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MARCH 13, 2014 | 040-14

Laurier event explores exciting field of citizen science

WATERLOO – How can Canadian families protect nature by using their smartphones—and have fun doing it? This question will be explored at a Wilfrid Laurier University event about the growing field of “citizen science” on Monday, March 17.

The event, titled “Every citizen an environmental scientist,” is part of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council’s (SSHRC) [“Imagining Canada’s Future” initiative](#). The event will be hosted by Craig Norris of CBC Kitchener-Waterloo’s “Morning Edition” radio show. Three speakers will deliver presentations using the “PechaKucha” format of 20 slides with 20 seconds per slide:

- Robert McLeman, associate professor, Laurier’s Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, and leader of Laurier’s NatureWatch 2.0 citizen science project.
- Julia Phillips, coordinator of the Adopt-a-Pond program, Toronto Zoo.
- Kevin Horrocks, Laurier student and citizen science website innovator.

The presentations will be followed by a question-and-answer session that invites the audience to join the conversation about citizen science, nature and technology.

The goal of Laurier’s NatureWatch 2.0 citizen science project is to create a Canada-wide generation of enthusiastic, educated and engaged citizen scientists by providing them with the right tools and connecting them with researchers. The partners in the project include the David Suzuki Foundation, Nature Canada, Desire2Learn and the University of Ottawa.

“I am excited about this celebration of the citizen science movement,” said Abby Goodrum, vice-president: research at Laurier. “NatureWatch 2.0 researchers engage the community in gathering data with innovative techniques such as smartphones, producing collective knowledge about climate change that will benefit present and future generations of Canadians.”

The event takes place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, 67 Erb Street West, Waterloo. It is free and open to the public. To register, visit <http://imagining.eventbrite.ca> or email James Popham, knowledge mobilization officer, Laurier’s Office of Research Services, at jpopham@wlu.ca.

The Laurier event is first in a series of four events throughout the week that will address the SSHRC future challenge: What knowledge do we need to thrive in an interconnected landscape, and how can emerging technology help leverage that goal and its benefits? Laurier, York University, Carleton University and the University of Guelph, members of the Research Impact knowledge mobilization network, have jointly been funded by SSHRC to present these regional events.