

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



New hydrologist adding to Laurier's expertise in northern water *Bill Quinton joins Laurier as Canada Research Chair in Cold Regions Hydrology*

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WATERLOO – A hydrologist who studies one of Canada's largest supplies of surface fresh water will help further strengthen Wilfrid Laurier University's reputation as Canada's top research institution in the area of cold regions hydrology.

Bill Quinton, who researches water flow and storage processes in Canada's north, will join Laurier as the university's Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Cold Regions Hydrology. The tier 2 CRC provides \$500,000 over five years to support the chair's research efforts.

On August 1, Quinton will join the department of geography and environmental studies, which is developing Canada's highest concentration of researchers specializing in northern hydrology. Laurier is already home to the Cold Regions Research Centre. That concentration increases Laurier's appeal to other researchers, graduate students and funding agencies with an interest in global warming and water supplies.

"It's fair to say that Laurier is gaining the critical mass required to stake out this important area as its own," said David Docherty, dean of the faculty of arts. "Dr. Quinton will join colleagues like Mike English, Rich Petrone and Brent Wolfe in what's becoming Canada's largest research group with a shared interest in the crucial area of northern hydrology."

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Quinton studies surface water hydrology in Canada's boreal and adjacent northern regions. The majority of the country's fresh surface water can be found within the boreal forest, which accounts for over half Canada's land surface and covers a substantial portion of most provinces and territories. It is also the area that has experienced the largest degree of climate warming in recent decades.

The presence of snow and ice, both above and below the ground, profoundly influences how water and energy are cycled and stored. But researchers currently know too little about the functioning of northern hydrological systems. Their understanding of how climate warming will affect the overall cycling and storage of surface water in cold regions is also poor. All this creates uncertainty about the future availability of Canada's fresh water resources.

Quinton will combine field, laboratory and computer-modelling studies to improve the understanding of, and ability to predict variations in, northern surface water supplies. "My research focuses on developing a better understanding of the impact of climate warming on an area that contains the majority of our fresh water," explained Quinton.

Quinton is looking forward to the collaborative opportunities that accompany moving his research program to Laurier. He believes the university offers a great opportunity to expand interest in cold region research.