

National Events (2006-2015)

2015

October

- CAUT sponsors a national campaign to “[Get Science Right](#)” to speak out against muzzling of scientists.

September

- [An open letter](#) signed by more than 100 former Parks Canada employees supports fired Alberta Park employee John Wilmshurst and warns of ‘deep fear’ in civil service about the muzzling of federal scientists by the Harper government.
- Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s government has [made more than two dozen secret cabinet decisions](#), hiding any trace of them from Parliament and Canadians.
- Songwriter and federal government environmental scientist Tony Turner was [put on administrative leave](#) with pay while being investigated for alleged conflict of interest and breach of the public service code of ethics. The investigation was initiated because Turner wrote and performed the song “Harperman” about the Harper government’s muzzling of scientists.

August

- A review of all televised English-language federal leaders’ debates from 1968 to 2011 reveals that [no debate question regarding science has ever been asked](#).

- The Canadian Institute of Health Research **cancels its celebrated MD/PhD program** due to funding cuts, resulting reactions of “**shock and disappointment**” from Canada’s medical and scientific communities.

July

- The **Canadian branch** of the international health research network, **Cochrane** prepares to **lose primary funding** from the **Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)**. Over the past five years, Cochrane produced more than 300 new or updated systematic reviews and trained nearly 3,000 new reviewers. With its primary funding cut off, Cochrane Canada risks losing its ability to assist in the production of evidence for informed decision-making in health care.
- Rob Brownstone – Canada Research Chair for spinal cord circuits – leaves Canada to pursue a career in England where he says research funding for his work is more secure. According to Dr. Brownstone, “**Attitudes toward research by [Canada’s] federal government have not been particularly encouraging.**”
- Federal government researcher Trevor Hadwen agrees to speak with the CBC regarding drought-like conditions in Alberta, but is denied media relations approval and **cannot complete the interview**. The blog **Speaking up for Science** subsequently publishes **this piece**, highlighting the blasé nature of media coverage of the incident.
- The **Voices-Voix Coalition reveals** that it expects the muzzling of government scientists and public servants to be a major focus of the United Nations in its forthcoming report on the Conservative government’s human rights record. The muzzling of scientists is also a central focus of the landmark Voices-Voix

report, [Dismantling Democracy: Stifling Debate and Dissent in Canada](#).

- A Toronto Star analysis of tens of thousands of requests shows that federal agencies [censored](#) the majority of government records requested under the Access to Information Act over the past year.

June

- Green Party leader Elizabeth May [introduces a bill](#) that would make all publicly-funded scientific research accessible by law. This means the government [could not deny access](#) to data collected by publicly-funded scientists. Having an open and transparent engagement with the facts would facilitate that decisions are made based on evidence and not on ideology. CEY – 08/12/2015
- Newfoundland and Labrador enacts what the Centre for Law and Democracy calls “[Canada’s first modern access to information law](#).” Among other changes, the new law gives more power to the province’s information commissioner, per a [recent series of recommendations](#) from an independent commission.
- The CBC Radio Program Ideas releases a three-part series called “[Science under Siege](#),” focused on the relationship between science and democracy, and recent attacks on scientific knowledge in the Canadian context and beyond. CS – 06/14/2015

May

- To draw attention to political interference with public science, a [protest on May 19th](#) was organized by three major federal labour unions (the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Association of

Professional Employees, and the Public Service Association of Canada), supported by Evidence for Democracy. In order to ensure that government employees can speak openly about their research, a key demand was that protection of scientific integrity be enshrined in the next labour contract. General lack of government **respect for public scientists** is an ongoing concern.

- The **Royal Society of Canada** publishes the **second in a series** of position papers on scientific research and scholarship in Canada, which calls for a strengthening of how scientific advice contributes to government policy.
- The federal Conservative Party **votes to defeat a Liberal Party motion** to create a ‘chief science officer’ to help ensure that federal scientists are protected from muzzling.
- Recently retired federal scientist Steve Campana **reveals that he was routinely muzzled** while working in government, despite performing relatively uncontroversial research. Campana claims federal scientists in Canada today are subject to a “**climate of fear.**”
- Federal scientists represented by the **Professional Institute for the Public Service of Canada** rally in **Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Vancouver** to protest government interference with their research and monitoring of their contact with the media. Participants say they feel the need to “**press for guarantees that would protect government researchers from being coerced to alter their data.**” **Evidence for Democracy** provides a **summary of coverage** of the protests.
- **Mike Rennie**, an ex-government scientist in northwestern Ontario, says muzzling was part of “toxic” work environment for federal government researchers.
- **A number of examples** of muzzling of scientists, including a request from The Canadian Press to speak to federal

government scientist Max Bothwell about his work on algae or “rock snot”, which led to a 110-page email exchange.

- **Steven Campana**, a former Fisheries and Oceans Canada scientist, said he decided to retire early from the department and took up a teaching position in Iceland largely due to “toxic” working conditions. He was even prohibited from attending self-funded scientific conferences.
- **Robert MacDonald** says that since 2012, 7,500 government scientists have lost their jobs.
- **The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada** (PIPSC), is pushing for “scientific integrity” in their workers’ contracts. To draw attention to political interference with public science, a **protest on May 19th** was organized by three major federal labour unions (the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, and the Public Service Association of Canada), supported by Evidence for Democracy. In order to ensure that government employees can speak openly about their research, a key demand was that protection of scientific integrity be enshrined in the next labour contract. General lack of government **respect for public scientists** is an ongoing concern.

April

- The **federal government appoints** a mining industry executive and former Conservative staffer to the board of the **International Development Research Centre**. The Crown corporation conducts international development research and **critics say** the appointment shows that the government hopes to fill the board with allies as opposed to independent researchers.

March

- The Information Commissioner of Canada publishes **a new report** urging the federal government to modernize its access to information system. The report argues that **Canada has fallen behind** other countries when it comes to providing its citizens with unfettered access to information and **echoes recommendations** from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and many other organizations that urgent changes be made.
- Documents obtained by **DeSmog Canada** via Access to Information legislation reveal that an **Environment Canada scientist hoping to speak with the press about the effects of oilsands toxins on fur-bearing animals was muzzled**. Initially, pre-scripted responses to interview questions were prepared, but the interview request was ultimately denied by former Environment Minister Peter Kent's office.
- **A new report** from the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre says Canada is falling behind other countries by shackling public advocacy work by charities. The report confirms that the Canada Revenue Agency's ongoing audits of left-leaning charities are having a chilling effect on advocacy. Its authors also **make a number of recommendations** that would help discourage government interference in charitable activities.
- Federal Scientists hoping to discuss the issue of scientific integrity with their union representatives **are forced to meet offsite**.
- **A researcher at Dalhousie University says** the federal government's axing of the mandatory long-form census is interfering with Nova Scotia's ability to prepare for flooding and other adverse effects of climate change.
- The **Heiltsuk First Nation alleges** that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans decision to re-open the herring sac roe seine fishery in British Columbia is based on unreliable

scientific models that are “very industry driven.” The DFO later agreed to [close the area](#) to commercial fishing vessels.

- [A new report](#) from the Council of Canadians reveals that federal government cuts to scientific research [have made Canada’s freshwater reserves more vulnerable](#).

February

- [Bill C-51](#) (the “Anti-Terrorism Act”) goes to committee. The bill comes in the wake of a shooting in Ottawa in October 2014, and “provides greater power to the security agencies to collect information on and disrupt the activities of suspected terrorist groups” ([the Globe and Mail](#)). It has been criticised by [law experts](#), [privacy advocates](#), [the Assembly of First Nations](#), [former Prime Ministers](#), and [more](#). Still others have pointed out that the bill could have [consequences for academic freedom](#).
- Climate scientist Andrew Weaver [wins a defamation suit](#) against the National Post. The judge in the case [ruled](#) that a number of National Post articles wrongly suggested that Weaver was “engaged in willful manipulation and distortion of scientific data.” The judge [also ruled](#) that the Post must remove the offending columns, and that the defendants “definitively espouse[d] a skeptical view of climate change.”
- [A report](#) from the Council of Canadian Academies finds that [Canada is falling behind](#) the rest of the world when it comes to the digital preservation of archives and public data.
- Liberal MP Ted Hsu’s private members bill C-626 to reinstate the mandatory long-form census [is defeated in Parliament](#) by a vote of [147 to 126](#). The bill’s defeat followed [numerous calls by media for its passage](#), and a

massive **campaign** in support of the bill and evidence-based decision making more broadly.

January

- A coalition of civil society organizations collectively representing tens of thousands of Canadians (and including Our Right to Know) signs a **joint statement** in support of liberal MP Ted Hsu's **private member's bill** to reinstate the mandatory long form census. The federal Conservatives scrapped the census in 2010, despite the **protests of** academics, library groups, think tanks, government advisory boards, business groups, and more.
- NAFTA **passes a resolution** to block the Commission for Environmental Cooperation from investigating allegations that toxic materials from Alberta's tailings ponds are leaking into nearby rivers and creeks. Such a leak would be a violation of the Fisheries Act.
- The news service **Blacklock's Reporter** reveals that Canadian **civil servants have been barred from accessing its website**. According to public sector unions, some public employees are forced to make special requests to the departments they work for in order to access information they need to do their jobs.
- A poll conducted by Nielsen for the CAUT found that a majority of respondents – 51% – disagreed with the the statement that the government “should invest in research only when it leads to the development of new products and services.” (CAUT Bulletin, 62 (1), January 21015, p.A5)

December

- Emails released due to an Access to Information request **reveal that** the Canada Revenue Agency destroyed all the text message records of its employees. The deletions come in the midst of a **controversial campaign of CRA audits** of charities that have expressed disagreement with Harper Government policies.
- The federal government unveils a new **Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy**, which identifies five “priority research areas.” Although **praised by university presidents**, the new strategy is panned by critics for being “**lousy policy**,” and for **devaluing public interest science** in favour of an **emphasis on business**.
- **Canadian scientists speak out** about a change being implemented by the Canadian Institute of Health Research. Going forward, applicants for CIHR funding could be forced to find matching funding from external partners in order to be eligible for grants. In response to this shift, **dozens of researchers from across the country write to** the governing council of CIHR, **drawing attention** to a “serious rift” between the Institute and those who study Aboriginal health, in particular.
- The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada announces that it will be **pushing for a package of contractual changes** that would protect scientific integrity.

November

- Using omnibus legislation, the federal government **moves to demote** the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. One of the country’s longest serving public health officials **warns** that this change will “weaken” the Public Health Agency.

- The Canadian Women's Health Network (CWHN) **suspends operations** after losing the financial support of the federal government in 2013.
- The Canadian National Ultrahigh-Field NMR Facility for Solids in Ottawa announces it will be **closing its doors** due to the **moratorium** on the NSERC Major Resources Support program and an overall lack of funding. Founded in 2005, the Facility has supported over 100 research projects, resulting in more than 170 peer-reviewed publications on topics ranging from **pharmaceuticals and health** to **nuclear magnetic resonance**. The National Research Council and the University of Ottawa later **join forces** to sustain operations of the Facility, after the scientific community **protests its closure**.
- Michael Rennie, a former Fisheries and Oceans Canada researcher **reveals that** “never in four years did [he] receive communications approval to speak with media by deadline.”
- The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC) – the union that represents scientists and other professionals in the federal public service – **votes** to campaign actively against the Harper government in 2015. The move **is a shift** from PIPSC's tradition of remaining at arm's length during elections, and is motivated in large part by the government's continued muzzling of scientists.
- Private Member's Bill C-626 (introduced by Liberal MP **Ted Hsu**) goes to a second reading in the House of Commons. **The Act to Amend the Statistics Act** would increase the independence of Canada's Chief Statistician, and reinstate the long-form census which was scrapped by the federal Conservatives in 2011. Since C-626 was tabled, the decision to do away with the mandatory census has once again been **roundly condemned** in the media. Unfortunately, the bill is **deemed unlikely to pass**.

- The former director of NAFTA's Commission on Environmental Cooperation says the environmental watchdog is "**dying a slow death.**" The commission was created in 1995 to ensure that the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement did not adversely affect the environment, but its recent submission that Canada is **breaking the Fisheries Act** has been ignored by the federal government.

October

- **A study** conducted by Evidence for Democracy and Simon Fraser University finds that Canadian government scientists are **far more restricted** in their ability to speak with the media than their U.S. counterparts. Its authors assessed the communications policies of 16 different federal departments, and found that all save one (the Department of Defence) scored lower than equivalent agencies in the U.S.
- NDP Deputy Science & Technology critic, Laurin Liu, **calls for** the Canadian government to restore prior levels of funding to its three federal granting councils: NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC. She highlights the fact that Canada has slipped from third place to ninth in **annual rankings** of 41 countries for performance in science, technology and innovation. She further accuses the Harper government of displaying "contempt for discovery research."
- **A report** from the Broadbent Institute finds that the Canada Revenue Agency's campaign to audit a number of Canadian charities is biased. The study refers to the audits as part of "the Harper government's continued and deliberate silencing of critical voices." Its findings also **suggest that** right-leaning charities have largely escaped the recent wave of audits.

- An **open letter** signed by hundreds of scientists and engineers from around the world urges Prime Minister Stephen Harper to end “burdensome restrictions on scientific communication and collaboration faced by Canadian government scientists.” **The letter argues** that Canada’s leadership on environmental and health research, in particular, is in jeopardy. Its message is endorsed by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, which pays for the letter’s promotion across the country.
- **A report** from Canada’s Commissioner of the Environment **finds that** Canada has **delayed monitoring of oil sands** pollution, and that government reporting on emissions has been misleading. As well, **the report notes that** the federal committee responsible for Canada’s climate plan has not met in three years.
- The **report** “Can Scientists Speak” analyzed the communication and media policies of sixteen federal government departments for openness and protection from political interference, and **found** that Natural Resources Canada tied for last place whereas the Department of National Defence took first place. The report further states that fifteen of the departments “scored lower than the United States average in 2013”.

