

GeogNews



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Memorial geographer Donald Forbes wins Arctic Science and Leadership Medal: Donald Forbes, Adjunct professor in Geography at Memorial University, is the recipient of the 2014 Martin Bergmann Medal. Established by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) in 2012, the medal recognizes achievement for “excellence in Arctic leadership and science”. In announcing the award, the RCGS specifically highlighted Don’s lifetime work in Arctic geography and his mentorship and leadership in community adaptation to climate change in coastal Arctic communities. [MUN Geography News](#)

Mount Allison U’s Michael Fox works with local school to establish new outdoor classroom: Dr. Michael Fox of the Geography and Environment department at Mount Allison University is at the heart of a project to introduce outdoor learning at a local elementary school. Working with individuals from the school, the province, and the community, Fox is redesigning the backyard of Salem Elementary School and developing curriculum for outdoor learning. Fox jokes, “your parents were right, research confirms that children benefit from spending more time outdoors.” However research also shows that, the amount of time people spend indoors in North America is increasing, to 95% by some estimates. In addition, the average North American child spends over 45% of their time in front of some sort of electronic device. Fox aims to change that. The first phase was started this summer with the development of wetlands, gardens, and the building of two outdoor classrooms. The idea for the project and its subsequent success came from the school’s principal, Ada Phinney according to Fox. “She saw the massive potential of the school’s location and outdoor space. She contacted the university to get us involved and was inspirational in getting the students and teachers excited about the project.” Originally a middle school teacher, Fox saw this as a golden opportunity. “I see our department, our students, and the larger university community contributing to this, and getting something important back. It is also one of my core research areas, one of my passions,” he says. Fox is also teaching a course called Education for Sustainable Development and has incorporated the project into the curriculum. Mount Allison students will work with each grade level and individual teachers and classes. “The students will be in the school one afternoon a week. So each will work on this notion of education for sustainable development, how it can be implemented, what are the challenges, and what are the opportunities.” [Mount Allison News](#)

UNBC Geography's Neil Hanlon receives "Health & Wellness Researcher of the Year" award, sponsored by UNBC, at the 8th annual "Northern BC A Healthier You Awards" jointly presented by MLA Shirley Bond, the [Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society \(IMSS\) of Prince George](#), and the *Prince George Citizen*. "Hanlon's research focuses on health geography, primarily on formal and informal health care service provided in rural and remote locations, including the impact of medical education programs for recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in the target areas as well as the role of volunteerism in aging resource-based communities."

UNBC's Fredy Peccerelli (MA Interdisciplinary Studies student, supervisor Dr. Catherine Nolin) was invited and presented at TEDYouth in New York City. Fredy is the Executive Director of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation – FAFG and was asked to speak about forensics, human rights, and the search for Guatemala's disappeared. See Fredy's 10 minute presentation [here](#) starting at 1hour, 48 min. [TEDYouth](#)

Western U's Jason Gilliland and partners release smartphone app to help users 'Buy Local, Eat Smart, Get Healthy': Western University researchers and partners released the [SmartAPPetite](#) app today, providing Southwestern Ontarians customized tips about local food, healthy eating, recipes, and information about local farmers and food providers. As part of an effort to connect the region to healthy, local food options, the smartphone app promotes the motto 'Buy Local, Eat Smart, Get Healthy,' and its creators aim to give a boost to the local food economy while helping people improve their diets. "The goal of our app is to remove barriers to finding local and healthy foods, which will help drive the local food economy," says Jason Gilliland, director of HEAL and professor in Western's Faculty of Social Science. "Many people experience or perceive barriers to accessing local foods, which can prevent local food networks from expanding their capacity." App users are provided with daily customized messages containing information on seasonality and nutritional content of local foods, as well as recipes and dietary tips that have been developed with Brescia's renowned Food & Nutrition program. "The goal of our app is to remove barriers to finding local and healthy foods, which will help drive the local food economy," says Jason Gilliland, director of HEAL and professor in Western's Faculty of Social Science. "Many people experience or perceive barriers to accessing local foods, which can prevent local food networks from expanding their capacity." The app is intended to help people achieve their individual food-related goals and promote the local food economy. "Educating the public and spreading awareness of the multiple economic, environmental, and health benefits of consuming local food is a necessary first step to fostering greater demand," Gilliland says. "This change in food spending patterns can in turn contribute to jobs growth in local food and strengthen Ontario's economy." [Western U News Release](#)

