



## News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

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### **CAG [GIScience Study Group](#) awards Dr. Nigel Waters inaugural GIScience Excellence Award:**

The awarding ceremony took place at the Steam Works Brew Pub during our Study Group's Annual Business Meeting and lunch. The award was introduced this past year to recognize distinction in research, scholarship, creativity, service, and/or teaching excellence among GIScience community members in Canada. A further goal of this award is to enhance the prominence and reputation of the GIScience Study Group and the CAG as national leaders and to recognize and promote excellent research practices. The call for this award is attached as general reference along with a picture of Dr. Waters giving his short acceptance speech. An arm's length adjudication committee evaluated nominations and concluded unanimously that Dr. Waters was worthy of this distinction. Excerpts from their recommendation are included below: "The Adjudication Committee for the GIScience Excellence Award is pleased to have recommended Dr. Nigel Waters for the award this year. One of the purposes of the award is "to recognize distinction in research, scholarship, creativity, service and/or teaching excellence among GIScience community members in Canada". Dr Waters' long career has made notable and sustaining contributions to many of these areas. The materials submitted by the nominator outlined very convincingly of the relevant contributions from his academic career at both the University of Calgary (1975 to 2007) and at George Mason University (2007 to 2014). Highlights from his tenure at University of Calgary include his being a Founding Director of the Masters in GIS program (1999 to 2006), one of the first in Canada to have a designated masters in GIS – a model that has since been replicated around the world. He moved to George Mason in 2007 to take up a position as the Director for the Centre of Excellence for Geographic Information Science. During his career, he has 16 PhD students and 53 Masters students, 29 of which were in the MGIS program at the University of Calgary. His research contributions have primarily focused on GIScience and its applications to a broad range of subject areas, notably: Transportation Geography; Health and Medical Geography; and Environmental and Habitat Modeling. In addition to student supervision and mentoring, he was very active in organizing academic conferences (at local, national and international levels) and encouraging student participation. It would be remiss not to mention the many editorial roles he has taken on during his career, overseeing the quality in a variety of journals (and other formats) into which GIS scholars publish."

**Ryerson U geography students help rebuild Nepal after the earthquake with pair of Mapathon events:** On April 25, Nepal was struck by a cataclysmic earthquake with a magnitude of at least 7.8 on the Richter scale. The disaster killed more than 8,800 people and injured more than 23,000 others,

leaving much of the developing country's villages and infrastructure devastated. On April 27 and May 3, a team from Ryerson's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies came together to help rebuild the depleted country from an ocean away. At the two "[Mapping for Nepal](#)" sessions, students, faculty and alumni joined with hundreds of volunteers from around the world to remap missing roads, villages and buildings. Using [OpenStreetMap](#) – an open-access, crowd-sourced online mapping project – the "mapathons" aimed to help first responders find victims in the aftermath of the disaster. Ryerson alumnus and geographic specialist Kamal Paudel and Ryerson geography professor Claus Rinner oversaw the events, guiding their collaborators through relatively new technology. "It was a fairly difficult process, in the sense that a lot of the volunteers were newbies," said Paudel, who works as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist at the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. "We had to train them at the beginning, but after we trained them, they were ready to do it. Claus and I oversaw the project, and we made sure they were confident in their work and were getting things done the right way. By the end of the day, everyone was perfect at the mapping process." The downloadable maps will be important for relief workers in the field, who will not have constant internet access. "In the case of Nepal, the locations of small villages and all the roads leading to them did not exist," said Claus Rinner. "The existing data from Google Maps could not be used easily. You need to have an internet connection, and if you're in the field [as a first-responder], you cannot download the Google Map. But OpenStreetMap, you can download an extract or the entire thing onto your device." For Claus Rinner, the events also offered an opportunity to experiment with the OpenStreetMap technology, which has the potential to alter the way geography is studied. "It's an important technology for us to know about," said Rinner. "Typically, geographic information is high-value and is licensed from vendors. This is an approach to producing a freely accessible map for everyone. In addition to the humanitarian side, I was interested immediately from the professional side." [Ryerson University News & Events](#)