September

- After 40 years of research on international development and foreign policy, the North-South Institute **closes its doors**. In a **release** on the closure, the Board of Directors cites a lack of funding. According to the Institute’s most recent **Annual Report**, more than half its \$2.4 million in revenue came from a government grant, not renewed since June, 2013. The University of Ottawa’s Lauchlan Munro **writes** that this is evidence of “the current federal government’s decision to

discontinue [a] longstanding bipartisan tradition of public funding of intellectual diversity through think tanks.”

- Over 400 academics from across Canada sign an [open letter](#) urging the Canada Revenue Agency to cease its audit of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Its authors say the audit suggests that the CRA itself is biased, and “fails to understand the nature of what academic research is all about.” The letter also [calls for a moratorium](#) on any further CRA audits of think tanks.
- A request from The Canadian Press to speak to federal government scientist Max Bothwell for an article about his research expertise failed to produce an interview. What it did produce was [110 pages of emails](#) to and from 16 different federal government communications operatives, according to documents obtained using access to information legislation.

August

- Liberal MP Stephane Dion [expresses concern](#) over the Harper government’s narrow focus on Canada’s military accomplishments instead of “our tireless and balanced promotion of justice, democracy, peace among nations, prosperity, social justice, equal opportunity, environmental health, scientific and technological development, artistic and cultural creation.” As examples of the “conscription of Canadian past,” Dion cites the \$30 million commitment to a War of 1812 commemoration and simultaneous fund slashing for libraries, archives, and public programming.
- Bureaucratic suppression [prevents federal scientists](#) from holding strictly technical briefings on alarmingly low levels of ice in the Canadian Arctic. Newly released federal documents show that The Canadian Ice Service had to seek nine levels of approval to conduct a briefing, which was

cancelled at the sixth level (“Ministerial Services”). As a result, Canadians are forced to obtain data on Canadian ice levels via the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in the U.S.

- Statistics Canada **admits** that its July **jobs report** had an error. Namely, Statscan revised the number of full-time jobs lost during that month from 59,700 to just 18,100. The Labour Force Survey can affect the value of the Canadian dollar, and the Bank of Canada relies on its findings to make decisions about Canada’s interest rate.

July

- **Documents** obtained through an access to information request **reveal that** the Harper government had heavily censored a memo recommending that it continue funding the **Canadian Environmental Network** (RCEN). The federal government cancelled its funding of RCEN – which helps facilitate expert consultations with government on issues of environmental policy – in 2011.
- **An open letter** signed by 140 doctors and scientists from across Canada says “federal cutbacks on large, randomized controlled trials will have negative consequences to scientific progress and the health of Canadians.” Given Canada’s strong history in successful randomized clinical trials, the report calls for “an immediate increase in support” for this important method of inquiry.
- **Research** completed by former journalist and graduate student, Gareth Kirkby reveals that ongoing tax audits of charities engaged in “political activities” are having a **chilling effect** on the organizations’ abilities to fulfill their mandates. Sixteen charities under audit participated anonymously in Kirkby’s research, and revealed that increased scrutiny from the Canada Revenue Agency has –

in particular – affected their ability to communicate with the public about their work.

June

- Meteorologists at Environment Canada are **forbidden from publicly discussing climate change**. The rationale given for the ban is that meteorologists are not qualified to answer questions related to climate change.

May

- Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada submits a **written statement** to the UN Human Rights Council calling for an immediate end to
- the surveillance of human rights defenders, Indigenous groups, and environmental organizations in Canada. 2. An immediate end to discriminatory inquiries and audits by the Canada Revenue Agency of Canadian charitable organizations. 3. The creation of an enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders.
- Emily Atkin, a journalist interested in seeing the tar sands, highlights the **numerous obstacles** when trying to enter the country in order to report on the Tar Sands.
- The Fifth Annual **Review of Free Expression in Canada** was released, highlighting the muzzling of scientists across the country. According to the report, the number of missing records complaints submitted to the information commissioner rose by 51% from 2012-2013. The report gave a failing grade to Canada's Access to Information system, with more than 80% of responses to information requests being partially or mostly censored.

April

- The Addictions Research Centre in Montague, P.E.I. is **closing**. CBC learned that the federal research centre will close in April of 2014. The facility was established in 1999 to help substance abusers in the federal prison system.
- **Concerns raised** about the possible resurfacing of BC's herring crisis without good governance of science. Despite the peaceful resolution of a northern BC herring roe fishery involving commercial fishermen and a First Nations community, mismanagement of fisheries leave tension and the potential for future conflict in the area.

March

- Environment Canada's **three-year budget** Funding will be slashed by 19.2% for wildlife and water programs, 17.6% for weather services, and 42.2% for pollution management and mitigation programs. Despite Canada's tattered climate change record, support for climate change programs has been cut by a shocking 69.4%.
- Historically leaders in the promotion of life-saving harm reduction technology, Canadian diplomats are now **under instruction** not to speak of harm reduction and even to have the term deleted from statements. Canadian negotiators help to prevent the inclusion of beneficial harm reduction health strategies in international drug policies at the UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs in Vienna.

February

- The Mersey Biodiversity Centre is **closed** despite attempts to partner with volunteers. The former recovery centre in Nova Scotia for the endangered Atlantic whitefish was one of the

latest casualties of federal government cuts. Scientists say the world's only surviving population of Atlantic whitefish is confined to three lakes outside Bridgewater. Six years ago, the federal government committed to a recovery plan for the endangered fish and part of that plan involved the Mersey Biodiversity Centre.

- An intimate relationship is **revealed** between the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and Postmedia, the media network that publishes the *National Post*, the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Calgary Herald*, among other major Canadian newspapers. Despite claims that “the association does not influence the editorial content of Postmedia papers”, Joint Ventures, pieces which highlight the role of energy in driving Canada’s economic engine, will appear in major papers.
- Kennedy Stewart, Official Opposition Critic for Science and Technology, releases an **open letter** to Minister of Science and Technology Greg Rickford. Stewart expresses “concerns with Industry Canada’s public consultations on the federal government’s updated Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy,” citing a lack of integrity and transparency.
- A report **released** by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada announces that the federal government plans to slash almost 5000 jobs and over \$2.5 billion in funding from its “science-focused departments” in the next two years.
- After the C. Civil Liberties Association files formal complaints against the RCMP and CSIS for illegally monitoring anti-pipeline environmental groups, a **piece** in *The Tyee* claims “fascist attitudes and behaviour” on the part of Canada’s government.
- Max Bothwell – a lead research scientist with Environment Canada – is **prevented from speaking** with the press about

the results of **his important research** on “rock snot.” Fortunately, his collaborators are able to communicate the team’s findings: that the mucus-like algae bloom that emerged in Atlantic Canada in 2006 is proliferating because of warming global temperatures. Scientists fear the organism (also known as didymo) could make it **harder for fish to access food sources**.

January

- Federal government closes seven out of nine Department of Fisheries and Oceans libraries, in what has been called “libricide” and a **knowledge massacre**. The library closures are hailed as **a blow to democracy** that is **damaging to Canada’s collective memory**, and critics **compare** the move to US president George Bush’s cuts to federal environmental libraries. Concerns raised about whether dismantled collections are being **adequately digitized**. Ted Hsu, MP for Kingston and the Islands, **voices his concern**: “The Harper government may not like science ... but it does not have the right to literally trash the products of decades worth of research just because it doesn’t suit the ideology of the Harper Conservatives. ... Destroying data is not just an ideological problem, it’s also blatant fiscal mismanagement.” Fisheries Minister Gail Shea denies claims by anonymous scientists that those books not left in dumpsters have been **burned or sent to landfills**, **stating** that books were “recycled in a green fashion.” Anonymous DFO scientists continue to voice concerns. Elizabeth May poses a serious challenge to the **legality** of the library closures.
- Health Canada’s primary research library closed. Scientists forced to **work around the cuts to library funding**: some borrow university students’ library cards, and one scientist

stores books and journals in his basement for his colleagues' use. E

- Canada Revenue Agency **conducts an audit of highly respected environmental groups**. Critics claim political intimidation. Environmental groups are concerned that the CRA will use the a **shifting definition** of “political advocacy work” to curtail their speech against pro-tar sands policies.

2013

December

- In a victory for advocates of public science and free speech, Libraries and Archives Canada **withdraws a controversial code of conduct**, first put into effect in early 2013. The **new code of conduct** reduces restrictions on LAC employees' professional development activities, and makes it easier for them to express personal opinions to the public.

November

- Speaking at the annual Canadian Science Policy Conference, Kennedy Stewart **advocates** for Bill C-558, advocating for the appointment of a Parliamentary Science Officer. MP Laurin Liu, Deputy Critic for Science and Technology, voices her support: “Beginning with the closure of the National Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, the Conservatives have used every tool at their disposal to prevent, limit, and restrict Canadian scientists from sharing their research with policy-makers and the public. ... Being independent from the government and responsible for serving the needs of the legislature, a Parliamentary Science Officer would revitalize scientific integrity in Ottawa.”

October

- **A survey** commissioned by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada finds that hundreds of federal scientists have been asked to alter or exclude technical information from documents, and *thousands* have been prevented from responding to inquiries from the media and/or the public. PIPSC president and CEO **Gary Corbett** **says** the survey indicates that government scientists now “live in a climate of fear.”

September

- Approval of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway proposal to move “dilbit” (diluted bitumen) oil to Asia by supertankers along the B.C. coast is subject to review by a joint panel with British Columbia. The province has so far rejected the plan based on environmental concerns. Interim Green Party of BC leader Adam Olsen notes that “The BC government ... found Enbridge has not completed even rudimentary science to understand what dilbit does when it is spilled”. Green Party politicians who have reviewed federal documents relating to proposed weather forecasting and dilbit-spill modeling research projects declare that “The Federal Government is moving forward over the next two years with a \$100 million plus...to research and model the complex waterways in the Kitimat and Hecate Straights region. In essence this is a federal government subsidy to the Northern Gateway Project.” Party leader **May** said “I’m personally quite shocked by the extent of the spending when we see science cut in so many areas.”

August

- Due to financial constraints and operational priorities, the **Centre of the Universe Interpretative Centre** in Victoria suspended its outreach activities effective August 24, 2013. This facility used to be funded by the National Research Council and cost \$250,00 per year. It was so “well used that most Saturdays kids had to wait outside for their turn to peer through one of the world’s most powerful telescopes.”

July

- The government **appoints** Greg Rickford as the new minister of state for science and technology. Rickford supported the closing of the ELA, which is located in his riding, despite concerted public protests.
- In the wake of Dr. Kibenge’s **lab being stripped of its OIE status** (see entry in Nov. 2012), scientists now **afraid** to report a deadly fish virus.

May

- The National Research Council (NRC) – which gave the country canola and the atomic clock – will now be taking its **scientific cues** from Canadian industry as part of a makeover of the country’s flagship research labs. The overhaul, quietly begun two years ago and now formally unveiled, means the 97-year-old NRC will focus on a clutch of large-scale, business-driven research projects at the expense of the basic science that was once at its core.
- The Conservative government **says** it wants to leverage the NRC’s world-class resources, everything from wind tunnels and ice tanks to high-powered microscopes, to help reverse the country’s chronically lagging innovation performance. The changes, layoffs, and attacks have, however, **resulted in**

lower production from NRC scientists. Since the Conservatives took office, NRC publications have plummeted from 1,991 in 2006 to just 436 in 2012. In the same time, NRC patents have dropped from 53 in 2006 to a mere 3 in 2012. The message this sends to talented early career researchers considering working for the NRC? Apply your skills elsewhere.

- John MacDougal, President of the NRC, **said** “Scientific discovery is not valuable unless it has commercial value”. Gary Goodyear, the Canadian Minister of State for Science and Technology, also stated “There is [sic] only two reasons why we do science and technology. First is to create knowledge ... second is to use that knowledge for social and economic benefit. Unfortunately, all too often the knowledge gained is opportunity lost.”
- Statistics Canada **releases** the results of the first voluntary survey that replaced the former compulsory census. One-third of Canadian households received the National Household Survey in 2011. Of those, 68.6% completed it fully, compared with the typical 94% response rate of a mandatory questionnaire. The former head of Statistics Canada, Munir Sheikh, **argues** that the survey “will not... provide a level of quality that would have been achieved through a mandatory long-form census. ...We are now in a funny upside-down world: We’re using the old census data to fix the survey results when the objective was to find a new anchor to fix survey results because the old anchor was out of date. This is a vicious circle. ... At some stage, it will become a process of garbage guiding garbage.” Because of the minimal response in some areas, the data are basically useless at the community level. For instance, the lack of detailed information makes it difficult for communities to plan bus routes or for advertisers to

target their marketing campaigns. More information available [here](#).

- Stats Can [estimated](#) that it spent \$652 million on the 2011 census and questionnaire program, versus a budget of \$567 million in 2006 for the long-form census. The abolition of the mandatory form increased the costs significantly while decreasing the quality.
- The President of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, Prof. Jeffrey Hutchings, [expressed](#) his serious concern about the muzzling of federal scientists.
- *The Economist* publishes an [editorial](#) critical of Harper's science policy, including his "comical excesses in communication control," after the department of Fisheries and Oceans tried to impose confidentiality restrictions on a joint Arctic research project involving the University of Delaware. A complaint from an American scientist prompted Ottawa to rethink its onerous confidentiality stipulations. And [more](#) from *The Globe and Mail*.
- Agriculture Canada [announces](#) the closure of some of its research operations in Western Canada. Ottawa issued potential job loss notices to 350 Agriculture Canada employees across Canada, including 125 in Western Canada. Affected employees include 144 commerce officers, 79 scientists, 76 information technology (IT) specialists, 29 engineers, 14 biologists, five research managers and three procurement officers.
- [Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre budget is reduced by a third](#). With a staff of 30, Bamfield is used by visiting researchers to study fish, marine animals and ecosystems. The centre also runs education programs for students at all levels. The facilities are funded through a consortium of five western universities and, until recently, Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

There had been no consultation, no previous inquiries or communication.

