



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Lethbridge's Chris Hopkinson takes to the skies for cross-country research mission: Dr. Chris Hopkinson, the University of Lethbridge geography professor, will be taking to the skies to conduct surveys about the environment that could provide game-changing information. Hopkinson and Dr. Laura Chasmer, Hopkinson's wife and colleague at the university, will conduct the surveys from a plane equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The duo is determined to study the ins and outs of Canada's ecosystems, including forests, water resources and wetlands, as well as the effects of climate change, such as flood hazards and permafrost loss. "While the mission has many partners and several individual objectives associated with each site, my overarching goal is to assist with documenting and understanding landscape changes at a very high resolution, over multiple Canadian ecozones, as well as the processes driving those changes" Hopkinson said. The pair will kick off their cross-country journey at the end of July, beginning with Ontario. They'll repeat former surveys in northern Ontario and Manitoba, parts of Saskatchewan and the Peace-Athabasca delta in Alberta. They'll then conduct surveys in the Northwest Territories, including areas near Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Norman Wells and Fort Simpson, Fort McMurray, Slave Lake, Calgary, the Castle Mountain watershed, Lethbridge, the Oldman River, and finally the Cypress Hills. [Global News](#)

U Northern British Columbia's Ellen Petticrew and Phil Owens leading post mine breach projects at Quesnel River Research Centre: Scientists at the Quesnel River Research Centre continue to collect sediment, water and aquatic life samples to help determine the impacts of the August 2014 Mount Polley Mine breach on the surrounding environment. "We have been looking at the trends of the sediment suspended in the water column of Quesnel River that's moving out of the lake, as well as the concentration of metals of the sediment from the riverbed," said UNBC's Ellen Petticrew, who along with her colleague Phil Owens. "In 2014 and 2015 the data from those sediment samples showed concentrations of copper quite a bit higher than the national guidelines for sediment quality," Owens said. "At one point it looked like concentrations were steadily declining since the turn over of Quesnel Lake during the winter of 2015, but in the winter of 2016 there was another pulse of contaminated sediments that came out of the lake that got deposited on the bed of the river." The copper values were nearly as high as they were during the 2015 winter turnover, and during the snow melt in early spring of 2016 there was a trend showing that concentrations of arsenic, vanadium and other elements were on the rise, Owens said. [Williams Lake Tribune](#)

U Victoria's Reuben Rose-Redwood argues against selling naming rights to civic facilities: Back in 2012, when the City of Victoria was mulling selling naming rights to civic facilities, University of Victoria geography professor Reuben Rose-Redwood launched an online petition that spelled out the argument against the idea. "By viewing public place names strictly in terms of their cash value, this sends a message to residents and visitors alike that the symbolic identity of the city is up for sale," it stated. "Instead of naming places in honour of those individuals or groups who played a significant role in Victoria's history, the proposed naming rights policy reduces public place names to 'commodities' that can be bought and sold, which has the effect of cheapening their symbolic value." In the end, Victoria was told the names of the city's facilities weren't worth as much as some had hoped. [Times-Colonist](#)

U Lethbridge's Laura Chasmer and Chris Hopkinson using laser mapping to survey northern landscape: Laser technology is helping a team of researchers gather more detailed information about the North's changing landscape. The team from the University of Lethbridge installed a state-of-the-art laser system in an airplane late last month, starting their research in northern Ontario before heading to Yellowknife this week. "It's just an amazing landscape," said Laura Chasmer, an assistant professor in geography. "There's so much diversity in the landscape that we can look at." The system emits laser light pulses to create three-dimensional topographical maps, charting everything from vegetation heights, changes in permafrost and depth of lakes and rivers. It's been an eyeopener for the researchers. Chasmer said the most prominent change she's noticed is lake levels, particularly after the N.W.T.'s extremely dry summer the last couple of years. "We have these small ponds and lakes where you're basically seeing no water in them anymore." But curiously, some lakes are maintaining their water levels. "Other lakes we're seeing are just fine, and to capacity," Chasmer said. "So this is quite interesting to us because we're wondering why these things might be changing and what's causing that." Research chair Chris Hopkinson has been surveying the territory since 2000, and says a lot has changed since then, noting the high rate of permafrost thaw, the death of trees and changes to the ecosystem. He says the new laser system is "much more sophisticated" than what they used in the past. [CBCNews|North](#)

U Alberta's Duane Froese investigate mammoth extinction on remote Alaskan island: University of Alberta researchers have helped to solve a 6,000-year-old mystery, discovering that one of the last populations of woolly mammoths likely died from thirst. Duane Froese said researchers wanted to find out why mammoths on a remote Alaskan island were able to survive thousands of years longer than their mainland counterparts. "They really are the icons of the ice age," he said. The island's mammoths survived roughly 6,000 years longer than those living in North America and Siberia, where populations went extinct 12,000 years ago. "We were able to pinpoint the time of extinction," Froese said, adding that this was done with a combination of carbon dating, DNA and fungal analysis. An international team of scientists, funded by the National Science Foundation in the United States, took a lake core sample on the island, which Froese said allowed them to reconstruct the nature of the water. The researchers discovered that the lake was becoming shallower over time. "The amount of freshwater available decreased dramatically from about 10,000 years ago to 6,000 years ago," he said. [Edmonton Journal](#)

