

GeogNews



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U Lethbridge's Craig Coburn using remote sensing to provide climate-change evidence: A

University of Lethbridge researcher says it's hard to deny there's climate change as evidence pours in. "We measure it. We know it," said Craig Coburn, a geography professor at the University of Lethbridge. Speaking to the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs, he described the fast-changing world of remote sensing, and its value in studying the many aspects of climate change. Scientists around the world continue reporting those changes, Coburn said – regardless of people like the prime minister downplaying their importance. "Scientists don't care what (Stephen) Harper believes," he told a questioner. "These are factual things that we're working on." Coburn said, scientists use remote sensing equipment to track a number of climate indicators: sea level, surface temperature of the ocean, seasonal surface changes, extent of the polar ice cap, atmospheric gases, and many more. They haven't been at it for long, however. "We have been doing this for 20 years, with consistency," he said. And methodology is still improving. The latest change, providing a standardized way of measuring the polar ice depth, came into effect just this spring. In the sky, Coburn said a new orbital carbon observatory is now tracking carbon dioxide levels around the world. "They're up," but he pointed out those levels subside as Northern Hemisphere crops shoot up during our spring and summer. Temperatures around the world are also rising, Coburn said, with 2014 the hottest year since record-keeping began. Many nations are paying attention to climate change, but Coburn said they're finding ways to work more collaboratively today. In Canada, he added, not many scientists are involved. Universities don't get many government grants to conduct climate change studies, he noted. "Increasingly they're getting pressure not to do basic research." But it's vital that climate research is allowed to continue, Coburn maintained. "In the lack of evidence, what have we got," he asked. "Ignorance?" [Lethbridge Herald](#)

U Saskatchewan's Cherie Westbrook suggests to flood planners should not forget beavers:

beavers can curtail rising floodwaters, new research shows. The work suggests that beaver dams can provide natural flood protection and that officials should consider encouraging beaver construction projects as part of flood prevention plans, the researchers say. Beavers construct dams from twigs and mud to create large, relatively calm pools of water to live in. Scientists had previously believed that beaver dams had little impact on floodwater storage during rainstorms, ecohydrologist Cherie Westbrook. As 19 cm of rain soaked Alberta, Canada, over three days in June 2013, Westbrook, of the University of Saskatchewan and colleagues monitored beaver dams along a stream. Water levels behind the dams rose 10-50 cm during the storm, postponing and reducing the peak surge of water flowing down the stream. [ScienceNews](#)

U British Columbia's David Ley wants more oversight on foreign real estate investment in

Vancouver: A UBC professor says the lack of government control over foreign real estate investment in Vancouver is surprising, because other cities that have a large amount of foreign ownership have measures to control soaring housing prices. "This is quite unusual for government to have a hands-off position to an important public need," said David Ley, a UBC geography professor who has studied five cities with housing bubbles, including Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, London, and Vancouver. "In other countries there is a much more active attempt to respond to the shelter needs of citizens," said Ley. Ley said one of the challenges is that data is not being collected, so any time there is a complaint about foreign investment, the government says it is purely anecdotal. I could tell you in percentage terms the shares of foreign buyers in other cities I am looking at. We know the percentage of overseas buyers, we even know where they are coming from. Here you need to piece things together," said Ley. "It has been demonstrated beyond doubt, because they have the data, that overseas investment is a key factor." While there is no 'silver bullet' solution, Ley said Canada could learn from Australia and other governments that have put in measures to control foreign investment. "The federal and provincial government is missing in action," said Ley. "The municipal government with very limited resources is aware of the problem and trying to address the problem through a variety of means, but clearly they do not have the taxation capacity to get involved in the scale we need." Ley said the future outlook isn't promising, unless there is intervention. "Things are going to get worse because our dollar is depreciating close to 20 per cent, which means for overseas investors, our property has just become 20 per cent cheaper," said Ley. [CBCNews | British Columbia](#)

U Manitoba's John Hanesiak and Pat McCarthy storm-chasing course puts students in the eye of the storm:

A course at the University of Manitoba isn't just teaching students about weather, it's bringing them into the centre of the action. The university's storm chasing course teaches students about severe weather, including how to predict it and how to safely observe it up close. Students then take a weeklong field trip with professors at the end of the seven-week course to experience firsthand anything from severe thunderstorms to tornadoes. That's what instructor Pat McCarthy says makes the program one of a kind. Since the course was started by University of Manitoba professor John Hanesiak in 2005, students have driven across North America chasing storms, seeing everything from loonie-sized hail to supercell tornadoes along the way. Students studying atmospheric science in the Department of Environment and Geography at the University of Manitoba are given preference for enrolling as one of the 14 students who can take the course. Any leftover spots are made available to members of the public, giving emergency management officials, military personnel and others with a keen interest in the weather the chance to take part. Marie Loeppky is one of those interested in learning about storm safety. In 2007, she was caught in the Elie, Manitoba, tornado that Environment Canada said was the first-ever F5 tornado recorded in Canada. "I was out there watching the F5 that hit Elie. I was on the wrong side of that storm, so it chased me back to the city actually," Loeppky said. [CTV News](#)

