

WEATHER AND CLIMATE DAY WEBSITES

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Geography Awareness Week 2008

Canadian Association of Geographers

For Weather and Climate Day, Geography Awareness Week 2007, we identified 10 outstanding Canadian web sites to demonstrate the connections between geography, and weather and climate.

I am pleased to say that more exceptional web sites have been identified for Weather and Climate Day, Geography Awareness Week 2008. I believe that the websites listed below combine to present a very informative overview of the past, present and future connection between geography, weather, and climate in Canada.

That said, if there are other websites that warrant recognition, then please call them to my attention. I look forward to receiving your suggestions via email at wellarb@uottawa.ca.

MeteoroloKids - SchoolNet Grassroots Project

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~mlryan/weather.htm>

This is an excellent site for parents, teachers and children to explore the phenomena that make up Canada's diverse weather, and we agree that the site designers got it right when they said, "It has been designed to meet many of the outcomes on the theme of weather as specified by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education." The site provides links to many elementary level weather-related experiments for the classroom or around the home, but there is some modesty in the site description. It is oriented towards grade 5 students, but much of the material available could likely be used or adapted for other grade levels. At this link you will also find many other links to additional weather-related sites and teaching resources on topics such as how clouds and fogs are formed. And, most importantly for this Canadian Association of Geographers program, **MeteoroloKids** has been designed to "examine how geography affects weather" and students are encouraged to "participate in hands-on science experiments relating to weather phenomena." We are very pleased to acknowledge this web site for its contribution to Weather and Climate Day, Geography Awareness Week 2008.

Via Rail Canada

http://www.viarail.ca/tourists/en_tour_mete.html

Information about the weather and climate of the major regions serviced by Via Rail is provided by this website. The information is pertinent to anyone from Canada or abroad who may be travelling, and wishes to learn more about the weather and climate at various destinations. As noted, "For each region, you'll find short-term weather forecasts for our main destinations, plus a description of the climate. You'll also find tables showing

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average temperatures throughout the year, the probability of rain and snow by region, and the approximate duration of winter.” Via Rail understands that Canada is a very large country with a diverse geography, and that as a result the climate can vary tremendously from one region to another. The information at this web site is particularly relevant to people who may be travelling a long distance within Canada, and who may not be aware of how the climate and weather can vary so dramatically between the different regions in the country.

Canadian Geographic – Extremes of Weather

http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/themes.aspx?id=weather&sub=weather_basics_zones&lang=En

This is a very appealing web site which explores weather and climate in Canada using interactive maps, animations, and pop-up windows. It is a very graphically pleasing site that could be used by anyone wishing to learn more about the phenomena that make up Canada’s fascinating weather and climate. The site contains many sections that use colourful graphics and animations in combination with audio commentary, making for a very entertaining learning experience. Topics covered include: where our weather begins, air masses, hurricanes and twisters, thunderstorms, and climate zones. There are also two sections on wind and solar power that demonstrate the relationship between weather and climate and energy production within Canada. There is also a section of games and quizzes – why not test your knowledge of Canada’s weather and climate after having perused the various links on this site. In particular, teachers and parents are encouraged to show kids this site, as the materials are presented in a very kid-friendly way, and would likely generate interest about weather and climate issues pertinent to Canada. Children are the future of this country, and encouraging them to become interested in the connection between weather and climate and geography is important to Canada’s future.

The Atlas of Canada

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/climate/snowcover>

Snowcover

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/climate/temperature>

Temperature

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/climate/precipitation>

Precipitation

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/naturalhazards/floods/majorfloods>

Floods

http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/naturalhazards/storm_surge/storm_surge

Storm Surges

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/climatechange>

Climate Change – Series of maps including:

[Human Activities Leading to Emissions](#)

[Stress to the Atmosphere](#)

[Climate Warming](#)

[Potential Impacts](#)

[Societal Responses](#)

[Future Options](#)

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The Atlas of Canada website is a powerhouse source of information about the weather and climate in Canada. Explore the various links provided to learn about how temperature, snow cover, precipitation, and other climatic variables are related to geography. For example, the fact that “large bodies of water have a moderating effect on temperature, keeping days cooler and nights warmer” is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of geography! Further, at each link you will find additional links to more information. For example, on the temperature page you will find links that allow you to explore interactive maps of temperature at different times of the year. The climate change links are very relevant to issues facing Canada today and provide a wealth of information, including numerous thematic maps that are a perfect fit for Weather and Climate Day: “This map series aims to provide policy makers, researchers and the general public with a geographical perspective to climate change. The series also attempts to integrate human activities and the environment, and links science and government policy.” The links accessible at the Atlas of Canada web sites can be utilized by the general public, researchers, policy makers, or anyone interested in learning how weather and climate affect Canadian society, and vice-versa.

Parks Canada

http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/v-g/ie-ei/cc/index_e.asp

Parks Canada is especially aware of potential climate change impacts and the implications they may have on the many national parks of Canada. The agency observes that “... as a northern country, Canada is particularly vulnerable. The result of this temperature change will not simply be a more moderate climate. Instead, there will significant disruption of ecosystems that have adapted to the existing climate.” At this site you will find an abundance of climate change information and links to specific issues, including: why our climate is changing, how these changes affect national parks in specific regions (since climate change will not be uniform), and the role citizens have to play in reducing potential climate change impacts. Canada’s many national parks capture the essence of the geographic variability across Canada, and the range of species that are supported in the diverse park habitats. We commend Parks Canada for acknowledging the threat that climate changes poses to our national parks, and encourage the public to visit this site and explore the links provided to learn more.

BritishColumbia.com

<http://www.bcweather.com/>

Check out this link to learn more about the intriguing geography of British Columbia, and how it influences the climate in the different regions of the province. “The climate of British Columbia varies from marine to continental, and is influenced by its location immediately east of the warm Pacific Ocean, the north-south orientation of its towering mountain chains, the mountainous topography, the prevailing westerly winds, and the province's northerly latitude.” Potential travellers to BC are advised to click on this link to learn about the different kinds of weather and climate in the different kinds of regions they may visit within this province. In our view, this is a very instructive web site, and well worth a visit or two, whether you live in BC, have a trip planned, or are just curious about the many kinds of connections between geography, and weather and climate.

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NationbyNation.com

<http://www.historycentral.com/NationbyNation/Canada/Geo.html>

This is a great web site for anyone in Canada or abroad seeking information about the diverse landscapes in Canada, including the features and characteristics of the various regions in terms of their geography and climate. And, it does an excellent job of making the links between weather, climate, geography, and society with specific examples such as agriculture. As the site notes, "Because of the harsh northern climate, only 12 percent of the land is suitable for agriculture. Thus, most of the population of 30 million live within a few hundred kilometres of the southern border, where the climate is milder, in a long thin band stretching between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans." We are very pleased to include this thoughtful and thought-provoking web site in the Weather and Climate Day selection for Geography Awareness Week 2008.

In closing this commentary on Weather and Climate Day, I thank Sam Herold, Masters Candidate in Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Ottawa, for his assistance as Coordinator for Weather and Climate Day, Geography Awareness Week 2008.

Sam reviewed the web sites selected for 2007, and then searched for 10 new sites for 2008 that complement, supplement, and diversify our web site offerings on the important connections between geography, weather and climate.

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Geographers, and visitors to Weather and Climate Day GAW 2008, "Thank you, Sam".