



Robert Gordon, Vice-President Research
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884 -0710 ext. 3601 or rogordon@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Director: Communications & Public Affairs
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

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Laurier provides leadership in cold regions water sciences as part of largest university-led water research program

WATERLOO – A \$78-million investment by the Government of Canada will enhance Wilfrid Laurier University's position as a global leader in cold regions water science.

The award, led by the University of Saskatchewan in partnership with Laurier, the University of Waterloo and McMaster University, will cement Canada's leadership in water research, developing solutions to threats facing the country's waters at a time of unprecedented change. The project entitled, *Global Water Futures: Solutions to Water Threats in an Era of Global Change*, will be the largest university-led water research program ever funded worldwide and one of the largest water science collaborations in the world.

The Honourable **Ralph Goodale**, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, made the announcement as part of the government's Canada First Research Excellence Fund initiative, which supports world-leading research at Canada's universities and colleges. Goodale noted that this funding will position Canada as "a global hub for leading-edge, user-driven water science for the world's cold regions."

Canada is experiencing some of the world's most rapid warming, which is having a profound impact on its water resources. The country is facing a future of floods, droughts and other extreme water events, including changes in the predictability of water quality and quantity.

"This federal investment will lead to significant discoveries and innovative tools to support the future security of our water resources," said **Robert Gordon**, Vice-President: Research at Laurier. "We are thrilled to work with our partners as part of this globally competitive research initiative. This project brings together Laurier's extraordinary strength in water research and, with our partners, demonstrates our capacity for Canada to be a world leader in the security of this precious resource."

The award, one of only 13 across the country, will draw on the expertise of leading academic researchers and industrial and government partners, resulting in an unprecedented network focused on water security research. The program will engage stakeholders in developing risk management solutions. For instance, it will build on relationships with Aboriginal communities in Canada's North and along the major rivers and lakes to help solve growing water challenges in those areas. The project will support numerous Laurier faculty members investigating water issues and will significantly bolster Laurier's long-standing partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Through the partnership, Laurier researchers and students work alongside government partners to address critical water issues facing the Territory.

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"The scale of this collaboration and support will allow Laurier researchers to bring our extensive network of living laboratories across the Northwest Territories to bear on addressing solutions to water futures in the North," said **Jennifer Baltzer**, associate professor in the Department of Biology and Canada Research Chair in Forests and Global Change. "The resulting cross-cutting, integrative research will foster solutions to the pressing issues that communities, industry and governments are experiencing surrounding water security in the face of global change."

The water research network will involve more than 380 Canadian university researchers in a wide range of disciplines, eight federal departments, 28 provincial agencies, seven Indigenous communities and governments, 34 industrial collaborators, and 45 international research institutes. The researchers will work with international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Climate Research Program and Future Earth, to develop the tools and models to mitigate water disasters, protect the environment and take advantage of economic opportunities.

About the Canada First Research Excellence Fund: Announced in the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2014, the Canada First Research Excellence Fund will invest approximately \$1.5 billion over seven years to support Canada's post-secondary institutions in their efforts to become global research leaders. It will propel Canadian universities, colleges and polytechnics to compete with the best in the world for talent and partnership opportunities, to make breakthrough discoveries, and to excel globally in research areas that will create long-term economic advantages for Canada.

Read about [Global Water Futures](#).

Read about the [Government of Northwest Territories – Laurier Partnership](#).

Read about the [Laurier Cold Regions Research Centre](#).

Read about the [Laurier Institute for Water Science](#).