

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier launches new Institute for Water Science** *New research centre will examine and protect Canada's water supply*

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University's new Laurier Institute for Water Science (LIWS) will develop solutions-based research and policy recommendations to protect and sustain Canada's water supply.

“Canada has significant water resources that, until recently, most citizens have taken for granted as clean, reliable and inexhaustible,” said LIWS director Dr. Jim McGeer, an associate biology professor at Laurier. “However, there is a growing realization that ongoing community and economic development, as well as the changing climate, will fundamentally alter our approach to water management.”

Laurier researchers at the LIWS will examine the competition for water access within Canada, the effects of changing climate on water resources and the sustainability of healthy aquatic and coastal ecosystems.

A central theme of the institute will be to develop regulations and policy recommendations related to water management, environmental protection and land-use planning based on its research findings. This theme is significant because water managers at the municipal, regional or national level are facing increasingly tough decisions about how to preserve and sustain water resources while meeting the demands of industrial and community users.

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The integrated ecosystem approach of the LIWS will incorporate experts from Laurier’s Faculty of Science, School of Business and Economics and Faculty of Arts, organized into three research groups: hydrological sciences, ecological and biogeochemical sciences and public policy and management. The institute will also collaborate with educational, governmental, industrial and environmental partners throughout Canada.

“Establishing the Laurier Institute for Water Science demonstrates Laurier’s commitment to work within the community and to focus on society’s most pressing challenges,” said dean of science Dr. Deb MacLatchy.

The institute is set apart from other water-science centres because of its broad range of expertise related to the Canadian Great Lakes region and the northern cold regions, such as the boreal forest. While the LIWS will focus on national challenges (Canada houses about 20 percent of the world’s fresh water), it will use southwestern Ontario as a “living laboratory.”

McGeer, associate professor of biology at Laurier, was appointed the inaugural director of the LIWS when it was granted approval by the university Senate last month. Dr. Bill Quinton, associate professor of geography and environmental studies, is the institute’s first associate director. In addition to its research activities, the LIWS will issue a bi-annual research newsletter and hold seminar series, conferences and symposia.