



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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**McGill U's Wayne Pollard Studies Eroding Arctic Coastline:** Arctic coastlines are on the retreat, especially in Canada, and their disappearance has significant implications for both the ecosystem and the economic and social life of the North, according to a group of international researchers. The changes are particularly dramatic in the Beaufort Sea along the coast of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska. "Every single element of the North is going to be affected, right from the engineering side to how the Inuit interact with their environment," Wayne Pollard, a McGill University geomorphologist who contributed to the study. [CBC News](#) | [Estuaries and Coasts](#)

**Mount Allison Dendrochronologists Receive Grant:** Colin Laroque and Geoff Kershaw of the Mount Allison University Dendrochronology (MAD) Lab have received funding from the Association of American Geographers to pursue research relating to the Alberta Oil Sands. The scientists will use dendrochronology - tree ring analyses - to help measure environmental changes in areas around the tar sands - a process not commonly used in this type of research. The team will begin do their field research in Saskatchewan and then travel west by canoe to Fort McMurray. [New Brunswick Business Journal](#)

**UBC Okanagan's Bernard Momer Discovers Kelowna Residents Value Local Culture:** A new report by Bernard Momer, associate professor of geography at UBC Okanagan, has found that Kelowna residents value and support cultural opportunities in the city. The report, entitled Our City, Ourselves, provides valuable insight into Kelowna's cultural status by using cultural indicators to measure progress and change. "Our research looked at a variety of cultural indicators such as infrastructure, spending habits and the variety of cultural activities in Kelowna," said Momer. "We found that 64 per cent of residents believe that arts and cultural pursuits are important to the quality of life in Kelowna and, on average, Kelowna residents spend more than the provincial average on cultural pursuits." [Kelowna Capital News](#)

**Ice Loss from Canadian Glaciers Documented by Trent U's Graham Cogley:** Graham Cogley of Trent University's Department of Geography is part of an international, multi-author team that has documented a dramatic increase in ice loss from glaciers in Canada's northernmost islands. The six-year study period is too short to establish a trend. "Year-to-year variation in the mass balance of the glaciers is very large", added Prof. Cogley. "Part of Trent's role in this study was to provide long-term context, based on its involvement in field work in the Arctic going back all the way to 1959. We also helped to provide 'ground truth'. Technically, an encouraging aspect of the study was that several independent sources of information – the laser-altimeter and gravimeter observations from orbit, numerical simulations, and the sparse and hard-won field measurements – all lined up beautifully." [Trent U Daily News](#)

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**University of Saskatchewan Field School in Chiapas, Mexico:** An academic partnership between the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States resulted in a 2 week February field school in Chiapas involving six universities and over 50 students. The U of S signed onto the Indigenous Planning Exchange (IPEX) in 2007, along with five other universities—Manitoba, New Mexico, Arizona State, Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, and Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. In the five years since its inception, IPEX has facilitated numerous student/faculty exchanges and field schools designed to develop experts in the planning of healthy, sustainable and self-reliant indigenous communities. The participating nine undergraduate and graduate students from U of S represented Native Studies, Geography and Planning, and the Regional and Urban Planning program. Field school highlights included touring a Zapatista community, Palenque, San Cristóbal de las Casas. International student engagement in all things geography and planning was inspiring. Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas provided classroom space and ground transport. The field school ended in a 2 day conference of student, faculty, and invited speaker presentations. U of S instructors were geographers [Bob Patrick](#) and [Ryan Walker](#), both in Geography and Planning.

