

GeogNews

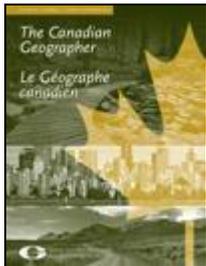
**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Canada's top scientist faces tough challenge: Kirsty Duncan, the medical geographer who last month became Canada's first Minister of Science, has a big mandate: to ensure that scientific considerations again figure into public-policy decisions. Duncan, appointed by newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, inherits a research community bruised by years of cuts to science programmes and research jobs under former prime minister Stephen Harper. In Canada, where ministers are chosen from among elected members of parliament, it is rare to see higher degrees in fields other than law or medicine. Trudeau's cabinet is a notable exception: Duncan, who earned a PhD in geography in 1992 at the University of Edinburgh, UK, is one of a small group of ministers with doctoral degrees in economics, sociology or engineering. Harper's government famously muzzled government researchers. But change is in the air. Duncan has been asked to shoulder the burden of shoring up Canada's science enterprise; this includes steps such as reforming the country's weakened environmental-assessment process and making basic research a higher funding priority. But it is not clear whether Duncan will have the power to make such changes. Canada's science ministers have historically operated with minimal budgets, and sometimes as junior ministers. Duncan's clout will not be put to the test until Trudeau releases his first federal budget in February. [Nature](#)

Wilfrid Laurier U's Robert McLeman and RinkWatch report nice ice in Calgary, swimming pools in Waterloo: El Nino has thrown Canada's backyard ice rinks into a Bizarro World, causing ideal early-winter skating conditions in the Prairies and soupy ponds east of the Great Lakes. "Where I am — it's great weather for having outdoor swimming pools," said Robert McLeman in Waterloo, Ont. The professor of geography and environmental studies at Wilfrid Laurier University is one of the founders of [RinkWatch](#), a website allowing people to pin their neighbourhood ice rinks on a map, and update the conditions all winter. "Then what we do is we pool that data with rink watchers across North America and we use it to track a number of different things relating to winter weather conditions and climate trends." After four seasons, McLeman says, he and his team have figured out the "magic" formula, in terms of temperature, to produce the perfect outdoor ice rink. "Several nights of -10 C or colder to get a good base and then you need a minimum of -5 C temperatures on a daily basis," he said. McLeman says that typically, those perfect ice rink conditions roll into Ontario and Quebec in late November or early December — allowing people in those parts to skate outdoors until the end of February. But instead, El Nino cast an early cold spell over Alberta — where backyard skating doesn't usually get going until January. The first ice rink recorded this season in Canada on RinkWatch as being easy to skate on was in Fort McMurray, Alta., and McLeman says he's seeing good conditions in rinks across Calgary. But he doesn't expect it to last. Not if El Nino has its way. [CBCNews | Calgary](#)

New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Clare J. A. Mitchell and Kendra O'Neill. 2015. [Tracing economic transition in the mine towns of northern Ontario: An application of the "resource-dependency model"](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12238

Rajendra Prasad Subedi and Mark Warren Rosenberg. 2015. [High-skilled immigrants—low-skilled jobs: Challenging everyday health](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12237

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Paul Stephany. 2015. [Cartography and contested ocean space: an analysis of intertidal shellfish harvest spaces in the territory of the Heiltsuk First Nation](#). M.A. thesis. Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Hung Chak Ho, Anders Knudby, Yongming Xu, Matus Hodul and Mehdi Aminipouri. 2016. [A comparison of urban heat islands mapped using skin temperature, air temperature, and apparent temperature \(Humidex\), for the greater Vancouver area](#). Science of The Total Environment 544:929–938.

Paul Kingsbury. 2016. [Rethinking the aesthetic geographies of multicultural festivals: a Nietzschean perspective](#). Annals of the American Association of Geographers 106:222-241.

