

W5001 Annual Meeting Participants and Minutes

Date: 7/28/2025 – 7/29/2025

Location: Park City, UT

Chair: Jessica Schad

Chair-elect: David Peters

Incoming Chair-elect:

Secretary: Tom Mueller

Communications/Website Chair: Richelle Winkler

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Business Meeting, Evening of 7/28/25

Attendance

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Paige	Kelly	Penn State	Pfk5055@psu.edu

- Welcome, Overview, Introductions

- Jessica Schad provided an overview of the executive committee and the purpose and history of W5001
- Present members went around and gave introductions

- Regular Business

- Report from Chair (Schad)
 - Went from 32 last year to 25 this year
 - Missing some representation for West and Northeast
- Report from Co-Chair (Peters)
 - Two research briefs so far this year
 - One in review currently

- Three committed
- Questions for briefs
 - Who reads it?
 - Issue of it 'counting'
- Working on making briefs ADA compliant
- You can get DOIs, but there is a small fee
- From the crowd
 - Ken J – these count for grants
 - Kate C – Deans have found them very helpful
 - John G – Offered up his staff to help make the pdfs compliant
 - Peters noted that it might be nice to have a theme
 - Monnat noted that the decennial volume could be a good organizing theme
 - Kate C – What is the intention of the briefs and the 'mission'
 - Eddy – We should send these to extension people, and Callie said they would be very valuable if they are about their region
 - Shannon – We need a dissemination plan... listserv?
 - Kate C – what about videos? Tom noted that a Panopto short video could be a way to do that
 - Peter Nelson and Schad discussed asking students to make videos
- Report from Secretary
 - Mueller noted that we will be having a session on this tomorrow to work on our impacts
- Report from Communications Chair
 - Updates on social media
 - Winkler asked that people follow our Facebook and LinkedIn pages
 - Brief series
 - Mueller asked that we put Briefs on the agenda for the next exec meeting
 - Follow the Census Project
 - Winkler said she doesn't have much to share on the Census Bureau, but recommended people follow The Census Project
- **Updates and New Business**
 - INRPHA Update
 - Monnat gave an overview of INRPHA
 - INRPHA is trying to promote underused NIH-funded datasets
 - Great Smoky Mountain Study of Rural Aging (GSMS-RA)
 - Understanding America Study (UAS)
 - National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS)
 - National Wellbeing Study (NWS)
 - Discussed mentored pilot grants
 - Methods are a big focus
 - Grant mentorship doesn't require having a pilot grant
 - INRPHA is focused on multidisciplinary engagement
 - Virtual annual meetings
 - Virtual topical and data webinars
 - Working groups

- Looking for working group leaders
 - In-person conference activities
 - NIA cross-network meeting at 2025 IAPHS (IAPHS) (Oct. 2025)
- Shannon – send out abbreviated minutes ahead of the meetings in the future
- 2026 & 2027 Planning
 - Shannon Monnat noted that 2026 needs to be focused on the proposal and themes
 - Send out email ahead of time
 - Dates
 - Shannon noted that the earlier meeting makes more sense
 - The group landed on doing it with RSS in the summer
 - Locations
 - Mueller noted that we could just go to Raleigh and pair with RSS
 - Kate C – we would need transportation arranged
 - The group seemed to land on Raleigh or somewhere close-by
 - Format
 - Keep the standard two-day format
 - Seems like we move the business meeting to the morning
 - Theme
 - Make a proposal
 - Look through the last proposal to make sure we did all we said that we would do
 - RPRN Recruitment
 - It's always been informal
 - Bring people and invite them
 - Mueller and others noted that we should do intentional recruitment
 - We don't need to just grow grow grow
 - 2027
 - Committee formed
 - Matt Brooks, Alex T, Kate C, Edith Marie, Eleanor, maybe John C
 - Debate was had about whether DC was the right move in 2027, or if we want to go somewhere else
- Election of New Co-Chair
 - Paige Kelly was nominated and accepted
 - Tom Mueller seconded
 - Vote passed unanimously
- Open Discussion

