



# GeogNews

News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

No. 133. June 5, 2011

Compiled by Dan Smith [<caq@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:caq@geog.uvic.ca)

---

**Carleton U's Iain Wallace Wins 2011 Award for Service to the Profession of Geography from CAG:** Iain Wallace, a professor with Carleton's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, is the recipient of the 2011 Award for Service to the Profession of Geography from the Canadian Association of Geographers. The award recognizes a member of the CAG for exceptional professional service over a period of years that has significantly advanced the profession and practice of geography in Canada. "It is the equivalent of a lifetime achievement award," notes Mike Brklacich, chair of the department. "It was an easy decision for us to nominate Iain as he is such an outstanding person in his field." Wallace has dedicated over 40 years of service to Canadian geography as a researcher, colleague, teacher and role model. [Carleton Newsroom](#)

**U Regina's Dave Sauchyn to Study Global Warming and Wild Prairie Storms:** David Sauchyn, a geography professor and research scientist, has been given \$1.25 million from the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa to study the effect of climate change on rural agricultural communities. "All the best science that we have suggests that as you heat up the Earth, you're going to expect more violent weather and that's the big effect of global warming, so that's what we're studying," Sauchyn said. "We're going to focus on, first of all, to what extent can we explain our wild weather in terms of global warming? We still don't know. And, secondly, if we expect more of this kind of crazy weather, what can we do about it, especially the people who are most vulnerable?" Sauchyn said people in cities can always duck into office buildings or their homes when the weather turns violent. But it's not that simple for farmers and First Nations. "They still have to make a living off the land and if there's drought and flooding and fires, they're severely impacted." [The Canadian Press](#) | [Winnipeg Free Press](#) | [Regina Leader-Post](#)

**McGill U's Bernhard Lehner Provides Explicit Database of Reservoirs and Dams for Sustainable River-Flow Management:** A close assessment of critical environmental and social tradeoffs associated with dams and reservoirs within the global river network has been impossible because the data describing their location, size and purpose have been incomplete and inadequate. That is, until now. The culmination of a four-year collaboration by a team of scientists from around the globe, coordinated by the Global Water System Project and led by McGill University's Bernhard Lehner, has produced the Global Reservoir and Dam database (GRanD), a unique, geographically explicit, high-resolution global database of large dams and reservoirs. "Thorough continental assessments and ongoing sustainable dam management and planning haven't been possible due to a lack of data. We've only been able to look at dams on a case-by-case basis," explained Lehner. "The Three Gorges Dam, for example, has been heavily investigated, but no one ever included the 100-plus large dams upstream from it in a single impact assessment. Now we can look at all of them at the same time to figure out what the combined effect is. This gives us a holistic view of a whole river basin." [EurekAlert!](#) | [McGill Newsroom](#)

---

**U Ottawa's Robert McLeman on Issue of Climate Change at UN Security Council:** This spring, Canada was the only country out of over 40 nations not to submit data on greenhouse gas emissions to the UN under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. And on May 30, the government admitted that in a report on climate change, it kept out information showing oil sands emissions had grown 20% in 2009. As a result, environmental experts say they heavily doubt that Canada would have raised the issue of climate change at the Security Council on its own—with one possible exception. "I don't think this one would be a high priority for the current Canadian government, unless it had something to do with Arctic sovereignty," said Robert McLeman, associate professor of geography at the University of Ottawa and a former Canadian foreign service officer. "When you think about current Canadian security priorities, they tend to be framed in terms of energy first and foremost." [Embassy](#)

**U Winnipeg's Mark Hanson On Government Plans to Clean Lake Winnipeg:** University of Manitoba researchers who study aspects of Lake Winnipeg comment on the Manitoba government's plans to clean up the lake. Mark Hanson, environment and geography, is looking at contaminants and effects of municipal wastewater effluents that flow into the Red River and eventually Lake Winnipeg. His research concerns itself with ecological risk assessment and he aims to better predict the risk toxicants pose to ecosystems, and to develop faster, more cost effective ways to assess changes in water quality. [U Manitoba Newsroom](#)

**Wilfrid Laurier U's Rich Petrone Loses Research Camp to Northern Alberta Wildfires:** The fires that raged through northern Alberta, destroying much of the town of Slave Lake, also claimed a Wilfrid Laurier University research camp which was examining the movement and quality of water in a boreal forest system was destroyed by the wildfire. The camp, which was also used by researchers at the University of Alberta, was located at Utikuma Lake, about 60 kilometres north of Slave Lake. It had existed since 2002 and had received over \$4 million in funding. The research was led by Rich Petrone, the director of Laurier's Cold Regions Research Centre. [The Record](#)

**U Toronto's Paul Hess on Small steps Toward More Walkable Suburbs:** University of Toronto geography professor Paul Hess, says that officials and experts often talk about the need to combat obesity and climate change by getting people in the suburbs to walk instead of drive. In Toronto's immigrant suburbs, he says, they are already walking. They have no choice. The challenge is to make walking a safer, less alienating experience. "These are people who spend a good part of their life jumping through a fence, walking over mud, crossing a busy street," says Prof. Hess. "It's not an easy or pleasant place to live." But it can be a better one, with a few small steps. [The Globe and Mail](#)

