



# GeogNews

News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

No. 165, March 14, 2012

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

---

**Dalhousie U's Heather Castleden Assesses the Health of Boat Harbour:** In 1967, a pulp and paper mill opened in Pictou County. Its toxic waste water was directed into an estuary called Boat Harbour alongside Pictou Landing First Nation. This practice has continued for the last 45 years. Dalhousie's Heather Castleden has been invited by the Pictou Landing Native Women's Association (PLNWA) to help them research the effects of Boat Harbour on the health of residents. Dr. Castleden's research team and the PLNWA subsequently received grants to investigate the toll the contamination of Boat Harbour has taken on residents' health. Dr. Castleden hopes that by 2015, Dalhousie and the PLNWA will have a clear picture of the environmental health toll taken on the communities surrounding Boat Harbour – and how they can finally address problems that have been brewing for almost fifty years. [Dal News](#)

**Brock U's Phillip Mackintosh on Expansion of Toronto Subway:** The fight over the expansion has been divisive, coming to a peak in February, when Toronto Transit Manager Gary Webster was dismissed. "Webster was considered one of the elite transit people in the world," said Phillip Mackintosh, a Geography Professor and Urban Planning expert at Brock University. "If someone like Gary Webster's says it's a bad idea [...] you should at least take him under advice." . On March 5, the City Council managed to remove most of Ford's allies from the TTC. Meanwhile, Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak has stepped in, calling for Premier Dalton McGuinty to intervene. For Mackintosh, Hudak's entrance into the debate indicated that something more than the transit system was at stake. "The problem with subways," said Mackintosh, "is that they are very expensive. How do you fund them? To afford to build a subway means that you will have to privatize the transit system. This is nothing new, it's what neoliberal economists have been advocating for 40 years." [The Brock Press](#)

**Lakehead U's Adam Cornwell Comments on Massive Ice Loss in Great Lakes:** Most of the water in the Great Lakes hasn't frozen over this year — largely because of a warmer-than-usual winter — and a new study shows the lakes have been losing ice cover for 40 years. Adam Cornwell, an assistant professor of geography at Lakehead University, said the findings are consistent with other climate research — all of which sends a powerful message. "What's happening on the Great Lakes is an immediate reminder that our climate is changing and the expectations that we've had in the past aren't going to hold true for the future," Cornwell said. And one of those expectations is a season of ice cover on the Great Lakes." [CBC News](#)

---

**UBC's David Ley on Closure of Metropolis Research Centres:** Ottawa plans to stop funding a research network whose findings have helped improve Canada's immigration policies and settlement programs. The federal government will not renew its \$9 million to the five Metropolis research centres when the grant runs out in 2013. Critics say the cut is another blow to researchers and community groups who have already lost the reliable data gleaned from the mandatory long-form census, which the Conservatives ended in 2010. While administrators knew their government funding would not last forever, the need for collaboration remains, said University of British Columbia professor David Ley. "One of my regrets is this (network) is not easy to put into place. Taking it apart, immigration policy in Canada will be a loser," said Ley, a founding director of the B.C. Metropolis. "There will be less evidence upon which to base policies." [Toronto Star](#)

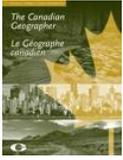
**UBC's David Edgington Argues B.C. Needs More Natural Disaster Preparation:** One year after a devastating earthquake and tsunami killed almost 20,000 people in Japan's Tohoku region, one expert says B.C. is not doing enough to prepare for its own natural disasters. Dr. David Edgington, a geography professor at the University of British Columbia, visited the Sanriku coast where the tsunami hit last year to study what happened and how local authorities responded. Now he's both disappointed and concerned Japan's disaster didn't inspire radical changes in B.C. where similar risks exist. "That was kind of a wake-up call for us here in the Lower Mainland. More budgets were set aside for strengthening public infrastructure, bridges, schools, my own university and so on. And I'm a little surprised that there hasn't been a similar wake-up call because of the crisis of 3/11 in Japan," he said. [CTV News](#)

**Keith Barney Awarded York University's Faculty of Graduate Studies Dissertation Award:** Dr. Keith Barney who has been awarded York University's Faculty of Graduate Studies dissertation award for 2011. York awards a single dissertation prize each year and Keith's was chosen from among those nominated in 2011 by 38 doctoral programs. Keith's dissertation was titled "*Grounding Global Forest Economies: Resource Governance and Commodity Power in Rural Laos*". Keith's advisory committee comprised Philip Kelly (supervisor), Peter Vandergeest and Shubhra Gururani. Since January 2012, Keith has held a postdoctoral fellowship in the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, Japan. From July 2012 he will take up a tenure stream position in the Australian National University's Crawford School of Economics and Government.