**U Toronto Mississauga Master's Student Sees Greener Futures with Microbes, Methane:** As one of five winners chosen for ECO Canada Student Ambassador Award, geography master's student Varun Gupta was given the chance to present his research to key players in the environment industry at Americana 2011, one of North America's largest environment conferences. "The conference was the perfect opportunity to kick-start my search in terms of employment opportunities outside of academia," says Gupta. "I networked with quite a few people from different parts of the industry. It was cool to see what's out there." Gupta has been investigating whether or not methane that forms in wetland soils can be oxidized and reduced by an as-yet-unknown group of anaerobic microbes before entering the atmosphere. If this process is occurring, it may be possible to inoculate prominent sources of methane such as man-made landfills, sewage treatment plants and hydroelectric dam reservoirs with the microbes to significantly reduce the release of this greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. [UTM News Release](#)

**U Alberta's Department of EAS Webcam:** The Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences has installed a new Axis 223M camera on the University of Alberta's H.M. Tory Building. The camera records and stores weather and river conditions every 15 minutes. Images are archived [at EAS Digital Imaging Facility](#) and then transmitted to the EAS web-server and displayed on the [Webcam webpage](#).

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### **Geographer of the Week: Mark Hunter, University of Toronto at Scarborough**

Dr. [Mark Hunter](#) is an Assistant Professor of Geography in the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Toronto at Scarborough. He teaches undergraduate courses at UTSC and a Graduate course at the St. George (downtown) campus. Mark is a graduate of the University of Sussex (Politics BA Hons, 1992); University of KwaZulu-Natal (Development Studies Masters, 1998); and University of California at Berkeley (Geography Ph.D., 2005). He was a Mellon post doctoral fellow at Dartmouth College from 2005-6.

Mark has a longstanding interest in South Africa that stems from a year spent teaching in a township in the former "homeland" of Transkei between 1988-9. He is currently a Research Associate at the School of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His recent research has been on AIDS in South Africa and his 2010 book (with Indiana University Press and the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press) is titled [Love in The Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa](#). Mark is beginning a new project exploring class, culture, and education after apartheid. He is trying to understand the tremendous growth of class inequalities after 1994 and how this plays out in, and is defined by, everyday practices especially in English-language schools.

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### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Irene Delgado-Fernandez. 2011. [Meso-scale modelling of aeolian sediment input to coastal dunes](#). Geomorphology. doi:10.1016/j.geomorph.2011.04.001

Denise Cloutier-Fisher, Karen Kobayashi and André Smith. 2011. [The subjective dimension of social isolation: A qualitative investigation of older adults' experiences in small social support networks](#). Journal of Aging Studies. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2011.03.012

Karen A. Harper, Ryan K. Danby, Danielle L. De Fields, Keith P. Lewis, Andrew J. Trant, Brian M. Starzomski, Rodney Savidge, and Luise Hermanutz. 2011. [Tree spatial pattern within the forest-tundra ecotone: a comparison of sites across Canada](#). Canadian Journal of Forest Research 41(3):479-489.

Krystian Imgrund, Reid Kreutzwiser and Rob de Loë. 2011. [Influences on the water testing behaviors of private well owners](#). Journal of Water and Health. doi:10.2166/wh.2011.139

Hugues Lantuit, Pier Paul Overduin, Nicole Couture, Sebastian Wetterich, Felix Aré, David Atkinson, Jerry Brown, Georgy Cherkashov, Dmitry Drozdov and Donald Lawrence Forbes, et al. 2011. [The Arctic Coastal Dynamics Database: A new classification scheme and statistics on Arctic permafrost coastlines](#). Estuaries and Coasts. DOI: 10.1007/s12237-010-9362-6

D. Scott Munro. 2011. [Delays of supraglacial runoff from differently defined microbasin areas on the Peyto Glacier](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI: 10.1002/hyp.8124

Robert M. Stewart and Harun Rashid. 2011. [Blending science and public policies for remediation of a degraded ecosystem: Jackfish Bay, north shore of Lake Superior, Ontario, Canada](#). Journal of Great Lakes Research. doi:10.1016/j.jglr.2011.03.007

Luna Vives-Gonzalez. 2011. [Insiders or outsiders? Argentinean immigrants in Spain](#). Citizenship Studies 15(2):227-245.