April

- The government announces that it will de-fund the Canadian Health Council as of 2014. The independent national agency has served as the primary accountability mechanism for the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal and the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, reporting annually to Canadians about the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of the health care system. The Council was told that with next year's expiry of the intergovernmental health agreements, "there is no longer a need" for it to monitor progress on health care renewal and reform in Canada. More information available [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- The federal government [announces](#) that it is reducing the number of departments and agencies that can do environmental reviews from 40 to just 3 to speed up approvals for projects that will bolster Canada's economy. Conducting environmental reviews requires time for research but the timeline allotted to each of the reviews is also shortened.
- The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) launches its <http://getscienceright.ca/>
- Allan Gregg, former Tory pollster, denounces the government's muzzling in a [public speech](#). "This was no random act of downsizing, but a deliberate attempt to obliterate certain activities that were previously viewed as a legitimate part of government decision making" Gregg stated, "namely, using research, science and evidence as the basis to make public policy decisions. " "It also amounted to an attempt to eliminate anyone who would use

science, facts and evidence to challenge government policies,” he added.

- Four opposition MPs [write to Commissioner Legault](#) requesting that she add the Library and Archives Canada Code of Conduct to her review of the muzzling of science in Canada.
- Federal funding for the Canadian Women’s Health Network has [ceased](#). “Effective April 1, we will no longer receive funding from the Women’s Health Contribution Program (WHCP), a program Health Canada set up in 1995 to provide the federal government with policy advice related to women’s health.” “The CWHN existed prior to being funded by the WHCP and it will continue to exist as long as we can find ways to keep ourselves sustainable. One of the main roles we have played for the past 18 years has been as the networking and communications arm of the Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health. Sadly they, too, are all losing their federal funding. This means that the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health in Halifax and the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence in Winnipeg will be closing down operations completely. The two other centres – the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health in Vancouver and the National Network on Environments and Women’s Health in Toronto – will remain open for a while, in the hope of finding other sources of funding. Ditto for the Réseau québécois d’action pour la santé des femmes in Montréal which has also been a recipient of the WHCP.”
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans [closes its oceans contaminants](#) research program. This will leave “Canada without any research or monitoring capacity for pollution in our three oceans, or any ability to manage its impacts on commercial fish stocks, traditional foods for over 300,000 aboriginal people and marine wildlife.”

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans **closes libraries**. Closure of fisheries' libraries called a 'disaster' for science. The libraries are home to the 50 illustrated volumes from Britain's Challenger expedition that sailed the seas in the late 1800s exploring the mysteries of the deep. The shelves heave with reports detailing the DDT pollution that wiped out young salmon in New Brunswick's "rivers of death" in the 1950s. And they contain vivid reminders of native fisheries, Canada's once vast cod stocks and the U.S. submarines that prowled the quiet fjords along the B.C. coast in the 1940s undefined history that is being packed into boxes as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans "consolidates" its world-class library collection. Seven DFO **libraries** across Canada are to close by the fall, including two that have been amassing books and technical reports on the aquatic realm for more than a century.
- Marley Waiser, a scientist at National Water Research Institute in Saskatoon, speaks out about being **muzzled**. Waiser spent more than 25 years with Environment Canada and is going public with concerns that Ottawa is muzzling scientists like her. She retired last year, about a year after **CBC News did a story about pollution in Regina's Wascana Creek** that referenced her research. She says she wasn't allowed to talk to a CBC reporter about that story, but now wants her voice heard.

March

- The world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area is de-funded by the federal government. Even scientists whose research is funded from other sources are prohibited to use the facilities. The Government of Ontario, however, is working collaboratively with the Conservatives, the Manitoba government, and others to keep the area this year and to

work toward sustainable funding for longer-term operations. Further information available from [CBC](#), the [Toronto Star](#), and [CTV News](#).

- *The Economist* publishes an [editorial](#) deploring Harper's tight control of information flow in connection with the refusal by an American scientist to sign a contract for a proposed collaboration in the Arctic between America's University of Delaware and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans because he feels that "it threatens [his] academic freedom and potentially muzzles [his] ability to publish data and interpretation and talk timely on science issues of potential public interest without government interference."
- Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault [responds favourably](#) to the request from Democracy Watch and the Environmental Launch, announcing the launch of an investigation into seven federal government departments over the muzzling of scientists. She sent a letter to the following departments: Environment Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources Canada, National Research Council of Canada, Department of National Defence, and she "added the Treasury Board, because of its role in relation to the development and implementation of government policies." More information [here](#).
- Two years after she was forbidden to talk to the media about her peer-reviewed and already-published research into diseases killing West Coast salmon, DFO researcher Kristi Miller is [allowed to talk to the press for the first time](#) about her future salmon research.
- The United Nations right-to-food envoy [says](#) the abolition of the long-form census makes it more difficult to fight poverty in Canada.
- Canada [pulls out](#) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Canada signed the

convention in 1994 and ratified it in 1995. Every UN nation (194 countries and the European Union) is currently a party to it, except, now, for Canada. This happened immediately before the conference in April, at which “the first ever comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of desertification, land degradation and drought” will be carried out. According to a notice from the UN Environment Program, “for the very first time, governments will provide concrete data on the status of poverty and of land cover in the areas affected by desertification in their countries.”

- The government **shuts down** the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, formerly an arms-length organization, and prevents its last head from posting a farewell message. It also forbids the transfer of its website to a think-tank based at the University of Ottawa. The think-tank, Sustainable Prosperity, had offered to keep the government-funded research accessible to the public. The panel was created by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s government in 1988. Until 2012, it was independent of the government, but changes adopted in the budget implementation legislation in July 2012 gave the Environment Minister powers to control its public messages. More information [here](#).
- The Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program and the Fraser River Estuary Management Program (BIEAP-FREMP), an intergovernmental program that helps protect the environment of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, **closes its doors** on March 31, 2013. According to Carrie Brown, manager of environmental programs with Port Metro Vancouver, “quite often development and preservation are in conflict with each other. The BIEAP-FREMP programs were part of the solution to that, to bring everyone together – not just government agencies, but often municipalities, the public, First Nations – and be sort of a neutral body that

could kind of stickhandle a lot of the issues along the Lower Mainland. All of that is currently not being worked on.”

- The Harper Government **votes against public science**. Here is a resolution in the Canadian House of Commons from **Wednesday, March 20, 2013**. It was sponsored by **Kennedy Stewart** of the **NDP**, the MP for Burnaby-Douglas in BC. That, in the opinion of the House: (a) public science, basic research and the free and open exchange of scientific information are essential to evidence-based policy-making; (b) federal government scientists must be enabled to discuss openly their findings with their colleagues and the public; and (c) the federal government should maintain support for its basic scientific capacity across Canada, including immediately extending funding, until a new operator is found, to the world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area Research Facility to pursue its unique research program. The motion was defeated 157 to 137, with the NDP and Liberals all supporting and every single Conservative voting Nay. Including the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper.
- Germany’s largest and most prestigious research institute **pulls out of a Canadian government-funded** \$25 million research project into sustainable solutions to tar sands pollution, citing fears for its environmental reputation. As many as 20 scientists at the world-famous **Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres** have ceased involvement in the **Helmholtz Alberta Initiative** (HAI), after a moratorium on contacts was declared last month.
- Federal Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault is **asked** by the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria and Democracy Watch to investigate the way the Harper government has been “muzzling” federal scientists.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) **introduces** new Publication Review Committee (PRC) Procedures for C&A Science requiring all scientists working on projects in

conjunction with DFO in the Central and Arctic Region to treat all information as proprietary to DFO, and await departmental approval before submitting research to any scientific journals. See also [Elizabeth May's column](#) regarding barriers affecting government scientists' participation in scientific conferences via bureaucratic overload.

February

- Canada restricts how researchers can share data. In 2013, a one-year joint project required a 19-page legal (draft) document. The section on data sharing and publication now consists of almost two pages containing language such as: “Any technology, data, or other information of any kind related to or arising from the Project (collectively “Information”) shall be deemed confidential and neither Party may release any such Information to others in any way whatsoever without the prior written authorization of the other Party ... The obligation of the Parties herein shall survive the expiration to which this Appendix is affixed and of which it is part.” This threatens academic freedom and potentially impinges on the ability to publish data and interpretation and to speak in a timely matter about scientific issues of potential public interest without government interference. More information [here](#).
- Andreas Muenchow, a physical oceanographer at the University of Delaware, expresses concern that new research agreements with the Canadian government may restrict his [ability to publish data](#).

January

- Library and Archives Canada's Code of Conduct: Values and Ethics introduced: "As public servants, our duty of loyalty to the Government of Canada and its elected officials extends beyond our workplace to our personal activities." More information [here](#). This Code of Conduct is later withdrawn due to public outcry (see: December 2013)
- Yolande Grisé, president of The Royal Society of Canada, publishes an [article](#) lamenting that "unreasonable limits are being placed on the ability of government-employed scientists to communicate their findings, whether through publication of their research results or attendance at scientific meetings. These restrictions seem particularly severe in topics related to the environment, where several government scientists have been denied the opportunity to discuss their work."
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans(DFO) scientists must [now get departmental approval](#) to submit research to science journals, and the department has the power to pull scientific articles that have already been accepted for publication. The DFO also has proposed confidentiality provisions, "that, for the first time," would apply to non-government and non-Canadian research collaborators.
- Canada's space agency faces deep funding cuts. Over the past year, the Canadian Space Agency has been battered by government budget cuts, buffeted by a critical review, and now even its president is ejecting right out of the place. While no one yet seems to know exactly how that extreme makeover will ultimately reshape the Canadian agency, there is no question the [space program has reached a critical point in its history](#), which spans more than a half-century. It remains a matter of debate how all this will impact the companies and thousands of employees in a space industry expected to generate an estimated \$3.4 billion of economic activity this year.

2012

December

- Senate **approves** Bill C-45, Harper's second omnibudget bill of the year, and Governor General David Johnston will give Royal Assent once more to this troubling trend of the Harper government. Tucked away in the changes of over 60 pieces of legislation, this second budget bill eliminates the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission (HMIRC). Bill C-45 eliminates the Commission by transferring its powers and responsibilities to the Minister of Health. Although this has failed to garner any in-depth media coverage, this change could have significant effects on fracking, tar sands development and the multiplicity of industries that deal with hazardous materials.

November

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) asked the Office of International Epizootics (OIE), the World Organization for Animal Health, to **strip Dr. Kibenge's BC lab of its status** as one of only 2 OIE reference labs for **Infectious Salmon Anaemia**. A few weeks before, the OIE changed the definition of an ISA virus – positive region. Previously, a region could only be designated positive if the “disease” was found. Now a region is positive if the virus is “detected.” Therefore if the OIE keeps their lab, BC would be designated as ISAv positive.
- A **document** released under Access to Information to Postmedia's Mike De Souza reveals that Environment Canada scientists had confirmed results published earlier by water expert David Schindler to the effect that contaminants were accumulating in snow near oil sands

operations. The document reveals that government researchers were discouraged from speaking to reporters about their findings, and a scripted list of answers was developed to contradict the findings. More information available [here](#).

October

- Canada's ozone science group falls victim to government cuts. Thousands of people have avoided getting skin cancer thanks to Canadian scientists who invented the UV index and the gold-standard tool for measuring the thickness of the Earth's ozone layer. But now Canada's ozone science group no longer exists, victim of government [budget cuts](#).

September

- NSERC's [elimination](#) of the \$35M "Major Resources Support" after the 2012 federal budget was another major setback for a number of senior researchers and their students. This program used to assist major and unique national or international experimental and thematic research resources to cover their operating and maintenance costs. For UBC researchers, this means the potential loss of a major research centre: the Pacific Northwest Consortium Synchrotron Radiation Facility.

August

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency [cancels](#) 2,970 project reviews due to the Harper government's budget legislation. 678 involved fossil fuel energy and 248 involved

a pipeline, including proposals from Alberta-based energy companies. More information [here](#).

- The federal government has gutted environmental laws and cut funding for environmental departments through its [omnibus budget bills](#). It has attempted to justify those massive environmental policy changes in part by saying that the review process was slow and inefficient. On the contrary, research by scientists at the University of Toronto, published in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, “found no evidence that regulatory review in Canada was inefficient, even when regulators had an on-going load of over 600 projects for review at any given time.”

July

- At the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Canada’s federal funding agency for university-based research, the [Major Resource Support Program](#) is cancelled and the Research Tools and Instruments program is suspended. These programs represent approximately 20% of NSERC’s core discovery funding envelope. Funding commitments will be honoured but no new projects will be taken on. The loss of future opportunities is immeasurable.
- The Kluane Lake Research Station, one of Canada’s oldest and most celebrated scientific research stations is [racing against the clock](#) to avoid having to close its doors. The Kluane Lake Research Station, located in the Yukon adjacent to the largest non-polar icefield in the world, is one of a handful of scientific outposts to have its funding cut by the federal budget. The Kluane facility is run by the Arctic Institute of North America, a joint U.S.-Canada research

operation that is administered by the University of Calgary along with the University of Alaska.

