BioBlitzes in Shreveport and the Baton Rouge areas attracted media attention. On Saturday, April 2, a BioBlitz was hosted by Baton Rouge Recreation Department (BREC) and co-sponsored by LaGEA and many other organizations including LSU’s Museum of Natural Science. The event was held at Forest Community Park in Baton Rouge and attracted over 115 participants. Biologists and other experts, as well as members of the public identified over 405 species. The National Geographic Society’s weekly “AC Blast” featured this BioBlitz, as did WAFB-TV in Baton Rouge and the Baton Rouge Advocate. On April 22, April 26, April 29, May 5-6, and May 13, BioBlitzes were held in Bossier City. These were coordinated by LaGEA Steering Committee member Susan Keith in cooperation with Caddo Parish Magnet High School/Stoner Hill Lab School/ Magnolia Charter School in Shreveport. LaGEA also provided equipment to Jean Lafitte National Wildlife Preserve for their very successful BugBlitz on May 6. LaGEA Assistant Coordinator Sara Ates coordinated all LaGEA efforts in association with each BioBlitz. BioBlitz is an event in which teams of students, teachers, families, and community volunteers work together to see how many species of plants, insects, birds, fungi, microbes, and other organisms they can identify and catalog using the iNaturalist smartphone app. National maps of these biotic distributions of species are then produced. This is a great way to get our students outdoors, interested in science, and seeing the power of geospatial technology in mapping our world.

LaGEA’s Giant Traveling Map of Louisiana will arrive by September 1. It will include a carrying case and a set of lesson plans and props designed to engage students. LaGEA will pilot the map for third grade students at schools with an active LaGEA membership, and at three community events around the state, including the Louisiana Science Teachers Association conference in Baton Rouge River Center on October 24. Watch for e-mail, website, and Facebook notifications on other appearances of the Map. Research shows that students who participate in active learning are more likely to retain spatial information.

The Louisiana State Geographic Bee was held at the Catholic Life Center in Baton Rouge on Friday, April 1. Isidore Newman School (New Orleans) eighth grader Luke Andel was crowned the champion. Luke earned a trip to Washington DC for the National Geographic Bee, where he represented our state very well. Jon Bobb, an eighth grader at Westminster Christian Academy in Opelousas, won second place. And third place was awarded to Austin McMorris, a fifth grader (!) at Central Intermediate School here in the Baton Rouge area. LaGEA is grateful to Jay Grymes for Coordinating the Bee again this year. In all, 82 schools participated. Up to 100 schools can send their school Bee winner to the state Bee with a qualifying score on National Geographic Society’s written exam, with priority given based on the school Bee champions’ scores on that exam. Register your school in September for next year’s Bee—it will be great to have 100 students participating in the state Bee next year!

Join LaGEA! If you know anyone who would like join LaGEA and receive our newsletter and other updates, please contact Robert Rohli at louisianageographicalliance@gmail.com. Membership is free!
Certified GIS Professional Fran Harvey led another successful “Louisiana GIS K-12: ConnectED and ArcGIS Online” workshop on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge on June 4. The program connects teachers with free resources from Environmental Systems Research Inc. that are available for creating story maps to use in infusing geography into the teaching of other subjects. The next ConnectED/ArcGIS workshop is tentatively planned for December 2016.

Teacher Professional Development Workshops

LaGEA Steering Committee member and Laplace Elementary third grade teacher Charla Duhe will participate in the Teacher Development Workshop in Denver, Colorado, on July 14-16. The purpose will be to assist LaGEA in the development of lesson plans and logistics for using the 16’ x 16’ map of Louisiana that we will acquire by September 1. Many thanks to Charla for representing LaGEA at this workshop and bringing back many good ideas for her fellow teachers.

Giant Traveling Map Teacher Workshop

Many thanks to LaGEA’s Sara Ates for developing LaGEA’s Facebook presence and keeping the LaGEA webpage up to date (http://lagea.ga.lsu.edu). “Like” LaGEA on Facebook by connecting from LaGEA’s website! The website and Facebook pages will be used to provide news and updates. Consider posting your geography-related activities on the Facebook page.

Facebook and Website

LaGEA Steering Committee members Forrest Lamb (left) and Charla Duhe (right) pose for a selfie with Missouri Alliance Coordinator and GLI special guest Shannon White.

Regional GeoLiteracy Institute

LaGEA Steering Committee members Charla Duhe and Forrest Lamb represented LaGEA at the Regional GeoLiteracy Institute in Columbia, South Carolina, on June 12-17. Special thanks to National Geographic Society for their generosity in supporting geography education through the National Geographic Bee.

On June 25, A Wetlands Education Through Maps and Aerial Photography (WETMAAP) workshop was held on the LSU-Baton Rouge campus. This program was made possible by a grant from the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission (LEEC) to Alma Robichaux of Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and Jean May-Brett, the former Math-Science Partnership Program Coordinator for Louisiana Department of Education. WETMAAP itself has been funded by several organizations. Eight of the 26 sites covered by the WETMAAP program are in Louisiana. Resources such as maps, aerial photographs, and imagery are available to teachers for use in the classroom through this program. The focus of the June workshop, led by May-Brett, was the False River site. Teachers earned CLUs for participating and came away with an enhanced appreciation for the free products that can make learning geography fun in the classroom. Special thanks to LSU’s Department of Geography and Anthropology for support of the workshop.

Wetland Education Through Maps and Aerial Photography Workshop

Jean May-Brett helps teachers to locate free resources for identifying land use changes along the Mississippi River.

Please learn more about LaGEA at http://lagea.ga.lsu.edu