**Carleton U's Michael Pisaric Shares Prestigious Cowles Geography Prize:** Several Canadian researchers have received the prestigious Henry Cowles Award for revealing new evidence of the destructive impact of global climate change on the Mackenzie Delta region in the Northwest Territories, an area hit by a widespread and ecologically destructive storm surge in 1999. The research into the impact of this salt-water surge is significant because one of the most ominous threats of global warming today is from rising sea levels, causing marine waters to inundate the land. Members of the team included [Michael Pisaric](#), Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University. [FASS News](#)

**Geography Professor Comments on Relationship Between Density and Culture in Calgary:** I asked a geography professor friend his thoughts on this relationship between density and culture. "Density does matter, which is why cities matter [in the production of culture]. People exist physically, they go places and do things bodily, and the likelihood that you're going to run into other people to generate new things in new combinations ... is vastly improved by the density that characterizes cities, as well as by densities that are configured so as to be more conducive to sociability." Or simply, the capacity for a city to present itself culturally has a relationship with the informal interactions its people have the opportunity to make. [Calgary Herald](#)

New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Brian Egan. 2012. [Sharing the colonial burden: Treaty-making and reconciliation in Hul'gumi'num territory](#). Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2012.00414.x

---

#### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Matthew D. Adams and Kamil Zaniewski. 2012. [Effects of recreational rock climbing and environmental variation on a sandstone cliff-face lichen community](#). Botany. DOI:10.1139/b11-109

Elisabeth Gouvernal and Brian Slack. 2012. [Container freight rates and economic distance: a new perspective on the world map](#). Maritime Policy & Management 39(2):133-149.

Peter V. Hall and Wouter Jacobs. 2012. [Why are maritime ports \(still\) urban, and why should policy-makers care?](#) Maritime Policy & Management 39(2):189-206.

Karen Heikkilä and Gail Fondahl. 2012. [Co-managed research: non-Indigenous thoughts on an Indigenous toponymy project in northern British Columbia](#). Journal of Cultural Geography 29(1).

K.-K. Kang; C.R. Duguay and S.E.L. Howell. 2012. [Estimating ice phenology on large northern lakes from AMSR-E: algorithm development and application to Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake, Canada](#). The Cryosphere 6:235-254.

Catherine Oosterbaan, Godwin Arku and Alex B. Asiedu, 2012. [Conversion of residential units to commercial spaces in Accra, Ghana: a policy dilemma](#). International Planning Studies 17(1).

Colette C. A. Starheim, Dan J. Smith, and Terry D. Prowse. 2012. [Multi-century reconstructions of Pacific salmon abundance from climate-sensitive tree rings in west central British Columbia, Canada](#). Ecohydrology. DOI: 10.1002/eco.1261

---

#### Other "Geographical" News

**Politically-Edgy eBook on Maps with Huge Viral Give-Away:** *How Maps Change Things: A Conversation About the Maps We Choose and the World We Want* by Ward Kaiser was released on March 5th, the 500th birthday of famous map-maker Gerhard Kremer, aka Mercator. The book is available as a free download for the full month of March, 2012 as a PDF, for iPhones and Kindle. The book examines maps as change agents, reflecting intentions and setting agendas, revealing who has power and resources, and who has not. It helps to explain the messages maps send. [PR.com](#)

---

**Antarctic Visitors Sowing Invasive Species:** Scientists warn that seeds attached to Antarctic tourists and researchers are bringing invasive plant species that could potentially threaten the southern continent's ecosystems. The study collected and identified seeds found on the bags and clothing of visitors to Antarctica, as well as examined the effects of non-indigenous species which have already become established in the area. The study found travellers often visit other frigid climates prior to visiting Antarctica. This resulted in up to half of the seeds being cold-adapted and able to withstand the extreme conditions. The study noted that invasive species were found establishing in areas where the ground has been disturbed by the retreat of melting glaciers. [CBC News](#)

---

**Some not so “Geographical” News**



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