



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
**No. 181, June 23, 2012**  
**Compiled by Dan Smith <[cag@geog.uvic.ca](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)>**

---

**U Waterloo Establishes Master of Climate Change Program:** The new Master's in Climate Change (MCC) program will be the first of its kind in Canada and will join only a handful of programs worldwide to focus specifically on the multiple ways climate change affects society and the environment. The one-year professional MCC program, residing in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, will launch in September 2013. "The MCC will equip our students with the latest knowledge about global trends and local solutions," said Prof. Paul Parker, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, "It enables our students to look forward and help create a better future through new tools, techniques and policies to address climate change. I am confident that demand will be high for our graduates. The MCC program aims to provide a unique educational experience to students interested in the various emerging career paths in climate change science and policy and management. The program is a specialized, course-based (non-thesis) program that will be completed over a period of three terms (12 months) of full-time studies. [MCC Program](#)

**Mount Allison U's Mike Fox Wins National Teaching Award:** Mount Allison University professor Dr. Mike Fox has received a national teaching award. Fox, head of the department of geography and environment, was recently presented with the Award for Excellence in Teaching Geography at the Canadian Association of Geographers 2012 conference in Waterloo. Fox is a very popular professor whose courses are much sought after. Three years ago the Students' Administrative Council (SAC) developed a new campus-wide teaching award and Fox was the first recipient. "This is truly an honour after teaching geography for 33 years. The fact that colleagues and students have nominated me and my professional association has recognized the importance of teaching and geographic education is certainly a career highlight for me," Fox says. Fox researches in the area of geographic literacy, public education and technology, and environmental education and planning. Another area of his research is social geography and community planning and he stresses the importance of community, both in his own life and in his classes. Fox began his career as a high school teacher before going back to university to get his PhD and he still has a fondness for teaching high school. He recently obtained his high school teaching license in New Brunswick so he can volunteer his time teaching upper-level high school students' university geography. Many of these students end up at Mount Allison, seeking out their old friend, and often go on to take geography or environmental studies. [MTA News](#)

**U Waterloo Department of Geography and Environmental Management:** The seeds for the present Department of Geography and Environmental Management were sown in 1962 when Ralph Krueger, Aubrey Diem and Roy Officer moved to the University of Waterloo to create a new department of geography within the young Faculty of Arts. Featured in the Spring 2012 issue of the University of Waterloo Magazine are current contributions by Paul Parker and Jonathan Price, as well as several other departmental members. [University of Waterloo Magazine](#)

**U Toronto's Danny Harvey on Electricity Demands as Extreme Heat Blankets Ontario and Quebec:** Demands for electricity are hitting seasonal highs as temperatures continue to soar across Ontario and Quebec, yet warnings to conserve energy aren't being issued as they used to be. In 2006, Ontario hit a record for electricity demand during an August heat wave. Two years later, the financial crisis hit, forcing many factories to close and businesses to downsize. "There may even be some industrial users of electricity who, in exchange for a reduction in their electricity rates, may get the request to shut down for an hour or two," said Danny Harvey, a geography professor at the University of Toronto specializing on climate change and energy and environment. "A few hours a year, and you see this avoids either the brownout or it avoids the need to build additional power generators." Other factors include refurbished nuclear reactors and new gas power plants that pump more electricity into the system, as well as solar panel installations. [CBC News](#)

**St. Mary's University Geography Students Impressive at Geomatics Atlantic 2012:** The annual Geomatics Atlantic conference was recently held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Adena Schutzberg writes "What impressed me most about this event were the students. I met two current second year geography students at St. Mary's University who seemed wise beyond their years. After getting a glimpse of geotechnology in high school, they both looked at the COGS post-high school program. After doing some homework on it, they both decided to first get a four-year degree and then try to get into COGS' post baccalaureate program." [Directions Magazine](#)

**Simon Fraser U's Jeremy Venditti Takes Interest in Fraser River Floods:** SFU geography professor Jeremy Venditti is currently carrying out flood research in the field near Mission. "The flows are the highest now, and you really have the greatest erosion and deposition in the channel. So, we really are excited about seeing how the river's working at this time of year," explains. He says rivers flood, sometimes several times year, out onto the flood plain. So, is everything being done to minimize the damage? "One of the things we try to encourage people to do is to stop putting infrastructure on the flood plain or the river. If anything should be done, it's that," suggests Venditti. He says the kinds of flows we're seeing this year are going to come back again and again. "There's not really any way that we can engineer the river or change the river to stop them, so we kind of just have to get out of its way." When he's not in the field, Venditti uses a flume channel and scale model of the Fraser back at the lab at SFU. "The channel itself is a metre wide and it's 15 metres long. We simulate river flows through there and we look at erosion and deposition patterns in sand that's on the bottom of the channel." [News1130](#)