June

- **Hundreds of scientists and researchers gather** on Parliament Hill to protest the “**Death of Evidence.**” Wearing white lab coats, the researchers-turned-protesters **came together to lament** the demise of the long-form census, and speak out against budget cuts to Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Library and Archives Canada, the National Research Council, Statistics Canada, the Polar Environmental Atmospheric Research Laboratory, and more.
- Employees of Parks Canada are **prohibited** from criticizing the federal government and are told that they have a “duty” to support the Harper government.
- At the 30th anniversary of the federal **Access to Information Act**, Canada finds itself **tied for 51st** in the world on a list of freedom-of-information rankings, behind Angola, Colombia and Niger.
- **The RCMP announces** the establishment of a counter-terrorism unit in Alberta to “prevent, detect, deny and respond to criminal threats to Canada’s national security”. Terrorist concerns include “activist groups, indigenous groups, environmentalists and others who are publicly critical of government policy.”
- The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) **closes its doors**. Since its inception in 2000, it received its core funding of nearly \$5 million per year from Health Canada; however, this funding was completely cut by the Conservative government in its 2012 budget. Given the precarious health conditions of Canada’s Aboriginal populations, NAHO took on an educational role and

established the [Journal of Aboriginal Health](#), the first of its kind. The organization also carried out ground-breaking work on social issues among Native populations in the Arctic.

May

- The government announces that it will [close down](#) the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy after the organization produced a report on Canada's climate change plans which emphasized the fact that the government would not reach its set targets of greenhouse-gas reductions unless additional measures are taken.
- The St. Andrews Biological Station in New Brunswick experiences cuts to funding in aquatic science. The brand new St. Andrews Biological Station Library is [slated to close](#) in 2013, the Contaminants and Toxicology program is to end, and the Habitat program will be reduced. About 7 scientists and librarians received layoff notices in May 2012.
- The Centre for Offshore Oil & Gas Energy Research (COOGER), a noted offshore research agency based at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, will experience cuts to funding and staff. The COOGER assisted in the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Its director, Ken Lee, recently received a letter telling him that his job would be affected as part of cost-cutting at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The research centre was established in 2002 to co-ordinate DFO research into the environmental and oceanographic impacts of offshore petroleum exploration, production and transportation. About 400 positions will be eliminated. More information available [here](#) and [here](#).
- Twelve researchers and scientists at the Maurice-Lamontagne Institute (MLI) received their [workforce](#)

adjustment (WFA) notice on May 17. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) will soon close the Laboratories of Expertise in Aquatic Chemical Analysis (LEACA) and dismantle the scientific team working on marine toxicology and chemistry. As a result, the LEACA will no longer be available to conduct chemical analyses in emergency situations (e.g., oil spills). The lab also works on improving detection methods for new toxic molecules accumulating in the aquatic food chain. The absence of monitoring of the biological effects of chemical compounds (PCBs, heavy metals, pesticides, organochlorines, antibiotics, etc.) in the aquatic environment raises concerns for the health and safety of many species and the people who consume them.

- The Conservative Government has decided that they do not need to maintain expertise on toxic emissions from smokestacks. The team of “smokestack” specialists at Environment Canada, who measure cancer-causing emissions and provide support for the development of standards, the assessment of pollution sources, analysis of the effectiveness of pollution-reduction technologies, and maintain an inventory of pollution from different sources, is being dismantled. These scientists play a key role working with enforcement officers and industry to crack down on toxic pollution. More information available [here](#) and [here](#).

April

- **The National Council of Welfare is terminated.** It was the only federal agency with a mandate devoted exclusively to improving the lives of low-income Canadians.
- **The Canadian Council on Learning**, having lost its federal funding, moves to **dissolve itself**.

- Statistics Canada imposes a Code of Conduct that **prohibits employees** from making personal comments about the organization, its staff or the government.
- Government “media minders” **intervene** when scientists at the International Polar Year conference in Montréal are approached by the media. Although it is common for the media to interview speakers at these conferences, researchers were instructed to ask for a business card and pass the message onto the media relations contact when approached by the media.
- Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird **announces** that the government is shutting down the Rights and Democracy Agency. The highly respected Rights and Democracy Agency was created in 1988 to encourage democracy and monitor human rights around the world. Liberal foreign affairs critic Dominic LeBlanc commented “this Conservative government has tried to use Rights and Democracy to advance its own ideological agenda. When that failed, they drove the organization into trouble and then killed it off as a ‘cost-cutting’ measure.”
- Maria Gergin **notes** in “Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record” (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 6, 2011) that a Deloitte and Touche audit concluded that the Harper government had engaged in an ‘ideological hijacking’ of the highly respected Rights and Democracy Agency.
- **Conservatives axe First Nations-led statistics Crown corporation.** The Conservative government has axed a First Nations-led Crown corporation created to fill the statistical “gap” that exists when it comes to getting numbers from First Nations reserves and the urban Aboriginal population. The First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI), which was created through legislation passed in 2005 during the Liberal government under Paul Martin, will see its \$5 million

budget cut in half this year and eliminated next year, according to the federal budget.

March

- **In its March 2012 budget, the budget of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was reduced by \$9.6 million over three years, an amount equal to about 10% of LAC's [total planned spending](#) for 2012-13. On April 30, 2012, LAC [sent notices to about 20%](#) of its employees advising them that their positions could be eliminated and that they could be laid off. In addition, the libraries in at least a dozen federal government departments [are now being closed](#), or their staffs and services are being significantly reduced. This includes the libraries at Agriculture Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Industry Canada, Transport Canada, the National Capital Commission, National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, Parks Canada, the Public Service Commission of Canada, and Public Works and Government Services Canada. Find more information [here](#).**
- **Tom Spears, a reporter for the Ottawa Citizen, learned that NASA and Canada's National Research Council were working together on a study of snowfall patterns. [Spears contacted NASA](#) and was able to speak to a scientist about the study within about 15 minutes. A similar request to the NRC generated a daylong public relations ordeal that involved 11 government employees and over 50 emails being sent, as federal employees tried to figure out how to answer the request and come up with "approved" lines.**

February

- Phil Cross, chief economic analyst of Statistics Canada **resigns**, claiming that internal debate was being suppressed on the topic of the long-form census.
- Environmentalism in Canada is officially declared a “**domestic terrorist threat**.”
- The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world’s largest scientific association, holds a panel on the muzzling of science in Canada. The BBC news publishes an **article** on the issue.
- The **Association des communicateurs scientifiques du Québec (ACS)**, **Association science et bien commun (ASBC)**, **Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE)**, **Canadian Science Writers’ Association (CSWA)**, **The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC)** and the **World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ)** send an **open letter** to PM Harper asking for timely and open access to federally funded scientists.

2011

October

- **David Tarasick**, part of a team that reported in *Nature* on the discovery of a huge hole in the ozone layer that is twice the size of Ontario, is prevented from talking with the media about the article.

April

- The **Canadian Science Writers’ Association** publishes an **open letter** to the leaders of Canada’s political parties to eliminate script writers, allow scientists to speak for

themselves, and let federal scientists inform the general population as public servants of Canada. JA – 05/19/2014

- An [Environment Canada](#) team published a [paper](#) on April 5, 2011, in *Geophysical Research Letters* concluding that a 2° C increase in global temperatures may be unavoidable by 2100. No interviews were granted by Environment Canada's media office.

March

- Over the 10 years prior to the 2011 budget, the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences (CFCAS) provided research grants of more than \$118.5 million. Over \$150 million in cash and in-kind support had been added to that amount by partner organizations. In 2011, [CFCAS](#) received half the amount required to sustain such a level of research.

February

- Professors [Errol Mendes and Amir Attaran](#), law professors at the University of Ottawa who are frequent critics of federal policies – immigration issues and the government's handling of the Afghan detainee issue, in particular – have consistently found themselves attacked on Conservative websites and by party spokespersons. In February 2011, both professors were notified of two conspicuous freedom-of-information requests at the University of Ottawa requesting details of the professors' employment, expenses, and teaching reviews and records. While legally the requesters remain anonymous, the professors say they have reason to believe that the requests are part of a larger intimidation tactic carried out by the Conservative government aimed at silencing them. See also [Maria](#)

Gergin's, "Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 6, 2011. More information [here](#).

January

- **Kristi Miller** published a [paper](#) in the respected journal *Science* suggesting that a virus was the cause of an unexpectedly high rate of salmon death. The journal considered her paper important enough that it encouraged journalists across the world to contact her for more information. The Privy Council prohibited her from speaking to journalists.

2010

December

- **The Sisters in Spirit** database was cut by the federal government, and new initiatives were announced, including another database on missing persons run by the RCMP. The database showed that 582 Aboriginal women had gone missing or had been murdered in Canada. The research results were published in March 2010, with the NWAC report "[What Their Stories Tell Us](#)". Native groups, human rights organizations and other critics called the policy change misleading and counterproductive, noting that the new missing persons database would no longer provide information on the particular risks to Aboriginal women.

September

- *Nature* publishes [an editorial](#) that Canada must free scientists to talk to journalists. “The information policies of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper are muzzling scientists in their dealings with the media.”

July

- *Nature* (466, 532, 29 July 2010) publishes [an editorial](#) urging reinstatement of long census form and organizes an international petition to ask the federal government to keep the long census form. Sign the petition [here](#).

June

- The government [replaces the mandatory long-form census](#) with a voluntary National Household Survey, against the protest of large numbers of scholars and organizations. In July, Dr. Munir Sheikh resigns in protest from his position as head of Statistics Canada.

April

- [The National Research Council](#) is laying off 86 people as part of cuts announced last year to reduce costs at the country’s leading research organization. The layoffs begin in April and will affect employees at the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI), the country’s national science library and leading publisher of scientific information. By the time it is over, CISTI, which used to employ about 350 people, will be down by close to 70 per cent, union officials say.
- [Scott Dallimore](#), a geoscientist working for National Resources Canada in British Columbia, publishes an [article](#)

in the respected journal “Nature” about a flood that occurred 13,000 years ago. Journalists are unable to talk with him in time for their deadline, because “new media interview procedures require pre-approval of certain types of interview requests by the minister’s office.

2009

December

- **The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL)** was a national, independent and non-profit organization focusing on lifelong and innovative learning in Canada, as well as on the general state of education in the country. In 2004 it was given a 5-year grant by the Liberal government, worth \$85 million. On December 21, 2009, Human Resources and Social Development Minister Diane Finley **sent** a letter to CCL, stating that the Conservative government would not be renewing the corporation’s grant. It was allowed to function for one more year, but without any state funding. In the fall of 2011, **CCL** announced that it would be closing its doors permanently in spring 2012.
- Lacking federal grants and hit hard by the 2008 recession, the **Canadian Policy Research Network**, which acted as a neutral forum so that groups with a wide variety of viewpoints on an issue could get together for discussions, closes its doors.

2008

March

- the appointment of the first and only Science Advisor, Arthur Carty, (appointed 2004) [was not renewed](#). His role was to support international research and development activities and to provide advice on global science and technology issues where relevant to Canada's national interests; to consider how to promote a strong culture of science, technology and innovation in Canada; and to provide advice on how the government can better support and benefit from science conducted inside government. Mr. Carty resigned as a consequence.

January

- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission president [Linda Keen](#) was fired in January 2008 after closing down a nuclear reactor for safety reasons. The government cited a shortage of isotopes essential to medical tests and procedures. It was a case of direct political interference of an arm's length, independent regulator of a potentially hazardous industry. The [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission](#) (CNSC) regulates [Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.](#) (AECL) and its research reactor at Chalk River north west of Ottawa. It produces 30% to 40% of the world's medical isotopes. Click [here](#) for the CBC version.

2007

November

- Environment Canada adopts a new **Media Relations Protocol**, with the aim of resulting in “one department, one voice.” Media Relations will henceforth coordinate all interactions with the media. Senior federal scientists must seek permission from the government prior to giving interviews, often requiring them to get approval from supervisors of written responses to the questions submitted by journalists before any interview.
- **A report** from a coalition of Canadian NGOs finds that the federal government is **hiding truth** about climate change. Canadian climate science is falling behind in place of oil extraction techniques and initiatives.

2006

September

- The government cancels a multi-year sustaining grant agreement for the **Canadian Policy Research Networks** that it had signed just five months earlier. In December 2009, lacking federal grants and hit hard by the 2008 recession, it closes its doors. NR – 11/5/2013
- The **Law Commission of Canada** has its funding cut and consequently has to close. The Commission conducted studies about topics such as Aboriginal rights, child abuse, extending rights beyond conjugal relationships, and removing restrictions on same-sex marriages.

April

- **Mark Tushingham**, a climatologist with Environment Canada, publishes a science fiction novel about global warming. DreamCatcher Publishing, of St. John, NB, that

published the book, organized a lunch at the National Press Club of Canada in Ottawa. Shortly before the event began, Elizabeth L. Margaris, the publisher, received a call from Mr. Tushingham telling her that the office of the Environment Minister, Ms. Ambrose, ordered him not to attend the lunch or to discuss his book with the news media.

Domestic Events (2006-2015)

2015

October

- CAUT sponsors a national campaign to “[Get Science Right](#)” to speak out against muzzling of scientists.

September

- [An open letter](#) signed by more than 100 former Parks Canada employees supports fired Alberta Park employee John Wilmhurst and warns of ‘deep fear’ in civil service about the muzzling of federal scientists by the Harper government.
- Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s government has [made more than two dozen secret cabinet decisions](#), hiding any trace of them from Parliament and Canadians.
- Songwriter and federal government environmental scientist Tony Turner was [put on administrative leave](#) with pay while being investigated for alleged conflict of interest and breach of the public service code of ethics. The investigation was initiated because Turner wrote and performed the song “Harperman” about the Harper government’s muzzling of scientists.

