

Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography proudly announces the

**Vega Medalist 2020**

**Professor David R. Montgomery**University of Washington, USA

**The Vega Medal 2020**

The Vega Medal is awarded to Professor David R. Montgomery at the Department of Earth and Space Sciences, University of Washington, USA by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography (establ. 1877) in honour of his pronounced achievements for physical geography, especially within the field of geomorphology. Professor Montgomery leads the very successful research group in geomorphology at University of Washington where he has developed the research in both theoretical and applied geomorphology, which are highly important for solutions to environmental and agricultural problems. He has published over 200 research articles and his research has had a large impact in the wider research community. He is also a highly appreciated author of popular science with a focus on erosion, nutrient leakage and sedimentation as current social issues and his books have garnered great attention. He is also a prominent popular educator about sustainable agriculture and writer of teaching material for the education of coming generations of geomorphologists.

The Vega Medal should have been handed over to Professor Montgomery by the King of Sweden at ceremony at the Royal Castle in Stockholm 23 April 2020. The current pandemic has unfortunately made not only the ceremony but also the aligned Vega Symposium impossible to conduct. The Vega Medal is every third year awarded to a world leading scholar in physical geography. Professor Lennart Olsson, Lund University nominated professor David R. Montgomery.

The Vega Symposium 2020 should have gathered a number of great scholars and had the following talks planned:

Introduction. Professor **Lennart Olsson**, Lund University, Moderator

Growing a Soil-Health Revolution. Professor **David Montgomery**, University of Washington, USA.

Sequestration of carbon in soil for food and climate. Professor **Rattan Lal**, Ohio State University, USA.

Realising the potential of soil biodiversity in shaping future sustainable food systems and mitigating climate change. Professor **Katarina Hedlund**, Lund University, Sweden.

Global adoption of Conservation Agriculture: Regenerating soil health. Professor **Amir Kassam**, University of Reading, UK.

Vega Symposium Synopsis

**Soil and Civilization: Sustaining Farming for the Future**

Soil is a defining characteristic of physical geography. It’s presence, absence, and character helps shape landscapes around the world. And though soil is the foundation for both ecology and human civilizations, it remains one of humanity’s least valued natural resources. In hindsight, it is clear that the agriculture upon which humanity depends left legacies of degraded lands in regions around the world. Now with each passing year ongoing soil loss and degradation makes it that much harder to keep feeding a growing world.

Rebuilding the health and productivity of the world’s agricultural soils presents opportunities to forge a new relationship between people and the land based on adapting how we farm to the landscape. It also provides opportunities to sequester carbon pulled from the atmosphere as increased soil carbon, decrease off-farm pollution, enhance on-farm biodiversity, and support rural economies.

This symposium will explore soil through linked interdisciplinary perspectives in physical geography, geology, soil science, agronomy, soil ecology/microbiology, climate change, and sustainability science. It will address questions such as: What is the role of soil biota and biology in rebuilding soil health? What farming practices can increase soil organic matter and regenerate soil fertility? How much can rebuilding soil organic matter help mitigating climate change? Advances in soil ecology have opened up new insights into microbial symbioses and point toward merging traditional ideas like cover crops, crop rotations and crop associations with new technologies that enable no-till farming and precision agriculture. The Symposium will explore soil functions for sustainable productivity and for soil-mediated ecosystem services from agricultural landscapes such as soil biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water cycling, clean water, nutrient retention, and control of soil erosion and flooding. Building on this approach the global spread of Conservation Agriculture and other styles of regenerative farming could form the basis for a soil-health revolution to sustain farming well into the future and contribute to addressing climate change over the 21st Century.

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Dr. Thomas Borén, President

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