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Joggins research wins environmental science student best paper

SACKVILLE, N.B. – A project on a piece of Joggins heritage has won a Mount Allison University student a prestigious award.

Mount Allison environmental science major Sarah Quann has won best overall undergraduate presentation at the 22nd annual Atlantic Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference in St. John's. Quann, from Ingonish, competed in an open forum against students from across the region to win the award. This is the third year in a row a Mount Allison student has earned top honours in the competition.

"I was stunned when my name was called. I was so impressed with the quality of the other student presentations that I saw at the conference, I had no idea I would be ranked above so many other excellent talks," says Quann.

Quann presented results from a directed studies project on past mining activity at the Joggins Fossil Cliffs, which she carried out in her second year under the guidance of geography and environment professor Dr. Colin Laroque. Her presentation highlighted results of a dendroarchaeology investigation of wood left over from past mining activity that is eroding out of the cliffs.

Dendroarchaeology involves the use of tree rings to determine the age of wood in a historical structure, in this case, pit props from past coal mine workings. Quann was able to determine when specific mine shafts were in use across two of the major coal-bearing seams exposed at Joggins. By establishing a timeline,



Sarah Quann collects data for her research project at the Joggins Fossil Cliffs in June. CONTRIBUTED

she was then able to research historical documents to determine which company was working each mine shaft along the current cliff sections.

"Sarah certainly captured the very strong role that undergraduate research plays at Mount Allison and I believe this type of public exposure of student work was a benefit for all

of our students who presented," said department head Dr. Mike Fox.

Quann received a presentation plaque and a monetary award for her achievement.