U Victoria Hakai Postdoctoral Fellow Dan Shugar helping map potential for catastrophic flooding near quake-devastated Nepalese villages and Annapurna Trail:

[Dan Shugar](#) (Hakai Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept. of Geography) is a UVic geoscientist who is helping analyze NASA and DigitalGlobe satellite imagery to provide crucial data to Nepalese officials in support of mitigation and emergency recovery efforts in Nepal. He is leading the analysis within the Annapurna region and, this past weekend, he and his team of two UVic grad students and one UVic staff member discovered a series of landslides, one of which had dammed the Marsyangdi River, creating a potentially deadly lake threatening the village of Lower Pisang. "We don't know when it might fail, but this could be a serious threat to Lower Pisang and villages downstream," he says. Dr. Shugar is part of an international 35-member volunteer group launched soon after the earthquake, whose efforts have now been incorporated into the NASA-USGS (US Geological Survey) Interagency Earthquake Response Team.



U Northern British Columbia researchers including Ellen Petticrew, Stephen Déry, Nikolaus Gantner, and Phil Owens [reported](#) on their investigation into the impacts following the Mount Polley tailings pond disaster. A video of the press conference presenting the findings so far can be found [here](#). [CBC National](#) | [Globe and Mail](#) | [Vancouver Sun](#)

U Victoria's Reuben Rose-Redwood's edited book, *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space* was among the books honoured by the Geographical Perspectives on Women (GPOW) Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers at the GPOW Book Reception in Chicago.

U Alberta's Jeffrey Kavanaugh (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences) receives Faculty of Science Innovation in Teaching Award. Jeff has helped provide a rigorous, instructive, and meaningful lab experience in a core courses. Students construct research-grade weather stations that monitor a range of standard meteorological parameters, an exercise which has directly contributed to several students' placement in summer research programs and in technical positions with industry. [U Alberta Faculty of Science](#)

U Victoria's Simon Springer named by the Political Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers as the 2015 recipient of the Stanley D. Brunn Young Scholar Award. The award is given to an individual who received their PhD within the past ten years, in honor of contributions that have generated new interest in the subfield and/or opened up new areas of inquiry for political geographic research.

U British Columbia welcoming Sarah Hunt as an Assistant Professor of Critical Indigenous Geographies in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program and the Department of Geography [UBC Geography](#)

U Northern British Columbia's Brian Menounos involved with [project](#) reporting that glaciers in western Canada will decrease in volume 70 per cent by the end of this century. [NBC News](#) | [New York Times](#) | [The Tyee](#)

U Ottawa's Anne Gilbert recipient of the Professor of the Year award. Every year, since 1995, the Faculty of Arts recognizes a professor who excels in the three areas of teaching, research and service to the university community. [U Ottawa Geography](#)

Western U Doctoral Candidate Sarah Mason won the American Association of Geographers, 2015 Rural Geography Specialty Group Student Paper Competition! Her paper, based on her PhD research was titled "*The Plant is Up and Running and the Wounds are Yet to Heal: Biosolids Facility Siting, Community Conflict and Emotional Geographies in Rural Ontario*". [Western Geography News](#)

U Northern British Columbia has a new field course: GEOG 405-3/603-3 *Fluvial Geomorphology: River Processes and Function* is running August 29-September 8, 2015 at the Quesnel River Research Centre (QRRC) near Likely, BC. The course is open to UNBC university undergraduates and grad students as well as students at other universities. Contact Dr. Ellen Petticrew (ellen.petticrew@unbc.ca) ASAP with expressions of interest

Western U's Belinda Dodson a visiting scholar at Oxford's International Migration Institute. As part of her sabbatical, Belinda will be there for the Trinity Term (April-June 2015) to present a research

seminar at the International Migration Institute and to participate in a round table on xenophobia in South Africa for the South Africa Discussion Group of Oxford's African Studies Centre. [Western Geography News](#)

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U Victoria PhD candidate Jennifer Mateer recently received a Mitacs Globalink Scholarship and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship in order to complete doctoral research in India.

