



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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UBC's Andrew Nelson and Michael Church Report that Fraser River's Mining History Shaping Waterway's Future: British Columbia residents facing a flood emergency this weekend can partly blame 19th-century gold miners for their woes. Geographers Andrew Nelson and Michael Church have shown how the Fraser River was significantly altered by 19th-century fortune seekers, whose dumped mine tailings from the Fraser's gold-rich banks and tributaries accumulated at critical points along the southern course of the river and continue inching toward its Pacific outlet today. Millions of tonnes of gravel flushed into the Fraser by miners as early as 154 years ago have been "accumulating in the river in the Lower Mainland throughout the 20th century," said Church. "Because this raises the river bed, it also raises the water surface for a given flow, so — at high flows — the protection from flooding afforded by the dikes becomes slowly less effective." Church also noted that potential solutions to the buildup of gold-rush tailings in the southern Fraser — such as mining the gravel to lower the riverbed — can create other problems. "This raises the question: if gravel is removed from the river, will it be replaced?" Church said. Removing too much gravel "will eventually cause the river to collapse into a single-thread channel (eliminate side channels, islands) that will be much simpler and much less productive of fish," he said. "There is a potential conflict here between flood security and the fishery (and the river environment in general) that needs intimate knowledge of the river and its history in order to manage for maximum benefit." [Vancouver Sun](#) | [Canada.com](#)

SFU's Jeremy Vinditti Sees Upside to Flooding in the Fraser Valley: This year's flooding is expected to cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage, but there is an upside. The flood water is full of sediments spilling onto farm land in the Fraser Valley. SFU geography professor Jeremy Vinditti says that will bring benefits for years to come. "When you bring these nutrients in, it means that we have to add less fertilizer to the soil over the long term," explains Vinditti. "It may not be that there is a better crop next year, but it may mean that we have to add less fertilizer to the soil to maintain its quality." He adds many in the scientific community are concerned with how close the dykes are built to the river's edge. "By not letting that water go back out onto the agricultural field, it means that we're going to be in a situation where we have to add fertilizer to it. In some cases, the dykes are too close to the river channel and it would be much better if they were moved back." [News1130](#)

Trent U Geographer Rachael Herron Awarded Convocation Gold Medal: Rachel Herron (BA'09) received the Governor General's Gold Medal for her Trent University MA in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies and her MA thesis on "Rural Perspectives on Aging and Care". Rachel is currently PhD candidate at Queen's University where she holds a doctoral fellowship from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). [Trent Daily News](#)

Carleton U's Fraser Taylor Receives SSHRC Outreach Support to Create Atlas as a Reconciliation Tool: The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council announced funding of a Public Outreach Grant to Geography Professor Fraser Taylor. The project will create an atlas as a reconciliation tool that will host a broad range of remote community contributions, mobilizing knowledge at the intersection of aboriginal research and the digital economy. It will involve the collaborative creation of a collection of online interactive multimedia maps with input from a diverse range of contributors that include members from several Anishinaabe communities and others interested in enhancing awareness of indigenous perspectives and exposing the assumptions implicit in western views, most notably the relationship between legal and regulatory institutions and people, their lives and experiences. [Morning Post Exchange](#) | [Carleton Newsroom](#)

UNBC Student Wins National Award for Research on Overlapping BC First Nations Claims: A graduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) has been honoured by the Canadian Association of Geographers for his research involving the First Nations treaty process in BC. Chris Turner recently received the prestigious Robin P. Armstrong Memorial Prize for his master's thesis on First Nations' "overlapping claims." The prize recognizes and promotes excellence in applied research on Canada's Aboriginal peoples and is selected from among both masters and PhD-level theses across the country. "I'm delighted to be recognized for this research," says Turner, who is currently a doctoral candidate at UNBC. "It's flattering to have the project singled out, and my graduate supervisor, Dr. Gail Fondahl, as well as my thesis committee deserves a lot of credit. UNBC is a terrific school to do graduate research in the field of indigenous geographies." [UNBC Media](#)

Maritime Geographers Identify Morris Building as Halifax's Oldest Wooden House: A team of researchers from Saint Mary's University, Université de Moncton-campus de Shippagan, and Mount Allison University have discovered what may be Halifax's oldest wooden house. The Morris Building, which narrowly avoided destruction in 2009, has been dated to 1764 – just 15 years younger than Halifax itself. The findings are based on historical research and dendrochronology, or tree-ring dating, a technique that determines the age of wood samples by matching their growth ring patterns to a sequence of rings with known dates. The analysis of 11 samples from the Morris Building was carried out at the Mount Allison Dendrochronology Lab by Dr. André Robichaud of the Université de Moncton-campus de Shippagan and Dr. Colin Laroque of Mount Allison University. The researchers also used historical maps from archives in the United Kingdom and copies of 18th century deeds at the Nova Scotia Archives to better understand the building's early history. Undertaken by Dr. Jonathan Fowler of Saint Mary's University, this work led to the surprise discovery that the Morris Building predates the ownership of the land by the Morris family. [SMU Media Release](#)

