



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Simon Fraser U's Meg Holden discovers discovers ways to speed up housing unit approvals: Surrey was the most expensive city in which to obtain permits for a mid-sized group of townhouses, while Vancouver was the slowest to grant approvals, according to builders' experiences. The findings were among those discovered in a multi-year series of reports authored by SFU researchers who collaborated with the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association (GVHBA) and a dozen participating municipalities. Associate SFU Geography Professor Meg Holden, co-author of the *Getting to Groundbreaking* series on municipal permitting, said the reports were meant to discover ways to speed up a backlog of 69,500 housing units awaiting approvals in a half-dozen Metro municipalities. "We completed two rounds of research and found that the wide variety of practices causes frustration among builders," Holden said. In one study, researchers asked participating municipalities to list the cost of fees for a hypothetical 22-unit townhouse on a half-hectare site. Surrey's municipal fees and charges were the highest at \$742,000, while Port Moody and White Rock came in lowest at \$184,000. The report said that costs in outlying areas like Surrey are higher because major infrastructure works such as pipes and roads tend to be less developed than they are in the metropolitan core. [Vancouver Sun](#)

U Toronto's Alemu Gonsamo and Jing M. Chen use satellite and field observations to investigate a climate change indicators across land, cryosphere and ocean: "Long-term observations records are needed to separate the anthropogenic causes and natural variability of climate change impacts. With satellite observational data now available for more than 30 years, and other field-based observations, it should be possible to attribute changes across regions to anthropogenic forcing. Alemu Gonsamo from University of Toronto, Canada and co-workers use satellite and field observations of the Northern Hemisphere to investigate a number of indicators across land, cryosphere and ocean. Climate indicator datasets such as snow cover, sea ice extent and concentration, sea level rise, spring thaw and onset of growing season are considered, in combination with atmospheric CO₂. The data span three decades from 1980-2012, although individual datasets vary in length and start date. There is a long-term relationship observed between temperature and several indicators. Detrending the data shows that natural forcings, such as solar radiation and teleconnections, are the main driver of interannual variability. In contrast, atmospheric CO₂ concentration displays a strong relationship with small interannual variability. The authors show coherent change across different biological and physical systems, which is not related to natural variability but can be attributed to anthropogenic forcing." [Nature Climate Change](#)

Simon Fraser U's Valerie Crooks on medical tourism: Thinking about a nip, tuck or, say, angioplasty in exotic surroundings? Medical tourists seek treatment in other countries for all kinds of reasons, like getting access to newer (and sometimes unproven) procedures, and circumventing lengthy wait times. And costs can be much lower. But medical tourism can also cost Canadian taxpayers. "In my experience, there are winners and losers in the industry," says Valerie Crooks, a professor at Simon Fraser University in health service geographies. "Medical tourism allows consumers more choice, and it allows the recipient countries to enhance their own medical systems. But sometimes it also cuts out local patients in destination spots." Crooks doesn't deny that Canadians are going abroad, but says it's unclear whether it is a trickle or a flow. There are about a dozen facilitation companies in Canada who act like travel agents for medical tourists. At this point, it's a niche business, says Crooks, who suspects many patients are immigrants returning to their home countries for treatment because they are familiar with the medical systems. "We have no tracking. We have no reliable numbers. There's no reason for hospitals abroad to report numbers," she says. "Because people are in search of numbers, the numbers are treated as truth. It's incredibly harmful. Policy decisions are being made on these numbers." [Ottawa Citizen](#) | [CTV News](#) | [The Province](#) | [News Talk 770, AM 630, Roundhouse Radio 98.3](#)

Statistics Canada geographers Chuck McNiven and Henry Puderer try to map Canada's true North: Let's say you live in Flin Flon, Man. Or maybe Fort Vermilion, Alta. Or maybe even Whitehorse, Yukon. Would it surprise you to learn that you don't actually live in the North? Well, not according to Chuck McNiven and Henry Puderer, anyway. Instead, you live in an area called "North transition," one of four regions the Statistics Canada geographers created (the others being "North," "South transition" and "South") in an attempt to determine exactly where Canada's North is. "To solve this cartographic brain teaser," Mary Vincent wrote in the September/October 2000 Canadian Geographic story that explained McNiven and Puderer's work, the two men "defined 'northness' using 16 characteristics, such as how often you have to flick on the furnace; the limits of permafrost, boreal forest, railways and all-season roads; number of agricultural growing days; climate; and accessibility to urban centres." The conclusion Vincent draws might cheer those who live in the North but discourage North transitioners, to coin an appellation for residents of that region. "And in Canada, it seems, it's better to be on top of the country than in the middle. The North has huge hydroelectric facilities in Labrador and Quebec, extensive mining and jobs in territorial capitals and is less reliant on government sources of personal income than is any other part of the country. The North transition zone, on the other hand, emerges as Canada's hidden have-not region, an area with few resources or urban centres." [Canadian Geographic](#)

