Peru Expedition

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A WKU Geography professor is once again having his expertise tapped on a global scale.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham tells us about Dr. John All’s latest research expedition .

Last year Dr. John All achieved a personal and professional goal when he studied climate change while summiting Mt. Everest. This year his research took him to another part of the world, only this time he took a professional photographer along to document it.

University Photographer Clinton Lewis can usually be found hustling from one photo shoot to the next on WKU’s campus.

But this summer, he was half way around the world with WKU geography professor John All scaling mountains in Peru.

“I documented a lot of John’s research and highlighted our faculty and research and our international reach as well.”

All headed up a group of scientists conducting research on climate and pollution in the Andes.

“Everyone was a lot more into the science than climbing which sort of surprised me. I figured the American Alpine Club, everyone would just be interested in the climbing and it was just the opposite.”

As a result, All got twice as much data as he anticipated. He says it helped to have someone on the team whose only job was photography.

“When you have someone else who can take care of that and think about framing the light while you just worry about the sciences, it makes it incredibly better.”

Lewis is an outdoor enthusiast himself, and began rock climbing last year. His role on the expedition came together at the last minute, leaving little time for preparation.

“I could have used six to eight months of training but did the best I could with the four weeks that I had.”

He says there were many moments, one in particular, that made it all worth it.

“The first sunlight was just skimming over the shoulder between these mountains, it was illuminating two peaks to the right that were on another mountain. Just right then it clicked this is what mountaineering is all about, it was just amazing.”

This semester, three students are processing the data All collected on the effects climate change has on the air quality and vegetation in the Andes. In about a month, they will meet with researchers from other universities to write a grant proposal to continue the study.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.