



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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**UBC Okanagan's Kevin Hanna discusses National Municipal Adaptation Survey:** Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its consensus reports on climate change, the global science and policy discussion has come to include a stronger recognition that Canadians must now also plan for the impacts of climate change. Across Canada the effects of climate change will differ greatly by region and community. The [National Municipal Adaptation Project](#) (NMAP) is a university-based research group that works to assess the state of planning for adaptation and resiliency in Canadian local governments, develop case studies, and generate applied knowledge that can help advance adaptation planning. Commitment to adaptation planning is variable across Canada, according to the group's findings. NMAP is helping to fill a knowledge gap by completing a survey of Canadian municipal governments that provides a broad image of the state of municipal adaptation planning in Canada. Just like recent weather events there's good news and bad news, says Kevin Hanna, associate professor of geography at UBC Okanagan. "The good news from our survey is that Canada's major cities recognize the importance of adaptation and are moving ahead," says Hanna. "The bad news is that many small communities are not there yet; and they may be the most vulnerable. "We found that provincial governments are very influential. "Steady provincial policy support not only for adaptation initiatives, but for areas such as reducing climate change contributions and alternative energy development, are important for spurring local governments to think about how they can protect themselves from the impacts of climate change." [UBC Okanagan News](#)

**University of Toronto Scarborough's Nick Eyles achievement recognized by Royal Society fellows:** Professor Nick Eyles of Physical and Environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto Scarborough received the Royal Society of Canada's 2013 McNeil Medal for the Public Awareness of Science. The [McNeil Medal](#) is given to a scholar who demonstrates an outstanding ability to promote and communicate science to students and to the public. Eyles was cited for his work as host of CBC's Geologic Journey – World, and for writing general interest books about geology. [U Toronto Research and Innovation](#)

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**U Victoria's Nicholas Lynch comments on urban life diversity and style:** Modernization of zoning and bylaws in Victoria being considered to increase diversity of housing in downtown area. Nicholas Lynch of the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria comments upon plans and reflects on the impact of similar changes in Vancouver. [Check News Video](#)

**U Calgary's Greg McDermid puts spotlight on the changing Alberta landscape:** The reds, greens and blues of the CAT Transform map created in the Department of Geography at the University of Calgary paint a powerful picture of Alberta's changing landscape over the past decade. The CAT Transform map (CAT stands for Change, After-effect and Trend) is the invention of the ABMI (Alberta Biodiversity Moderating Institute) Remote Sensing Group, led by Greg McDermid, associate professor in geography. McDermid and his core team—including adjunct professor Guillermo Castilla and research technician Jennifer Hird, MSc—have accessed hundreds of satellite remote sensing images taken of Alberta's landscape since 2001, analyzing changes in the health and density of vegetation over time in each frame. Boiling this complex wealth of data into three variables (change, after-effect and trend) the team has created a visualization technique that uses colours on a map. The result is the CAT Transform map, which provides a striking revelation of the changes Alberta's landscape underwent in a 10-year time frame (from 2001 to 2011)—all in a single image. Distinct patterns of urban expansion around Alberta's municipalities are visible in the image, as is the impact of oilsands development, and natural disturbances such as wildfires. Areas of forest regrowth can also be seen. [Calgary UToday](#)

**Memorial U geography major studies in Antarctica over christmas holidays:** Through the program Students On Ice, 3rd year MUN Geography student Caitlyn Baikie studied the impacts and management of tourism in Antarctica with Dr. Pat Maher (University of Northern British Columbia) and Dr. Hans Gelter (Luea University of Technology). The Antarctic Peninsula is not your typical classroom, but for Caitlyn Baikie, of Nain, Nunatsiavut, a 3rd year MUN Geography student, it provided the perfect location to study the impacts and management of Antarctic tourism. This Christmas Caitlyn participated in the latest expedition by Students On Ice, an organization which takes high school and university students from all corners of the world to the Polar Regions to partake in the educational experience of a lifetime. The latest expedition took 70 students from seven different countries and world leaders in Tourism, Marine Ecosystems, Antarctic History, and Geology to the Antarctic Peninsula to experience the remote landscape over a nine-day period. For many, this was a once in a lifetime experience that was both educational and transformative. [MUN Geography Department](#)

