



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers  
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**U Northern British Columbia's Stephen Dery reports smaller snowpack threatening Fraser River:** A new study shows the volume of the mountain snowpack feeding B.C.'s largest watershed has dropped by almost one fifth over a six-decade period. That snow used to supply the vast majority - 70 per cent - of the Fraser River Basin's annual flow. Now that's dipped to half, with the rest made up of rainfall, according to a University of Northern B.C. It's part of a trend of shorter, warmer winters and drier summers, thanks to rising air temperatures, shifts in rainfall timing, and a decline in snowfall. It means, on average across the basin, the snow melts 10 days earlier. That presents problems for salmon: with less water flowing through habitats in the summer, the water warms, making it more difficult for salmon to survive. When UNBC researchers started looking at trends in the Fraser River's daily flow, they expected to see a decline in both snowpack and snowmelt. "I think what is shocking is just how much that has changed," said environmental science professor Stephen Dery of the 19 per cent drop. "That's a very large decline. That's very significant." Dery led the research over a three-year period, collecting data upstream at the Fraser River at Shelley and the Thompson River near Spences Bridge. They looked at the Fraser River's main stem and six of its major tributaries between 1949 to 2006. Interestingly, even as the snowpack decreased, the actual volume of water entering the Fraser River has remained fairly static. "We're seeing more rainfall than we have in the past, so it's compensating for that loss of snow," said Dery. "There is indication that the Fraser River is now transitioning from a snow-dominated regime to a hybrid one - in other words heading more towards a rainfall-dominated system. [Prince George Citizen](#)

**Brock U's Ebru Ustundag takes an inter-disciplinary approach to social justice:** Recently faculty from Brock University, as well as graduates currently working in academia tackled issues around teaching social justice and breaking barriers between the school and the streets. One of the members of the panel was geography professor Ebru Ustundag who spoke out about what social justice means in her area of study and research. Ebru had many things to say about Turkey, the idea of a "scholarly activist", and all the baggage that comes along with the term. She explained how she encourages the creation of "spaces of care" in her research/teaching and that "belonging and connecting have been essential" to understanding her research. She proposed many questions. "What are the conditions that make social justice possible?... Who has the rights to have rights?... Social justice research is important, but it is quite messy." [The Brock Press](#)

**U Victoria's Cam Owens and Trisalyn Nelson involved in community-embedded education related to plans to make Victoria "the best small cycling city in the world":** With its compact size, mild climate, and flat terrain, one could easily make the argument that Victoria offers some of the best conditions for cycling in all of Canada. Beyond the celebrity planners and bold strategy being #Biketoria, perhaps one of the most intriguing and unique aspects of the design and planning process has been the development of a brand-new course in the Geography Department at the University of Victoria. This course came together out of a chance meeting between faculty members Cameron Owens and Trisalyn Nelson. Students had returned from Dr. Owens' field school studying planning innovations in Northern Europe, inspired to make a difference in their own communities. During a meeting with mayor and council to explore opportunities for collaboration – to which Owens had invited Nelson, an expert in spatial data – Mayor Helps wondered aloud about a community-embedded education opportunity modeled after Vancouver's now-famous CityStudio program. "In less than a week, we drew up a pilot course that would combine the Geography Department's desired learning outcomes with a meaningful work experience, while meeting the city's needs of supporting real research and outreach," says Nelson. The interest among students proved as passionate as council's, and within a week, the 30 student enrollment was met and the class was off and running. #Biketoria provides a rare opportunity for collaboration between today's professionals and those of the next generation, where students act as an extension of the city's transportation department and Urban Systems' team, while critically scrutinizing the process. Working from the Capital Regional District office in the city centre rather than UVic's remote campus, students will be able to better visualize the spaces slotted for development, and interact directly with the community. [VanCityBuzz](#)

**Memorial U Masters student Jeanette Carney gathers tales of Asbestos Hill:** Across a sprawling stretch of tundra south of Nunavik's Hudson Strait sit the gravel-like remains of the region's first-ever mine site, Asbestos Hill or Putuniq in Inuttitut, which operated from 1972 to 1984. For a project that shut down more than 30 years ago, the mine's mountainous tailings ponds have left a noticeable impact on the land and on the Inuit who live in the region, most of them from the nearby communities of Kangiqsujuaq and Salluit. And, although an increasing amount of research focuses on the social impacts of mining on Arctic communities, graduate student Jeanette Carney noted that little had been documented on the impacts of Nunavik's first mine — second in the Canadian Arctic, after the Rankin Inlet nickel mine. So Carney, a masters degree student in the Department of Geography at Memorial University in St. John's, Nfld., set about interviewing former Asbestos Hill workers and their families, many of whom now work at the two mines currently operating in Nunavik, the Raglan and Nunavik Nickel mines. And what she's discovered so far — she has yet to write her thesis — is a legacy with many sore points, but which has led to better conditions for Inuit in today's mining industry. That's where Asbestos Hill has made a real social impact, Carney discovered, through her research: the mine inspired the types of regulations and agreements that are now in place to help Inuit benefit from the mining industry. Yet what the mine has left behind has also become an integral part of the landscape and life in Nunavik, for better or for worse. [Nanatsiaq Online](#)