U Toronto's Danny Harvey Global comments on report that carbon dioxide levels reach highest point ever, likely for good: Global carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have surpassed 400 parts per million, and will almost certainly remain there indefinitely. To put it into context, Danny Harvey, a professor in the department of geography at the University of Toronto, who teaches about climate change, explains that before the Industrial Revolution, carbon dioxide levels were around 280 parts per million. "So that's about a 40 per cent increase, and way, way outside the range of the last million years," he explained. This, coupled with temperature increases, puts the planet on track to become ice-free at some point in the future. "It doesn't mean all the ice is going to melt in the next 100 or 1,000 years, but it does give you a perspective on just how big these changes are and the trajectory of where we're heading," he said. Harvey said if we do nothing, we're on a clear path toward a climate that is between 1.5 and 4.0 degrees warmer, with carbon dioxide levels around 450 or 500 parts per million. In order to stop that increase, the world would have to eliminate fossil fuel emissions completely by 2060. [CBCNews | Technology & Science](#)

U Waterloo Department of Geography and Environmental Management welcomes four new faculty members:

[Christine Dow](#) joined the department in May, following a fellowship at Nasa Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. With a background in glaciology, her research interests are focused on the development of subglacial hydrological networks and the impact of this on ice dynamics on a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

[Daniel Cockayne](#) joins Geography from the University of Kentucky, where he completed his PhD in Geography. Adding to the department's human geography capacity, his research investigates workplace culture and entrepreneurialism in San Francisco's digital media sector. Drawing on perspectives from cultural, economic, feminist geography, and contemporary social theory and philosophy, he explores how people manage and conceptualize their work in the context of 'new media' startup firms that develop websites and applications for smartphones and tablets.

[Nancy Worth](#) joins Waterloo from York University and will begin teaching in Winter 2017. A feminist economic geography, her research interests include work, social reproduction, inequalities, age and generations, and feminist theory. Theoretically, her interests lie in relationality and temporality, focusing on futurity, intergenerationality and precarity. Dr. Worth did her PhD at the University of Leeds and was a Banting Fellow at McMaster University, where she studied precarious work environments for millennial women in Canada.

Geography also welcomes commercially-licensed airplane pilot [Suzanne Kearns](#). Dr. Kearns holds a Helicopter Flight Training diploma, a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Science, a Master of Science degree in Human Factors and Systems Engineering, and a Ph.D. in Education. Her research explores aviation human factors, training methodologies, and teaching technology. She will be teaching aviation courses for both the Geography & Aviation and Science & Aviation programs.



Simon Fraser U's Janet Sturgeon retires. Janet has been a faculty member in SFU Geography since 2004. She is a productive scholar of political ecology, effective instructor and an willing and active departmental citizen. She has chosen to retire at the end of August 2016. [SFU Geography News](#)

U Ottawa's Luisa Veronis awarded a grant for research on Syrian refugee resettlement. Rukhsana Ahmed (Communication) and Luisa Veronis (Geography), along with their colleague Kevin Pottie (Medicine) – have been awarded a SSHRC grant in the Targeted Research theme: Syrian Refugee Arrival, Resettlement and Integration. This grant is a result of a partnership initiative with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and was established in order to support research and mobilize knowledge in a timely way on key issues and events in the early days of the migration and resettlement process. [UOttawa News](#)

Simon Fraser U's Valorie Crooks receives [SFU Health Research Day](#) research development grant. This funding will enable her to collaborate with two colleagues from other SFU faculties to develop new research examining Canadians' use of medical crowdfunding. [SFU Geography News](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

- Laura Cameron, Isla Forsyth, Aki Yamamura and André Reyes Novaes. 2016. [Historical geography as an international discipline 1975–2015: responses](#). The Geographical Journal 182:284–288.
- David W. Edgington, Norio Ota, Nobuyuki Sato and Jackie F. Steele (Editors). 2016. [Japan and Canada in Comparative Perspective: Economics and Politics; Regions, Places and People](#). A Collection of Papers from an International Conference held in Tokyo, May 2015, organized jointly by the Japan Studies Association of Canada the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies and the Japan-Canada Interdisciplinary Research Network on Gender, Diversity and Tohoku Reconstruction.
- James D. Ford, Simon E. Tilleard, Lea Berrang-Ford, Malcolm Araos, Robbert Biesbroek, Alexandra C. Lesnikowski, Graham K. MacDonald, Angel Hsu, Chen Chen and Livia Bizikova. 2016. [Opinion: Big data has big potential for applications to climate change adaptation](#). Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 113:10729-10732.
- Kirsten Greer and April James. 2016. [Integrating hydrology and historical geography in an interdisciplinary Environmental Masters Program in Northern Ontario, Canada](#). Geophysical Research Abstracts. 18:EGU2016-10312-2, 2016.
- Jean-Sébastien Landry, Lael Parrott, David T. Price, Navin Ramankutty and H.Damon Matthews. 2016. [Modelling long-term impacts of mountain pine beetle outbreaks on merchantable biomass, ecosystem carbon, albedo, and radiative forcing](#). Biogeosciences 13:5277-5295.
- Phillip Gordon Mackintosh. 2016. [Contradictory mobility: child self-protection and automobiles in interwar Toronto's Globe](#). British Journal of Canadian Studies 29:199-224.
- Markus Moos, Pablo Mendez, Liam McGuire, Elvin Wyly, Anna Kramer, Robert Walter-Joseph and Mark Williamson. 2015. [More continuity than change? Re-evaluating the contemporary socio-economic and housing characteristics of suburbs](#). Canadian Journal of Urban Research. 24.
- Matthew Q. Morison, Merrin L. Macrae, Richard M. Petrone and Lee Ann Fishback. 2016. [Seasonal dynamics in shallow freshwater pond-peatland hydrochemical interactions in a subarctic permafrost environment](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI:10.1002/hyp.11043
- Jaroslav Obu, Hugues Lantuit, Michael Fritz, Wayne H. Pollard, Torsten Sachs and Frank Günther. 2016. [Relation between planimetric and volumetric measurements of permafrost coast erosion: a case study from Herschel Island, western Canadian Arctic](#). Polar Research 35.
- Thomas Schellenberger, Wesley Van Wychen, Luke Copland, Andreas Käab and Laurence Gray. 2016. [An inter-comparison of techniques for determining velocities of maritime Arctic glaciers, Svalbard, using Radarsat-2 Wide Fine mode data](#). Remote Sensing 8:785.
- Joel T. Steeves, Sidney Lee Barbour, Grant Ferguson and Sean K. Carey. 2016. [Heat transfer within frozen slopes in subarctic Yukon, Canada](#). Environmental Geotechnics. DOI:10.1680/jenge.15.00058
- Robert G. Way, Antoni G. Lewkowicz. [Modelling the spatial distribution of permafrost in Labrador–Ungava using the temperature at the top of permafrost](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences 53:1010-1028.
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New Book