All Day Meeting 7/29/25

- Flash Talks
 - Matt Brooks – Unexpected Changes in Rural Families: Fewer Married Parents, Lower Child Poverty
 - Edith-Marie Green – Rurality Bites: Addressing Data Difficulties Related to Studying Place and Space in Three National-Level Datasets

- Paige Kelly & Linda Lobao – Cutback Policies across Urban and Rural Communities
- Darcy Sullivan, Matt Brooks, J. Tom Mueller, & Regina Baker – An Alternative Path to Health Insurance? The Impact of Medicaid Expansion on SSI Participation
- Madelyn Verno, J. Tom Mueller, & Caitlin Hodges – Modeling the Relationship between Bedrock Lithology, Land Use, Settlement, and the Uneven Distribution of Health-Related Water Quality Issues in Oklahoma and Kansas
- Callie Adams – Rooted and Resilient: Youth Development Through 4-H Afterschool in Rural Utah
- David Peters, Emma Bartling, & Emily Meyer – Identifying and Understanding Rural Legal Deserts to Inform Public Policy
- Alexander Theophilus – Your Neighbors are New Every Week”: Short-Term Rentals, Housing, and Wellbeing in High Amenity Rural Communities
- David McGranahan presented “Updating the Natural Amenities Scale”
- Panel on “Amenity Migration & Community Wellbeing in the Intermountain West”
 - Dr. Dejan Eskic – Senior Research Fellow at the Kern C. Gardner Policy Institute
 - Dr. Elsa Perez – USU Assistant Professor of Translation & Interpretation
 - Lindsey Romaniello – U of Utah PhD Planning Student
- Discussion circles
 - Community and Economic Development
 - What does a diverse economy in rural look like?
 - Challenges related to growing or shrinking (housing)
 - Low quality vs. availability
 - Boomer transition and what it means for community well-being
 - What needs to happen for them to age into the old old years
 - Do we need to talk about AI in rural communities
 - Environment, Natural resources, Ag., Food Systems
 - Lack of Ag focused people
 - Aging farmers
 - Diversification and different levels of food systems
 - Ag land transitions
 - Mental health among farmers
 - Natural resource dependency and health outcomes
 - Amenities becoming disamenities
 - Affluent people leaving high amenity areas due to potential for disasters
 - Fertility and the environment
 - Land transitions are apart of the demographic process and a stressor
 - Can you even afford to pass it on
 - Questions about existing data
 - People moving away from the drying up great salt lake
 - Childcare and health insurance for farmers or entrepreneurs
 - Climate havens?
 - Is it a thing?
 - It is important to think about the people who are choosing to stay
 - What are people choosing to do when they choose to stay
 - Health, Health Care, and Disability Services
 - Life course perspectives and analysis
 - County level health indicators that are reliable

- Healthcare workforce
 - Aging
 - Disappearance of working age adults from rural areas
 - How does this all relate to disability and unpaid work
 - The use of AI in healthcare
 - AI could either increase or decrease disparities
- Workshop on Impact Statements
 - Productive discussion on impacts
 - Members developed impact statements for the annual report
 - We decided to kick off next year's meeting with impact statements

JOURNAL ARTICLES

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- Anderson, Cory, Shuai Zhou, and Guangqing Chi. 2023. "Population-Wide Vaccination Hesitancy among the Amish: A County-Level Study of COVID-19 Vaccine Adoption and Implications for Public Health Policy and Practice." *Population Research and Policy Review* 42(4):70.
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DISSERTATIONS/THESES

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- Alvis, Kayla. 2023. Title of Dissertation: *Rurality, Health, and Disability: A Conceptual Framework and Empirical Study of Ohio*. (Ohio State University)
- Barnett, Matthew J., December 2023. Title of Dissertation: *Toward a More Holistic Understanding of Uranium-Related Views and Experiences of Residents in the Four Corners Region of the United States*. (Utah State University)