Memorial U's Arn Keeling's cultural geography students create concept models for Giant Mine markers: "Project Dystopia," "The Information Tomb" and the "Giant Facility for Environmental Hazards" were among the conceptual models developed for markers and warning systems at Yellowknife's Giant Mine by a class of cultural geography students at Memorial University. The abandoned Giant Mine in Canada's Northwest Territories is the location of 237,000 tonnes of arsenic trioxide buried in underground chambers, which the federal government has proposed to control by freezing in place for at least 100 years. Students in Arn Keeling's third-year Cultural Landscapes class grappled with this problem by creating scale models for their design concepts of commemoration and warning systems. During a class workshop, they used everyday objects like blocks, figurines, cardboard and carpet swatches to imagine how to mold the landscape above Giant Mine to both warn future generations of the hazards underground and to inform them about how to care for the site. They drew on the Memorial research team's report on Communicating with Future Generations, landscape theory, and other sources to think about the role of landscape markers in a "multi-level" messaging system to warn the future about toxic contaminants at the mine. [@abandondminesnc](#)

U Alberta graduate Britta Jensen discovers volcanic ash drifts much farther than previously thought: Volcanic ash, which can provide valuable snapshots of Earth's history, appears to drift much farther than previously thought, says a University of Alberta graduate who is part of a team that made the important discovery. And that could help scientists tie information and events in Earth's past together that they could not previously connect, potentially unlocking a wealth of new information about the Earth's climate, plant life, archaeological records, animal fossils, and anything else preserved in the geological record, said Britta Jensen, an expert in Quaternary geology, the most recent period in Earth's history, which stretches back about two million years. Jensen specializes in tephrochronology, an area of science that uses layers of "tephra," or ash, to link and date events in Earth's history. When a volcano erupts, it spews ash that has its own unique chemical composition, or its own so-called "fingerprint," Jensen said. Because ash blankets the ground within two weeks of an eruption, it's a great tool to tell scientists that paleo-environmental records connected to that ash must have happened at the same moment in history, she said. [Edmonton Journal](#)

Wilfrid Laurier U's Robert McLeman coordinating RinkWatch project as wintry November weather has Canadians skating on backyard rinks: An unusually wintry November has Canadians skating on backyard rinks much earlier than last year. And that's great news for the Laurier researchers behind RinkWatch, a research project that uses outdoor rinks to study winter weather conditions and climate change. Earlier this week, backyard rinks in Edmonton, Lloydminster and Brandon reported good skating conditions to the RinkWatch website, with many rinkmakers in Ontario already flooding their rinks in hopes of skating soon. "At this pace, the outdoor skating season looks to be starting roughly two weeks earlier than last winter across much of Canada," said Robert McLeman, an associate professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at Laurier and one of the researchers behind RinkWatch. Entering its third winter, the RinkWatch project asks backyard rinkmakers in Canada and the northern United States to mark their location on an [interactive online map](#) – found at [rinkwatch.org](#) – and provide updates of skating conditions throughout the winter. Researchers at Laurier use the data to do fine resolution mapping of winter temperatures and track year-to-year progress of larger winter climate trends. They also find it helps stimulate a wider public discussion about the potential impacts of climate change on cherished outdoor activities like skating. Over 1,000 backyard and neighbourhood rinks have participated in the RinkWatch project over its previous two winters, and the [RinkWatch.org](#) website has a busy discussion forum where outdoor rink enthusiasts share photos and rinkmaking tips. [WLU News Release](#)

Carleton U's Professor Fran Klodawsky releases evaluation of Ottawa's Equity and Inclusion Lens initiative: Carleton University's Fran Klodawsky, professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, released a report about the progress and effectiveness of the Equity and Inclusion Lens (EI Lens) initiative that has attracted interest across Canada and internationally for its efforts to promote more equitable and inclusive interactions among Ottawa city staff, as well as interactions between city staff and area residents. The research that informed the report, entitled *Equity and Inclusion: Findings, Possible Next Steps and General Lessons*, was the result of a partnership between academic researchers at Carleton and University of Ottawa, and representatives of the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), the City of Ottawa and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. [Carleton Newsroom](#)

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Rob Vogt. 2014. [A model for Holocene glacial erosion at Peyto Glacier, Alberta](#). MSc in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (Geography), University of Northern British Columbia. Supervisor: Dr. Brian Menounos.