U Calgary's Greg McDermid uses drones to hunt mountain pine beetles in Alberta forests: Tracking the spread of the mountain pine beetle has been one of the great challenges facing the forestry industry. Currently, the task requires sending teams of forestry officers into the last known areas where trees were attacked, and then spreading out in concentric circles to find where the beetles went next. This must be done once the beetles are dormant in winter. Geography professor Greg McDermid believes this task can be achieved through remote sensing using unmanned aerial vehicles more popularly known as drones. "It's an exciting time in remote sensing right now. Using UAVs we can do things at a much broader scale and cheaper than ever before," says McDermid. "We can capture images at orders of magnitude beyond anything we've been able to do before." [UToday Calgary](#)

U Victoria's Trisalyn Nelson joins ASU to lead School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning: Trisalyn Nelson, the new director of ASU's School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning as of July 1, has focused her research on examining spatial and spatial-temporal patterns in order to better understand the underlying processes behind everything from wildlife movement to hazardous chemical exposure to cycling safety. "Societal challenges are increasingly complex," Nelson said. "They include interactions between physical environments, built environments, and people. "With 54 percent of the world's population living in cities, health and sustainability require urban planning that is informed by knowledge of earth processes and human interactions with space and place." "I chose to move to ASU because I believe society needs solutions that an integrated geographical sciences and urban planning school can provide," Nelson said. Nelson joins ASU from Canada's University of Victoria, where she founded and directed the Spatial Pattern Analysis and Research Laboratory, was director of the Geomatics Program, and held the Lansdowne Research Chair in Spatial Sciences. Nelson's research initiatives build on transdisciplinarity among technical fields — integrating the power of computing, statistics and geographic information science. [ASU News](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Taylor M. Anderson and Suzana Dragičević. 2016. [Geospatial pest-parasitoid agent based model for optimizing biological control of forest insect infestation](#). Ecological Modelling 337:310–329.

Jonathan Anim Amoyaw and Isaac Luginaah. 2016. [Residential spaces and timing of first sexual intercourse among never-married youths in Nigeria](#). Archives of Sexual Behavior. DOI:10.1007/s10508-016-0803-6

Tim Aubry, Arnaud Duhoux, Fran Klodawsky, John Ecker and Elizabeth Hay. 2016. [A longitudinal study of predictors of housing stability, housing quality, and mental health functioning among single homeless individuals staying in emergency shelters](#). American Journal of Community Psychology. DOI:10.1002/ajcp.12067

Ajit Auluck, Blake Byron Walker, Greg Hislop, Scott A. Lear, Nadine Schuurman and Miriam Rosin. 2016. [Socio-economic deprivation: a significant determinant affecting stage of oral cancer diagnosis and survival](#). BMC Cancer 16:569. DOI:10.1186/s12885-016-2579-4

Kirstie Cadger, Andrews K. Quaicoo, Evans Dawoe and Marney E. Isaac. [Development interventions and agriculture adaptation: a social network analysis of farmer knowledge transfer in Ghana](#). Agriculture 6:32. DOI:10.3390/agriculture6030032

Mavis Chan, Peter A. Johnson and Malcolm Shookner. 2016. [Assessing the use of government open data and the role of data intermediaries: the case of Nova Scotia's Community Counts Program](#). JeDEM 8:1-27.

Oliver T. Coomes, Yoshito Takasaki, Christian Abizaid and J. Pablo Arroyo-Mora. 2016. [Environmental and market determinants of economic orientation among rain forest communities: Evidence from a large-scale survey in western Amazonia](#). Ecological Economics 129:260–271.

Justin Del Bel Belluz, Maycira Costa, Gregor Reid and Stephen Cross. 2016. [Bio-optical variability at a Vancouver Island aquaculture site](#). Limnology and Oceanography. DOI:10.1002/lno.10332

Daniel Germain. 2016. [A statistical framework for tree-ring reconstruction of high-magnitude mass movements: case study of snow avalanches in eastern Canada](#). Geografiska Annaler. DOI:10.1111/geoa.12138

Kira Hoffman, Dan Gavin, Ken Lertzman, Dan Smith and Brian Starzomski. 2016. [13,000 years of fire history derived from soil charcoal in a British Columbia coastal temperate rain forest](#). Ecosphere. DOI:10.1002/ecs2.1415

Nanfeng Liu and Paul Treitz. 2016. [Modelling high arctic percent vegetation cover using field digital images and high resolution satellite data](#). International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation 52:445–456.

Jean Michaud and Sarah Turner. 2016. [Tonkin's uplands at the turn of the 20th century: Colonial military enclosure and local livelihood effects](#). Asia Pacific Viewpoint 57:154-167.

Genevieve L. Noyce, Roberta Fulthorpe, Adam Gorgolewski, Paul Hazlett, Honghi Tran and Nathan Basiliko. 2016. [Soil microbial responses to wood ash addition and forest fire in managed Ontario forests](#). Applied Soil Ecology 107:368–380.

