

Fall 2012

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Fall 2012

STUDYING HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

Hartter receives prestigious National Geographic Society Research and Exploration Grant

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Joel Hartter, assistant professor of geography, co-directs the Population, Environment, and Climate in the Albertine Rift Project, which explores the impacts of population explosion and climate change on resource availability and conservation efforts in Uganda. He has recently been awarded a \$20,000 [National Geographic Society Research and Exploration Grant](#) to continue researching these impacts on local communities and endangered mountain gorillas and chimpanzees outside Kibale National Park — about 200km west of the capital city Kampala and about 50 km from the Congo border. The Center for International Education awarded Hartter a [Grant for International Development & Engagement](#) to support his research there in the summer of 2011.

The National Geographic Society grant enables Hartter (and his co-grantee Sadie Ryan from SUNY ESF) to study local climate variability and its impact on crop yields, resource quality and abundance, vegetation productivity, and wildlife habitat and food sources — to which changes could pose serious threats to rural livelihoods. Knowledge of rainfall variability and its temporal and spatial patterns is essential for water-resource and land-use management as well as food security. Little is known about inter-annual rainfall variability (onset, cessation, frequency of rain events, etc.) and how local farmers are affected by- and adapt to - these changes.



According to Hartter, the main objective of this project is to understand the geographical patterns of household responses to climate change in a biodiversity hotspot. “By quantifying this fine-scale analysis of household vulnerability across an environmental (savanna to forest) and conservation management (park, corridor, domestic landscape) gradient, we can augment our ongoing regional-scale analyses of land use, cover change and climate change, and increase the utility of larger scale results into local management and social concerns.” Hartter plans on returning to work in Uganda this summer.

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