- Bennett, Elizabeth A. 2025. Title of Dissertation: Still “The Last Best Place”? Concentrated Ownership, Amenity Migration, And Community Change In Southwest Montana (Penn State)
- Brown, Austin. August 2023. Title of Dissertation: *Suburban Subjectivities: A Genealogical Account of the American Dreamscape*. (Syracuse University)
- Bundschuh, Kristine. 2022. Title of dissertation: *‘It’s Truly Everything’: The Multidimensional and Interconnected Reasons New Hampshire Residents Stay in Place*. (University of New Hampshire).
- Feng, Yining, December 2024. Title of Dissertation: The Disaster Migration Continuum: How Mobility, Immobility, And Population Recovery Unfold Through Vulnerability And Spatiotemporal Dynamics (Penn State)
- Henness, Steve, May 2024. The Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program: A Mixed Methods Case Study. (*University of Missouri-Columbia*)
- Koci, Kristen Rene, "Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Natural Resource Dependency in Rural Utah" (2024). <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd2023/172> (*Utah State University*)
- Sun, Yue, 2024, “Explaining Geographic Disparities in Cardiovascular Disease Mortality: The Roles of Physical Environment, Industry Structures, and State Policies.” (*Syracuse University*)
- Swanson, Eric. 2023. Title of Dissertation: *The Influence of Urban Economies on Socioeconomic Well-Being Along the Rural-Urban Continuum*. (Ohio State University)
- Vinter, Zak, 2023, Evaluating the Impact of Public Library Branch Closures on Student Achievement. (*Montana State University*)
- Yates, Justin. 2025. Title of Dissertation: "Ethical Imperative to Health and Epistemological Distance: Rural Patients and Advance Practice Registered Nurses" (University of Missouri, Advisor: E. Avery)
- Zhou, Shuai. August 2023. Title of Dissertation: *Environmental Migration in The United States: A Spatio-Temporal Perspective, 1970–2020*. (Penn State)

NEWS AND OP-EDS

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DATA PRODUCTS

Egan-Robertson, David, Katherine J. Curtis, Richelle L. Winkler, Kenneth M. Johnson, and Caitlin Bourbeau. "Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2020." Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2023 (Beta Release). Web. <https://netmigration.wisc.edu/>.

W5001 Annual Report – Year Three (2023 – 2024)

Accomplishments

PRESENTATIONS

In the second year of W5001, over 60 in-person and virtual presentations were made to fellow researchers at annual meetings of professional associations, university seminars, and other research conferences, including the Rural Sociological Society, the American Sociological Association, the Population Association of America, the American Association of Geographers, the American Public Health Association, the Community Development Society, Association for Policy Analysis and Management, the National Council on Family Relations, and the Gerontological Society of America, among a number of other smaller regional conferences and meetings.

POLICY OUTREACH

Members consulted at the highest levels of federal policy as members of, or consultants for: the Office of Management and Budget's Interagency Committee on Metropolitan and Micropolitan Standards; Office of Management and Budget's Interagency Working Group on Race and Ethnicity; the Federal Committee on Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (FC SPD 15), which is charged with government-wide implementation of new race/ethnic data collection standards (SPD 15) and reviewing government collection and distribution of race/ethnic data; the U.S. Government Accountability Office; the United States Forest Service Social Science research group; and the United States Global Change Research Program.

Members conducted briefings, workshops and consultations to state and federal policymakers, extension officials, community organizations, and other stakeholder groups, including: National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine; Utah State Governor and Legislature; Washington State Legislature; the Florida Department of Elder Affairs; City of Madison, WI Common Council; Copper Shores Community Health Foundation; Team Peninsula of MI; New Hampshire State Legislature; American Enterprise Institute; Brookings Institute; Wisconsin Farm Bureau Board of Directors; Iowa Farm Bureau Agriculture Leaders Summit; South Dakota Farm Bureau; Living Water Cooperative of the Upper Midwest; Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative; Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services; Oregon Department of Human Services; Kansas Geological Survey; Masonic Cancer Alliance; and extension professionals and stakeholders across Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Utah, among others. In addition to in-person or

virtual briefings, members also prepared and published 15 policy briefs and reports.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Members communicated research findings to the public with over 43 interviews and Op-eds through many media outlets, including in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, The Conversation, Washington Post, Des Moines Register, KCRG TV Cedar Rapids, River to River Iowa Public Radio, The Economist, Farm Equipment Magazine, Midday with Maria Shilaos, Newsweek, Associated Press, Oregon Public Radio, and The Salt Lake Tribune, among others.