**McGill U's Sarah Turner part of discussion on teaching methods:** In the midst of increasing class sizes and decreasing faculty members and staff, quality of teaching in post-secondary education has been a question of concern for many students. Initiatives to maintain and integrate research and teaching are seldom, and at times, limited. McGill's Teaching Inquiry Network is one of the groups attempting to integrate research and teaching to benefit students' undergraduate learning experience by bringing together professors to share and develop teaching methods. Almost all McGill Faculties are represented in the Network. Geography professor Sarah Turner is one of the members of the Teaching Inquiry Network. Last semester, Turner implemented some of these ideas from the Network in her GEOG 409: Geographies of Developing Asia course by having students write journal entries for each week of readings. "From the student feedback [journal entries] seem to work really well as a learning tool and students appreciate the ability to take time crafting their responses rather than taking an exam that they have to cram for." "Although it might seem weird," continued Turner, "Professors don't have that many opportunities to really debate and critique different teaching approaches, because we're so busy just getting all the parts of our job done. So this is a fun and productive way to think through new ideas." [McGill Daily](#)

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**UBC's Brett Eaton on the recent building frustrations:** Renovations to the UBC Geography Building began in the summer of 2013 and were planned to be completed by the first day of September so as to not interfere with student learning or research. Due to later inspections and reviews of the building, more necessary renovations became apparent and the project is now scheduled to be completed in February. The disruption of classes and research due to the construction has disgruntled many of the faculty, staff, and students who frequently teach, work, and study in the building. Associate Professor Brett Eaton composed a letter to the President in October describing the department's concerns and possible remedies and a petition was signed and sent in December to all the senior administrators of UBC. [UBC Geographer](#)

**Concordia undergrads find rental housing decreasing in La Petite-Patrie due to condo conversions:** "Gentrification" has become a buzzword in working-class-turned-hip neighbourhoods across Montreal, from St-Henri to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Some equate gentrification with the renewal of run-down inner-city areas, while others fear that it transforms poorer neighbourhoods beyond recognition, thereby alienating longtime residents and leading to their displacement as rents and property values skyrocket. It's no surprise, then, that gentrification polarizes opinion. Last week, 25 Concordia undergraduates and their professor waded into the turbid gentrification debate. They put in roughly 2,000 hours of research last semester to determine how gentrification is affecting the little neighbourhood of La Petite-Patrie. The study, led by Concordia professor Ted Rutland, also found that gentrification has affected some blocks more than others. "[The research project] comes out of the tradition of trying to treat the city as a learning space [...] but also contributing to it," Rutland said. Not only did the study find a reduction in access to rental housing, it also shows that nearly half of condo conversions in La Petite-Patrie use the undivided co-ownership model, while the other half used the divided co-ownership model. [The Link](#)

**U Western announces opening of new computational geomorphology lab:** The Computational Geomorphology Lab (CGL) provides high-end computer stations for modelling, simulation, spatial data analysis, statistical data analysis, and data visualization. Research activities are focussed on landscape evolution, fluvial geomorphology, hydrology, catchment analysis, and aquatic ecosystem assessment. The CGL contains 3 Tesla GPU computer systems for high-performance parallel computation, and 5 additional workstations for scientific computing. Software available in the lab includes ArcGIS, SigmaPlot, SPSS, Surfer, Matlab, Telemac 2D/3D, CAESAR, MS Visual Studio, Intel Parallel Studio, PGI Fortran. The use of the CGL is available to graduate students doing research involving numerical simulation, and students working with [Dr. Yates](#) or [Dr. Van De Wiel](#).

