



Advancing environmental justice

through Student Pathways, Action Research, and Critical engagement

Spring 2023 Newsletter

Congratulations SPARC faculty and students!

SPARC faculty and students are being recognized on campus for the quality of their work. SPARC undergraduate students Anne Johnson, Sarah Buening, and Piper Christian, mentored by Kate Magargal, won 2nd place for their poster at the CSBS Student Research Day. Brian Coddling received the distinguished teaching award and Brett Clark received the distinguished mentor award. Congratulations to all for these well-deserved recognitions.



Student Pathway Spotlight:

Environmental Justice course that has completely shifted my thinking about homelessness and my position within community. After studying city-led displacement events and the impact our actions have on the homeless communities within Salt Lake, I have been inspired to continue related research for my undergraduate thesis.

My thinking is that people experiencing homelessness are closer to the earth than any of us and have been forced to live a resourceful lifestyle out of necessity. I believe there is much that we can learn from people experiencing homelessness through their way of life. I hope to better understand connection and belonging amongst people experiencing homelessness and look forward to working with students in the fall environmental justice course as well as my thesis advisor, Dr. Jeff Rose, to conduct qualitative on-site interviews and observations. The findings of this study may be used to inform policymakers, service providers, as well as the wider public about the value of involving people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the management and upkeep of public spaces. Additionally, this research may contribute to development of policies and/or programs that empower people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to take greater ownership of the place they have chosen to live.

Unsheltered Connections – Maddie Fuchs

In the spring of 2023, I participated in a community based research project in my



Action Research Spotlight:

Energy Sovereignty Action

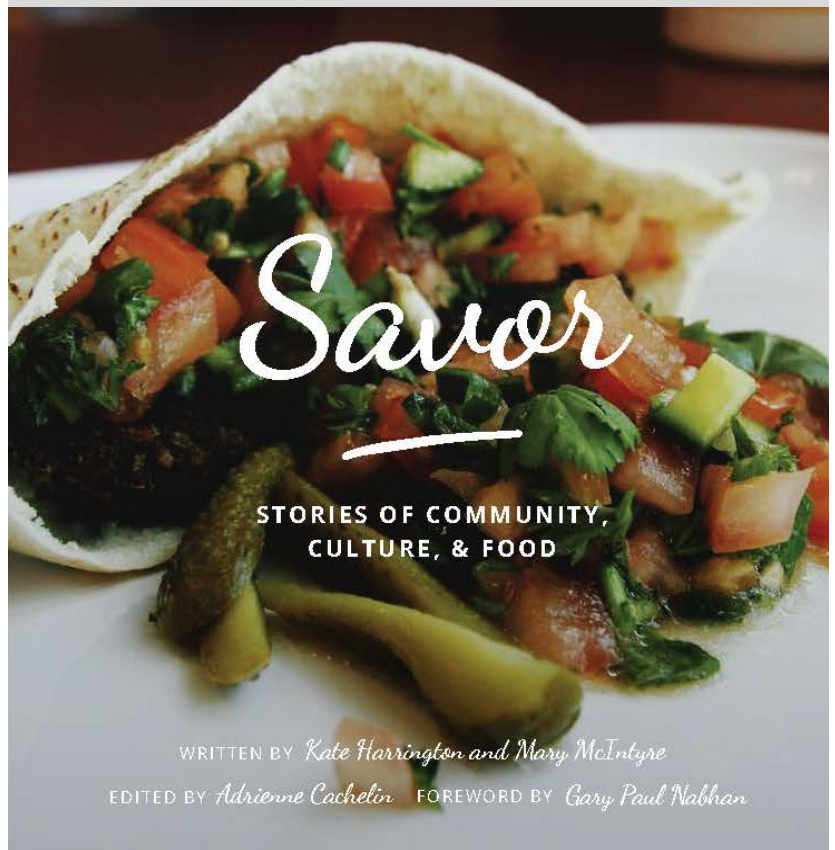
Over the past year, SPARC Associate Director Kate Magargal has worked with collaborators at Utah Diné Bikéyah to communicate findings from community-based research to representatives of Tribal and Federal government entities. With research results supported by contributions from over 50 SPARC students since 2017, Magargal and UDB worked together to create a policy portfolio summarizing the research and translating it into policy for consideration by Tribal leaders. Magargal and UDB staff presented the documents to the Navajo Utah Commission at monthly meetings as well as to staff at the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service. These communications will support Native communities by advocating how the needs and expertise of Native communities should inform the management of Bears Ears National Monument.

Critical Engagement Spotlight:

Savor goes farm to table...

In 2015, we published our first cookbook ethnography project in collaboration with the Glendale Mtn-View Learning Center. This book highlighted the beauty and diversity of human experiences in this wonderful community, illustrating a diversity of meanings around food and place. Given community request, Savor 2 is in the works and will continue highlighting the importance of foodways through individual chef's narratives, adding the element of food production and cultivation. Thank you Sophie Chernosky, Iris Flattery, and Trista Long!

Second edition coming soon!



Celebrating Changemakers!

Congratulations **ENVST graduating class 2023**. We know the world will be a better place for your skills and commitment. Thanks for all your work with the lab!

Piper Christian completed a GIS internship and served as project coordinator with SPARC this year. She will take her knowledge of community-based research coordination as a NASA fellow this summer.

Congratulations **Dr. Kate Magargal** and best of luck with your new faculty position at the University of Utah Honors College. Your leadership and passion have moved SPARC forward in fundamental ways and we look forward to continued collaboration!

Welcome Debolina Banerjee

The SPARC lab is excited to welcome Debolina Banerjee as our new postdoctoral fellow! Debolina has just completed her dissertation integrating urban ecology, environmental justice, complex systems, and cognitive science. We look forward to putting her expertise to work in community based research!



Want to learn more?

Come visit our newly updated website: <https://sparc.utah.edu/>

Article Spotlight:

García, I., & Hernandez, N. (2023). "They're Just Trying to Survive": The Relationship Between Social Vulnerability, Informal Housing, and Environmental Risks in Loíza, Puerto Rico, USA. *World Development Sustainability*, 100062.

[Read it Here](#)