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### Recent Theses and Dissertations

Nathalie Nicole Brunet. 2011. [Prairie pothole drainage and water quality](#). MSc thesis. Department of Geography and Planning, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Supervisor: Cherie Westbrook.

Christine Creyke. 2011. The Tahltan Nation and our consultation process with mining industry: How a land use plan might improve the process. MA Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (Geography), University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia. Co-Supervisor: Drs. Greg Halseth and Gail Fondahl.

Henry R. Hawkins. 2011. [Towards a brighter future: motivations and obstacles to solar photovoltaic adoption in Ontario](#). BA Honours thesis. Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Supervised by: Patricia Ballamingie.

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Alexandra Pedersen. 2011. Amplifying voices of development: Insights from indigenous Maya leaders in El Quiché, Guatemala. MA International Studies, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dr. Catherine Nolin.

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## Other “Geographical” News

**Melting Ice on Canadian Arctic Islands a Major Player in Sea Level Rise:** Melting glaciers and ice caps on Canadian Arctic islands play a much greater role in sea level rise than previously thought. The 550,000-square-mile Canadian Arctic Archipelago contains some 30,000 islands. Between 2004 and 2009, the region lost the equivalent of three-quarters of the water in Lake Erie. During the first three years of the study, from 2004 through 2006, the region lost an average of 7 cubic miles of water per year. That increased dramatically to 22 cubic miles of water -- roughly 24 trillion gallons -- per year during the latter part of the study. Over the entire six years, this added a total of 1 millimeter to the height of the world's oceans. [ScienceDaily](#) | [Nature](#)

**Dry Banff Hot Springs Baffles Scientists:** Banff's well-known Upper Hot Springs pool has to be filled with tap water in the winter, and scientists don't know why the natural supply is drying up. Parks Canada has been using municipal water to fill the pool during the winter at the 1930s era bathhouse for more than a decade. Every year more than 300,000 people, including tourists from around the world, soak in the picturesque pool, with Mount Rundle as a backdrop. The hot springs are the highest in Canada, at 1,585 metres above sea level. [CBC News](#)

**Hans Rosling and the Magic Washing Machine:** What was the greatest invention of the industrial revolution? Hans Rosling makes the case for the washing machine. With newly designed graphics from Gapminder, Rosling shows us the magic that pops up when economic growth and electricity turn a boring wash day into an intellectual day of reading. [TED](#)

**Mapping Patterns in Crime with Geography and Math:** Robert Cheetham is leading an effort to create software that can sift through mountains of crime data to find geographic patterns and then create visually evocative maps for police departments. Cheetham used the success of an initial prototype to create a next generation software tool, called [HunchLab](#). The new software supports not only the early warning system capabilities of the original prototype, but can also generate animations and forecasts of projected changes in crime. [NSF Discoveries](#)

**Creative Placemaking:** A number of scholars and public policy analysts continue to research the ways in which members of the "creative class" are transforming cities and small towns. This paper explores the possibilities of "creative placemaking." For the purposes of this paper, creative placemaking is defined as the process by which "partners from public, private, non-profit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities." The paper includes an executive summary, and continues on to examine strategic case studies in Buffalo, Portland, and San Jose. [Creative Placemaking](#)

**Cities and Climate Change. Global Report on Human Settlements:** Planners and others continue to explore how the world's cities will be affected by climate change in the coming decades, and this report released by the United Nation's Human Settlement Programme takes a close look at the subject. This abridged version of the full report argues, "local action is indispensable for the realization of national climate change commitments agreed through international negotiations." The report is divided into six chapters, including "Urbanization and the Challenge of Climate Changes" and "The Impacts of Climate Change on Urban Areas". The report draws on a wide range of scholarly data taken from UN reports, along with others working in the field of climate change and environmental science. [UN Habitat](#)

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Some not so "Geographical" News



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GeogNews Archives: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/cag/geognews/geognews.html>

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