



UVIC CENTRE OPENS PORTAL TO BC WEATHER DATA

Detailed information on British Columbia weather—past and present—is now just a mouse click away, thanks to a new data portal launched today by the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) at the University of Victoria.

The PCIC Data Portal gives the public access to weather observations from more than 6,000 locations around the province, including records of temperature, precipitation, wind speed and humidity. The data dates from the present to as far back as 1872.

“We expect the information to be invaluable to researchers, engineers, industry and anyone with a keen interest in the climate of the province or its historical weather,” says Dr. Francis Zwiers, director of PCIC. “These observations will contribute to everyone’s understanding of climate in the province as it continues to evolve.”

The dataset and portal is the result of a partnership among several BC government ministries, BC Hydro, RioTinto AlCan, and PCIC.

“This web portal delivers on the premier's commitment to be an open government. It’s also another great tool that will help us all gain a better understanding of how we can prepare for an increasingly variable and changing climate,” said Terry Lake, Minister of Environment.

The portal has widespread application. For example, municipal engineers can use the data to plan updates to storm drainage systems or manage drinking water supplies. Forest managers can use the data to assess forest fire risk. And weather buffs can look at the data to see how the weather has changed over the years where they live.

PCIC researchers plan to develop new high-resolution temperature and precipitation maps for BC and make them available on the portal.

The UVic-led Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions contributed funding and consultation in support of the data-gathering efforts. PCIC computer programmers and scientists developed the data portal to house the disparate sources of data. Environment Canada supports PCIC’s role as a central repository for climate data in the province.

”This is a good-news story that illustrates what can be achieved when a group of like-minded partners work together to create open access to a data resource that is of broad public and scientific interest,” says Zwiers.

The portal can be accessed at <http://pacificclimate.org/tools-and-data/data-portal>

Hosted by UVic, PCIC is a regional climate service provider that aims to serve the public need for climate and climate-change science. PCIC’s research goals are to understand the present-day evolution of climate, describe the regional impacts of climate change, and study the hydrological impacts of climate change.

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