

Arctic Alive! Giant Arctic floor map lets students explore Canada's North like never before

Ottawa, December 16, 2014—Canadian schoolchildren can get a chance to "walk" across Canada's Arctic and challenge their perceptions of the North through a new national educational project produced by Canadian Geographic Education and the Canadian Museum of Nature.

Arctic Alive: Explore the natural history of Canada's Arctic is anchored by a giant floor map, measuring 8m x 11m, that can be easily rolled out in gyms or large rooms. The map is part of a portable learning kit that is available free to schools across Canada starting in early 2015. Real specimens of Arctic plants, animals, fossils and minerals representing the Arctic's surprising biological and geological diversity enliven 10 lesson plans that teachers can apply to classes from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Topics include general geography of the Arctic, animal adaptations, sea ice, and insights into the region's natural history – from tiny life in the oceans to mammals such as polar bears. One lesson plan draws from real case studies of Arctic field expeditions by Canadian Museum of Nature scientists: students plan the logistics for fieldwork, and set goals to study and document the region's natural history.

"The Canadian Museum of Nature's historic expertise in Arctic research and exploration is well represented in the details that went into the map and the lesson plans," says Meg Beckel, museum President and CEO. "We drew from our national collections and scientific knowledge to create with Canadian Geographic this wonderful teaching tool about a part of our country where new discoveries continue to be made."

"The Royal Canadian Geographical Society and the Canadian Museum of Nature have a long-standing relationship – in fact it began in 1929," says John Geiger, CEO of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. "It is only fitting that the Museum and the Society have partnered on an Arctic project – one that is designed to help students from coast to coast to coast understand that the Arctic is a remarkable, varied, storied and enchanting place."

The Arctic giant map is the latest in a series of portable maps produced by Canadian Geographic Education and is available to its 13,000 teacher members across Canada at no cost. Previous topics have included the boreal forest, wildlife migration and Canada from space. Arctic Alive, is the first, however, to include real hands-on specimens, supplemented by species activity cards, which enrich the study of the region.

The detailed Arctic map extends from the northern regions of the Arctic archipelago, down to areas such as southern James Bay. About 20 terrestrial and aquatic ecozones are represented, demarcated by specific colours. The goal is to show the North as a land of diversity and colour, rather than a land of bleak whites and greys dominated by snow and ice.

The general public can try out the map from December 26 to January 4 during holiday activities at the Canadian Museum of Nature, 240 McLeod St., Ottawa. Starting in early 2015, schools or teachers can reserve the map and associated activities at canadiangeographic.ca.

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The **Canadian Museum of Nature** is Canada's national museum of natural history and natural sciences. The museum provides evidence-based insights, inspiring experiences and meaningful engagement with nature's past, present and future. It achieves this through scientific research, a 10.5 million specimen collection, education programs, signature and travelling exhibitions, and a dynamic web site, **nature.ca**.

Canadian Geographic Education (CG Education) is the educational network of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, one of Canada's largest educational associations. CG Education programs aim to strengthen geographic education in the classroom and to increase the emphasis on geography within the school system. Through innovative programming with a wide range of public and private sector partners, CG Education endeavours to foster geographic engagement and increase the public awareness of geographical literacy.

Media contacts:

Dan Smythe
Canadian Museum of Nature
613-566-4781; 613-698-9253 (cell)
dsmythe@mus-nature.ca

Deb Chapman
Canadian Geographic
613-745-4629 ext. 160; 613-299-8995 (cell)
chapman@rcgs.org