



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Alberta's John England calls lack of national polar policy 'an embarrassment and frustrating':

Standing on the shoreline of Banks Island 20 years ago, John England was saw the Arctic when it was still largely like what the late 19th Century explorers saw in temperatures and sea ice severity. "I saw the ice shelves and now I'm standing in their stead, in the very same places and recognizing something they never would have dreamt of." Early in 2010, England penned an opinion essay. In it, England said an Arctic policy and increased government funding were crucial to help support researchers in remote field sites "to continue crucial monitoring of the fast-changing Arctic environment." "The lack of such a policy leaves many Canadian scientists feeling voiceless and chronically insecure about research support," he wrote. Asked if much or anything has changed in the past six years, England sighed. "There have been a few glimmers of resurgence in Canada," he said. "But the fundamental answer is there really has been no significant progress in finally establishing a national polar policy. "If this country wants to be recognized as a really engaged Northern nation, not only in science but economic, strategic and cultural, environmental concerns, we need to get our act together and stand on the international stage and identify a polar policy that ensures that we have a long-term vision and a co-ordinated and strategic plan to implement that." [Calgary Herald](#)

McMaster U's Mike Waddington on Hamilton's ghost rivers: Centuries ago, Hamilton was a blanket of lush green space. Sometimes they rerouted water into culverts and built roads and parking lots on top. Sometimes they filled in the watercourses — with dirt, with garbage, with other material. Generations later, developers still shoulder the impact. Hamilton isn't alone in this, said Mike Waddington, a McMaster University professor of geography and earth sciences. The Niagara Escarpment and its many waterfalls make Hamilton's streams persistent, Waddington said. "There are many streams that would have come down the escarpment and cut through the town," he said. "Along the shoreline, we had huge wetlands with their own little inlets and small streams." Previous generations lacked environmental knowledge, Waddington said. They saw "wetlands along the coastline as wasteland." Newer cities, such as Oakville, incorporate greenery into the urban landscape, Waddington said. But "in Hamilton, they were mostly filled in." "We now know that small streams and wetlands provide valuable ecosystems and services." There's at least one local movement to peel back the concrete and let water flow freely again. [CBCiHamilton](#)

U Manitoba's David Barber named to the Order of Canada: Respected Arctic scholar and U Waterloo Faculty of Environment alumnus receives one of Canada's highest civilian honours. He is the Director of the Centre for Earth Observation Science (CEOS), Canada Research Chair in Arctic System Science, and Associate Dean (Research) for the Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources at the University of Manitoba. Barber studied Arctic Climatology under the supervision of geography professor Ellsworth LeDrew and received his Ph.D. in 1992; a time when climate change in the Arctic wasn't as apparent as it is today. "We did not see a global climate change signal in the High Arctic," he said. "But Dr. LeDrew reminded us that we should expect to see the 'first and strongest' signs of global warming at high latitudes of the planet - turns out he was correct." Looking back, Barber credits Professor LeDrew for educating him, not only in the theoretical and practical aspects of Arctic climate change research but also in creating the networks between industry, government and academia that are necessary to make research in the high Arctic possible. Today, Barber is an internationally respected researcher studying the influence of climate change on Arctic sea processes and the resulting impacts on human and marine systems. He leads annual research trips aboard the Canadian icebreaker, the CCGS Amundsen and was instrumental in developing ArticNet's Schools on Board program, an outreach initiative that gives teachers and high school students the opportunity to join the crew on research trips. [U Waterloo Environment](#)

U Victoria undergraduate Sheldon Vos awarded grant from Pacific Salmon Foundation: Sheldon Vos who is currently working towards a bachelor of science degree in geography with a concentration in geomatics, is a longtime volunteer with the Central West Coast Forest Society (CWFS). In this role, he has worked on restoring salmon habitat in the Barclay and Clayoquot Sound areas, where old logging practices destroyed much of the small rivers and creeks in the area. CWFS, in turn, clears out the large debris left by logging and then rebuilds the riparian areas around the stream to create a healthy ecosystem for salmon to return to and spawn, said Vos, a mature student who recently returned to school. "Another big part of CWFS' recent work has been replacing old culverts from under the highways in the area. Many of these old culverts create a fish barrier blocking salmon's migratory paths. By replacing these culverts with up-to-date culverts, salmon are free to swim farther upstream to their native spawning areas." "Growing up on Vancouver Island, salmon have been a big part of my life since I was young," he said. "Sport fishing is something that I did with my family when I was young and something that I still enjoy. I look forward to working with organizations such as PSF and CWSF to ensure salmon continue to return in healthy numbers so that I can enjoy fishing with my own family in years to come." [Saanich News](#)