August

- A review of all televised English-language federal leaders' debates from 1968 to 2011 reveals that [no debate question regarding science has ever been asked](#).
- The **Canadian Institute of Health Research** [cancels its celebrated MD/PhD program](#) due to funding cuts, resulting reactions of "[shock and disappointment](#)" from Canada's medical and scientific communities.

July

- The [Canadian branch](#) of the international health research network, **Cochrane** prepares to [lose primary funding](#) from the **Canadian Institute of Health Research** (CIHR). Over the past five years, Cochrane produced more than 300 new or updated systematic reviews and trained nearly 3,000 new reviewers. With its primary funding cut off, Cochrane Canada risks losing its ability to assist in the production of evidence for informed decision-making in health care.
- Rob Brownstone – Canada Research Chair for spinal cord circuits – leaves Canada to pursue a career in England where he says research funding for his work is more secure. According to Dr. Brownstone, "[Attitudes toward research by \[Canada's\] federal government have not been particularly encouraging](#)."
- Federal government researcher Trevor Hadwen agrees to speak with the CBC regarding drought-like conditions in Alberta, but is denied media relations approval and [cannot complete the interview](#). The blog **Speaking up for Science** subsequently publishes [this piece](#), highlighting the blasé nature of media coverage of the incident.
- The **Voices-Voix Coalition** [reveals](#) that it expects the muzzling of government scientists and public servants to be a major focus of the United Nations in its forthcoming report on the Conservative government's human rights record. The muzzling of scientists is also a central focus of the landmark Voices-Voix

report, [Dismantling Democracy: Stifling Debate and Dissent in Canada](#).

- A Toronto Star analysis of tens of thousands of requests shows that federal agencies [censored](#) the majority of government records requested under the Access to Information Act over the past year.

June

- Green Party leader Elizabeth May [introduces a bill](#) that would make all publicly-funded scientific research accessible by law. This means the government [could not deny access](#) to data collected by publicly-funded scientists. Having an open and transparent engagement with the facts would facilitate that decisions are made based on evidence and not on ideology. CEY – 08/12/2015
- Newfoundland and Labrador enacts what the **Centre for Law and Democracy** calls “[Canada’s first modern access to information law](#).” Among other changes, the new law gives more power to the province’s information commissioner, per a [recent series of recommendations](#) from an independent commission.
- The **CBC Radio Program Ideas** releases a three-part series called “[Science under Siege](#),” focused on the relationship between science and democracy, and recent attacks on scientific knowledge in the Canadian context and beyond. CS – 06/14/2015

May

- To draw attention to political interference with public science, a [protest on May 19th](#) was organized by three major federal labour unions (the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, and the Public Service Association of Canada), supported by Evidence for Democracy. In order to ensure that government

employees can speak openly about their research, a key demand was that protection of scientific integrity be enshrined in the next labour contract. General lack of government [respect for public scientists](#) is an ongoing concern.

- **The [Royal Society of Canada](#)** publishes the [second in a series](#) of position papers on scientific research and scholarship in Canada, which calls for a strengthening of how scientific advice contributes to government policy.
- The federal Conservative Party [votes to defeat a Liberal Party motion](#) to create a ‘chief science officer’ to help ensure that federal scientists are protected from muzzling.
- Recently retired federal scientist Steve Campana [reveals that he was routinely muzzled](#) while working in government, despite performing relatively uncontroversial research. Campana claims federal scientists in Canada today are subject to a “[climate of fear](#).”
- Federal scientists represented by the **[Professional Institute for the Public Service of Canada](#)** rally in [Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Vancouver](#) to protest government interference with their research and monitoring of their contact with the media. Participants say they feel the need to “[press for guarantees that would protect government researchers from being coerced to alter their data](#).” **[Evidence for Democracy](#)** provides a [summary of coverage](#) of the protests.
- [Mike Rennie](#), an ex-government scientist in northwestern Ontario, says muzzling was part of “toxic” work environment for federal government researchers.
- [A number of examples](#) of muzzling of scientists, including a request from The Canadian Press to speak to federal government scientist Max Bothwell about his work on algae or “rock snot”, which led to a 110-page email exchange.
- [Steven Campana](#), a former Fisheries and Oceans Canada scientist, said he decided to retire early from the department and took up a teaching position in Iceland largely due to “[toxic](#)” working conditions. He was even prohibited from attending self-funded scientific conferences.

- [Robert MacDonald](#) says that since 2012, 7,500 government scientists have lost their jobs.
- [The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada](#) (PIPSC), is pushing for “scientific integrity” in their workers’ contracts. To draw attention to political interference with public science, a [protest on May 19th](#) was organized by three major federal labour unions (the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, and the Public Service Association of Canada), supported by Evidence for Democracy. In order to ensure that government employees can speak openly about their research, a key demand was that protection of scientific integrity be enshrined in the next labour contract. General lack of government [respect for public scientists](#) is an ongoing concern.

April

- The [federal government appoints](#) a mining industry executive and former Conservative staffer to the board of the [International Development Research Centre](#). The Crown corporation conducts international development research and [critics say](#) the appointment shows that the government hopes to fill the board with allies as opposed to independent researchers.

March

- **The Information Commissioner of Canada** publishes [a new report](#) urging the federal government to modernize its access to information system. The report argues that [Canada has fallen behind](#) other countries when it comes to providing its citizens with unfettered access to information and [echoes recommendations](#) from the **Canadian Civil Liberties Association** and many other organizations that urgent changes be made.

- Documents obtained by **DeSmog Canada** via Access to Information legislation reveal that an **Environment Canada scientist hoping to speak with the press about the effects of oilsands toxins on fur-bearing animals was muzzled**. Initially, pre-scripted responses to interview questions were prepared, but the interview request was ultimately denied by former Environment Minister Peter Kent's office.
- **A new report** from the **University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre** says Canada is falling behind other countries by shackling public advocacy work by charities. The report confirms that the Canada Revenue Agency's ongoing audits of left-leaning charities are having a chilling effect on advocacy. Its authors also **make a number of recommendations** that would help discourage government interference in charitable activities.
- Federal Scientists hoping to discuss the issue of scientific integrity with their union representatives **are forced to meet offsite**.
- **A researcher at Dalhousie University says** the federal government's axing of the mandatory long-form census is interfering with Nova Scotia's ability to prepare for flooding and other adverse effects of climate change.
- The **Heiltsuk First Nation alleges** that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans decision to re-open the herring sac roe seine fishery in British Columbia is based on unreliable scientific models that are "very industry driven." The DFO later agreed to **close the area** to commercial fishing vessels.
- **A new report** from the **Council of Canadians** reveals that federal government cuts to scientific research **have made Canada's freshwater reserves more vulnerable**.

February

- **Bill C-51** (the "Anti-Terrorism Act") goes to committee. The bill comes in the wake of a shooting in Ottawa in October 2014, and "provides greater power to the security agencies to collect

information on and disrupt the activities of suspected terrorist groups” ([the Globe and Mail](#)). It has been criticised by [law experts](#), [privacy advocates](#), [the Assembly of First Nations](#), [former Prime Ministers](#), and [more](#). Still others have pointed out that the bill could have [consequences for academic freedom](#).

- Climate scientist Andrew Weaver [wins a defamation suit](#) against the National Post. The judge in the case [ruled](#) that a number of National Post articles wrongly suggested that Weaver was “engaged in willful manipulation and distortion of scientific data.” The judge [also ruled](#) that the Post must remove the offending columns, and that the defendants “definitively espouse[d] a skeptical view of climate change.”
- [A report](#) from the **Council of Canadian Academies** finds that [Canada is falling behind](#) the rest of the world when it comes to the digital preservation of archives and public data.
- Liberal MP Ted Hsu’s private members bill C-626 to reinstate the mandatory long-form census [is defeated in Parliament](#) by a vote of [147 to 126](#). The bill’s defeat followed [numerous calls by media for its passage](#), and a massive [campaign](#) in support of the bill and evidence-based decision making more broadly.

January

- A coalition of civil society organizations collectively representing tens of thousands of Canadians (and including **Our Right to Know**) signs a [joint statement](#) in support of liberal MP Ted Hsu’s [private member’s bill](#) to reinstate the mandatory long form census. The federal Conservatives scrapped the census in 2010, despite the [protests of](#) academics, library groups, think tanks, government advisory boards, business groups, and more.
- NAFTA [passes a resolution](#) to block the **Commission for Environmental Cooperation** from investigating allegations that toxic materials from Alberta’s tailings ponds are leaking into

nearby rivers and creeks. Such a leak would be a violation of the Fisheries Act.

- The news service [Blacklock's Reporter](#) reveals that Canadian [civil servants have been barred from accessing its website](#). According to public sector unions, some public employees are forced to make special requests to the departments they work for in order to access information they need to do their jobs.
- A poll conducted by Nielsen for the CAUT found that a majority of respondents – 51% – disagreed with the the statement that the government “should invest in research only when it leads to the development of new products and services.” (CAUT Bulletin, 62 (1), January 21015, p.A5)

2014

December

- Emails released due to an Access to Information request [reveal that](#) the **Canada Revenue Agency** destroyed all the text message records of its employees. The deletions come in the midst of a [controversial campaign of CRA audits](#) of charities that have expressed disagreement with Harper Government policies.
- The federal government unveils a new [Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy](#), which identifies five “priority research areas.” Although [praised by university presidents](#), the new strategy is panned by critics for being “[lousy policy](#),” and for [devaluing public interest science](#) in favour of an [emphasis on business](#).
- [Canadian scientists speak out](#) about a change being implemented by the **Canadian Institute of Health Research**. Going forward, applicants for CIHR funding could be forced to find matching funding from external partners in order to be eligible for grants. In response to this shift, [dozens of researchers from across the country write to](#) the governing

council of CIHR, [drawing attention](#) to a “serious rift” between the Institute and those who study Aboriginal health, in particular.

- The **Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada** announces that it will be [pushing for a package of contractual changes](#) that would protect scientific integrity.

November

- Using omnibus legislation, the federal government [moves to demote the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada](#). One of the country’s longest serving public health officials [warns](#) that this change will “weaken” the Public Health Agency.
- **The Canadian Women’s Health Network (CWHN)** [suspends operations](#) after losing the financial support of the federal government in 2013.
- **The Canadian National Ultrahigh-Field NMR Facility for Solids** in Ottawa announces it will be [closing its doors](#) due to the [moratorium](#) on the NSERC Major Resources Support program and an overall lack of funding. Founded in 2005, the Facility has supported over 100 research projects, resulting in more than 170 peer-reviewed publications on topics ranging from [pharmaceuticals and health](#) to [nuclear magnetic resonance](#). The National Research Council and the University of Ottawa later [join forces](#) to sustain operations of the Facility, after the scientific community [protests its closure](#).
- Michael Rennie, a former **Fisheries and Oceans Canada** researcher [reveals that](#) “never in four years did [he] receive communications approval to speak with media by deadline.”
- **The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC)** – the union that represents scientists and other professionals in the federal public service – [votes](#) to campaign actively against the Harper government in 2015. The move [is a shift](#) from PIPSC’s tradition of remaining at arm’s length during elections, and is motivated in large part by the government’s continued muzzling of scientists.

- Private Member's Bill C-626 (introduced by Liberal MP [Ted Hsu](#)) goes to a second reading in the House of Commons. **The Act to Amend the Statistics Act** would increase the independence of Canada's Chief Statistician, and reinstate the long-form census which was scrapped by the federal Conservatives in 2011. Since C-626 was tabled, the decision to do away with the mandatory census has once again been [roundly condemned](#) in the media. Unfortunately, the bill is [deemed unlikely to pass](#).
- The former director of NAFTA's **Commission on Environmental Cooperation** says the environmental watchdog is "[dying a slow death](#)." The commission was created in 1995 to ensure that the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement did not adversely affect the environment, but its recent submission that Canada is [breaking the Fisheries Act](#) has been ignored by the federal government.

October

- [A study](#) conducted by Evidence for Democracy and Simon Fraser University finds that Canadian government scientists are [far more restricted](#) in their ability to speak with the media than their U.S. counterparts. Its authors assessed the communications policies of 16 different federal departments, and found that all save one (the Department of Defence) scored lower than equivalent agencies in the U.S.
- NDP Deputy Science & Technology critic, Laurin Liu, [calls for](#) the Canadian government to restore prior levels of funding to its three federal granting councils: NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC. She highlights the fact that Canada has slipped from third place to ninth in [annual rankings](#) of 41 countries for performance in science, technology and innovation. She further accuses the Harper government of displaying "contempt for discovery research."

- A report from the **Broadbent Institute** finds that the Canada Revenue Agency's campaign to audit a number of Canadian charities is biased. The study refers to the audits as part of "the Harper government's continued and deliberate silencing of critical voices." Its findings also suggest that right-leaning charities have largely escaped the recent wave of audits.
- An open letter signed by hundreds of scientists and engineers from around the world urges Prime Minister Stephen Harper to end "burdensome restrictions on scientific communication and collaboration faced by Canadian government scientists." The letter argues that Canada's leadership on environmental and health research, in particular, is in jeopardy. Its message is endorsed by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, which pays for the letter's promotion across the country.
- A report from Canada's Commissioner of the Environment finds that Canada has delayed monitoring of oil sands pollution, and that government reporting on emissions has been misleading. As well, the report notes that the federal committee responsible for Canada's climate plan has not met in three years.
- The report "Can Scientists Speak" analyzed the communication and media policies of sixteen federal government departments for openness and protection from political interference, and found that Natural Resources Canada tied for last place whereas the Department of National Defence took first place. The report further states that fifteen of the departments "scored lower than the United States average in 2013".

