

PICS NEWS



Full house at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver BC.

First annual forum sets high benchmark

Carbon pricing proved to be a hot topic at the first annual forum held by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), attracting around 250 participants and widespread media coverage over the three day Vancouver event (8-10 June 2009).

With Environment Minister Barry Penner among the opening speakers, delegates heard from climate change experts and policymakers from government and the business, academic and NGO communities on the forum topic, "Decoding Carbon Pricing". Debate was also sparked during the forum's free public panel discussion entitled "The Future of Carbon Pricing: Implications of the BC Election".



A free public debate over the future of carbon pricing proves a popular draw-card. The panelists (from L to R): Jeffrey Simpson, Globe & Mail; Vaughn Palmer, Vancouver Sun; George Heyman, Sierra Club of BC; Nancy Olewiler, SFU; and Bruce Sampson, International Centre for Sustainable Cities.

Forum conclusions: the British Columbia (BC) carbon tax is an effective and fair pricing policy when combined with appropriate revenue recycling; carbon pricing is an essential part of the wider plan required to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change; BC has been a leader on climate change issues and federal leadership is now needed; BC's policy must be

integrated with federal and US policies as those develop; and greater public involvement is needed on climate change issues.

Post-forum surveys also revealed calls for more discussion on Cap and Trade's compatibility with Carbon Tax, and how those tax revenues should be spent; the need for more adaptation planning and for mechanisms that allow businesses to remain competitive, as well as a greater emphasis on solutions. PICS's annual forums aim to critically examine climate change issues, and explore effective mitigation and adaptation policy approaches.

To access material presented at the Vancouver forum and survey results, visit <http://www.pics.uvic.ca/carbon-pricing.php>.

PICS director takes the helm



Dr. Thomas Pedersen's appointment as Director of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions marks the end of an extensive international search involving a number of extremely high calibre candidates, and the start of an exciting new era for PICS.

The June 25th announcement by University of Victoria (UVic) President Dr. David Turpin noted that Tom was chosen with the unanimous support of the search committee. "Tom was the principal author of the proposal which led to the establishment of PICS, and he has a clear vision

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of how vital the work of PICS is,” he said. “Tom will be instrumental in forging strong links between PICS’s four collaborating universities and with senior decision-makers in government and industry. He has the drive and knowledge to ensure PICS success in meeting its goals.”

In a congratulatory e-mail to Dr. Pedersen, the new Minister of State for Climate Action, John Yap, said he was delighted Pedersen would be bringing his strong leadership experience and deep scientific credentials to PICS: “...climate change is the defining challenge of our generation and the work which PICS undertakes is a key part of our government’s climate action plan.”

Pedersen says he is deeply honoured to have been chosen to lead PICS. His goals for the Institute within the next 12 months include the establishment of a strategic research plan; strengthening the working relationship with the BC government; and engaging with Canadian industries, the public, NGOs and the media. His longer-term goals include positioning PICS as the leading national research institute in the field of climate mitigation/adaptation and policy, with an international reputation for credibility and trustworthiness, and launching a new generation of scholars.

Pedersen will move from his current position as dean of science at UVic, which he has held since 2003. His previous positions include director of the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at UVic, and associate dean, research, for the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

He holds a degree in geology from UBC and a PhD in marine geochemistry from the University of Edinburgh. Pedersen is also a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He has published extensively in the field of paleoceanography, and has longstanding interests in climate change issues and the application of government policy to climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

Pedersen will assume his duties as PICS director on September 1.

PICS research update

The future direction of PICS research priorities is taking shape with its Program Committee now identifying research leaders to carry the process forward.

At a workshop held in Vancouver in April this year, the Committee, along with invited guests from the BC Climate Action Secretariat and Environment Canada, met to determine what path PICS research should take over the next few years.

The result was the identification of four major interdisciplinary themes for the first round of research projects:

- the low carbon economy;
- sustainable communities;
- resilient environment/ecosystems;
- individual action/social mobilization.

Research projects mounted under the themes will have to meet

as many criteria as possible, including the need to be solutions-oriented; have high impact; integrate adaptation/mitigation and sustainability; be relevant to BC, and have applications outside the province; have the ability to lever other external funding and be interdisciplinary.

Research leaders will be identified under each of the four themes to lead workshops in the early fall of 2009. These workshops will form interdisciplinary teams to produce two or three full proposals for funding by PICS. A total of \$600,000 is available for viable projects.

goBeyond celebrates one year anniversary

BC’s new Minister of State for Climate Action, John Yap, was among the guest speakers at the one year celebration of success of goBeyond - a provincial youth-led climate action project that is financially supported by PICS. Other supporters at the June 24 event included the BC Climate Action Secretariat, BC Hydro and participating post-secondary institutions.