NEW FUNDING

Members received external funding to extend and build on research to meet project objectives. This included the following:

Matthew Brooks (PI), Miles Taylor (Co-I), "The Living Arrangements of Rural Older Adults and its Uneven Impacts on Physical Health." Interdisciplinary Research Network on Rural Health and Aging (\$34,685) - 12/1/2024 - 5/15/2025

"Understanding & Addressing Environmental Justice Issues Among Utah Youth." (PI), *Mountains and Plains Environmental Justice Grants Hub* (\$250,000), 2025-2027 (funding rescinded by the federal government)

"Housing Costs in Tourism Dependent Rural Communities." (PI), *Metropolitan Center for Applied Research & Extension* (\$16,022), 2024-2025.

"Engagement, Consent & Community Wellbeing in Transitioning Coal Communities." (Co-PI), *Common Ground Consortium - Energy Policy Institute* (\$79,289), 2024-2025

Chandler, T., ... John J. Green, ... et al. "Training Solutions: An All-Hazards Approach for Advancing Rural and Tribal Resilience," Columbia University (Prime), U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (J. Green portion of multi-party project = \$25,188), 2024-2027.

Green, John J. (PI) and Rachel Welborn. "Southern Rural Development Center 2024 Plan of Work," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (\$616,417). 2024 - 2026.

Kelly, Paige. (PI) and Ryan Thombs. "Older Adults Quality of Life in Rural Communities: Differences by Aging in Place and Retirement Destinations." INRPHA NIA (\$35,000), 2025-2026.

David Rothwell Co-PI (Jones, G., Principal Investigator) Clear signals: Decoding wastewater to strengthen public health. OSU Transdisciplinary Seed Project. \$50,000 (2025-2026).

AWARDS

Tim Slack and Shannon Monnat. 2025 Frederick H. Buttel Outstanding Scholarly Achievement Award for *Rural and Small-Town America: Context, Composition, and Complexities* (University of California Press, 2024).

Peter Nelson named *Tamar Mayer Distinguished Professor of Geography* - Middlebury College

Jessica Schad: William R. Freudenburg Award of Merit, Natural Resources Research Interest Group, *Rural Sociological Society (RSS)*, 2025

Jessica Schad: Researcher of the Year, *College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Utah State University (USU)*, 2025

Jessica Schad: Giraffe Award Nominee (engaging in risky or new projects), *College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHaSS), USU*, 2025

Edith-Marie Green: Rankin-Skatrud Predoctoral Award, *Departments of Population Health Sciences and Kinesiology, University of Wisconsin-Madison*, 2025

TEACHING

Tim Slack: 299 students taught, 1 PhD chair, 2 MA chair.

Guangqing Chi: 2 PhD chair

Matt Brooks, 150 students, 1 MA chair

Kristina Brant: 1 MA chair, 1 PhD chair

Peter Nelson: taught 116 undergraduate students, advised 2 senior honors theses, 2 senior projects.

Richelle Winkler: 1 PhD chair

Danielle Rhubart: 300 Students Taught

Jessica Schad: 13 graduate students taught, 3 PhD chair

Kenneth Johnson: 10 graduate students, 1 PhD Chair.

