



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Calgary's Shelley Alexander aims to find out if coyotes are a real threat: Shelley Alexander knows coyotes have a bad rap, but she wants to find out why. They are often described as pesky or aggressive, and dangerous to pets, livestock or people. "There is a perception of risk associated with coyotes," said Alexander, an associate professor of geography at the University of Calgary and a human-wildlife conflict specialist. "In some cases, those are real. "We want to understand what's driving those situations that creates the risk." Alexander, who spent eight years researching coyotes and human conflict in Calgary, has determined that it's unusual for humans to be attacked by coyotes. She and colleague Dianne Draper, along with two graduate students, will spend the next few years talking to property owners in the Foothills — from Bearspaw west to the Ghost, and the Trans-Canada Highway north to Sundre — about their experiences with coyotes. The [Foothills Coyote Initiative](#), which launches this month and runs until 2019, will collect information through in-depth interviews and online surveys to build a profile of what's happening on farms, ranches and acreages west of Calgary. "The real interest to me is the area where the landscape is rapidly changing from agricultural to . . . those larger homes on small acreages," said Alexander. "It's an important focal area because we know that when we transition toward urbanized landscapes we increase the chance of conflict." "The landscape is one of the fastest changing landscapes in North America, so it's a critical area to get into." Alexander said she hopes the information will help improve the connections among scientists, wildlife managers and the people who live on the landscape. "The end goal being: improving welfare of the people's experiences out there, helping their perception of risk, improving welfare and the situation for domestic animals — whether it's cattle, or dogs and cats," she said. "Then, helping maintain healthy coyote populations out there." [Calgary Herald](#)

Carleton U's Jack D. Ives receives Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal: Prof. Jack D. Ives, PhD, eminent montologist and Honorary Research Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University (Ottawa), has been selected to receive the world's highest award for mountain advocacy: the Lifetime Achievement edition of the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal. Montology is the interdisciplinary study of all aspects of mountains, including highland-lowland linkages, and focuses particularly on mitigating and managing disasters, improving stewardship of mountain ecosystems, and sustaining mountain livelihoods and culture. Dr. Kumar P. Mainali, research professor at the University of Maryland and President of Mountain Legacy, released a statement explaining that the award is presented for remarkable service in the conservation of culture and nature in mountainous regions. The medal both recognizes Sir Edmund Hillary's own service on behalf of mountain people and their environment and also encourages the continuing emulation of his example. Dr. Mainali emphasized that This is the first Lifetime Achievement edition of the Hillary Medal. [Carleton DGES News](#)

U Victoria's Ian Walker warns B.C. coast should brace for 'monster' El Nino year: The "monster" El Nino weather system expected to hit Canada's West Coast later this fall and winter could lead to higher tides, flooding and erosion in low-lying coastal areas, says a professor at the University of Victoria. Ian Walker's warning comes out of part of a [larger study](#) by a group of researchers from five countries bordering the Pacific who looked into El Nino and La Nina weather systems. The study was published this week in the journal Nature Geoscience. Walker, a geography professor whose specialties include beach and dune systems, coastal erosion and climate-change impacts, said he contributed data collected from the west coast of Vancouver Island, between Tofino and Ucluelet. "What makes B.C. kind of distinct in the broader Pacific Basin is that we see coastal erosion and flooding responses for both El Nino and La Nina," said Walker. "Now this year is a pretty monster El Nino, probably the largest ever witnessed. We know that in past El Ninos from here to California we've seen some of the highest historic rates of erosion. So we can prepare for that and we've seen that signal in our data." El Nino is a natural, tropical, ocean temperature phenomenon, in which warm water near the equator in the Pacific moves towards South America's northern coast and then turns northward, as far as Haida Gwaii and Alaska, said Walker. "As warm things expand, we see a higher water level, on the order of tens of centimetres, depending on where you are," said Walker. "So that's super imposed on the tides and storms are then superimposed on top of that." The result can be higher ocean-water levels, he said. "This is a big El Nino year, so we should be prepared but we should also be prepared as much for the La Nina which could follow in a couple years," said Walker. [The Vancouver Sun](#) | [Global News](#) | [National Post](#) | [CHEK TV](#) |

