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The past year has been wonderful for me. Our daughter Pippa was born on October 28th (2014) and will have her first birthday shortly. She has brought a lot of joy and also a sharp reduction in my working hours - both good things. Because of parental leave and sabbatical I have not been teaching, but have tried to stay relevant by advising thesis and summer students. I also led a field trip to the Adirondacks in September titled: “Adirondacks: Old or Young?” We stayed at Wilmington notch campground (near Whiteface) and visited a bunch of classic ADK locations including Ausable Chasm, Whiteface Summit, and the falls at Jay, NY.

My research is moving along well and I have been fortunate to work with 7 or 8 great students over the past year. We have worked out a lot of the kinks in our optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) lab, which is now running at full speed. I must thank my former student Zach Perzan who was instrumental in getting the lab up to speed. The lab is currently working on a project funded by National Geographic reconstructing the highstands of paleo-Lake Terreton in the eastern Snake River Plain, Idaho. We did our first field expedition this summer and Jack Steele will be cranking out the OSL dates for his thesis in the coming months. We will return to Idaho in the spring and hope to continue the work in collaboration with archaeologists at the Idaho National Lab in coming years.

This fall we will be wrapping up a project using cosmogenic 3He dating to develop a paleo-seismic record on an active normal fault in northern California. The work has been funded by PG&E as part of a project to assess the seismic hazard to one of their hydroelectric dams on the Pit River. Abra Atwood completed her thesis on this project in the spring and Perri Silverhart worked on it over the summer, including some very hot field work on basaltic fault scarps in July! I have also been playing around with the new LiDAR datasets available in Vermont. I have two current thesis students (Will Jacobs and Caitlin Haedrich) who will be exploring whether we can extract useful information about river bank erosion from the LiDAR datasets.

Most importantly, I can’t wait to get back to teaching this spring! I miss the constant infusion of energy from seeing the students every day and the stimulation of trying to keep pace with their tough questions. Please stop by and visit us if you are back in the area, we would love to say hello.