



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Western University's Jason Gilliland Recognized for Creating Children's Health Atlas: Esri Canada today presented an Award of Excellence to Dr. Jason Gilliland, a professor at Western University and a scientist for the Children's Health Research Institute, for his outstanding application of geographic information system technology to help improve children's health in Southwestern Ontario. Dr. Gilliland led a multidisciplinary team in a research study of environmental factors affecting children's health in the region. The results have been compiled into "Opportunities for Healthy Living in Southwestern Ontario: A Focus on Children's Environments, First Edition," a 400+-page atlas that will be used by local planners and public health agencies to improve children's health and well-being. The project was commissioned by the Children's Health Research Institute and funded by the Green Shield Canada Foundation and the Children's Health Foundation. "Our environment and the way we build our communities have a significant impact on our health," says Alex Miller, president, Esri Canada. "Dr. Gilliland's research project is an excellent example of geomedicine, which delivers a new type of medical intelligence by combining environmental and health information. The atlas his team produced will help advance children's health in Southwestern Ontario by providing better guidance on the development and delivery of quality health services." [Directions Magazine](#) | [Morning Post Exchange](#)

York U's Geography Alumni Association 'Contour Lines' Newsletter: The February 2012 newsletter of York's Geography Department features notes: on the upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration; a review of the 2011-2012 Alumni Association Speakers Series; recollections of Professor George Tatham by Howard Douglas; an introduction to Suzanne Tank, Bruce Erikson and Gang Hong, new appointments in the department; an article by PhD candidate Dylan McLean who is studying the geography of clowns; a feature Amy Lavender Harris who was presented with a Heritage Toronto "Award of Merit"; and, Sara L. Jackson 'Notes from the Field' on Artisanal Coal Mining in Mongolia. [Contour Lines, February 2012](#)

Memorial U's Trevor Bell and David Liverman Reveal Elevated Metal Levels in Residential St. John's: In a recent paper coauthored by Environmental Science graduate student Robert Foley and Geography professors Trevor Bell and David Liverman, explore the potential impact for ecosystem and human health of metal levels in St. John's soil. The team looked specifically at levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper, nickel, lead, vanadium and zinc. Using a contamination index, soils in the downtown area and on residential properties predating the 1950s were classified as highly contaminated. Using statistical techniques, the research team was able to identify clusters of metals in soil samples and together with their spatial patterns to suggest that weathered paint, vehicular emissions, and coal burning were important sources for the main metal contaminants in the sampled soils. Of the three metals that significantly exceeded human health guide-lines, lead and arsenic pose the greatest potential health risk. [Memorial Geography News](#)

Hirsch-Index Benchmarking of Academic Research by Top-Cited Geographers in Canada: The first Canadian version of HIBAR (Hirsch-Index Benchmarking of Academic Research) was recently released. A researcher's H-index score is the maximum number of publications for which each publication is cited at least that many times. Comparisons are made within peer groups and disciplines and only the top three scholars are identified within each peer group ([full results](#)). Under the discipline of Geography, **David Ley** from the UBC Geography Department ranked first; **Meric Gertler** of the Department of Geography & Program in Planning at the University of Toronto ranked second; and, Jamie Peck of the UBC Geography Department ranked third. **Geraldine Pratt** of the UBC Geography Department ranked first under the discipline of Gender Studies. [Globe and Mail](#)

SFU Geography Students Map Biking Hazards Enroute to Whistler: Cyclists setting out to ride the 120-km Sea to Sky Highway between Horsebay and Whistler, BC can check out hazardous areas on a new map developed by a group of fourth-year SFU geography students. An [accompanying study](#) details various safety issues such as road-shoulder width, drainage, road maintenance and signage. The map itemizes 20 different hazards along the winding mountainside route, including road-shoulder widths as narrow as 38 cm, drain grates with openings wider than bike tires, poor road and marker maintenance, and a lack of signage for motorists or directions for bikers using intersections. The students, some of whom are avid cyclists, began the Geography 455 project in January, driving the route several times and stopping to note hazards, then cycling the route to assess it from the cyclist's perspective. [SFU News Online](#)

Mount Allison Student Receives New Brunswick Environmental Leadership Award: Daniel Delong, a Mount Allison student from Lower Coverdale, NB, has been awarded a New Brunswick Environmental Leadership Award. The award is given to individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership in the enhancement and protection of the environment. Delong, a first-year student in English and environmental studies, was selected in part because of his efforts to establish the Mill's Creek Nature Park in Riverview. Delong is continuing his environmental work at Mount Allison. "I'm currently working on the Bouctouche river restoration project, where a causeway is causing significant adverse effects on the Little Bouctouche River," he explains. "I am working with my father on this project and we recently had a meeting on the matter with local residents". Delong will spend next summer doing a research project on this issue at Mount Allison under the supervision of Dr. Michael Fox, head of the geography and environment department. [Mount Allison News](#)