U Regina's David Sauchyn warns oilsands may face severe water shortages from Athabasca River: The river that provides water to the oilsands industry is much more prone to multi-year droughts than modern records show, suggesting that the industry's current level of water use may not be sustainable, a new study suggests. A [study](#) led by University of Regina researcher David Sauchyn has found that those water flow measurements aren't that representative of the river's long-term behaviour. "What we show is if you go back 900 years, the river is much more variable than you would think based on measurements since 1950s," Sauchyn said. In order to get centuries' worth of data, Sauchyn and his colleagues drilled pencil-sized cores from live trees and cut cross sections of dead trees to measure their rings. They sampled hundreds of very old Douglas firs and limber pine trees growing on the dry slopes in the upper part of the Athabasca basin. The researchers compared the "climate record" found in the tree rings to measured water flows in the Athabasca River since 1952 and found a very close correlation. They then used that to estimate water flows going back 900 years. What they found were records of droughts that lasted years to decades, including relatively recent severe droughts from 1888-96 and another one from 1790 to 1806, when river flows were lower than the minimum ever recorded by modern instruments. Some droughts in previous centuries were even worse, lasting up to half a century. "That is something we just haven't experienced, when we do it's going to be difficult because we're not used to it," Sauchyn said, "but also because it will reoccur in a much warmer climate than in the past — a double whammy." [CBC News](#)

U Toronto's Evan Castel's research on understanding nurses' and physicians' fear of repercussions for reporting errors: Physicians and nurses are afraid to speak up about unsafe medical practices, says a new study by University of Toronto and York University researchers, and this puts patients' health at risk. To the researchers' surprise, the study of over 2,700 Canadian doctors and nurses showed that fear did not change with time on the job: older, more experienced clinicians were no less intimidated than their more junior colleagues when it came to reporting patient safety issues. Nor was fear tied to age or gender, as seen with other workplace behaviours. Instead, a supportive work environment makes all the difference when it comes to encouraging clinicians to report problems. "Punishing staff merely encourages denial, fear and secrecy. We saw that safety leadership from the unit matters, but leadership from the larger hospital itself matters far more," said Evan Castel, a PhD candidate in geography and public health policy at U of T. [U Toronto News](#)

New textbook coedited by UNBC professors Margo Greenwood and Sarah de Leeuw gives voice to Indigenous perspectives on health. The textbook, [Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social](#) seeks to move academic discussion beyond established social health determinants, such as income and education, to help explore impacts of other factors, including colonization and colonialism, environment, geography, and culture. What makes this book special is that it has been written by Indigenous people about Indigenous people and their viewpoints on health," explained de Leeuw, an associate professor in the Northern Medical Program, a partnership between UNBC and the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine, and in UBC's School of Population and Public Health. "It also provides an artistic lens on health issues rarely seen in academic medical text. The book includes creative voice in the form of poems, stories and other art that provide a unique and serious reflection on health status." The book features contributions from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis writers, with chapters ranging from scholarly papers by Aboriginal Health research experts to reflective essays by Indigenous leaders and insights on well-being shared through community members. [UNBC Newsroom](#)

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Melinda Agapito. 2015. On making conservation tradeoffs spatially explicit: A multi-criteria method for integrating competing stakeholders priorities in marine conservation planning. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Department of Geography, Memorial University, Newfoundland. Supervisors: Rodolphe Devillers and Evan Edinger.

Robin Olive Kite. 2015. [Movement analytics: A data-driven approach to quantifying space-time variation in grizzly bear \(*Ursus arctos L.*\) near-road movement patterns](#). Unpublished MSc thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Trisalyn Nelson.



The Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers – Ontario Division (CAGONT), in Ottawa, October 23 & 24. CAGONT 2015 will be held in the Loeb Building at Carleton University. The conference is hosted by the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University.

Oral presentations and posters will be scheduled from submitted abstracts. Field trips will take place on Friday, October 23rd with oral and poster sessions held on Saturday, October 24th. We welcome proposals for the organization of oral presentations and posters. If interested, please submit your proposal before the abstract deadline of Oct. 9. Conferences details at [CAGONT 2015](#)



According to 2015 World University Rankings the **best subject to study at UBC is geography**.
[VanCityBuzz](#)

U Victoria's Chris Darimont commented that an NHL hockey player charged with illegal grizzly bear hunt in B.C. would not have been apprehended without the Heiltsuk Nation's efforts. "(But) the provincial government is going to gloat that this demonstrates that they have enforcement capability and this is a well-managed, scientific hunt," he said. Prof. Darimont said the government is defending the annual hunt for political gain from hunting advocates. [The Globe and Mail](#)

UNBC Geography's Dr. Greg Halseth and co-authors Sean Markey and Laura Ryser wrote the BC chapter for the recently launched "State of Rural Canada 2015" published by The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF). Read the full chapter [here](#).

