Zhihao Wang

4600 River Rd, Riverdale, MD 20737
+1 614-674-8826 zhwang1@umd.edu linkedin Google Scholar zhwang0.github.io

Education

University of Maryland *Ph.D., Geographical Information Science; GPA: 3.84* **2020 – 2025 (Expected)**

The Ohio State University *M.A., Geography; GPA: 4.00* **2018 – 2020**

University of Waterloo *B.E.S., Honors Geomatics; Minor, Computer Science; GPA: 3.91* **2016 – 2018**

Wuhan University *B.E., Remote Sensing Science and Technology; GPA: 3.82* **2014 – 2018**

Research Projects

Geospatial Foundation Model | *Python, TensorFlow, PyTorch* **Dec. 2023 – Present**

- Fine-tuned and evaluated geospatial foundation models (e.g. **IBM Prithvi** and **Meta SAM**) on satellite image crop classification, flood and wild-fire change detection, as well as cloud and crop segmentation.
- Conducted experiments to answer when or when not foundational models are suitable for remote sensing tasks, compared to traditional ML, conventional (UNet, DeepLabv3+), and transformer-based models (ViT, SegFormer).

Advanced Physics-Guided Deep Learning | *Python, TensorFlow, PyTorch* **Jan. 2021 – Present**

- *Proj. 1*: Developing a deep-learning framework for predicting global carbon stocks and fluxes in the NASA's Earth Information System. Technology contributions cover: (1) a robust **spherical Fourier Neural Operators** framework for accelerating **PDEs** in numerical models and accurately representing Earth's surface conditions; (2) a **knowledge informed neural network** for generating more reliable predictions across various spatial and temporal scales, particularly in few-shot conditions.
- *Proj. 2*: Developed Deep-ED, a framework approximating and accelerating long-term projections of a process-based ecological model (EDv3.0). Key achievements include: (1) **a de-sequencing and multi-scale structure** for achieving approximately a 62% reduction of error accumulation in long-term forecasting; (2) **a self-guided learning strategy** to mitigate heterogeneous effects; and (3) **a geo-physical active learning algorithm** to enhance sampling efficiency.
- *Proj. 3*: Created SimFair, a **physics-guided** and **fairness-aware** deep learning model for temperature estimations. Novelties include: (1) proposing an **inverse-modeling design** to guide traditional data-driven predictions to align with natural laws through (53% RMSE improvement); (2) integrating **the law of energy conservation** from radiative transfer models into the learning process; and (3) achieving greater prediction fairness by 73% in new test regions through a dual-fairness consistency loss.
- *Proj. 4*: Estimated daily precipitation across the U.S. using satellite thermal images, gauge observations, and radar measurements. Efforts include: (1) building multi-source training data generations and analysis-ready benchmark products including **GPM, ERA5, PRISM, CHIRPS, GRIDSAT, GHCN networks**; (2) training machine learning models (**AutoML, ConvLSTM**) to retrieve precipitations in a robust manner for near-global-scale data predictions.

Cloud-Based Satellite Image Generation & Classification | *Google Earth Engine* **Jan. 2019 – Dec. 2022**

- Parallelly processed **100k+** raw satellite images for generating extensive training datasets in GEE and Apache Sedona.
- Designed a **Markov Random Field**-based algorithm to optimize time-series classification consistency using Javascript in GEE, enhancing the accuracy by integrating environmental change principles into the classification process.

Selected Publications

- **Wang, Z.**, Xie, Y., Li, Z., Jia, X., Jiang, Z., Jia, A., & Xu, S. SimFair: Physics-Guided Fairness-Aware Learning with Simulation Models. In Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. AAAI'24.
- **Wang, Z.**, Xie, Y., Jia, X., Ma, L., & Hurtt, G. High-Fidelity Deep Approximation of Ecosystem Simulation over Long-Term at Large Scale. ACM SIGSPATIAL'23. **(Oral)**.
- Chen, W.*, **Wang, Z.***, Li, Z.*, Xie, Y., Jia X., & Li, A. Deep Semantic Segmentation for Building Detection Using Knowledge-Informed Features from LiDAR Point Clouds. ACM SIGSPATIAL'22. **(Top-3 Solution)**.

Skills

Languages: Python, MATLAB, R, JavaScript, C++/C, SQL
Tools/Libraries: TensorFlow, PyTorch, Google Earth Engine and Cloud Platform, Apache Sedona, Linux, Git, ArcGIS
Coursework: Machine Learning, Neural Networks, Computer Vision, Biogeography-Environmental Change, linear algebra

Honors and Awards

- Student Scholarship, AAAI 2024
- Top-3 Competition Winner & Travel Grant, ACM SIGSPATIAL CUP 2022, 2023
- Dean's Fellowship, University of Maryland 2020
- Dean's Honor List & Entrance Scholarship, University of Waterloo 2016, 2017, 2018
- Wuhan University Scholarship, 5050 Scholarship, Wuhan University 2016