**Laurentian University Geography Course in Macedonia:** Seven thousand kilometres away from their usual classroom, a group of Laurentian University students spent three weeks this spring on a unique 'field study' course in Geography. The eight students travelled to the Republic of Macedonia in May, exploring the capital of Skopje and working alongside students from Saints Cyril and Methodius University. The field study course was designed by Laurentian University's Dr. Jorge Virchez, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography. After being invited to collaborate on some research with an old friend in Macedonia, Dr. Virchez decided to use the occasion to create a learning opportunity for his students, and devised a course outline. "I thought this would be an ideal way for our students to learn about a place that is fascinating, and that they probably would not see otherwise," said Dr. Virchez. "It is a beautiful country with a rich history, and I know from past experience that students really benefit from first-hand learning." After a few days in the capital city, the Laurentian students travelled to the mountainous region of Prilep, where they worked alongside Macedonian students in conducting interviews with elderly village residents, many of whom raise sheep and tend small gardens. Guy says it was enlightening to hear their stories and to explore another way of life. "I think they're more value-oriented, where we in North America are more goal-oriented," she says. "They see long-term, longer time-horizons, and we're all 'instant.' They'll take 'the long way home.' The pace of life is so different." Jordan Babando, a Master's student was keen to sign up for Professor Virchez' field study course. Asked for words of advice to future students who might have the chance to take a cultural geography course, Babando said "Get ready for a great experience. You may suffer culture shock, but it's worth it, and the food is amazing. Don't miss out!" [NorthernLife.ca](#)

**U Guelph Geography student Jennifer Jones wins Trudeau Scholarship:** A University of Guelph PhD candidate has received a Trudeau Scholarship, the most prestigious doctoral award in Canada. Geography student Jennifer Jones is one of 16 scholars to win a \$60,000 scholarship from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation this year. Originally from Yukon, Jones received her undergraduate degree from Queen's University in 1992. After working in indigenous health for many years, she earned a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2013. Looking for a way to

continue studying indigenous health and well-being, she found U of G geography professor Ben Bradshaw. “He took a chance in inviting me, and I am thankful for it,” said Jones, who also acknowledged faculty and staff in the Department of Geography for supporting her Trudeau application. She will return to Yukon next winter and later to Australia to investigate policy issues. Jones studies the effects of colonialism and assimilation on indigenous health and well-being, and how to improve policies, including environmental assessments, to mitigate the health impacts of mining developments. “I feel honoured and a little overwhelmed,” said Jones, who studies human health impacts of mine developments in the Canadian North. “The financial support will enable me to work with Northern indigenous communities and take the time to delve into my research.” Begun in 2003, the Trudeau Scholarships support doctoral students studying human rights and dignity, responsible citizenship, Canada and the world, and humans and their natural environment. [U Guelph News](#)

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**Laurentian University Geography Course in Macedonia.** The Department of Geography organized the course the Cultural Geography of the Balkans. The course took place in the Republic of Macedonia from May 12 to June 2, 2014. Ten Canadian Students and a Professor were in Macedonia. The Laurentian course was hosted by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Sts. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje.

**GIScience Study Group & Esri Canada Awards presented at #CAG2015:** First place: [Jake Wall](#) (UBC), Supervisor: Brian Klinkenberg (*African elephant conservation: new spatial approaches bring new understanding*). Runner-up: **Gillian Harvey** (UVic), Supervisor: Trisalyn Nelson (*Towards improved methods for modeling marine mammal distributions and densities to support coastal conservation*).

**U British Columbia Field School at Williams Lake:** Fieldwork is a cornerstone of geographical research, and should be an integral part of an undergraduate education in Geography. Noting the lack of an annual, local field course in Human Geography and Environment and Sustainability at UBC, Dr. Siobhán McPhee developed such a course through a Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund grant. The primary course objective was to provide students with an opportunity to apply skills learned in the classroom to community building projects in BC, with an emphasis on mutual benefit between the student and the community. [UBC Geography](#)

**U Toronto's Benita Tam** receives the Canadian Association of Geographers' [Robin Armstrong Memorial Prize for Excellence in Indigenous Studies](#).