Melissa D. Giesbrecht and Valorie Crooks. 2016. [Place, Health, and Diversity: Learning from the Canadian Experience](#). Routledge. 252 p.



Although health equity and diversity-focussed research has begun to gain momentum, there is still a paucity of research from health geographers that explicitly explores how geographic factors, such as place, space, scale, community, and location, inform multiple axes of difference. Such axes can include residential location, age, sex, gender, race/ethnicity, culture, religion, socio-economic status, marital status, sexual orientation, education level, and immigration status. Specifically focussing on Canada's rapidly changing society, which is becoming increasingly pluralized and diverse, this book examines the place-health-diversity intersection in this national context. Health geographers are well positioned to offer a valuable contribution to diversity-focussed research because place is inextricably linked to differential experiences of health. For example, access to health care and health promoting services and resources is largely influenced by where one is physically and socially situated within the web of diversity. Furthermore, applying geographic concepts like place, in both the physical and social sense, allows researchers to explore multiple axes of difference simultaneously. Such geographic perspectives, as presented in this book, offer new insights into what makes diverse people, in diverse places, with access to diverse resources (un)healthy in different ways in Canada and beyond. [SFU Geography News](#)

Recently Completed Theses and Dissertations

Laura Benakoun, 2016. [The relationship between long-term foliar decline assessments and annual growth of sugar maple in Ontario, Canada](#). MSc thesis. Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario. Supervisor: Ze'ev Gedalof.

Alison McIntosh. 2016. [Reducing harm through food and work: incorporating food security and peer employment in harm reduction programming](#). MA thesis. Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Supervisor: Eugene McCann.

Alexandra M.C. Ouédraogo. 2016. [Spatial analysis and determinants of asthma health and health services use outcomes in Ontario](#). MSc thesis. Department of Geography, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario. Supervisor: Eric Crighton.

Other "Geographical" News

Drone Delivery Canada receives Special Flight Operations Certificate from Transport Canada: The certificate now allows DDC the ability to advance its drone delivery technology and accelerated testing in the Canadian skies beginning with Southern Ontario. [Edmonton Journal](#)

Retreating glacier makes Yukon sheep easy targets for hunters: A retreating Yukon glacier has prompted conservation officers to close an area alongside Kluane Lake to sheep hunters. Conservation officers say sheep have been descending from Sheep Mountain in Kluane National Park and Reserve and crossing the Alaska Highway to graze on fresh grass growing on the shores of Kluane Lake. That's making them easy targets. [CBCNews | North](#)

Gatekeeper or rubber stamp? Recent tenure denial raises questions about a president's role in tenure decisions: Faculty advocates argue that tenure decisions are the primary domain of professors, and yet most institutions still involve presidents in the process. So what is the appropriate role of a college or university president in tenure cases? That's what faculty members and administrators at one college are trying to figure out in light of a recent presidential tenure veto that roiled the campus - in part because of the rejected professor's protest method (a hunger strike). [Inside Higher Ed](#)

How fast will we need to adapt to climate change? What would we do differently if sea level were to rise one foot per century versus one foot per decade? Until now, most policy and research has focused on adapting to specific amounts of climate change and not on how fast that climate change might happen. Using sea-level rise as a case study, researchers have developed a quantitative model that considers different rates of sea-level rise, in addition to economic factors, and shows how consideration of rates of change affect optimal adaptation strategies. [ScienceDaily](#)

Some Not So “Geographical” News



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