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## Laurier researchers receive funding for Water Knowledge Application Network

WATERLOO – Permafrost in the Northwest Territories is thawing and the ecosystem is changing. Over the past three years, Wilfrid Laurier University researcher William (Bill) Quinton, a Canada Research Chair in Cold Regions Hydrology, has been working with collaborators to map the change in the permafrost and to develop computer models that will help predict permafrost distribution and river flow. Quinton has received \$150,000 in funding from the Canadian Water Network (CWN) to create the Water Knowledge Application Network (WatKAN).

WatKAN will focus on two-way knowledge transfer between knowledge producers and users working together to solve watershed management challenges arising from permafrost thaw. The project will build on earlier research projects in the Northwest Territories, developing ways to bring that knowledge to the communities and policymakers who can use it.

“Laurier’s cold regions research, in partnership with the Northwest Territories, is both cutting-edge and crucial,” said Abby Goodrum, vice-president: research. “The Water Knowledge Application Network will share the research and prediction tools developed by Quinton and his team with local First Nations people, government policymakers, and Northwest Territories communities who will be making decisions about the ecosystem in which they live.”

The objectives of WatKAN include increasing community involvement throughout the Taiga Plains region and Yellowknife, NWT; adapting the predictive models to the needs identified by local communities; and training local communities to apply the Cold Region Hydrological Model to guide watershed management.

“WatKAN will reduce the uncertainty of the future availability and quality of northern water resources resulting from permafrost thaw, and will provide a rigorous scientific basis for management strategies by predicting both long- and short-term changes to water resources,” said Quinton.

The CWN-funded WatKAN project team and partners include:

### Research Team

- William Quinton, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Jennifer Baltzer, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Patricia Gober, Professor, University of Saskatchewan
- Philip Marsh, Adjunct Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Deborah MacLatchy, Vice-President, Academic & Provost, Wilfrid Laurier University
- John Pomeroy, Professor, University of Saskatchewan
- Howard Wheeler, Professor, University of Saskatchewan

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### Partners

- Government of Northwest Territories
- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
- Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada
- Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources

For more information about Laurier's Cold Regions Research Centre, visit [coldregions.ca](http://coldregions.ca).

### **About Canadian Water Network (CWN)**

Headquartered in Waterloo, ON, Canadian Water Network ([www.cwn-rce.ca](http://www.cwn-rce.ca)) was created in 2001 by the Government of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence program to connect international water researchers with decision-makers engaged in priority water management issues. CWN works to harness the expertise of researchers to improve the ability of practitioners and implementers to respond to water challenges. The funding received was part of CWN's call for projects on "Evolving Opportunities for Knowledge Application": <http://www.cwn-rce.ca/news/knowledge-application-funding-announcement-october-2013>.

- 30 -