**Unexploded Bomb Halts UVic Dune Restoration Research in Pacific Rim National Park:** Since 2009, Ian J. Walker and his students have been working with Parks Canada Agency (PCA) in Pacific Rim National Park, near Ucluelet, BC, on one of Canada's largest coastal dune restoration projects. The project, designed to remove an invasive beach grass and promote more dynamic habitat for endangered species, ground to a halt this spring when PCA and DND closed the entire Wickaninnish Dunes site after a retired PCA staff member discovered an unexploded mortar left over from WWII military activities. In their land surveys at the site, the researchers have often discovered military artifacts unearthed by shifting sands in the dunes, but have never unexploded ordnance. The closure has significant impacts for visitor safety and research on beach-dune dynamics and restoration. This hazard poses an interesting application of the science of geomorphology. [UVic Geog News](#)

**Bruce Newbold to Direct McMaster School of Geography and Earth Sciences:** Bruce Newbold will be assuming the role of Director of the School of Geography and Earth Sciences effective July 1, 2012. Bruce's research focuses on internal migration in Canada and the United States; immigration: settlement and adjustment; immigration and health; and aging Issues: population mobility, transportation, health. [Newbold Webpage](#)

### **U Saskatchewan's Ryan Walker on Saskatoon Plans to Develop "Infill Corridors":** Two

Saskatoon streets will look vastly different as the city forges ahead with studies looking at retrofitting the city's main roads for thousands more residents and a next-generation rapid transit system. The plan equates to a second try at developing the city's main streets, said Ryan Walker, a University of Saskatchewan urban planning professor. Higher-density, mixed-use development built around mass transit hubs is more environmentally sound than strict outward growth and produces a better quality of life, he said. "Over the last 100 years, we had our first crack at developing our existing built-up area and now we're taking a concerted second run at it," Walker said. "It's pretty exciting." The critical question is going to be how the city attracts development along the corridors, he said. More aggressive targets need to be set. "They're asking the right questions and setting the right priorities," Walker said. [The StarPhoenix](#)

---

#### **Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers**

Gulsah Akara, Kelly J. Clifton and Sean T. Doherty. 2012. [Redefining activity types: Who participates in which leisure activity?](#) Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice 46(8):1194–1204.

Abdullah BaMasoud and Mary-Louise Byrne. 2012. [The impact of low ice cover on shoreline recession: A case study from Western Point Pelee, Canada.](#) Geomorphology. doi.org/10.1016/j.geomorph.2012.06.004

B. B. Mehdi, R. Ludwig and B. Lehner. 2012. [Determining agricultural land use scenarios in a mesoscale Bavarian watershed for modelling future water quality.](#) Advances in Geosciences 31:9-14.

Patrick O'Brien and Cheryl McKenna Neuman. 2012. [A wind tunnel study of particle kinematics during crust rupture and erosion.](#) Geomorphology. doi.org/10.1016/j.geomorph.2012.06.005

Jaclyn A. Paterson, James D. Ford, Lea Berrang Ford, Alexandra Lesnikowski, Peter Berry, Jim Henderson and Jody Heymann. 2012. [Adaptation to climate change in the Ontario public health sector.](#) BMC Public Health 12:452.

Jeremy Snyder and Valorie A. Crooks. 2012. [Guidelines for reducing the negative public health impacts of medical tourism.](#) BioéthiqueOnline 2012, 1/12.

---

#### **Other "Geographical" News**

**Discover Sudbury:** Did you know that Greater Sudbury has not one, but two meteorite impact craters? Do you know how or where nickel and copper were first discovered in Sudbury? Dynamic Earth reports the release of a new app Discover Sudbury, which is a GPS-enabled smart phone tour of the geological, glacial, mining, and cultural history of the City of Greater Sudbury. [Discover Sudbury](#)

**The Geography of Marijuana Possession Arrests:** Following the news that the mayor of Chicago is prepared to support a decriminalization policy that would make the possession of 15 grams or less of marijuana a violation rather than a criminal offense, Whet Moser wondered what marijuana arrests looked like across the city. The city's data portal returned 6,453 arrests for possession of 30 grams or less of marijuana, currently a misdemeanor, from January to the end of May this year.

[ChicagoMag.com](#)

---

## Some not so “Geographical” News

**Why Academic Papers Fail:** There are many reasons to publish papers - prestige in certain communities and promises to grant agencies, for instance. Tom McCabe argues in the community blog [LessWrong](#) that as a way for ideas to be read by other people, evaluated, spread, criticized, and built on - academic papers fail. Why?

1. The time lag is huge; it's measured in months, or even years.
2. Most academic publications are inaccessible outside universities.
3. Virtually no one reads most academic publications.
4. It's very unusual to make successful philosophical arguments in paper form.
5. Papers don't have prestige outside a narrow subset of society.
6. Getting people to read papers is difficult.
7. Academia selects for conformity.
8. The current community isn't academic in origin.
9. Our ideas aren't academic in origin.
10. Papers have a tradition of violating the bottom line rule.
11. Academic moderation is both very strict and badly run.

---

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