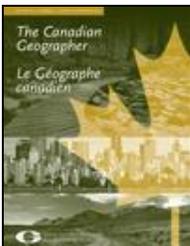
U Victoria set to welcome Johan Feddema as the department chair. Johan is currently professor and chair of the Geography Department at the University of Kansas. He obtained a PhD in Climatology from the University of Delaware, and his research interest is primarily in studying the processes by which anthropogenic actions affect climate. His current research combines remote sensing, GIS, and modeling to develop datasets to simulate land cover change and other human processes at the Earth's surface in the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) Community Climate System Model (CCSM).

U Ottawa's Bernard Lauriol was invited at the "Les années lumières", a Radio Canada science radio show to talk about his book on ice formations found in local caves. Listen to the interview here (in French [Écoutez l'entrevue ici](#))

McGill U's master's student Anna Agosta G'meiner award a student presentation award from the Paleoenvironmental Change Specialty Group at the recent Association of American Geographers annual meeting. [AAG Paleoenvironmental Change](#)

Queen's U announces that **Rachel Herron** who will be taking up a tenure-track position in the Department of Geography at Brandon University this Fall and that **Philip Bonnaventure** who will be starting a tenure track position at the rank of assistant professor in physical geography in the Department of Geography at the University of Lethbridge. [Queen's Geography Newsletter](#)

New in [The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien](#)



John Bélec. 2015. [Underwriting suburbanization: The National Housing Act and the Canadian city](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12175

Wei Lu and Feng Qiu. 2015. [Do food deserts exist in Calgary, Canada?](#) The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12176

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Genevieve Ali, Doerthe Tetzlaff, Jeffrey J. McDonnell, Chris Soulsby, Sean Carey, Hjalmar Laudon, Kevin McGuire, Jim Buttle, Jan Seibert and Jamie Shanley. 2015. [Comparison of threshold hydrologic response across northern catchments](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI: 10.1002/hyp.10527

Laura Cameron and Sinead Earley. 2015. [The ecosystem—movements, connections, tensions and translations](#). Geoforum. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.03.015

Matthew E. Fagan, Ruth S. DeFries, Steven E. Sesnie, J. Pablo Arroyo-Mora, Carlomagno Soto, Aditya Singh, Philip A. Townsend and Robin L. Chazdon. 2015. [Mapping species composition of forests and tree plantations in northeastern Costa Rica with an integration of hyperspectral and multitemporal Landsat imagery](#). Remote Sensing 7:5660-5696.

Annie Lagadec, Étienne Boucher and Daniel Germain. 2015. [Tree ring analysis of hydro-climatic thresholds that trigger ice jams on the Mistassini River, Quebec](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI:10.1002/hyp.10537

Alexandre Normandeau, Patrick Lajeunesse and Guillaume St-Onge. 2015. [Submarine canyons and channels in the Lower St. Lawrence Estuary \(Eastern Canada\): Morphology, classification and recent sediment dynamics](#). Geomorphology 241:1–18.

Ellen L. Petticrew, Sam J. Albers, Susan A. Baldwin, Eddy C. Carmack, Stephen J. Déry, Nikolaus Gantner, Kelly E. Graves, Bernard Laval, John Morrison, Philip N. Owens, Daniel T. Selbie and Svein Vagle. 2015. [The impact of a catastrophic mine tailings impoundment spill into one of North America's largest fjord lakes: Quesnel Lake, British Columbia, Canada](#). Geophysical Research Letters. DOI:10.1002/2015GL063345

Audrey M. Rémillard, Bernard Hétu, Pascal Bernatchez, Jan-Pieter Buylaert, Andrew S. Murray, Guillaume St-Onge and Martin Geach. 2015. [Chronology and palaeoenvironmental implications of the ice-wedge pseudomorphs and composite-wedge casts on the Magdalen Islands \(eastern Canada\)](#). Boreas. DOI: 10.1111/bor.12125

Amanada K. Slaunwhite and Scott Macdonald. 2015. [Alcohol, isolation, and access to treatment: Family physician experiences of alcohol consumption and access to health care in rural British Columbia](#). The Journal of Rural Health. DOI:10.1111/jrh.1211.

Amanada K. Slaunwhite and Scott Macdonald. 2015. [Primary health care utilization for alcohol-attributed diseases in British Columbia Canada 2001–2011](#). BMC Family Practice 16:34. DOI:10.1186/s12875-015-0247-4

Maria Strack, Yoseph Zuback, Colin McCarter and Jonathan Price. 2015. [Changes in dissolved organic carbon quality in soils and discharge 10 years after peatland restoration](#). Journal of Hydrology. DOI: 10.1016/j.jhydrol.2015.04.061

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Roxanne Ahmed. 2015. [Spatio-temporal variation in the spring freshet of major circumpolar Arctic river systems](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Terry Prowse.

Laurie Brinklow. 2015. Artists and the articulation of islandness, sense of place, and story in Newfoundland and Tasmania. PhD dissertation. Discipline of Geography and Environmental Science, School of Land and Food, University of Tasmania.