In Victoria, the District of Saanich is using data from [BikeMaps.org](#) — an innovative [web map](#) developed by a group of UVic geographers (led by Trisalyn Nelson, who is now with Arizona State University) — to track hot spots of safe and risky cycling as the district moves ahead on cycling infrastructure projects. The BikeMaps.org team analyzed the Saanich data and created a map showing "hot spots" for incidents and near-misses, such as areas where the Galloping Goose Regional Trail intersects with motor vehicle traffic and at the busy Shelbourne and McKenzie intersection. Saanich's partnership with BikeMaps.org is part of its 25-year active transportation plan, dubbed Saanich Moving Forward, Machielse said. In December, Saanich council voted in favour of a \$12.5-million plan that would improve pedestrian walkways and add separated cycle lanes on both sides of Shelbourne Street between North Dairy Road and Torquay Drive. Vehicle traffic will be restricted to two lanes, down from four, between Broadmead and Kisber avenues and Garnet Road, and some drivers have expressed concern that the changes could clog traffic on an already busy artery. [Victoria TimesColonist](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Laurence D. Andriashek and Rene W. Barendregt. 2017. [Evidence for Early Pleistocene glaciation from borecore stratigraphy in north-central Alberta, Canada](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences. DOI:10.1139/cjes-2016-0175

Barrie R. Bonsal, Charles Cuell, Elaine Wheaton, David J. Sauchyn and Elaine Barrow. 2017. [An assessment of historical and projected future hydro-climatic variability and extremes over southern watersheds in the Canadian Prairies](#). International Journal of Climatology. DOI:10.1002/joc.4967

Brandon Heung, Matúš Hodúl and Margaret G. Schmidt. 2017. [Comparing the use of training data derived from legacy soil pits and soil survey polygons for mapping soil classes](#). Geoderma 290:51–68.

Jolène Labbé, James D. Ford, Malcolm Araos and Melanie Flynn. 2017. [The government-led climate change adaptation landscape in Nunavut, Canada](#). Environmental Reviews. DOI:10.1139/er-2016-0032

Olivia Mussells, Jackie Dawson and Stephen Howell. 2017. [Navigating pressured ice: Risks and hazards for winter resource-based shipping in the Canadian Arctic](#). Ocean & Coastal Management 137:57–67.

Sharon L. Smith and Philip P. Bonnaventure. 2017. [Quantifying surface temperature inversions and their impact on the ground thermal regime at a High Arctic site](#). Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research.

Simon Springer. 2016. [Anarchist praxis and the evolution of social change: the problem with revolution and thought](#). Antipode.

Lu Wang and Lara Palacios. 2017. [The social and spatial patterning of life stress among immigrants in Canada](#). Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health. DOI:10.1007/s10903-016-0538-4

Stephen R.H. Worthington and C. Christopher Smart. 2017. [Transient bacterial contamination of the dual-porosity aquifer at Walkerton, Ontario, Canada](#). Hydrogeology Journal. DOI:10.1007/s10040-016-1514-8

Jian Yang, Yuhong He and John Caspersen. 2017. [Region merging using local spectral angle thresholds: A more accurate method for hybrid segmentation of remote sensing images](#). Remote Sensing of Environment 190:137–148.

Other “Geographical” News

Toronto and Montreal top list for worst traffic bottlenecks in Canada: A new report suggests some of Canada's worst traffic bottlenecks are serious enough to compare with those in major American cities. The report found that the most consistently congested stretch of highway in the country, a portion of Highway 401 running through central Toronto, is the ninth most clogged artery in Canada and the United States. A bottleneck in Montreal, considered the third worst in Canada according to the new research, compares with congestion levels in Boston. The CAA identified the worst bottlenecks by analyzing provincial and municipal traffic volume numbers along with GPS data over nearly 3,000 kilometres of roads across the country. [CBCNews|Toronto](#)

Some Not So “Geographical” News



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