Maarten Krabbendam, Nick Eyles, Niko Putkinen, Tom Bradwell and Lina Arbelaez-Moreno. 2015. [Streamlined hard beds formed by palaeo-ice streams: a review](#). Sedimentary Geology. DOI:10.1016/j.sedgeo.2015.12.007

Kristian Larsen, Ron N. Buliung and Guy E.J. Faulkner. 2015. [School travel. How the built and social environment relate to children's walking and independent mobility in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area, Ontario, Canada](#). Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board. 2513. DOI: 10.3141/2513-10

John C. Lehr and Serge Cipko. 2015. [The Ukrainian cultural landscape in Canada and Brazil: A century of change and divergence](#). Canadian Ethnic Studies 47:171-204.

John Lindsay. 2015. [The practice of DEM stream burning revisited](#). Earth Surface Processes and Landforms. DOI: 10.1002/esp.3888

Amina Mezdoor, Luisa Veronis and Robert McLeman. 2015. [Environmental influences on Haitian migration to Canada and connections to social inequality: Evidence from Ottawa-Gatineau and Montreal](#). In: Environmental Migration and Social Inequality. Edited by: Robert McLeman, Thomas Faist and Jeanette Schade. Springer International Publishing. Part II:103-115.

Jon F. Tunncliffe and Michael Church. 2015. [A 1-D morphodynamic model of postglacial valley incision](#). Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface 120:2253–2279.

Josie Wittme and Kate Parizeau. 2016. [Informal recyclers' geographies of surviving neoliberal urbanism in Vancouver, BC](#). Applied Geography 66:92-99.

C.M. Ye, P. Cui; J. Li and S. Pirasteh. 2015. [A method for recognising building materials based on hyperspectral remote sensing](#). Materials Research Innovations 29(S10):9-94.

Yu Zhang, Stephen A. Wolfe, Peter D. Morse, Ian Olthof and Robert H. Fraser. 2015. [Spatiotemporal impacts of wildfire and climate warming on permafrost across a subarctic region, Canada](#). Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface 120:2338-2356.

Other “Geographical” News

Skating counterclockwise: a great Canadian mystery: It comes across as a curious Canadian conundrum, but the question 'Why do we skate counterclockwise' is in fact a global mystery. Of course, indoor rinks are often set up to guide skaters to move counterclockwise. But CBC video producer Evelyn Asselin observed that even at outdoor neighbourhood rinks, people naturally skate to the left, so she set out to investigate. "I don't know," said Preet Dhillon, a Calgarian who was out skating with her kids on Wednesday at the Olympic Oval. "This is a tricky quiz. The practice goes beyond skating too. Think of track and field events. Even animals like dogs and horses tend to race counterclockwise, though maybe there are exceptions in places like the U.K. and [Australia](#). The method may even date back to Roman times when chariots also raced — you guessed it — to the left. "People have tried to study the reasons behind the counterclockwise effect, but no scientific reasons have been identified," said Marcel Lacroix, associate director of sport at the University of Calgary's Olympic Oval. He says there are some theories why this happens — that our hearts are just left of centre in our bodies, making that side ever-so-slightly heavier. More people are right-handed, and it's been hypothesized that turning left might feel more natural for the majority of the population. In fact, the only person observed skating clockwise at the Shaganappi outdoor rink on Wednesday was left-handed. "It's just a lot of goofy speculation," said Lacroix. What if you're an outlier who prefers to circle the ice clockwise? "Tough luck," Lacroix said, laughing. [CBCNews | Calgary](#)

Candy cane crisis: U.S. takeover leaves Canadian retailers short: Vancouver area Santa Dick Woldring knew he might be facing a sticky situation more than a month ago. In early November, Woldring — who for 18 years has portrayed Santa at paid and unpaid events — tried to buy his usual supply of 7,000 peppermint candy canes and came up short. He couldn't find any. "This year they didn't have any and I got into a panic," said Woldring, who tried various retailers with no luck. He isn't alone. This year, many Canadian retailers are running short of the iconic striped treat. [CBCNews | British Columbia](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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