**Queen's U Geography Experiments with Class Sizes:** According to a recent study, an average first-year class at Queen's is one of the largest in the country. "Without a doubt, large classes are an issue at Queen's," said Andy Leger, an education developer from Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning. Last semester, a Queen's geography professor experimented with class size by splitting a 100-level lecture of 180 students into three smaller groups. The professor and two TAs met with groups of 60 students each week, and used online lecture videos to supplement learning. Leger received provincial government funding to monitor and report on the experiment. He said students seemed more engaged in the smaller groups, but the effects were difficult to quantify. [The Journal](#)

**Canadian Council for Geographic Education Position Paper:** CCGE Chair Connie Wyatt Anderson has written a positioning paper entitled *Strategic Planning and Geographic Thinking*. The paper proposes an approach based on the concept of Geographical Thinking and a second document, entitled *Defining a Strategic Approach to Geographical Thinking in Canada*, outlines a three-year plan to develop and promote Geographical Thinking as a foundational element of geography curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in Canada. [CCGE Webpage](#)

---

### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Luis L.M. Aguiar, Patricia Tomic and Ricardo Trumper. 2011. [Mexican migrant agricultural workers and accommodations on farms in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia](#). Metropolis British Columbia. Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity. Working Paper Series. No. 11-04.

Jeffrey Ivan Barnes, John E. Wall, Domingo Diaz and Patricia Ballamingie. 2011. [Missed understandings: cultural and communication disconnects in indigenous livelihood revitalization and conservation](#). Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal. DOI: 10.1080/08941920.2011.559616

Ranu Basu. 2011. [Multiculturalism through multilingualism in schools: emerging places of “integration” in Toronto](#). Annals of the Association of American Geographers. DOI: 10.1080/00045608.2011.579536

Gregory D. Bauch and Edward J. Hickin. 2011. [Rate of floodplain reworking in response to increasing storm-induced floods, Squamish River, south-western British Columbia, Canada](#). Earth Surface Processes and Landforms 36(7):872-884.

Dianne Bravo and Alan R. Hill. 2011. [The effect of chronic high groundwater nitrate loading on riparian forest growth and plant–soil processes](#). Water, Air, & Soil Pollution. DOI: 10.1007/s11270-011-0840-7.

Abdullah BaMasoud and Mary-Louise Byrne. 2011. [Analysis of shoreline changes \(1959–2004\) in Point Pelee National Park, Canada](#). Journal of Coastal Research. doi: 10.2112/JCOASTRES-D-10-00160.1

I. Charron, E.A. Johnson and Yvonne E. Martin. 2011. [Tree establishment on bars in low order gravel-bed mountain streams](#). Earth Surface Processes and Landforms. DOI: 10.1002/esp.2183

Suzan L. Lapp, Jeannine-Marie St. Jacques, Elaine M. Barrow and David J. Sauchyn. 2011. [GCM projections for the Pacific Decadal Oscillation under greenhouse forcing for the early 21st century](#). International Journal of Climatology. DOI: 10.1002/joc.2364

Krystian Imgrund, Reid Kreutzwiser and Rob de Loë. 2011. [Influences on the water testing behaviors of private well owners](#). Journal of Water and Health 9(2):241–252.

---

### Other “Geographical” News

**Global Warming Jeopardizing Canadian Ice Highways, Study Says:** They are the frozen arteries of Canada’s northernmost lands, a network of roads built on icy rivers, lakes and muskeg that bring supplies to mines and towns across the country. Every year, provinces, territories and companies build some 5,400 kilometres of ice roads in Canada, providing a way in for critical items such as diesel, gas and groceries. But new research is raising troubling questions about the future of those ice roads, suggesting that a warming climate could melt away the winter lifelines. A trio of geographers at the University of California, Los Angeles, report in the journal Nature that, by the middle of this century, Canada is likely to lose nearly 400,000 square kilometres of land accessible by winter road – an area the size of Newfoundland and Labrador. “This is a transportation system that is going to be profoundly affected by a warming climate in an adverse direction,” said Scott Stephenson, a physical geographer and PhD student who is the study’s lead author. [The Globe and Mail](#)

---

**Climate Played Big Role in Vikings' Disappearance from Greenland:** Greenland's early Viking settlers were subjected to rapidly changing climate. Temperatures plunged several degrees in a span of decades. A reconstruction of 5,600 years of climate history from lakes near the Norse settlement in western Greenland also shows how climate affected the Dorset and Saqqaq cultures. What climate scientists have been able to ascertain is that an extended cold snap, called the Little Ice Age, gripped Greenland beginning in the 1400s. This has been cited as a major cause of the Norse's disappearance. Now researchers led by Brown University show the climate turned colder in an earlier span of several decades, setting in motion the end of the Greenland Norse. [Science Daily](#)

---

Some not so "Geographical" News



---

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

---