U Victoria MSc candidate Alex Francis awarded a scholarship by the Association of Professional Biology. [UVic Geography News](#)

Trent U 4th year Geography-ERS major Michael Schmidt is the 2015-16 recipient of the Currie Honours Prize in support of his Honours Thesis research on the effect of road salt on the Canadian Shield. [Trent Geography News](#)

PCAG 2015: The Department of Geography and the Environment at Lakehead University and the Department of Geography at the University of Winnipeg are co-hosting [PCAG2015](#) to be held from September 25-27, 2015 at the Lakeside Inn and Conference Centre in Kenora, Ontario.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Taylor Anderson and Suzana Dragicevic. 2015. [An agent-based modeling approach to represent infestation dynamics of the emerald ash borer beetle](#). Ecological Informatics. DOI:10.1016/j.ecoinf.2015.09.003

Tom Baker and Cristina Temenos. 2015. [Urban policy mobilities research: Introduction to a debate](#). International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12252

Patrick L. Barnard, Andrew D. Short, Mitchell D. Harley, Kristen D. Splinter, Sean Vitousek, Ian L. Turner, Jonathan Allan, Masayuki Banno, Karin R. Bryan, André Doria, Jeff E. Hansen, Shigeru Kato, Yoshiaki Kuriyama, Evan Randall-Goodwin, Peter Ruggiero, Ian J. Walker and Derek K. Heathfield. 2015. [Coastal vulnerability across the Pacific dominated by El Niño/Southern Oscillation](#). Nature Geoscience. DOI:10.1038/ngeo2539

Abdullah Al Mamun and Ryan K. Brook. 2015. [Evaluating local rules and practices for avoiding tragedies in small-scale fisheries of oxbow lakes, Southern Bangladesh](#). International Journal of the Commons 9.

Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward. 2015. [Thinking through dualisms in urban policy mobilities](#). International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12254

Amy Mui, Yuhong He and Qihao Weng. 2015. [An object-based approach to delineate wetlands across landscapes of varied disturbance with high spatial resolution satellite imagery](#). ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing 109:30–46.

Anja A. Sorensen, Gordon B. Stenhouse, Mathieu L. Bourbonnais and Trisalyn A. Nelson. 2015. [Effects of habitat quality and anthropogenic disturbance on grizzly bear \(*Ursus arctos*\) home range fidelity](#). Canadian Journal of Zoology. DOI:10.1139/cjz-2015-0095

Other “Geographical” News

We could have discovered climate change as early as the 1940s if we had just looked: In parts of the tropics, anthropogenic climate change has been tinkering with the thermometer since the 1940s. Running 23 global climate simulations that combine historical trends (beginning in 1860) with future emissions scenarios, researchers estimated when the very first fingerprints of climate warming — extreme temperatures and shifts in the mean annual temperature — would have become measurable across the world, had we been paying any attention. Near the equator, the writing was on the wall decades before the concept of anthropogenic climate change had been realized. [Gizmodo](#)

Public service union helped save Agriculture Canada library's documents from the dumpster: By exposing the trashing of reports, journals and other documents, Canada's public service union may have prevented even more from ending up in a landfill, said Johanne Fillion, a spokesperson for the Professional Institute of Public Service. After PIPSC issued a release in late August showing the holdings from a suddenly-closed federal government library tossed in a dumpster, Agriculture Canada has since boxed a large amount of material, Fillion said. Staff at the Alberta-based Agriculture and Agri-Food Lethbridge Research Centre informed Fillion that boxes and boxes of books are sitting in the hallway of the centre, awaiting their fate. The research documents and journals, discarded and otherwise, came from the library of the research centre, which the federal government shut down in late August. It's not known how much research material was discarded in the closure. [National Pbserver](#)

Researchers seek to make science an election issue: Scientists fed up with cuts to their funding and being muzzled by the Conservative government are mobilizing to highlight the issues during the current federal election campaign. This is Science Literacy Week in Canada and they deem it to be a good time talk about the importance of science and using hard evidence to make decisions. “This election presents an unprecedented opportunity to turn the page on years of abuse and neglect of science and evidence,” says Katie Gibbs, executive director of the science advocacy group, Evidence For Democracy. “Hopefully it will be a turning point for Canada to once again be a (sic) international leader for science and research.” [Radio Canada International](#)

Earliest evidence of ancient North American salmon fishing dated to at least 11,500 years ago: Researchers in Alaska have found the earliest known evidence that Ice Age humans in North America used salmon as a food source, according to a new paper. "Salmon fishing has deep roots, and we now know that salmon have been consumed by North American humans at least 11,500 years ago," said lead author Carrin Halfman. The findings also suggest that salmon spawning runs were established much earlier and much farther north than previously thought, at the end of the Pleistocene epoch. [EurekAlert!](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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