September

- After 40 years of research on international development and foreign policy, the **North-South Institute** closes its doors. In a release on the closure, the Board of Directors cites a lack of funding. According to the Institute's most recent Annual Report, more than half its \$2.4 million in revenue came from a government grant, not renewed since June, 2013. The University

of Ottawa's Lauchlan Munro [writes](#) that this is evidence of "the current federal government's decision to discontinue [a] longstanding bipartisan tradition of public funding of intellectual diversity through think tanks."

- Over 400 academics from across Canada sign an [open letter](#) urging the Canada Revenue Agency to cease its audit of the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**. Its authors say the audit suggests that the CRA itself is biased, and "fails to understand the nature of what academic research is all about." The letter also [calls for a moratorium](#) on any further CRA audits of think tanks.
- A request from The Canadian Press to speak to federal government scientist Max Bothwell for an article about his research expertise failed to produce an interview. What it did produce was [110 pages of emails](#) to and from 16 different federal government communications operatives, according to documents obtained using access to information legislation.

August

- Liberal MP Stephane Dion [expresses concern](#) over the Harper government's narrow focus on Canada's military accomplishments instead of "our tireless and balanced promotion of justice, democracy, peace among nations, prosperity, social justice, equal opportunity, environmental health, scientific and technological development, artistic and cultural creation." As examples of the "conscription of Canadian past," Dion cites the \$30 million commitment to a War of 1812 commemoration and simultaneous fund slashing for libraries, archives, and public programming.
- Bureaucratic suppression [prevents federal scientists](#) from holding strictly technical briefings on alarmingly low levels of ice in the Canadian Arctic. Newly released federal documents show that **The Canadian Ice Service** had to seek nine levels of approval to conduct a briefing, which was cancelled at the sixth level

(“Ministerial Services”). As a result, Canadians are forced to obtain data on Canadian ice levels via the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in the U.S.

- Statistics Canada [admits](#) that its July [jobs report](#) had an error. Namely, Statscan revised the number of full-time jobs lost during that month from 59,700 to just 18,100. The Labour Force Survey can affect the value of the Canadian dollar, and the Bank of Canada relies on its findings to make decisions about Canada’s interest rate.

July

- [Documents](#) obtained through an access to information request [reveal that](#) the Harper government had heavily censored a memo recommending that it continue funding the [Canadian Environmental Network](#) (RCEN). The federal government cancelled its funding of RCEN – which helps facilitate expert consultations with government on issues of environmental policy – in 2011.
- [An open letter](#) signed by 140 doctors and scientists from across Canada says “federal cutbacks on large, randomized controlled trials will have negative consequences to scientific progress and the health of Canadians.” Given Canada’s strong history in successful randomized clinical trials, the report calls for “an immediate increase in support” for this important method of inquiry.
- [Research](#) completed by former journalist and graduate student, Gareth Kirkby reveals that ongoing tax audits of charities engaged in “political activities” are having a [chilling effect](#) on the organizations’ abilities to fulfill their mandates. Sixteen charities under audit participated anonymously in Kirkby’s research, and revealed that increased scrutiny from the Canada Revenue Agency has – in particular – affected their ability to communicate with the public about their work.

June

- Meteorologists at **Environment Canada** are [forbidden from publicly discussing climate change](#). The rationale given for the ban is that meteorologists are not qualified to answer questions related to climate change.

May

- Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada submits a [written statement](#) to the UN Human Rights Council calling for an immediate end to
- the surveillance of human rights defenders, Indigenous groups, and environmental organizations in Canada. 2. An immediate end to discriminatory inquiries and audits by the Canada Revenue Agency of Canadian charitable organizations. 3. The creation of an enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders.
- Emily Atkin, a journalist interested in seeing the tar sands, highlights the [numerous obstacles](#) when trying to enter the country in order to report on the Tar Sands.
- The Fifth Annual [Review of Free Expression in Canada](#) was released, highlighting the muzzling of scientists across the country. According to the report, the number of missing records complaints submitted to the information commissioner rose by 51% from 2012-2013. The report gave a failing grade to Canada's Access to Information system, with more than 80% of responses to information requests being partially or mostly censored.

April

- The **Addictions Research Centre** in Montague, P.E.I. is [closing](#). CBC learned that the federal research centre will close in April of 2014. The facility was established in 1999 to help substance abusers in the federal prison system.

- [Concerns raised](#) about the possible resurfacing of BC's herring crisis without good governance of science. Despite the peaceful resolution of a northern BC herring roe fishery involving commercial fishermen and a First Nations community, mismanagement of fisheries leave tension and the potential for future conflict in the area.

March

- Environment Canada's [three-year budget](#) Funding will be slashed by 19.2% for wildlife and water programs, 17.6% for weather services, and 42.2% for pollution management and mitigation programs. Despite Canada's tattered climate change record, support for climate change programs has been cut by a shocking 69.4%.
- Historically leaders in the promotion of life-saving harm reduction technology, Canadian diplomats are now [under instruction](#) not to speak of harm reduction and even to have the term deleted from statements. Canadian negotiators help to **prevent the inclusion of beneficial harm reduction health strategies** in international drug policies at the UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs in Vienna.

February

- The **Mersey Biodiversity Centre** is [closed](#) despite attempts to partner with volunteers. The former recovery centre in Nova Scotia for the endangered Atlantic whitefish was one of the latest casualties of federal government cuts. Scientists say the world's only surviving population of Atlantic whitefish is confined to three lakes outside Bridgewater. Six years ago, the federal government committed to a recovery plan for the endangered fish and part of that plan involved the Mersey Biodiversity Centre.
- An intimate relationship is [revealed](#) between the **Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers** and **Postmedia**, the

media network that publishes the *National Post*, the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Calgary Herald*, among other major Canadian newspapers. Despite claims that “the association does not influence the editorial content of Postmedia papers”, Joint Ventures, pieces which highlight the role of energy in driving Canada’s economic engine, will appear in major papers.

- Kennedy Stewart, Official Opposition Critic for Science and Technology, releases an [open letter](#) to Minister of Science and Technology Greg Rickford. Stewart expresses “concerns with Industry Canada’s public consultations on the federal government’s **updated Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy**,” citing a lack of integrity and transparency.
- A report [released](#) by the **Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada** announces that the federal government plans to slash almost 5000 jobs and over \$2.5 billion in funding from its “science-focused departments” in the next two years.
- After the **C. Civil Liberties Association** files formal complaints against the RCMP and CSIS for illegally monitoring anti-pipeline environmental groups, a [piece](#) in *The Tyee* claims “fascist attitudes and behaviour” on the part of Canada’s government.
- Max Bothwell – a lead research scientist with Environment Canada – is [prevented from speaking](#) with the press about the results of [his important research](#) on “rock snot.” Fortunately, his collaborators are able to communicate the team’s findings: that the mucus-like algae bloom that emerged in Atlantic Canada in 2006 is proliferating because of warming global temperatures. Scientists fear the organism (also known as didymo) could make it [harder for fish to access food sources](#).

January

- Federal government **closes seven out of nine Department of Fisheries and Oceans libraries**, in what has been called “libricide” and a [knowledge massacre](#). The library closures are hailed as [a blow to democracy](#) that is [damaging to Canada’s](#)

[collective memory](#), and critics [compare](#) the move to US president George Bush's cuts to federal environmental libraries. Concerns raised about whether dismantled collections are being [adequately digitized](#). Ted Hsu, MP for Kingston and the Islands, [voices his concern](#): "The Harper government may not like science ... but it does not have the right to literally trash the products of decades worth of research just because it doesn't suit the ideology of the Harper Conservatives. ... Destroying data is not just an ideological problem, it's also blatant fiscal mismanagement." Fisheries Minister Gail Shea denies claims by anonymous scientists that those books not left in dumpsters have been [burned or sent to landfills](#), [stating](#) that books were "recycled in a green fashion." Anonymous DFO scientists continue to voice concerns. Elizabeth May poses a serious challenge to the [legality](#) of the library closures.

- Health Canada's primary research library closed. Scientists forced to [work around the cuts to library funding](#): some borrow university students' library cards, and one scientist stores books and journals in his basement for his colleagues' use. E
- Canada Revenue Agency [conducts an audit of highly respected environmental groups](#). Critics claim political intimidation. Environmental groups are concerned that the CRA will use the a [shifting definition](#) of "political advocacy work" to curtail their speech against pro-tar sands policies.

2013

December

- In a victory for advocates of public science and free speech, **Libraries and Archives Canada** [withdraws a controversial code of conduct](#), first put into effect in early 2013. The [new code of conduct](#) reduces restrictions on LAC employees' professional development activities, and makes it easier for them to express personal opinions to the public.

November

- Speaking at the annual Canadian Science Policy Conference, Kennedy Stewart [advocates](#) for Bill C-558, advocating for the appointment of a Parliamentary Science Officer. MP Laurin Liu, Deputy Critic for Science and Technology, voices her support: “Beginning with the closure of the National Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, the Conservatives have used every tool at their disposal to prevent, limit, and restrict Canadian scientists from sharing their research with policy-makers and the public. ... Being independent from the government and responsible for serving the needs of the legislature, a Parliamentary Science Officer would revitalize scientific integrity in Ottawa.”

October

- [A survey](#) commissioned by the **Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada** finds that hundreds of federal scientists have been asked to alter or exclude technical information from documents, and *thousands* have been prevented from responding to inquiries from the media and/or the public. PIPSC president and CEO [Gary Corbett says](#) the survey indicates that government scientists now “live in a climate of fear.”

September

- Approval of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway proposal to move “dilbit” (diluted bitumen) oil to Asia by supertankers along the B.C. coast is subject to review by a joint panel with British Columbia. The province has so far rejected the plan based on environmental concerns. Interim Green Party of BC leader Adam Olsen notes that “The BC government ... found Enbridge has not completed even rudimentary science to understand what dilbit does when it is spilled”. Green Party politicians who have reviewed federal documents relating to proposed weather

forecasting and dilbit-spill modeling research projects declare that “The Federal Government is moving forward over the next two years with a \$100 million plus...to research and model the complex waterways in the Kitimat and Hecate Straights region. In essence this is a federal government subsidy to the Northern Gateway Project.” Party leader [May](#) said “I’m personally quite shocked by the extent of the spending when we see science cut in so many areas.”

August

- Due to financial constraints and operational priorities, the [Centre of the Universe Interpretative Centre](#) in Victoria suspended its outreach activities effective August 24, 2013. This facility used to be funded by the National Research Council and cost \$250,00 per year. It was so “well used that most Saturdays kids had to wait outside for their turn to peer through one of the world’s most powerful telescopes.”

July

- The government [appoints](#) Greg Rickford as the new minister of state for science and technology. Rickford supported the closing of the ELA, which is located in his riding, despite concerted public protests.
- In the wake of Dr. Kibenge’s [lab being stripped of its OIE status](#) (see entry in Nov. 2012), scientists now [afraid](#) to report a deadly fish virus.

May

- The **National Research Council** (NRC) – which gave the country canola and the atomic clock – will now be taking its [scientific cues](#) from Canadian industry as part of a makeover of the country’s flagship research labs. The overhaul, quietly begun

two years ago and now formally unveiled, means the 97-year-old NRC will focus on a clutch of large-scale, business-driven research projects at the expense of the basic science that was once at its core.

- The Conservative government [says](#) it wants to leverage the NRC's world-class resources, everything from wind tunnels and ice tanks to high-powered microscopes, to help reverse the country's chronically lagging innovation performance. The changes, layoffs, and attacks have, however, [resulted in lower production from NRC scientists](#). Since the Conservatives took office, NRC publications have plummeted from 1,991 in 2006 to just 436 in 2012. In the same time, NRC patents have dropped from 53 in 2006 to a mere 3 in 2012. The message this sends to talented early career researchers considering working for the NRC? Apply your skills elsewhere.
- John MacDougal, President of the NRC, [said](#) "Scientific discovery is not valuable unless it has commercial value". Gary Goodyear, the Canadian Minister of State for Science and Technology, also stated "There is [sic] only two reasons why we do science and technology. First is to create knowledge ... second is to use that knowledge for social and economic benefit. Unfortunately, all too often the knowledge gained is opportunity lost."
- Statistics Canada [releases](#) the results of the first voluntary survey that replaced the former compulsory census. One-third of Canadian households received the National Household Survey in 2011. Of those, 68.6% completed it fully, compared with the typical 94% response rate of a mandatory questionnaire. The former head of Statistics Canada, Munir Sheikh, [argues](#) that the survey "will not... provide a level of quality that would have been achieved through a mandatory long-form census. ...We are now in a funny upside-down world: We're using the old census data to fix the survey results when the objective was to find a new anchor to fix survey results because the old anchor was out of date. This is a vicious circle. ... At some stage, it will become a process of garbage guiding garbage." Because of the minimal

response in some areas, the data are basically useless at the community level. For instance, the lack of detailed information makes it difficult for communities to plan bus routes or for advertisers to target their marketing campaigns. More information available [here](#).