**U British Columbia PhD Students Leonora King and Marc Tadaki – ask 'What does it mean to be a Geographer?':** PhD Geography students, [Leonora King](#) and [Marc Tadaki](#) hosted the first ever graduate student "workshop to discuss human and physical geographical identity". Outcomes from the workshop included recognition that human and physical geographers have different feelings about disciplinary identity; human geographers appear to be more comfortable articulating what is 'geographical' about their work/approach and why that is valuable; and physical geographers tend to identify more with the biogeosciences and are less confident in articulating why being a 'geographical' biogeoscientist is a virtue rather than a weakness. [UBC Geography](#)

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



Jessica Blewett and Neil Hanlon. 2016. [Disablement as inveterate condition: Living with habitual ableism in Prince George, British Columbia](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12254

K. Wayne Forsythe, Chris H. Marvin, Christine J. Valancius, James P. Watt, Stephen J. Swales, Joseph M. Aversa and Daniel J. Jakubek. 2016. [Using geovisualization to assess lead sediment contamination in Lake St. Clair](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12253

Andrea Olive. 2016. [What is the fracking story in Canada?](#) The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12257



**U Saskatchewan welcomes geographer James Robson** to the SENS faculty as Assistant Professor, tenure-track, in Human Dimensions of Sustainability, effective July 1, 2016. Dr. Robson comes to SENS from the University of Manitoba, where he has been a post-doctoral fellow and a research associate with the Natural Resources Institute. He held a SSHRC Banting Post-doctoral Fellowship at the University of Redlands, and completed his PhD at the University of Manitoba and his MA at the University of Sussex. Dr. Robson's research focuses on common property theory, emphasizing environmental governance and biodiversity conservation.

**Geography helped me get where I am now:** The GANS Geographic Education Posters were created to help young people identify some of the endless possibilities that learning geography provides, by highlighting the various different geography related post-secondary education programs and geospatial related career opportunities available. All the professionals featured here are graduates of Nova Scotia high schools and have followed a variety of post-secondary paths, including both colleges and universities, to get where they are today. The custom designed posters were professionally printed and sent to the corresponding high school that the featured professional graduated from. Clicking an image below will open up a dedicated page for the individual with a larger digital PDF version of the poster and a summary of the person's post-secondary path, and his/her present job.

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## Recent Theses and Dissertations

Sai Latt. 2016. Depoliticization, securitization and violent accumulation in the integration of the Greater Mekong Sub-region. PhD dissertation. Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Supervisor: Janet Sturgeon.

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## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Frederick Ato Armah, Sheila A. Boamah, Reginald Quansah, Samuel Obiri and Isaac Luginaah. 2016. [Working conditions of male and female artisanal and small-scale goldminers in Ghana: Examining existing disparities](#). The Extractive Industries and Society. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2015.12.010

Roger Holmes, David G. Armanini and Adam G. Yates. 2016. [Effects of best management practice on ecological condition: Does location matter?](#) Environmental Management. DOI:10.1007/s00267-016-0662-x

Biljana Narancic, Reinhard Pienitz, Bernhard Chaplign, Hanno Meyer, Pierre Francus and Jean-Pierre Guilbault. 2016. [Postglacial environmental succession of Nettiing Lake \(Baffin Island, Canadian Arctic\) inferred from biogeochemical and microfossil proxies](#). Quaternary Science Reviews. DOI:10.1016/j.quascirev.2015.12.022

Joel W. Trubilowicz, J.M. Shea, G. Jost and R.D. Moore. 2016. [Suitability of North American Regional Reanalysis \(NARR\) output for hydrologic modelling and analysis in mountainous terrain](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI:10.1002/hyp.10795

Sangheon Yi and Norm R. Catto. 2016. [Paleoenvironmental studies in the Korean Peninsula and adjacent geographic areas](#). Quaternary International. DOI: 10.1016/j.quaint.2015.10.096

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### Other “Geographical” News

**B.C. First Nations’ ancient medicinal clay shows promise against today’s worst bacterial infections:** Naturally occurring clay from Kisameet Bay, B.C. — long used by the Heiltsuk First Nation for its healing potential — exhibits potent antibacterial activity against multidrug-resistant pathogens. “After 50 years of over-using and misusing antibiotics, ancient medicinals and other natural mineral-based agents may provide new weapons in the battle against multidrug-resistant pathogens.” The clay deposit is situated on Heiltsuk First Nation’s traditional territory, 400 kilometres north of Vancouver, Canada, in a shallow five-acre granite basin. The deposit was formed near the end of the last Ice Age. Local First Nations people have used the clay for centuries for its therapeutic properties. [UBC News](#)

**Use of digital devices in the classroom for nonclass purposes on the rise:** Students waste about one-fifth of class time on laptops, smartphones and tablets, even though they admit such behavior can harm their grades, a new report found. The average student uses those devices for “nonclass purposes” -- in other words, texting, emailing and using social media -- 11.43 times in class during a typical day. Since the survey was first conducted in 2013, the number of times students check their devices has increased from 10.93, according to the results. [Inside Higher Ed](#)

**Canadian University libraries struggle to stock journals priced in U.S. dollars:** Students and faculty at some of Canada's post-secondary schools may soon have a tougher time doing research because the low loonie is forcing libraries to rethink what journals and books they stock. Journal subscriptions are often priced in U.S. dollars, and most university libraries pay for a majority of their collection purchases in American dollars. And when it comes to purchasing library materials, the loonie is only part of a bigger problem: the quick pace at which academic journal prices tend to rise. Librarians have coined the steeply rising prices the serials crisis.

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## Some not so "Geographical" News



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GeogNews Archives: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/cag/geognews/geognews.html>  
[@CanGeographers Weekly](#): <https://paper.li/CanGeographers/1394987315>