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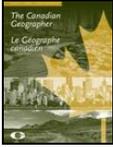
#### **New Theses and Dissertations:**

Justin Alan Stefanik. 2015. [Squaring Palliser's Triangle: The normalization of nature in the Canadian dry-land prairies 1860-1940](#). PhD Dissertation. Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Supervisors: Fiona Mackenzie and Simon Dalby.

Andrew Williams. 2015. [Governmentality and mining: Analyzing the environmental impact assessment for the Mary River Mine, Nunavut, Canada](#). M.A. thesis. Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Supervisor: Emilie Cameron.

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## New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Jesse S. Sayles. 2015. [No wilderness to plunder: Process thinking reveals Cree land-use via the goose-scape](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12201

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## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Valorie A. Crooks, Victoria Casey, Rebecca Whitmore, Rory Johnston and Jeremy Snyder. 2015. 45. ['They go the extra mile, the extra ten miles...': examining Canadian medical tourists' interactions with health care workers abroad](#). In: Handbook on Medical Tourism and Patient Mobility. Edited by Neil Lunt, Daniel Horsfall, Johanna Hanefeld. Edward Elgar Publishing. 451-460.

Grant Ferguson and Scott Jasechko. 2015. [The isotopic composition of the Laurentide Ice Sheet and fossil groundwater](#). Geophysical Research Letters. DOI: 10.1002/2015GL064106

Mark P. Thomas and Steven Tufts. 2015. [Austerity, right populism, and the crisis of labour in Canada](#). Antipode. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12162

Tristan Pearce, James Ford, Ashlee Cunsolo Willox and Barry Smit. 2015. [Inuit Traditional Ecological Knowledge \(TEK\) subsistence hunting and adaptation to climate change in the Canadian Arctic](#). Arctic 68.

Yuhui Qiaoa, Niels Halberga, Saminathan Vaheesana and Steffanie Scotta. 2015. [Assessing the social and economic benefits of organic and fair trade tea production for small-scale farmers in Asia: a comparative case study of China and Sri Lanka](#). Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems. DOI:10.1017/S1742170515000162.

Linda Trinh, Kristian Larsen, Guy E. Faulkner, Ronald C. Plotnikoff, Ryan E. Rhodes, Scott North and Kerry S. Courneya. 2015. [Social-ecological correlates of physical activity in kidney cancer survivors](#). Journal of Cancer Survivorship. DOI:10.1007/s11764-015-0462-y

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## Other “Geographical” News

**Carbon and curriculum - towards evidence-based climate change education in Canada:** Despite an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is a threat to our society, many young Canadians do not view it as a major issue. This suggests flaws in the way that youth are educated on climate change. I therefore investigated climate change education in Canada to recommend improvements. I analyzed Canadian secondary science curricula according to two frameworks to determine how thoroughly climate change is addressed. Results showed that Canadian provinces provide more comprehensive coverage of climate change than American states (70% of Canadian provinces give the highest level of coverage compared to 10% of American states). [LUP Student Papers](#)

**Dispersal of alien species redefines biogeography:** It has been hypothesized that globalization of human-mediated dispersal of species may break down biogeographic boundaries. However, empirical tests had been lacking until recently. An international research team has now discovered a comprehensive biogeographic reorganization for 175 species of alien gastropods across 56 countries. The data shows that homogenization is indeed happening. Geographic barriers to dispersal have fallen down but climate still limits how species colonize new areas. [ScienceDaily](#)

**'Myths' persist about the increase in human-caused seismic activity:** New research addresses some common misconceptions about induced seismicity -- the biggest of which is that it is primarily related to oil and gas recovery by hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking.' [ScienceDaily](#)

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### Some not so “Geographical” News



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