



Pacific Institute
for Climate Solutions
Knowledge. Insight. Action.

MEDIA TIP
17 September 2012

Wildfires and energy generation: what's the link?

Wildfires sweeping through large parts of Canada and the United States this summer have caused significant damage, with Monday's Peachland fire a close-to-home example. To reduce the risk of fires, which is expected to increase as a result of climate change, rural communities across BC are removing – and discarding – trees and other biomass from surrounding forests.

What if this wood waste could be used to generate energy?

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) is hosting a free public lecture this week at the University of Victoria entitled "*Fire in the woods or fire in the boiler?*" exploring the potential of combining wildfire risk control with energy generation.

Dr. Juan Blanco from the University of British Columbia's Forest Sciences Centre will present new research conducted in partnership with the BC Community Energy Association and the Green Heat Initiative. The project is funded under the PICS carbon management in BC forests theme, which aims to develop sustainable forest management practices in the face of a changing climate.

"The substitution of fossil fuels with forest biomass could not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, heating costs and energy dependence," says Blanco, "but also promote job creation in the green energy sector for rural communities in the BC interior."

"Our research will help BC communities better implement both fire risk reduction and bioenergy generation programs by providing local decision-makers with the necessary tools and knowledge," adds collaborator Dale Littlejohn from the BC Community Energy Association.

This event is an important opportunity to learn about wildfire prevention at the urban-forest interface and about bioenergy generation in BC.

Media are welcome to attend the lecture. Advance interviews can be arranged by contacting the PICS office.

WHAT: Free public lecture by Dr. Juan Blanco, UBC Department of Forest Sciences
WHEN: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 19
WHERE: University House 1 (formerly Alumni House), University of Victoria
Live Webcast: www.pics.uvic.ca/events/live-webcast

– 30 –

Media contact:

Jessica Worsley, PICS Communications at 250-853-3678 or jworsley@uvic.ca