Jacinda K. Dariotis: taught 12 graduate students, advised 4 graduate students, mentored 4 undergraduate and 10 high school students

Eileen Avery: 108 students taught, 1 PhD Chair (see relevant diss below); 1 UG research intern (ISA presentation co-author)

Leif Jensen: 24 students taught, 2 PhD Chair

Paige Kelly: 45 students taught, 1 PhD Chair

David Peters: 110 students taught, 1 PhD Chair

David Rothwell: 89 students taught, 2 PhD chair

J. Tom Mueller: 4 students taught, 2 PhD chair

DISSERTATIONS

Yates, Justin. 2025. Title of Dissertation: "Ethical Imperative to Health and Epistemological Distance: Rural Patients and Advance Practice Registered Nurses" (University of Missouri, Advisor: E. Avery)

Bennett, Elizabeth A. 2025. Title of Dissertation: Still "The Last Best Place"? Concentrated Ownership, Amenity Migration, And Community Change In Southwest Montana (Penn State)

Feng, Yining, December 2024. Title of Dissertation: The Disaster Migration Continuum: How Mobility, Immobility, And Population Recovery Unfold Through Vulnerability And Spatiotemporal Dynamics (Penn State)

Impacts

Over the course of the study year, members of W5001 impacted science and society in numerous ways. We report our impacts in-line with our study objectives:

Objective 1: Describe recent U.S. rural population change and the components of these changes, and investigate the roles of recent population health, environmental, and policy shocks and stressors in driving these changes

- In response to a Congressional request, the group helped develop an innovative, science-based measure of ruggedness to improve rural policy and increase more equitable access to rural resources and opportunities. The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) has already modified its eligibility criteria for rural health grants to include terrain factors, specifically using this new Road Ruggedness Scale (RRS). The change better identifies areas with difficult access to healthcare due to rugged terrain, expanding eligibility for FORHP grants.
- Members of our group informed Extension specialists on the drivers and implications of population change in rural communities. We brought together over 100 specialists from multiple regions. The knowledge generated from this convening is being used to inform their local and regional programming in critical areas of community and economic development, natural resources, and health.
- Insights from the RPRN Listening Sessions with more than 100 rural development stakeholders from 23 states were used to inform Extension professionals in developing a better understanding of rural population characteristics and trends and to help them request the types of research they need to help inform their work for future. This included dissemination of a report and a webinar with 48 participants from across the country.
- At the request of the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), a W5001 member presented on rural population trends to 12 state directors from the Midwest. The W5001 member assembled the presentation, facilitated a discussion, and produced 12 state demographic profiles. The information and discussion helped inform changes to AFBF operations, outreach, and collaboration across states. This resulted in additional presentations and facilitated discussion to four other state farm bureaus.

- Literature from members of this group, coupled with data from the Net-Migration for U.S. Counties site, was used to inform strategic planning in Mississippi for the Land-Grant University's role in helping to address community vitality in rural places experiencing population loss, working with industry and government partners.
- Dr. Ken Johnson's analysis of recent rural demographic trends is contributing to rural prosperity and economic development by providing important information to planners and policymakers and is being used by a National Science Foundation K-12 Education Task Force, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the NH State Legislature.
- Members of the RPRN network generated new classifications of rurality, along a rural-urban continuum (Rural-Urban Continuum Codes, Rural-Urban Commuting Areas, and Frontier and Remote Area codes), for counties, census tracts, and zip codes that are being used by federal agencies for determining eligibility for various programs including in Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration, Veteran's Administration, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs.
- Dr. Matt Brooks and Shelley Clark wrote an Op-Ed at the Washington Post on changing rural families and misconceptions the general public may have on them.

Objective 2: Describe shifts in rural economic well-being (i.e., poverty, livelihood strategies, income, housing, infrastructure) in the context of recent population health, environmental, and policy shocks and stressors and identify linkages between economic wellbeing and population dynamics, policies, and institutional responses.