WLU PhD candidate Ryan Connon receives W. Garfield Weston Award for Northern Research for his research focused on understanding the way in which runoff pathways are expected to change as a result of thawing permafrost in northwestern Canada. [WLU News](#)

UNBC geographers Drs. Brian Menounos and Neil Hanlon (both, Geography Program) and **Phil Owens** (Environmental Sciences) attended the recent university celebration of Tenure and Promotion as all three achieved promotion to Full Professor. [UNBC Facebook](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Robert C. Bailey, Simon Linke and Adam G. Yates. 2014. [Bioassessment of freshwater ecosystems using the reference condition approach: Comparing established and new methods with common data sets](#). *Freshwater Science* 33:1204-1211.

Danielle C. Claar, Caroline H. Fox, Cameron Freshwater, Jessica J. Holden, Allan Roberts and UVic Research Derby. 2014. [Extinction risk for imperiled species in Canada](#). *PLOS|One*. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0113118

Sebastian Henn and Harald Bathelt. 2015. [Knowledge generation and field reproduction in temporary clusters and the role of business conferences](#). *Geoforum* 58:104–113.

E. Iturrutxa, N. Mesanza and A. Brenning. 2014. [Spatial analysis of the risk of major forest diseases in Monterey pine plantations](#). *Plant Pathology*. DOI: 10.1111/ppa.12328

Amy M. Lerner, Thomas K. Rudel, Laura C. Schneider, Megan McGroddy, Diana V. Burbano and Carlos F. Mena. 2014. [The spontaneous emergence of silvo-pastoral landscapes in the Ecuadorian Amazon: patterns and processes](#). *Regional Environmental Change*. DOI:10.1007/s10113-014-0699-4

Nicole L. Louiseize, Melissa J. Lafrenière and Meredith G. Hastings. 2014. [Stable isotopic evidence of enhanced export of microbially derived NO₃ following active layer slope disturbance in the Canadian High Arctic](#). *Biogeochemistry* 121:565-580.

Paul A. Moquin, Patricia S. Mesquita, Frederick J. Wrona and Terry D. Prowse. 2014. [Responses of benthic invertebrate communities to shoreline retrogressive thaw slumps in Arctic upland lakes](#). *Freshwater Science* 33:1108-1118.

Geraldine Pratt and Caleb Johnston. 2014. [Filipina domestic workers, violent insecurity, testimonial theatre and transnational ambivalence](#). *Area* 46:358–360.

Xiaogang Wang, Jiafeng Wang, Curtis Russell, Paul Proctor, Richard Bello, Kaz Higuchi and Huaiping Zhu. 2014. [Clustering of the abundance of West Nile virus vector mosquitoes in Peel Region, Ontario, Canada](#). *Environmental and Ecological Statistics* 21:651-666.

Other “Geographical” News

Study links fracking to earthquakes in Alberta: One group of geophysicists from Alberta believe they have found evidence linking fracking to seismic activity in northern parts of the province. “The exact mechanisms remain to be fully understood but there is a generally accepted or favoured view that by injecting large volumes of wastewater into the ground it will change the stress, or in common terms, pressure in the underground,” Jeff Gu said. “In addition, there’s heavy water and fluids in there that have a tendency to lubricate pre-existing faults or cracks in the given area, so having more pressure and potentially fluids and lubrication may trigger or facilitate the earthquakes. [The Northern Journal](#)

Record North Pacific temperatures threatening B.C. marine species: The North Pacific Ocean is setting record high temperatures this year and raising concerns about the potential impact on cold water marine species along the B.C. coast, including salmon. Ocean surface temperatures around the world this year reached the highest temperature ever recorded. “We’ve never seen this before. It’s beyond anyone’s experience and this is why it’s puzzling”. [CBC News](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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