**McMaster U's Richard Harris challenges students to think critically about cult of home ownership:** Despite all the financial obstacles they face, young adults have been eager believers in home ownership. Now, they're thinking more critically about houses. That's the sense you get from the twentysomethings in Richard Harris's fourth-year urban housing class in the geography program at McMaster University in Hamilton. For the second year in a row, Prof. Harris has given his students a fall assignment to construct an argument for either buying a home or renting. "Last year, in a class of 29 students, a clear majority said they would buy," Prof. Harris wrote me in an e-mail. "I was surprised because I had spent a lot of time speaking about the dangers of price bubbles, and about the opinion of most experts that the markets in many Canadian cities had moved, or were moving, into bubble territory." This year, only five of 23 said they'd buy and 18 chose to rent. "Although the assignment was the same and the content of my lectures pretty much the same, the pattern of response was very different," Prof. Harris wrote. While the size of his class is too small to be statistically definitive, Prof. Harris considered the swing in opinion noteworthy. It's all that and more if you want to understand where our housing market is heading in the years ahead. [The Globe and Mail](#)

## Recent Theses and Dissertations

Benjamin Spigel. 2013. [The emergence of regional cultures and practices: a comparative study of Canadian software entrepreneurship](#). PhD Dissertation. Department of Geography and Program. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario. Supervisor: Harald Bathelt.

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### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

L. Chasmer, C. Hopkinson, T. Veness, W. Quinton and J. Baltzer. 2014. [A decision-tree classification for low-lying complex land cover types within the zone of discontinuous permafrost](#). Remote Sensing of Environment 143:73–84.

Jeffery P. Dech, Shawn Mayhew-Hammond, April L. James and Bharat Pokharel. 2014. [Modeling Canada yew \(\*Taxus canadensis\* Marsh.\) distribution and abundance in the boreal forest of northeastern Ontario, Canada](#). Ecological Indicators 36:48–58.

Courtney D Edwards, Kylee A Pawluk and Stephen F Cross. 2014. [The effectiveness of several commercial antifouling treatments at reducing biofouling on finfish aquaculture cages in British Columbia](#). Aquaculture Research. DOI: 10.1111/are.12380

Julie Malingowski, David Atkinson, Javier Fochesatto, Jessica Cherry and Eric Stevens. 2014. An [Observational study of radiation temperature inversions in Fairbanks, Alaska](#). Polar Science. doi.org/10.1016/j.polar.2014.01.002

Merle Massie and Maureen G. Reed. 2013. Cumberland House in the Saskatchewan River Delta: flood memory and the municipal response, 2005 and 2011. In: Climate Change and Flood Risk Management: Adaptation and Extreme Events at the Local Level. Edited by E. Carina H. Keskitalo. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Press. 150-189

Merle Massie. 2013. Flooding and the Carrot River watershed source water protection plan, Saskatchewan: civic engagement and causal stories. In: Climate Change and Flood Risk Management: Adaptation and Extreme Events at the Local Level. Edited by E. Carina H. Keskitalo. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Press. 222-257.

Jed A. Long, Trisalyn A. Nelson, Stephen L. Webb and Kenneth L. Gee. 2014. [A critical examination of indices of dynamic interaction for wildlife telemetry studies](#). Journal of Animal Ecology. DOI:10.1111/1365-2656.12198

A. Jonathan Shaw, G. Karen Golinski, Elizabeth G. Clark, Blanka Shaw, Hans K. Stenøien and Kjell I. Flatberg. 2014. [Intercontinental genetic structure in the amphi-Pacific peatmoss \*Sphagnum miyabeianum\* \(Bryophyta: Sphagnaceae\)](#). Biological Journal of the Linnean Society, 111:17–37.