- Stats Can [estimated](#) that it spent \$652 million on the 2011 census and questionnaire program, versus a budget of \$567 million in 2006 for the long-form census. The abolition of the mandatory form increased the costs significantly while decreasing the quality.
- The President of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, Prof. Jeffrey Hutchings, [expressed](#) his serious concern about the muzzling of federal scientists.
- *The Economist* publishes an [editorial](#) critical of Harper's science policy, including his "comical excesses in communication control," after the department of Fisheries and Oceans tried to impose confidentiality restrictions on a joint Arctic research project involving the University of Delaware. A complaint from an American scientist prompted Ottawa to rethink its onerous confidentiality stipulations. And [more](#) from *The Globe and Mail*.
- Agriculture Canada [announces](#) the closure of some of its research operations in Western Canada. Ottawa issued potential job loss notices to 350 Agriculture Canada employees across Canada, including 125 in Western Canada. Affected employees include 144 commerce officers, 79 scientists, 76 information technology (IT) specialists, 29 engineers, 14 biologists, five research managers and three procurement officers.
- **Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre** [budget is reduced by a third](#). With a staff of 30, Bamfield is used by visiting researchers to study fish, marine animals and ecosystems. The centre also runs education programs for students at all levels. The facilities are funded through a consortium of five western universities and, until recently, Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). There had been no consultation, no previous inquiries or communication.

April

- The government announces that it will de-fund the Canadian Health Council as of 2014. The independent national agency has served as the primary accountability mechanism for the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal and the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, reporting annually to Canadians about the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of the health care system. The Council was told that with next year's expiry of the intergovernmental health agreements, "there is no longer a need" for it to monitor progress on health care renewal and reform in Canada. More information available [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- The federal government [announces](#) that it is reducing the number of departments and agencies that can do environmental reviews from 40 to just 3 to speed up approvals for projects that will bolster Canada's economy. Conducting environmental reviews requires time for research but the timeline allotted to each of the reviews is also shortened.
- The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) launches its <http://getscienceright.ca/>
- Allan Gregg, former Tory pollster, denounces the government's muzzling in a [public speech](#). "This was no random act of downsizing, but a deliberate attempt to obliterate certain activities that were previously viewed as a legitimate part of government decision making" Gregg stated, "namely, using research, science and evidence as the basis to make public policy decisions. " "It also amounted to an attempt to eliminate anyone who would use science, facts and evidence to challenge government policies," he added.
- Four opposition MPs [write to Commissioner Legault](#) requesting that she add the Library and Archives Canada Code of Conduct to her review of the muzzling of science in Canada.
- Federal funding for the **Canadian Women's Health Network** has [ceased](#). "Effective April 1, we will no longer receive funding from the Women's Health Contribution Program (WHCP), a program Health Canada set up in 1995 to provide the federal

government with policy advice related to women's health." "The CWHN existed prior to being funded by the WHCP and it will continue to exist as long as we can find ways to keep ourselves sustainable. One of the main roles we have played for the past 18 years has been as the networking and communications arm of the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health. Sadly they, too, are all losing their federal funding. This means that the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health in Halifax and the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence in Winnipeg will be closing down operations completely. The two other centres – the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health in Vancouver and the National Network on Environments and Women's Health in Toronto – will remain open for a while, in the hope of finding other sources of funding. Ditto for the **Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes** in Montréal which has also been a recipient of the WHCP."

- The **Department of Fisheries and Oceans** [closes its oceans contaminants](#) research program. This will leave "Canada without any research or monitoring capacity for pollution in our three oceans, or any ability to manage its impacts on commercial fish stocks, traditional foods for over 300,000 aboriginal people and marine wildlife."
- The **Department of Fisheries and Oceans** [closes libraries](#). Closure of fisheries' libraries called a 'disaster' for science. The libraries are home to the 50 illustrated volumes from Britain's Challenger expedition that sailed the seas in the late 1800s exploring the mysteries of the deep. The shelves heave with reports detailing the DDT pollution that wiped out young salmon in New Brunswick's "rivers of death" in the 1950s. And they contain vivid reminders of native fisheries, Canada's once vast cod stocks and the U.S. submarines that prowled the quiet fjords along the B.C. coast in the 1940s undefined history that is being packed into boxes as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans "consolidates" its world-class library collection. Seven DFO [libraries](#) across Canada are to close by the fall, including

two that have been amassing books and technical reports on the aquatic realm for more than a century.

- Marley Waiser, a scientist at National Water Research Institute in Saskatoon, speaks out about being [muzzled](#). Waiser spent more than 25 years with Environment Canada and is going public with concerns that Ottawa is muzzling scientists like her. She retired last year, about a year after [CBC News did a story about pollution in Regina's Wascana Creek](#) that referenced her research. She says she wasn't allowed to talk to a CBC reporter about that story, but now wants her voice heard.

March

- The world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area is de-funded by the federal government. Even scientists whose research is funded from other sources are prohibited to use the facilities. The Government of Ontario, however, is working collaboratively with the Conservatives, the Manitoba government, and others to keep the area this year and to work toward sustainable funding for longer-term operations. Further information available from [CBC](#), the [Toronto Star](#), and [CTV News](#).
- *The Economist* publishes an [editorial](#) deploring Harper's tight control of information flow in connection with the refusal by an American scientist to sign a contract for a proposed collaboration in the Arctic between America's University of Delaware and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans because he feels that "it threatens [his] academic freedom and potentially muzzles [his] ability to publish data and interpretation and talk timely on science issues of potential public interest without government interference."
- Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault [responds favourably](#) to the request from Democracy Watch and the Environmental Launch, announcing the launch of an investigation into seven federal government departments over the muzzling of scientists. She sent a letter to the following departments: Environment

Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources Canada, National Research Council of Canada, Department of National Defence, and she “added the Treasury Board, because of its role in relation to the development and implementation of government policies.” More information [here](#).

- Two years after she was forbidden to talk to the media about her peer-reviewed and already-published research into diseases killing West Coast salmon, DFO researcher Kristi Miller is [allowed to talk to the press for the first time](#) about her future salmon research.
- The United Nations right-to-food envoy [says](#) the abolition of the long-form census makes it more difficult to fight poverty in Canada.
- Canada [pulls out](#) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Canada signed the convention in 1994 and ratified it in 1995. Every UN nation (194 countries and the European Union) is currently a party to it, except, now, for Canada. This happened immediately before the conference in April, at which “the first ever comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of desertification, land degradation and drought” will be carried out. According to a notice from the UN Environment Program, “for the very first time, governments will provide concrete data on the status of poverty and of land cover in the areas affected by desertification in their countries.”
- The government [shuts down](#) the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, formerly an arms-length organization, and prevents its last head from posting a farewell message. It also **forbids the transfer of its website** to a think-tank based at the University of Ottawa. The think-tank, Sustainable Prosperity, had offered to keep the government-funded research accessible to the public. The panel was created by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s government in 1988. Until 2012, it was independent of the government, but changes adopted in the budget implementation legislation in July 2012 gave the Environment Minister powers to control its public messages. More information [here](#).

- **The Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program and the Fraser River Estuary Management Program** (BIEAP-FREMP), an intergovernmental program that helps protect the environment of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, [closes its doors](#) on March 31, 2013. According to Carrie Brown, manager of environmental programs with Port Metro Vancouver, “quite often development and preservation are in conflict with each other. The BIEAP-FREMP programs were part of the solution to that, to bring everyone together – not just government agencies, but often municipalities, the public, First Nations – and be sort of a neutral body that could kind of stickhandle a lot of the issues along the Lower Mainland. All of that is currently not being worked on.”
- The Harper Government [votes against public science](#). Here is a resolution in the Canadian House of Commons from [Wednesday, March 20, 2013](#). It was sponsored by [Kennedy Stewart](#) of the [NDP](#), the MP for Burnaby-Douglas in BC. That, in the opinion of the House: (a) public science, basic research and the free and open exchange of scientific information are essential to evidence-based policy-making; (b) federal government scientists must be enabled to discuss openly their findings with their colleagues and the public; and (c) the federal government should maintain support for its basic scientific capacity across Canada, including immediately extending funding, until a new operator is found, to the world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area Research Facility to pursue its unique research program. The motion was defeated 157 to 137, with the NDP and Liberals all supporting and every single Conservative voting Nay. Including the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper.
- Germany’s largest and most prestigious research institute [pulls out of a Canadian government-funded](#) \$25 million research project into sustainable solutions to tar sands pollution, citing fears for its environmental reputation. As many as 20 scientists at the world-famous [Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres](#) have ceased involvement in the [Helmholtz Alberta](#)

[Initiative](#) (HAI), after a moratorium on contacts was declared last month.

- Federal Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault is [asked](#) by the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria and Democracy Watch to investigate the way the Harper government has been “muzzling” federal scientists.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) [introduces](#) new Publication Review Committee (PRC) Procedures for C&A Science requiring all scientists working on projects in conjunction with DFO in the Central and Arctic Region to treat all information as proprietary to DFO, and await departmental approval before submitting research to any scientific journals. See also [Elizabeth May’s column](#) regarding barriers affecting government scientists’ participation in scientific conferences via bureaucratic overload.

February

- Canada restricts how researchers can share data. In 2013, a one-year joint project required a 19-page legal (draft) document. The section on data sharing and publication now consists of almost two pages containing language such as: “Any technology, data, or other information of any kind related to or arising from the Project (collectively “Information”) shall be deemed confidential and neither Party may release any such Information to others in any way whatsoever without the prior written authorization of the other Party ... The obligation of the Parties herein shall survive the expiration to which this Appendix is affixed and of which it is part.” This threatens academic freedom and potentially impinges on the ability to publish data and interpretation and to speak in a timely matter about scientific issues of potential public interest without government interference. More information [here](#).
- Andreas Muenchow, a physical oceanographer at the University of Delaware, expresses concern that new research agreements

with the Canadian government may restrict his [ability to publish data](#).

January

- **Library and Archives Canada's Code of Conduct: Values and Ethics** is introduced: "As public servants, our duty of loyalty to the Government of Canada and its elected officials extends beyond our workplace to our personal activities." More information [here](#). This Code of Conduct is later withdrawn due to public outcry (see: December 2013)
- Yolande Grisé, president of **The Royal Society of Canada**, publishes an [article](#) lamenting that "unreasonable limits are being placed on the ability of government-employed scientists to communicate their findings, whether through publication of their research results or attendance at scientific meetings. These restrictions seem particularly severe in topics related to the environment, where several government scientists have been denied the opportunity to discuss their work."
- **Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)** scientists must [now get departmental approval](#) to submit research to science journals, and the department has the power to pull scientific articles that have already been accepted for publication. The DFO also has proposed confidentiality provisions, "that, for the first time," would apply to non-government and non-Canadian research collaborators.
- Canada's space agency faces deep funding cuts. Over the past year, the **Canadian Space Agency** has been battered by government budget cuts, buffeted by a critical review, and now even its president is ejecting right out of the place. While no one yet seems to know exactly how that extreme makeover will ultimately reshape the Canadian agency, there is no question the [space program has reached a critical point in its history](#), which spans more than a half-century. It remains a matter of debate how all this will impact the companies and thousands of

employees in a space industry expected to generate an estimated \$3.4 billion of economic activity this year.

2012

December

- Senate [approves](#) Bill C-45, Harper's second omnibudget bill of the year, and Governor General David Johnston will give Royal Assent once more to this troubling trend of the Harper government. Tucked away in the changes of over 60 pieces of legislation, this second budget bill eliminates the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission (HMIRC). Bill C-45 eliminates the Commission by transferring its powers and responsibilities to the Minister of Health. Although this has failed to garner any in-depth media coverage, this change could have significant effects on fracking, tar sands development and the multiplicity of industries that deal with hazardous materials.

November

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) asked the **Office of International Epizootics** (OIE), the World Organization for Animal Health, to [strip Dr. Kibenge's BC lab of its status](#) as one of only 2 OIE reference labs for [Infectious Salmon Anaemia](#). A few weeks before, the OIE changed the definition of an ISA virus – positive region. Previously, a region could only be designated positive if the “disease” was found. Now a region is positive if the virus is “detected.” Therefore if the OIE keeps their lab, BC would be designated as ISAv positive.
- A [document](#) released under Access to Information to Postmedia's Mike De Souza reveals that Environment Canada scientists had confirmed results published earlier by water expert David Schindler to the effect that contaminants were

accumulating in snow near oil sands operations. The document reveals that government researchers were discouraged from speaking to reporters about their findings, and a scripted list of answers was developed to contradict the findings. More information available [here](#).

October

- Canada's ozone science group falls victim to government cuts. Thousands of people have avoided getting skin cancer thanks to Canadian scientists who invented the UV index and the gold-standard tool for measuring the thickness of the Earth's ozone layer. But now Canada's ozone science group no longer exists, victim of government [budget cuts](#).

September

- NSERC's [elimination](#) of the \$35M "Major Resources Support" after the 2012 federal budget was another major setback for a number of senior researchers and their students. This program used to assist major and unique national or international experimental and thematic research resources to cover their operating and maintenance costs. For UBC researchers, this means the potential loss of a major research centre: the **Pacific Northwest Consortium Synchrotron Radiation Facility**.

August

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency [cancels](#) 2,970 project reviews due to the Harper government's budget legislation. 678 involved fossil fuel energy and 248 involved a pipeline, including proposals from Alberta-based energy companies. More information [here](#).
- The federal government has gutted environmental laws and cut funding for environmental departments through its [omnibus](#)

[budget bills](#). It has attempted to justify those massive environmental policy changes in part by saying that the review process was slow and inefficient. On the contrary, research by scientists at the University of Toronto, published in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, “found no evidence that regulatory review in Canada was inefficient, even when regulators had an on-going load of over 600 projects for review at any given time.”

July

- At the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Canada’s federal funding agency for university-based research, the [Major Resource Support Program](#) is cancelled and the Research Tools and Instruments program is suspended. These programs represent approximately 20% of NSERC’s core discovery funding envelope. Funding commitments will be honoured but no new projects will be taken on. The loss of future opportunities is immeasurable.
- The Kluane Lake Research Station, one of Canada’s oldest and most celebrated scientific research stations is [racing against the clock](#) to avoid having to close its doors. The Kluane Lake Research Station, located in the Yukon adjacent to the largest non-polar icefield in the world, is one of a handful of scientific outposts to have its funding cut by the federal budget. The Kluane facility is run by the Arctic Institute of North America, a joint U.S.-Canada research operation that is administered by the University of Calgary along with the University of Alaska.