- Published reports from RPRN utilized by elected state officials in PA to inform their work as part of the Rural Population Revitalization Commission.
- Drs. Shannon Monnat and Tim Slack were invited to present their research on rural population health trends and challenges to the Aspen Health Strategy Group in 2025. Based on the discussions in that meeting, former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist wrote a 4-part series on improving rural health, published in *Forbes* (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/billfrist/2025/07/15/rural-health-resilience-a-four-part-series-on-healing-the-other-america/>). In addition, Frist and former Kansas Governor and HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius wrote a commentary

for U.S. News and World Report about how proposed policy changes could adversely affect rural health and health care (<https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2025-07-01/gop-big-beautiful-bill-pass-house-senate-medicaid>). These efforts helped to inform policymakers, reporters, and the general public about rural health and health care challenges and have potential to influence future policy decisions.

- Place-based research conducted in rural communities in Utah and Washington state demonstrated that community members in high natural amenity places are concerned about population growth, housing affordability, and overtourism. We published research on these case studies, specifically relating to increases in tourism and amenity driven in-migration in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. This research led to an invitation to participate in a Washington State Legislature funded project entitled “Investigating Housing Market Conditions in Tourism-Dependent Municipalities.” This project led to a report written for the Washington State Legislature advocating for rural community housing needs, as well as presentations and engagement with city and county governments throughout Washington.
- Research on short-term rentals, tourist lodging, and housing in northern Utah received significant press coverage in high readership newspapers and statewide radio stations. This coverage led to increased conversations about the need for robust short-term rental regulations and housing policy, particularly in high amenity rural communities.
- Research from the shrink smart project, on how declining towns have maintained or grew quality of life, helped a community of 2,000 people in west central Iowa successfully obtain a \$750,000 USDA Rural Development grant to remodel a shuttered middle-school building into senior housing. The community used W5001 research in the grant proposal; and a W5001 member conducted several community facilitations to refine the project and help write the proposal.
- Research on broadband access and utilization in rural areas was used to inform Extension programming for train-the-trainer programs to advance digital skills in rural communities.
- Demographic research on migration, population aging, and mortality was used to help expand knowledge of Extension professionals and those

working with nonprofit organizations to help families dealing with heirs' property and difficult family land transfers. This included opportunities to offer more Extension workshops in places with high levels of net out-migration.

- Dr. Lori Hunter published a piece in the [*Conversation*](#) on the vulnerability of older, rural Americans to extreme events which received nearly 4,400 “reads” and was reprinted in over 35 local newspapers. Brant published a piece in the *Conversation* on housing insecurity in rural Appalachia amid extreme weather events which received over 10,000 reads and was reprinted in over 10 other outlets.
- Research on the effects of Medicaid expansion on rural mortality was used in an evidentiary hearing in the Montana State legislature.
- Continued to develop Utah’s first longitudinal, statewide, representative survey of residents, including an oversample of rural residents, to understand their views on longstanding and emerging environmental issues. Publicly available briefs and reports have been downloaded over 4,000 times.

Objective 3: Investigate how recent shocks and stressors affect trends in rural population health, disabilities, and health disparities across the lifespan and how communities and institutions respond to and adapt to these challenges

- Research on aging-related healthcare changes during periods of upheaval with a focus on perception of societal shocks as threats in rural and urban communities across the state of Wisconsin, using the example of advance care planning during the pandemic, was presented to legislators at the Wisconsin State Capitol.
- Data from the National Wellbeing Survey, which was created by members of this group and includes an oversample of residents from nonmetropolitan counties, were downloaded over 6,000 times in the past year. This data resource is making it possible for the broader research community, including those outside of W5001, to conduct research that can generate new knowledge about rural health, employment, and economic wellbeing in the United States.
- Dr. Katherine Curtis and collaborators generated new research on wildfires and migration in the United States. Our study was selected by the NICHD

Population Dynamics Research Branch for an online feature authored by an NICHD Senior Policy Advisor for broad public access and targeted dissemination to national policymakers. This research is enhancing public knowledge about the migratory consequences of wildfires.

- Drs. Leif Jensen and Shannon Monnat were invited to offer presentations on rural health as two of four featured presentations for a workshop on Health in Rural America: Challenges and Opportunities organized by the NIH Health Disparities Interest Group (HDIG). The workshop reaches health researchers in NIH and beyond.