Ansley Charbonneau. 2015. [Rock glacier activity and distribution in the southeastern British Columbia Coast Mountains](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dan Smith

Erika Hille. 2014. [The effects of shoreline retrogressive thaw slumping on the hydrology and geochemistry of small tundra lake catchments](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Daniel Peters.

Heather Leech. 2015. [Seasonal habitat selection by resident and translocated caribou in relation to cougar predation risk](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dennis Jelinski.

Masuruli Baker Masuruli. 2014. [Costs and benefits of nature-based tourism to conservation and communities in the Serengeti ecosystem](#). PhD dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisors: Phil Dearden and Rick Rollins.

Bryan Mood. 2015. [Latest Pleistocene and Holocene glacier behaviour at Franklin Glacier, Mt. Waddington area, British Columbia Coast Mountains, Canada](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dan Smith

Benjamin Paquette-Struger. 2015. [Biogeochemistry, limnology, and ecology of Arctic lakes](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Fred Wrona.

Amanda Slaunwhite. 2014. [Alcohol related harm and primary health care in British Columbia, Canada](#). PhD dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

Byron Smiley. 2015. [A 100-year retrospective and current carbon budget analysis for the Sooke Lake Watershed: Investigating the watershed-scale carbon implications of disturbance in the Capital Regional District's Water Supply Lands](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: John A. Trofymow and Olaf Niemann.

Kira Stevenson. 2014. [Using long-term ecological research to promote sustainable whale-watching practices in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dave Duffus,

Vikki St-Hillaire. 2014. [Holocene glacial history of the Bowser River watershed, northern Coast Mountains, British Columbia](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dan Smith

Christina Suzanne. 2015. [Effects of natural and anthropogenic non-point source disturbances on the structure and function of tributary ecosystems in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Fred Wrona,

Adam Wicks. 2015. [Coastal storm surge identification and classification at Red Dog Dock, Alaska, 2004-2014](#). MSc thesis, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: David Atkinson.

Other “Geographical” News

Keeping our traditions alive. Compendium of best practices in promoting the traditional ways of life of arctic indigenous peoples (Inuktitut): Arctic Indigenous peoples and communities have a long history of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, sustained through generations of traditional economies and cultural practices. For many, living according to traditional ways of life creates a sense of cultural identity, fosters a close connection to nature and provides them with increased control over their own destiny. Sustaining their traditional ways of life, through the transfer of traditional practices, ensures that their values persist and that important social and cultural links are maintained. [Arctic Council](#)

Nova Scotia universities face sanction from national university teachers’ group: The association representing the country’s academic staff is warning that Nova Scotia’s universities could be sanctioned if they try to use new powers that many say violate constitutionally protected rights, and undermine academic freedom. The new legislation was passed by the Nova Scotia Legislature on May 5th despite widespread opposition from faculty, staff and students both provincially and nationally. “I am not surprised when governments, donors, or special interests try to intrude upon academic affairs,” wrote Robinson. “I am surprised when the leaders of our universities are so quick to acquiesce and accede to these pressures. I would expect more from those charged with defending the core academic principles of institutional autonomy, collegial governance, and academic freedom.” [CAUT](#)

Shipping containers grow food anywhere: The food tech startup Freight Farms is giving new life to old shipping containers, and at the same time giving impetus to locally grown food. Jon Friedman and Brad McNamara founded the startup in 2010 with a vision of outfitting used shipping containers with sophisticated hydroponics equipment to turn them into boxed farms that could be placed in alleys, abandoned lots, parking lots or any other location where agriculture would typically be out of the question. [DNews](#)

Warming trend brings bitter harvest to B.C. farmers: Across B.C., farmers and scientists have mapped out how climate change will affect agriculture in different regions. Farmers in Richmond and Delta are concerned about sea-water encroachment depositing salt on soil. A combination of sea level rise and lower spring runoff could reduce the amount of fresh water in the south arm of the Fraser River, the sole source of irrigation for the area’s farms. [Business Vancouver](#)

UBC student writes 52,438 word dissertation with no punctuation — not everyone loved it: There was Patrick Stewart, PhD candidate, defending his final dissertation before a handful of hard-nosed examiners at the University of British Columbia late last month. The public was invited to watch; two dozen curious onlookers saw Stewart attempt to persuade five panelists that his 149-page thesis has merit, that it is neither outlandishly “deficient,” as some had insisted it was, nor an intellectual affront. Unusual? It is definitely that. Stewart’s dissertation, titled *Indigenous Architecture through Indigenous Knowledge*, eschews almost all punctuation. There are no periods, no commas, no semi-colons in the 52,438-word piece. [National Post](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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