June

- [Hundreds of scientists and researchers gather](#) on Parliament Hill to protest the “[Death of Evidence](#).” Wearing white lab coats, the researchers-turned-protesters [came together to lament](#) the demise of the long-form census, and speak out against budget

cuts to Environment Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Library and Archives Canada, the National Research Council, Statistics Canada, the Polar Environmental Atmospheric Research Laboratory, and more.

- Employees of Parks Canada are [prohibited](#) from criticizing the federal government and are told that they have a “duty” to support the Harper government.
- At the 30th anniversary of the federal [Access to Information Act](#), Canada finds itself [tied for 51st](#) in the world on a list of freedom-of-information rankings, behind Angola, Colombia and Niger.
- [The RCMP announces](#) the establishment of a counter-terrorism unit in Alberta to “prevent, detect, deny and respond to criminal threats to Canada’s national security”. Terrorist concerns include “activist groups, indigenous groups, environmentalists and others who are publicly critical of government policy.”
- **The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO)** [closes its doors](#). Since its inception in 2000, it received its core funding of nearly \$5 million per year from Health Canada; however, this funding was completely cut by the Conservative government in its 2012 budget. Given the precarious health conditions of Canada’s Aboriginal populations, NAHO took on an educational role and established the [Journal of Aboriginal Health](#), the first of its kind. The organization also carried out ground-breaking work on social issues among Native populations in the Arctic.

May

- The government announces that it will [close down](#) the **National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy** after the organization produced a report on Canada’s climate change plans which emphasized the fact that the government would not reach its set targets of greenhouse-gas reductions unless additional measures are taken.

- **The St. Andrews Biological Station** in New Brunswick experiences cuts to funding in aquatic science. The brand new St. Andrews Biological Station Library is [slated to close](#) in 2013, the Contaminants and Toxicology program is to end, and the Habitat program will be reduced. About 7 scientists and librarians received layoff notices in May 2012.
- The Centre for Offshore Oil & Gas Energy Research (COOGER), a noted offshore research agency based at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, will experience cuts to funding and staff. The COOGER assisted in the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Its director, Ken Lee, recently received a letter telling him that his job would be affected as part of cost-cutting at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The research centre was established in 2002 to co-ordinate DFO research into the environmental and oceanographic impacts of offshore petroleum exploration, production and transportation. About 400 positions will be eliminated. More information available [here](#) and [here](#).
- Twelve researchers and scientists at the Maurice-Lamontagne Institute (MLI) received their [workforce adjustment \(WFA\) notice](#) on May 17. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) will soon close the **Laboratories of Expertise in Aquatic Chemical Analysis** (LEACA) and dismantle the scientific team working on marine toxicology and chemistry. As a result, the LEACA will no longer be available to conduct chemical analyses in emergency situations (e.g., oil spills). The lab also works on improving detection methods for new toxic molecules accumulating in the aquatic food chain. The absence of monitoring of the biological effects of chemical compounds (PCBs, heavy metals, pesticides, organochlorines, antibiotics, etc.) in the aquatic environment raises concerns for the health and safety of many species and the people who consume them.
- **The Conservative Government has decided that they do not need to maintain expertise on toxic emissions from smokestacks.** The team of “smokestack” specialists at Environment Canada, who measure cancer-causing emissions

and provide support for the development of standards, the assessment of pollution sources, analysis of the effectiveness of pollution-reduction technologies, and maintain an inventory of pollution from different sources, is being dismantled. These scientists play a key role working with enforcement officers and industry to crack down on toxic pollution. More information available [here](#) and [here](#).

April

- **The National Council of Welfare is terminated.** It was the only federal agency with a mandate devoted exclusively to improving the lives of low-income Canadians.
- **The Canadian Council on Learning**, having lost its federal funding, moves to **dissolve itself**.
- Statistics Canada imposes a Code of Conduct that **prohibits employees** from making personal comments about the organization, its staff or the government.
- Government “media minders” **intervene** when scientists at the International Polar Year conference in Montréal are approached by the media. Although it is common for the media to interview speakers at these conferences, researchers were instructed to ask for a business card and pass the message onto the media relations contact when approached by the media.
- Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird **announces** that the government is shutting down the **Rights and Democracy Agency**. The highly respected Rights and Democracy Agency was created in 1988 to encourage democracy and monitor human rights around the world. Liberal foreign affairs critic Dominic LeBlanc commented “this Conservative government has tried to use Rights and Democracy to advance its own ideological agenda. When that failed, they drove the organization into trouble and then killed it off as a ‘cost-cutting’ measure.”
- Maria Gergin **notes** in “Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record” (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 6, 2011)

that a Deloitte and Touche audit concluded that the Harper government had engaged in an 'ideological hijacking' of the highly respected Rights and Democracy Agency.

- [Conservatives axe First Nations-led statistics Crown corporation](#). The Conservative government has axed a First Nations-led Crown corporation created to fill the statistical "gap" that exists when it comes to getting numbers from First Nations reserves and the urban Aboriginal population. **The First Nations Statistical Institute (FNSI)**, which was created through legislation passed in 2005 during the Liberal government under Paul Martin, will see its \$5 million budget cut in half this year and eliminated next year, according to the federal budget.

March

- In its March 2012 budget, the budget of **Library and Archives Canada** (LAC) was reduced by \$9.6 million over three years, an amount equal to about 10% of LAC's [total planned spending](#) for 2012-13. On April 30, 2012, LAC [sent notices to about 20%](#) of its employees advising them that their positions could be eliminated and that they could be laid off. In addition, the libraries in at least a dozen federal government departments [are now being closed](#), or their staffs and services are being significantly reduced. This includes the libraries at Agriculture Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Industry Canada, Transport Canada, the National Capital Commission, National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, Parks Canada, the Public Service Commission of Canada, and Public Works and Government Services Canada. Find more information [here](#).
- Tom Spears, a reporter for the Ottawa Citizen, learned that NASA and **Canada's National Research Council** were working together on a study of snowfall patterns. [Spears contacted NASA](#) and was able to speak to a scientist about the study within about 15 minutes. A similar request to the NRC generated a

daylong public relations ordeal that involved 11 government employees and over 50 emails being sent, as federal employees tried to figure out how to answer the request and come up with “approved” lines.

February

- Phil Cross, **chief economic analyst of Statistics Canada** [resigns](#), claiming that internal debate was being suppressed on the topic of the long-form census.
- Environmentalism in Canada is officially declared a “[domestic terrorist threat](#).”
- The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world’s largest scientific association, holds a panel on the muzzling of science in Canada. The BBC news publishes an [article](#) on the issue.
- The [Association des communicateurs scientifiques du Québec](#) (ACS), [Association science et bien commun](#) (ASBC), [Canadian Journalists for Free Expression](#) (CJFE), [Canadian Science Writers’ Association](#) (CSWA), [The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada](#) (PIPSC) and the [World Federation of Science Journalists](#) (WFSJ) send an [open letter](#) to PM Harper asking for timely and open access to federally funded scientists.

2011

October

- [David Tarasick](#), part of a team that reported in *Nature* on the discovery of a huge hole in the ozone layer that is twice the size of Ontario, is prevented from talking with the media about the article.

April

- The [Canadian Science Writers' Association](#) publishes an [open letter](#) to the leaders of Canada's political parties to eliminate script writers, allow scientists to speak for themselves, and let federal scientists inform the general population as public servants of Canada. JA – 05/19/2014
- An [Environment Canada](#) team published a [paper](#) on April 5, 2011, in *Geophysical Research Letters* concluding that a 2° C increase in global temperatures may be unavoidable by 2100. **No interviews were granted by Environment Canada's media office.**

March

- Over the 10 years prior to the 2011 budget, the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences (CFCAS) provided research grants of more than \$118.5 million. Over \$150 million in cash and in-kind support had been added to that amount by partner organizations. In 2011, [CFCAS](#) received half the amount required to sustain such a level of research.

February

- Professors [Errol Mendes and Amir Attaran](#), law professors at the University of Ottawa who are frequent critics of federal policies – immigration issues and the government's handling of the Afghan detainee issue, in particular – have consistently found themselves attacked on Conservative websites and by party spokespersons. In February 2011, both professors were notified of two conspicuous freedom-of-information requests at the University of Ottawa requesting details of the professors' employment, expenses, and teaching reviews and records. While legally the requesters remain anonymous, the professors say they have reason to believe that the requests are part of a larger intimidation tactic carried out by the Conservative government

aimed at silencing them. See also [Maria Gergin](#)'s, "Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 6, 2011. More information [here](#).

January

- [Kristi Miller](#) published a [paper](#) in the respected journal *Science* suggesting that a virus was the cause of an unexpectedly high rate of salmon death. The journal considered her paper important enough that it encouraged journalists across the world to contact her for more information. **The Privy Council** prohibited her from speaking to journalists.

2010

December

- **The Sisters in Spirit database** was cut by the federal government, and new initiatives were announced, including another database on missing persons run by the RCMP. The database showed that 582 Aboriginal women had gone missing or had been murdered in Canada. The research results were published in March 2010, with the NWAC report "[What Their Stories Tell Us](#)". Native groups, human rights organizations and other critics called the policy change misleading and counterproductive, noting that the new missing persons database would no longer provide information on the particular risks to Aboriginal women.

September

- *Nature* publishes [an editorial](#) that Canada must free scientists to talk to journalists. "The information policies of Conservative

Prime Minister Stephen Harper are muzzling scientists in their dealings with the media.”

July

- *Nature* (466, 532, 29 July 2010) publishes [an editorial](#) urging reinstatement of long census form and organizes an international petition to ask the federal government to keep the long census form. Sign the petition [here](#).

June

- The government [replaces the mandatory long-form census](#) with a voluntary National Household Survey, against the protest of large numbers of scholars and organizations. In July, Dr. Munir Sheikh resigns in protest from his position as head of Statistics Canada.

April

- **The National Research Council** is laying off 86 people as part of cuts announced last year to reduce costs at the country's leading research organization. The layoffs begin in April and will affect employees at the **Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information** (CISTI), the country's national science library and leading publisher of scientific information. By the time it is over, CISTI, which used to employ about 350 people, will be down by close to 70 per cent, union officials say.
- [Scott Dallimore](#), a geoscientist working for Natural Resources Canada in British Columbia, publishes an [article](#) in the respected journal "Nature" about a flood that occurred 13,000 years ago. Journalists are unable to talk with him in time for their deadline, because "new media interview procedures require pre-approval of certain types of interview requests by the minister's office."

2009

December

- **The Canadian Council on Learning** (CCL) was a national, independent and non-profit organization focusing on lifelong and innovative learning in Canada, as well as on the general state of education in the country. In 2004 it was given a 5-year grant by the Liberal government, worth \$85 million. On December 21, 2009, Human Resources and Social Development Minister Diane Finley [sent](#) a letter to CCL, stating that the Conservative government would not be renewing the corporation's grant. It was allowed to function for one more year, but without any state funding. In the fall of 2011, [CCL](#) announced that it would be closing its doors permanently in spring 2012.
- Lacking federal grants and hit hard by the 2008 recession, the **Canadian Policy Research Network**, which acted as a neutral forum so that groups with a wide variety of viewpoints on an issue could get together for discussions, closes its doors.

2008

March

- The appointment of the first and only **Science Advisor, Arthur Carty**, (appointed 2004) [was not renewed](#). His role was to support international research and development activities and to provide advice on global science and technology issues where relevant to Canada's national interests; to consider how to promote a strong culture of science, technology and innovation in Canada; and to provide advice on how the government can better support and benefit from science conducted inside government. Mr. Carty resigned as a consequence.

January

- **Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission** president [Linda Keen](#) was fired in January 2008 after closing down a nuclear reactor for safety reasons. The government cited a shortage of isotopes essential to medical tests and procedures. It was a case of direct political interference of an arm's length, independent regulator of a potentially hazardous industry. The [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission](#) (CNSC) regulates [Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.](#) (AECL) and its research reactor at Chalk River north west of Ottawa. It produces 30% to 40% of the world's medical isotopes. Click [here](#) for the CBC version.

2007

November

- Environment Canada adopts a new [Media Relations Protocol](#), with the aim of resulting in "one department, one voice." Media Relations will henceforth coordinate all interactions with the media. **Senior federal scientists must seek permission from the government prior to giving interviews**, often requiring them to get approval from supervisors of written responses to the questions submitted by journalists before any interview.
- [A report](#) from a coalition of Canadian NGOs finds that the federal government is [hiding truth](#) about climate change. Canadian climate science is falling behind in place of oil extraction techniques and initiatives.

2006

September

- The government cancels a multi-year sustaining grant agreement for **the Canadian Policy Research Networks** that it had signed just five months earlier. In December 2009, lacking federal grants and hit hard by the 2008 recession, it closes its doors. NR – 11/5/2013
- The **Law Commission of Canada** has its funding cut and consequently has to close. The Commission conducted studies about topics such as Aboriginal rights, child abuse, extending rights beyond conjugal relationships, and removing restrictions on same-sex marriages.

April

- **Mark Tushingham**, a climatologist with Environment Canada, publishes a science fiction novel about global warming. DreamCatcher Publishing, of St. John, NB, that published the book, organized a lunch at the National Press Club of Canada in Ottawa. Shortly before the event began, Elizabeth L. Margaris, the publisher, received a call from Mr. Tushingham telling her that the **office of the Environment Minister**, Ms. Ambrose, ordered him not to attend the lunch or to discuss his book with the news media.