



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

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**U Guelph's Evan Taylor receives Tier 1 chair in Global Food Security:** Geography professor Evan Fraser received a Tier 1 chair in Global Food Security to study food security under changing environmental and economic conditions. Tier 1 chairs are acknowledged international leaders in their fields and are awarded \$200,000 a year for seven years. "Developing an understanding of the processes that will sustainably feed a growing human population represents one of the century's grand challenges," Fraser said. "Having the opportunity to devote myself to this topic through the CRC program is an incredible privilege and the sort of opportunity that most academics only dream of. I'm profoundly grateful to both the University of Guelph and the Canada Research Chairs program for their interest in this pressing global issue as well as their support of me personally." Fraser previously held a Tier 2 CRC. [U Guelph News](#)

**U Victoria's Chris Darimont and why British Columbia's grizzly hunt fails test of science:** Provincial management of the annual trophy hunt that has yielded a 500-per-cent increase in the number of grizzlies killed since the Liberals ended a moratorium in 2001 fails the most basic scientific standards, say four B.C. scientists. In 2001, about 50 bears were killed. By 2007, the annual kill was more than 350. The government claims killing up to six per cent of grizzlies a year is sustainable based on its estimate of 15,000 bears. But the scientists say such uncertainty surrounds grizzly numbers and they could be as low as 8,000. And even based on the higher population, grizzly kills routinely exceed sustainable mortality. It is alarming that purported scientific management often proceeds without the hallmarks of science — transparency, intelligibility, and rigorous evidence," write Kyle Artelle, John Reynolds, Paul Paquet and Chris Darimont. They make particular objection to the government's apparent misrepresentation of actual research findings in publicly justifying its hunting policy. The scientists say the province "borrowed" the language in their research to justify expanding the hunt although that decision ran counter to the researchers' conclusions. [The Vancouver Sun](#)

**SFU geography master's graduate Kelly Baldwin on splitting of British Columbia agricultural farm reserve land:** BC Energy and Mines Minister Bill Bennett stirred up a hornet's nest last summer when he said that the Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries may change. The results of the core review, though, do call for splitting the reserve into two areas: Zone 1 will include the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and the Okanagan; Zone 2 applies to ALR throughout the rest of the province. In the latter, there will be more flexibility for "non-agricultural, home-based businesses." Bennett said the only change to the Interior zones is the addition of "social and economic" factors in considering permitted uses. However, SFU geography master's graduate Kelly Baldwin said that allowing other uses on farmland can lead to its fragmentation and loss of use for farming. She added that allowing secondary uses on ALR land may make it easier to remove from the reserve later. "It is easier to push projects like Site C through, for instance, if you can argue in a political arena that the land within the ALR is not used for farming at the current time." [The Maple Ridge News](#)

**U Regina's Emily Eaton on the future of Saskatchewan's PFRA pastures:** Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration's (PFRA) community pastures were established by the federal government in the "Dirty Thirties." During the 1930s, a long drought and Great Depression induced farmers to cultivate lands previously reserved for grazing with devastating effects. The fragile native prairie was broken by plows, and much of the soil, parched by drought, blew away in the winds. Thousands of people fled the Prairies, unable to eke out their subsistence. The federal government responded in 1935, by establishing the PFRA to address soil erosion and lack of water resources. The PFRA re-seeded abandoned lands and added other Crown lands to create community pastures. Today, the PFRA pastures contain some of the largest remnants of native prairie in Canada and stretch over 1.5 million acres of land. Through the Community Pasture Program, native prairie has been sustainably managed, and over 358,000 acres of poor-quality cultivated lands have been returned to grass. Integral to the sustainable management of these lands is the grazing of cattle. Ranchers pay professional PFRA staff a fee for their cattle to graze in the fields. In the spring of 2012, ranchers and PFRA staff were surprised by the federal government's announcement that it would divest the pastures to the provincial governments. That process is now underway in Saskatchewan. [Prairies North](#)

**U Calgary's Shelley Alexander on co-existing with coyotes during denning season:** When coyotes make headlines it's rarely within the context of a "good news story." This is a scenario that played out yet again earlier this month in Edmonton when nine coyotes had a run-in with a woman walking her three dogs along the city's river valley. Ultimately, one of the dogs was injured and emergency crews were called in to intervene. Notably, no coyotes needed to be put down. But, as frightening as the situation was, it's not an incident that shocked Shelley Alexander, an associate professor in the Department of Geography, who specializes in carnivore ecology and conservation. She has been researching human-coyote conflicts for over a decade. Alexander, who launched the Calgary Coyote Project in 2005, seeks to warn the public that this time of year finds the highest number of conflict reports involving coyotes -- but she stresses there are simple steps to take to avoid problems. "We need to be more vigilant at this time," says Alexander. "If your dog comes upon a denning area, there's going to be a response to that. It's often misconstrued as an attack, but most of the incidents that occur at this time of year are defensive. The coyote is protecting its young, its den sight and its mate." One key preventative measure is to keep dogs leashed during the denning period unless you're in an area you know to be safe, such as the Southland Dog Park, which is fenced off. "You need to have a constant eye on your dog and be able to call it right back," Alexander says. "You can't see your dog if it disappears into the trees." She adds: "In the research we've done with recorded incidents of coyote biting, 93 per cent of these cases involved off-leash dogs." It's also important that humans steer clear of denning areas, Alexander says, noting that dens are easily disturbed. When coyotes are forced to find new dens, their pups often die during relocation. Another critical conflict time is the "dispersal season" in the fall, which is when coyotes who reach maturity leave the pack to fend for themselves. This is a period of stress for coyotes, and, when hungry, they will sometimes roam residential neighborhoods looking for food. [UCalgary Today](#)

