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Mount Allison environmental science student wins best paper at recent conference

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, NL.

Quann, from Ingonish, N.S., competed in an open forum against students from across the region to win the award. This is the third year in a row that 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 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 By establishing a timeline, she was then able to research historical documents to determine which company was working each mine shaft along the current cliff sections.

Department head Mike Fox says, "Sarah certainly captured the very strong role that under-



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

graduate research plays at Mount Allison and I believe this type of public exposure of student work was a benefit for all of our stu-

dents who presented."

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