Christian Zdanowicz, David Fisher, Jocelyne Bourgeois, Mike Demuth, James Zheng, Paul Mayewski, Karl Kreutz, Erich Osterberg, Kaplan Yalcin, Cameron Wake, Eric J. Steig, Duane Froese, Kumiko Goto-Azuma. 2014. [Ice cores from the St. Elias Mountains, Yukon, Canada: Their significance for climate, atmospheric composition and volcanism in the North Pacific Region](#). Arctic.

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## CAG 2014

The [Department of Geography](#) at Brock University is hosting the [2014 annual conference](#) and meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG), May 26-30, 2014. This event is part of the largest academic gathering in Canada - the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences - and it includes a range of activities and events; some of which have been organized in collaboration with two partner associations, the Canadian Cartographic Association (CCA) and the Environmental Studies Association of Canada (ESAC).

For more information, please refer to the [second call for papers and special sessions](#). New information will be posted on this site as it becomes available.

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### Other "Geographical" News

**Space crunches at some Canadian universities means students are waking up early:** Ontario universities accepted a record number of students last year, 50 per cent more than a decade earlier, and there hasn't been enough new classroom space to accommodate the crunch. That means officials can't always find classroom space within the normal nine-to-five work day. At Wilfrid Laurier University that means some first year students have classes that begin at 7 a.m. At Ryerson University classes starting as early as 8 a.m. are a "practical necessity." [Macleans.ca](#)

**Grade inflation? Maybe students are just working harder:** The argument that universities are dishonestly manipulating student grades is both lazy and ill-informed. Statistics recently released across all British universities show that, over the past decade, the proportion of students gaining a first class degree has nearly doubled, from 11% in 2003-4 to 19% in 2012-13. The proportion of students attaining a 2.1 has also increased. Research at Lancaster University's School of Management argues that this simply reflects the rising quality of A-level students. Others have suggested that this may be evidence of "dishonesty", as universities chase league table recognition. Who is right? [The Guardian](#)

**Rainforests in Far East shaped by humans for the last 11,000 years:** New research shows that the tropical forests of South East Asia have been shaped by humans for the last 11,000 years. The rain forests of Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Thailand and Vietnam were previously thought to have been largely unaffected by humans, but the latest research suggests otherwise. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Women's writing groups - five reasons to start one:** A women's writing collective recognises the value of bringing like-minded women together in the pursuit of individual or collaborative writing endeavours. It recognises the existence of gender-specific barriers to writing and publishing in academia and presents a radical departure from the gender-neutral initiatives that modern universities often provide to encourage us to write (read: publish). [The Guardian](#)

**Climate change threatens future of Winter Olympics:** Only six of the previous Winter Olympics host cities will be cold enough to reliably host the Games by the end of this century if global warming projections prove accurate. Even with conservative climate projections, only 11 of the previous 19 sites could host the Games in the coming decades, according to a new study. [ScienceDaily](#)

**New online course shows how to slow climate change:** A new online, animated course released by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) outlines an arsenal of practical methods and policy options for successfully combating human-induced climate change. [PICS Media Release](#)

**How to ... design a university-level student project that benefits the developing world:** Many students arrive at university armed with good qualifications but are vague about the kind and quality of impact they can make on society when they leave three to four years later. One of the ways in which programmes demonstrate relevance to society is in addressing pressing concerns such as poverty alleviation and sustainable development in emerging nations. [The Guardian](#)

**In 1943 German U-boat crew built weather station in Newfoundland:** It was a cold and bleak October morning in 1943, when a German U-boat crew built Weather Station Kurt (Wetter-Funkgerät Land-26) in Newfoundland. This marks the only time (that we know of) during WWII that the Germans conducted a military operation on North American soil. It wasn't until the late '70s that the weather station was discovered to still exist. A team of Canadian historians, went to the site in 1981 and brought the station to Ottawa where you can now visit it at the [Canadian War Museum](#). [Roadtrippers](#)

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### Some not so “Geographical” News



The CAG now works for geographers on [Twitter](#). Keep up-to-date by following [@CanGeographers](#)

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

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