Trent U's Geography Alumni Win Reach for the Peak: The alumni team won this year's Reach for the Peak event. Reach for the Peak is an annual trivia contest held by Trent University Geography Society (TUGS) to encourage the Trent community to participate in a multi-disciplinary trivia challenge. The purpose of the event is to expand one's general knowledge in a variety of subjects in a fun and social way. This year TUGS worked on improving Reach for the Peak by organizing the event in collaboration with Otonabee College to improve the student experience and provide a better facility for the event. [TUGS News](#)

Queen's U's Harry McCaughey Reports "We Are Walking Backwards" on Climate Change: Harry McCaughey, a Queen's University professor turned his lights off for Earth Hour, but says "My mind cannot get away from this overwhelming problem we are facing." McCaughey, who has taught environmental science for 40 years sees the past year as one marked by dismal failures: withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol, inadequate regulation of the Alberta oil sands, sharp cuts to Canada's internationally respected ozone monitoring network in the North, staff reductions at Environment Canada, and the "quite astonishing" media control imposed on federal scientists. He could go on. All in all, says McCaughey, "We are walking backwards." [Toronto Star](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Abraham Akkerman and Shinji Shimoura. 2012. [Discrete choice in commuter space: Small area analysis of diurnal population change in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region](#). Computers, Environment and Urban Systems. doi.org/10.1016/j.compenvurbsys.2012.03.001

Mark Andrachuk and Barry Smit. 2012. [Community-based vulnerability assessment of Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, Canada to environmental and socio-economic changes](#). Regional Environmental Change. DOI: 10.1007/s10113-012-0299-0

Nathaniel Bell, Richard Simons, S. Morad Hameed, Nadine Schuurman and Stephen Wheeler. 2012. [Does direct transport to provincial burn centres improve outcomes? A spatial epidemiology of severe burn injury in British Columbia, 2001–2006](#). Canadian Journal of Surgery 55(2);110-116.

Jim M. Buttle, Sarah Boon, Daniel L. Peters, Chris Spence, H.J. (Ilja) van Meerveld, and Paul H. Whitfield. 2012. [An overview of temporary stream hydrology in Canada](#). Canadian Water Resources Journal. DOI:10.4296/cwrj3703903

Nathaniel L. DeBono, Nancy A. Ross and Lea Berrang-Ford. 2012. [Does the Food Stamp Program cause obesity? A realist review and a call for place-based research](#). Health & Place. doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2012.03.002

Jessica Finlay and Jennifer Massey. 2012. [Eco-campus: applying the ecocity model to develop green university and college campuses](#). International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education 13(2):150-165.

T.S. Gala and A.M. Meless. 2012. [Monitoring prairie wet area with an integrated LANDSAT ETM+, RADARSAT-1 SAR and ancillary data from LIDAR](#). Catena 95:12–23.

Gloria I. López and Jeroen W. Thompson. 2012. [OSL and sediment accumulation rate models: Understanding the history of sediment deposition](#). Quaternary Geochronology. doi.org/10.1016/j.quageo.2012.02.026

Jennifer Throop, Antoni G. Lewkowicz and Sharon L. Smith. 2012. [Climate and ground temperature relations at sites across the continuous and discontinuous permafrost zones, northern Canada](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences. DOI:10.1139/e11-075

Other “Geographical” News

Kindly Canada turns Bully on Science and Climate: Canada once enjoyed a deserved reputation for scientific and environmental leadership. Those days are long gone, says Bob Holmes in a commentary in a recent issue of the New Scientist. The Harper government has abandoned Canada's climate commitments, cut back on science spending and muzzled government scientists who might stray from the official line. Hardly the cuddly Canada the world thought it knew. The result is that Canadians - and the rest of the world - have been denied the chance to hear from some of the most authoritative scientific voices on important issues. What's worse, the silence comes just when the government's environmental policies are most in need of vigorous public debate. The effect has been stifling. [NewScientist](#)

United States Geological Survey Emergency Management: Most people are familiar with the work of the United States Geological Survey as it relates to describing and analyzing everything from tectonic activity to mineral deposits around the United States. People may be less familiar with their work as it relates to emergency management. This website provides information about their work to support the National Response Framework emergency support functions, along with a cornucopia of materials on the Natural Hazards Support System (NHSS), Issues of Interest, and a set of USGS Real-Time Resources. The National Hazards Support System includes an interactive world map of current natural hazard events. Visitors can toggle various natural hazard layers off and on as they see fit. Additionally, the Issues of Interest area contains updates on earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis, and volcanoes. [USGS](#)

United Nations - Humanitarian Affairs: The United Nations (UN) works on a myriad of topics related to human development, including addressing ethnic strife in different parts of the globe and coordinating disaster response strategies. This particular section of the UN website provides information about their work on humanitarian affairs. Here visitors can use the right-hand side of the page to learn about various programs that are currently underway in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Haiti. One of the most useful sections of the site is the Tools area. Here visitors can find resources available to relief efforts, such as the financial tracking service, the consolidated apparel process, the International Early Warning Programme and is the Central Emergency Response Fund. Finally, the site also contains a Thematic Issues area, which contains information about the impact of climate change, food security problems, and other matters as they relate to the UN's humanitarian relief projects. [UN Humanitarian](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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