Marc Oliva, Filip Hrbacek, Jesús Ruiz-Fernández, [Miguel Ángel de Pablo, Gonçalo Vieira, Miguel Ramos and Dermot Antoniades](#). [Active layer dynamics in three topographically distinct lake catchments in Byers Peninsula \(Livingston Island, Antarctica\)](#). Catena. DOI: doi:10.1016/j.catena.2016.07.011

Matti Siemiatycki. 2016. [The making and impacts of a classic text in megaproject management: The case of cost overrun research](#). International Journal of Project Management. DOI:10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.07.003

Olav Slaymaker. 2016. [A review of three significant geohazards in the Canadian Cordillera: the case of river floods, debris flows/floods, and debris/rock avalanches](#). International Journal of Geohazards and Environment 2:92-103.

Hossein Vahidi and Wanglin Yan. 2016. [How is an informal transport infrastructure system formed? Towards a spatially explicit conceptual model](#). Open Geospatial Data, Software and Standards. DOI:10.1186/s40965-016-0009-9



Jean-Francois Rousseau, a Post-Doctoral researcher under [Janet Sturgeon](#) at Simon Fraser University, has been hired for a tenure-track position in the School of Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa. Jean-Francois has negotiated a starting date of January 1, 2017, so that he can complete his SSHRC post-doc. [SFU Geography](#)

Simon Fraser U PhD student, Natalia Perez, has published an article in a Colombian online website. The article is about a referendum that is being promoted in Colombia in order to change four articles of the Colombian Constitution of 1991. Natalia argues that a careful analysis shows how the changes would undermine their interests and, instead, favour the ones of large Colombian agribusiness companies. [SFU Geography](#)

Other “Geographical” News

Why Faroe Islanders are mapping their homeland with camera-toting sheep: There are almost twice as many sheep as people on the Faroe Islands. So a few of the 50,000 humans have decided to recruit the animals to help them map the country. The sheep are outfitted with harnesses mounted with 360-degree cameras and then left to roam. The purpose — to entice Google Street View to come to the remote islands and map the places too dangerous for the sheep: the roads. [CBC Radio](#)

‘Vancouver Vanishing’ maps hundreds of demolished character homes: A Vancouver resident who’s passionate about documenting character homes before they’re demolished has turned her popular Facebook page into an interactive map. With over 11,000 fans, the Vancouver Vanishes Facebook page has continuously posted photos and information on the hundreds of mostly West Side character homes that have faced demolition since 2013. Resident and author Caroline Adderson created the page after noticing so many beautiful homes in her neighbourhood were being torn down. She began tracking their location and taking photos during daily dog walks. Now the 410 properties tracked so far have been mapped so audiences can see just how prevalent these demos are. [Global News](#)

The past, present and future of the PhD thesis: According to one of those often-quoted statistics that should be true but probably isn’t, the average number of people who read a PhD thesis all the way through is 1.6. And that includes the author. More interesting might be the average number of PhD theses that the typical scientist has read from start to finish. Would it reach even that (probably apocryphal) benchmark? Reading back over a thesis can be like opening up a teenage diary: a painful reminder of a younger, more naive self. The prose is often rough and rambling, the analyses spotted with errors, the methods soundly eclipsed by modern ones. And students in the process of writing a thesis can find themselves in a very dark place indeed: lost in information, overwhelmed by literature, stuck for the next sentence, seduced by procrastination and wondering why on earth they signed up to this torture at all. [Nature](#).

Edmonton the first Canadian city to be mapped by Uber: Edmonton will become the first Canadian city to be mapped by Uber, the ride-sharing company announced Friday. A few dozen Uber mapping cars have begun to criss-cross Edmonton collecting data and images as part of an international project. The images recorded by the cars will help improve Uber’s service, such as finding ideal pickup and drop-off points, and the best routes for its drivers. The technology will also aid in the development of self-driving cars. [Edmonton Journal](#)

Climate change is already shifting global cloud patterns, boosting warming: Clouds are moving up, up and away. An analysis of satellite data has found that, since the early 1980s, clouds have shifted towards Earth’s poles and cloud tops have extended higher into the atmosphere. The changes match what climate models predict and are a rare step forward among much scientific uncertainty about how clouds will behave in a warming world “It’s really the first credible evidence that we have of climate change and clouds in the observed record,” says Joel Norris. [Nature](#).

Priced out of rental market, Simon Fraser students sleeping on campus: Nicholas Ree is an intensely hard-working, 23-year-old theatre student at Simon Fraser University who is currently homeless. For the last three months, Mr. Ree has been sleeping inside SFU downtown, because his meagre student budget can’t support the growing cost of shelter. Mr. Ree, who is from Japan and has lived in Vancouver for four years as a Canadian citizen, is one of a growing legion of people who have been pushed out of rental properties for any number of reasons. Most often, they are “reno-victed”, which is what happens when your landlord wants to renovate to charge a higher rent. [Globe and Mail](#)

Some Not So “Geographical” News

There’s a technical term for a sunny,
warm day which follows two rainy days.



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