SFU Geography Student Spending Summer with Operation Save H2O: University and high school students will be hitting the pavement this summer to teach Surrey residents how to lower their water consumption - and why they should do it. Surrey's Operation Save H2O program is led by post-secondary and high school students who go door-to-door providing resources and tools to residents with the goal of encouraging water conservation and ultimately saving residents money. Ryan Santiago, an SFU student in human geography and economics, is one of 10 students spending his summer with Operation Save H2O. "People drink a lot of water and use a lot of water in the summer, using sprinklers and things like that," Santiago said. "But the fresh water that we get to use for these activities is less in the summer because it doesn't rain. There's a mismatch in consumption and supply." While there are obvious benefits to saving water, there's a potential benefit for the wallet as well. Santiago said the students will inform people about Surrey's water-metering program, which is voluntary. [Surrey Now](#)

Carleton U Geography Alumna May Chazan Wins 2012 CAGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award: Carleton University alumna May Chazan is the winner of the 2012 Distinguished Dissertation Award from the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), in collaboration with University

Microfilms International (UMI), a division of ProQuest. The CAGS/UMI award recognizes doctoral students whose dissertations make an original contribution to their academic field. Chazan, who graduated from Carleton last fall with a PhD in Geography and a specialization in Political Economy, won for her dissertation that undertook a sensitive and in-depth analysis of the global Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign. That campaign was started by the Stephen Lewis Foundation in response to large numbers of African children who had been orphaned by AIDS. Under the supervision of Carleton University's Dr. Michael Brklacich in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, her work illustrated how the campaign positively impacted the lives of hundreds of South African women through their collective response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa. [Carleton Newsroom](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Scott Bell, Kathi Wilson, Laura Bissonnette and Tayyab Shah. 2012. [Access to primary health care: does neighborhood of residence matter?](#) Annals of the Association of American Geographers. DOI:10.1080/00045608.2012.685050

James Ford, Marie-Pierre Lardeau and Will Vanderbilt. 2012. [The characteristics and experience of community food program users in arctic Canada: a case study from Iqaluit, Nunavut.](#) BMC Public Health 12:464.

Emily H. Huxter and H.J. (Ilja) van Meerveld. 2012. [Intermittent and perennial streamflow regime characteristics in the Okanagan.](#) Canadian Water Resources Journal. DOI:10.4296/cwrj2012-910

Fereidoun Rezanezhad, Jonathan S. Price and James R. Craig. 2012. [The effects of dual porosity on transport and retardation in peat: A laboratory experiment.](#) Canadian Journal of Soil Science. 10.4141/cjss2011-050.

Richard J. Soare, Susan J. Conway, Geoffrey D. Pearce, Francois Costard and Antoine Séjournéc. 2012. [Sub-kilometre \(intra-crater\) mounds in Utopia Planitia, Mars: character, occurrence and possible formation hypotheses?](#) Icarus. doi.org/10.1016/j.icarus.2012.06.003

Jeannine-Marie St. Jacques, Suzan L. Lapp, Yang Zhao, Elaine M. Barrow and David J. Sauchyn. 2012. [Twenty-first Century central Rocky Mountain River discharge scenarios under greenhouse forcing.](#) Quaternary International. doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2012.06.023

Other "Geographical" News

The Greatest Globe on Earth: It isn't the biggest, shiniest, most up-to-date and detailed globe in the world. But the American Geographical Society's 18-inch Rand McNally Terrestrial Globe is doubtless the most precious because it was signed by 85 of the greatest explorers in modern times: from Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart to Neil Armstrong and John Glenn. Not only did they sign it when they got back from netherlands (and netherworlds), they charted their courses on it in wavering ink lines across oceans and continents. [Smithsonian.com](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News

The Rabbit Problem – The University of Victoria Story: By 2009 the population of feral rabbits on the 400 acre campus of the University of Victoria had reached an estimated 2500 rabbits. These rabbits, the result of the release of unwanted pets, first appeared in the late 1980s. The University produced a widely controversial “Rabbit Management Plan” and captured and humanely dispatched 102 rabbits from the athletic field complex to address growing safety concerns. After this event, and following a brief court injunction which prevented the University from trapping rabbits, four individuals obtained permits to receive rabbits, and the necessary funds to sterilize them. When all was said and done, 102 rabbits were killed, 902 were trapped, sterilized, and relocated to sanctuaries (some as far away as Texas), and the remaining population was removed by the large resident population of hawks, owls, eagles and osprey. Through the entire process the University found itself besieged through the social media and by the news media from across Canada and around the world. [The Rabbit Problem | Rabbits@UVic](#)

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