Profiles of professional geographers

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For more profiles, visit our website (www.aag.org/careerprofiles) or see the book Practicing Geography: Careers for Enhancing Society and the Environment (Pearson Education 2013).
ANDREW TELFER
Sustainability Manager
Walmart Canada | Mississauga, Ontario
Influences every part of the company’s environmental strategy, from purchasing to store building to operations

“Sustainability is the new normal, the new cost of doing business”
MARK BARNES

Eagleton Governor's Executive Fellow, 2010

Ph.D. Candidate, Rutgers University

His dissertation explores how institutions create policies to address vulnerability to climate change.

His internship was an “opportunity to step back and gain another perspective on politics”
Uses her training in **geodemography** and **retail geography** to support retail site selection, market analysis, and forecasting.

“A big part of our job is to predict customer behavior... having a **GIS and statistics background** is a huge plus.”
“It’s more important than ever that geographers get out there and use their skills and training to make a difference.”

“Geography is uniquely positioned to prepare the next generation of well-rounded and innovative thinkers to address environmental issues.”
Environmental Education Specialist
Pine Grove Furnace State Park
Gardens, PA

Uses her geography training to interpret physical and cultural landscapes

“I love seeing visitors have that ‘A-ha’ moment”
“Geography has a central role in everything the Census Bureau does”
“Right now is the most exciting time to be a geographer”

Regional Manager | Esri
Philadelphia, PA

Helps businesses throughout the central-eastern region of the U.S. use geography and GIS to enhance their operations
Providing environmental data to clients in seconds through a Google map interface.

Living proof that careers sometimes arise from unexpected opportunities!

KRISTEN CARNEY
Co-founders of Cubit Planning
Austin, TX
Using technology to automate boring work

ANTHONY MORALES

Providing environmental data to clients in seconds through a Google map interface.
SONIA

MEDICAL GEOGRAPHER
Austin, TX

Studies HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases using GIS and geographical analysis.

“Even though we’re all human, we have different risks of becoming infected because of where we are.”
Focuses on geographic research, modeling, simulation, and data requirements for civil-military operations.

Helps federal agencies collaborate regarding geospatial technology and information.

“Geographers need to learn how to market themselves in a way that people in a lot of other fields don't need to.”
DAVE SELKOWITZ

U.S Geological Survey Research Geographer

Alaska

Uses geospatial technology to assess the effects of climate change on Alaska’s landscapes

Traveled over 100,000 miles in 2009 to do fieldwork and present his research
Oversees historic preservation projects throughout the state

“In non-profits, there's an opportunity to become personally invested in whatever work you're doing”
The valuation of real estate is very much a problem of geographic analysis. It involves understanding how numerous characteristics of a property come together to influence its value.

I am amazed when I see colleagues struggling over questions that could easily be answered through spatial analysis.

Principal | Dutch Hill Consulting
Poughkeepsie, NY

“The valuation of real estate is very much a problem of geographic analysis. It involves understanding how numerous characteristics of a property come together to influence its value.”
NANCY DAVIS LEWIS

Research Program Director
The East-West Center
Honolulu, HI

Promotes better relations and understanding between the peoples of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific

“Fill your toolbox with as many tools and experiences as possible”
“People often feel they know me even if they haven’t met me.”

GLENN LETHAM

Co-founder, Spatial Media, and Managing Editor, GISuser.com

Victoria, British Columbia

Technology evangelist who uses social media to maintain his extensive professional network
MARSHA HENDERSON

Vice President for External Affairs, SUNY at Buffalo

Helps build partnerships between the university and industry, alumni, government, and civic leaders

“Geography gave me a framework for understanding why things are the way they are.”
“The possibilities for teaching with GIS are endless...

...I’m constantly amazed at the projects my students come up with.”

PAULA ANN TREVINO

Grade-Level Principal
Helix Charter High School
La Mesa, CA

Uses GIS in the classroom to help get kids excited about science
“What I do on a daily basis has an impact on the lives of the people I work with.”
Evaluates potential retail store locations using GIS and assesses how current events and global trends will affect business.

“My work is inherently geographic – looking at how things interact over distance, but at the neighborhood scale.”
TODD VOTTEL

Executive Manager for Intergovernmental Relations & Policy
Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
Seguin, TX

Helps develop state and federal policies to develop, conserve, and protect water resources in Central Texas

“The best professors I had were the ones who had full careers and started teaching after that.”
It feels a little like being a professor, but instead of changing classes every semester, you change countries every few years.
WILLIAM SHUBERT

International Editions Coordinator

National Geographic Magazine
Washington, DC

Guides the preparation of articles for publication in two dozen international markets

Helps ensure that writers’ meaning isn’t lost in translation
NANCY TIAN

Recommends post-doc positions as a way to get started in a government research career.

Research Geographer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Research Triangle Park, NC

Studies why certain health issues occur and what environmental factors are responsible.
CARMEN TEDESCO
Senior Spatial Planning & Development Specialist
Development Alternatives, Inc.
Bethesda, MD

“My work is really eclectic – but that’s one of the main benefits of being a geographer.”
“We firmly believe there are skills we can teach, but we can’t teach attitude.”

Founders and Owners
Applied Field Data Systems
Houston, TX

Specialize in field-based GPS, GIS, and mapping services, consulting, and training
Geographic techniques and technologies are part of the National Park Service's "common language"
Advises federal government clients on geospatial operations, policy, and governance issues

“With the right combination of skills and attitude, the job prospects in geospatial consulting are excellent.”
Kate’s team raised over $45 million for disaster response after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Establishes partnerships with donors and coordinates fundraising efforts to provide safe housing and to boost local economies.
Notes that the line between “public” and “private” entities is blurring as business skills are needed across sectors.

Research Fellow, Water Policy Group
Overseas Development Institute | London, UK
Conducts research on international aid effectiveness to improve access to water and sanitation and to increase water security.
Harnesses natural resources to provide services that are typically handled by built infrastructure

Fostering Chattanooga’s transformation from one of America’s “most polluted” cities into a model of sustainable urban planning
Develops, analyzes, and disseminates information on land use, economy, and population to support long-range planning and forecasting for the greater Houston, Texas, region.

“*It’s a quintessential geographer’s job: we pay no attention to disciplinary boundaries.*”
“Face-to-face networking is more important now than ever.”
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