**Winter 2014 CWAG Newsletter:** The Winter 2014 Newsletter of the Canadian Women and Geography Study Group features items highlighting 2013 Student Paper Award Winner Reiko Obokata. Reiko Obokata is currently in the second year of my Master's program at the University of Ottawa, working under the supervision of Dr. Luisa Veronis, and within a broader SSHRC-funded research project entitled Environmental Influences and International Migration to Canada. Her thesis research is looking at whether environmental factors influence the migration decisions of Filipino newcomers to Canada. The newsletter also contains congratulatory notes to Evelyn Peters and Catherine Nolin, and early career faculty profiles of Emily Eaton and Kirsten Greer. [CWAG Winter 2014 Newsletter](#)

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## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Dale Armstrong. 2014. [American national security and the death of space sanctuary](#). *Astropolitics* 12: 69-81.

Donald Cayer and Najat Bhiry. [Holocene climate and environmental changes in western subarctic Québec as inferred from the sedimentology and the geomorphology of a lake watershed](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:55-65.

Kaleigh A. Eichel, Merrin L. Macrae, Roland I. Hall, LeeAnn Fishback and Brent B. Wolfe. 2014. [Nutrient uptake and short-term responses of phytoplankton and benthic algal communities from a subarctic pond to experimental nutrient enrichment in microcosms](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:191-205.

Elyn R. Humphreys, Chris Charron, Mathew Brown and Randall Jones. 2014. [Two bogs in the Canadian Hudson Bay Lowlands and a temperate bog reveal similar annual net ecosystem exchange of CO<sub>2</sub>](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:103-113.

Lauren A. MacDonald, Nicole Farquharson, Roland I. Hall, Brent B. Wolfe, Merrin L. Macrae and Jon N. Sweetman. [Avian-driven modification of seasonal carbon cycling at a tundra pond in the Hudson Bay Lowlands \(Northern Manitoba, Canada\)](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:206-217.

Benjamin C. O'Reilly, Sarah A. Finkelstein and Joan Bunbury. 2014. [Pollen-derived paleovegetation reconstruction and long-term carbon accumulation at a fen site in the Attawapiskat River Watershed, Hudson Bay Lowlands, Canada](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:6-18.

Julia Orlova and Brian A. Branfireun. 2014. [Surface water and groundwater contributions to streamflow in the James Bay Lowland, Canada](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:236-2014.

Andrew Tam, William A. Gough, Slawomir Kowal and Changwei Xie. 2014. [The fate of Hudson Bay lowlands palsas in a changing climate](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:114-120.

Jerry White, Roland I. Hall, Brent B. Wolfe, Erin M. Light, Merrin L. Macrae and LeeAnn Fishback. 2014. [Hydrological connectivity and basin morphometry influence seasonal water-chemistry variations in tundra ponds of the northwestern Hudson Bay Lowlands](#). *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research* 46:218-235.

Chaoyang Wu, Robbie A. Hember, Jing M. Chen, Werner A. Kurz, David T. Price, Céline Boisvenue, Alemu Gonsamo and Weimin Ju. 2014. [Accelerating forest growth enhancement due to climate and atmospheric changes in British Columbia, Canada over 1956-2001](#). *Nature Scientific Reports* 4. doi:10.1038/srep04461

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### Other “Geographical” News

**PhD supervisor: the perfect one doesn't exist, so where else can you find help?** Supervisors are not superhuman. Some give brilliant writing guidance, but are ineffectual when a student reveals that they are depressed. Others become best friends with their students, but never motivate them to put words on the page. The ideal supervisor has infinite time and unparalleled knowledge. She is patient

and always available; she is understanding and constantly supportive. Unfortunately, she doesn't exist. If a supervisor can't help, where can a student find support? [The Guardian](#)

**The Gulf of Mexico's dead zone:** With rising demand over the past decade for the corn-based fuel additive ethanol, American farmers have grown more corn than at any time since World War II. Unfortunately, the nitrogen fertilizer being applied to cornfields is contributing to a growing "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico, a serious blow to the fisheries of the northern Gulf. The size of the Gulf dead zone this summer is predicted by NOAA to be a 7,286 square mile (15,125 sq. km) area of the Gulf paralleling the Louisiana shoreline. [National Geographic News Watch](#)

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### Some not so "Geographical" News



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