The event yielded valuable networking opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community partners involved in climate change action, and also gave participants an update into goBeyond’s past, current and future projects and outreach activities. For more information visit <http://www.go-beyond.ca/>.



BC Minister of State for Climate Action, John Yap, with Jamie Biggar from goBeyond at the June 24 celebration.

Rapid expansion of PICS Climate Solutions Network

Since its launch in March 2009, the PICS Climate Solutions Network (CSN) - an online community of climate change experts and stakeholders - has rapidly grown to include 200 plus members. While its primary focus is on BC, the CSN has been attracting individuals and organizations from across Canada and overseas.

The network connects researchers, scientists, policy-makers and others working towards climate change solutions with the aim of facilitating collaboration, communication and information exchange. This means improved access to key contacts in academia, government, and the private and non-profit sectors. The CSN allows PICS to identify clusters of—and gaps in—climate change

research, and is a useful tool to identify who is doing what in the climate change arena. Browse and/or register for the CSN at <http://www.pics.uvic.ca/research/index.php>

Meet the PICS Campus Co-coordinators

Campus coordinators have now been appointed at the four collaborating universities to promote and support PICS activities at their home institutions. Meet the team!

Lawrence Pitt, University of Victoria



Dr. Lawrence Pitt joined PICS in January 2009 and has taken on the campus coordinator position in addition to his other roles. Prior to that, he was Research Coordinator at the multidisciplinary Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic) at the University of Victoria. Dr. Pitt brings extensive knowledge of energy research to

PICS as well as experience in interdisciplinary research environments. He hopes PICS will develop into a respected source of quality research that is communicated clearly to a wide audience.

Alison Munro, University of British Columbia

Alison has worked in interdisciplinary sustainability research management at UBC for a number of years. She has worked as the Research Manager for the Sustainable Development Research Institute, Project Manager for the Georgia Basin Futures Project, and as Research Manager for the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from SFU, and a Master of Public Administration from Dalhousie.



As a mom concerned about the future for her young children, Alison is looking forward to working with the UBC community to support the development of increased research capacity, learning opportunities, and partnerships to develop effective climate change policies and actions in British Columbia.

Kyle Aben, University of Northern British Columbia



Kyle maintains a profile of all climate-related activities at UNBC, supports the work of UNBC faculty members, assists in research, organizes PICS-related activities and outreach, and fosters a network of climate researchers in Northern BC.

He says the wide range of people involved in climate change research in his region is impressive, and he is working hard to further engage the community as well as UNBC researchers and students in the PICS network.

Prior to this role, Kyle worked in BC measuring carbon footprints for industry and consulting for GHG project validation and verifications. He has also worked as a Senior Greenhouse Gas Analyst for BDO Dunwoody.

Kyle's thesis for his Master of Arts in International Studies - "Deciphering the source of technology change: greenhouse gas emission reduction in the BC forest industry 1990-2005" - is soon to be published in the Technology in Society journal.

Deborah Herbert, Simon Fraser University



Deborah brings to her role experience in research management gained through managing interdisciplinary sustainability research projects at UBC, as well as a background in climate change research.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Carleton University and Master of Arts in Resource Management and Environmental Studies from UBC. As the latest recruit to the PICS campus coordinators team, Deborah is enthusiastic about engaging SFU researchers and students in PICS's drive to identify innovative climate change solutions and seek new opportunities for adaptation and mitigation that improve BC's economy and environment.

PICS white paper featured at Vancouver panel

The PICS White Paper "Climate Change and Health in British Columbia" was featured at a networking panel hosted in Vancouver on 26 June by the BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network and the BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network. Around 70 people attended the "Climate Change and Health in Rural and Remote British Columbia" event, and remote participants joined in via WebEx.

Main conclusions of the forum: the need for interdisciplinary and collaborative research efforts to explore climate change and health at a more local level, and for ways to incorporate such climate change information into the tools used by decision-makers and planners.

Funds are available from BCEOHRN and BCRRHRN to provide seed money for getting grants and teams organized (more information is available at www.bccrrhrn.ca and www.bceohrn.ca). Remote participants indicated interest in holding similar panels/networking events in the North and the Interior of BC.

PICS fellowship holders' research on track

PICS graduate fellowships worth \$10,000 each have been supporting the research of eight graduate students at collaborating universities since September 2008. Personal profiles on each recipient are available at http://www.pics.uvic.ca/graduate_profiles.php but we caught up with three of them recently.

Zosia (Zofia) Brown, PhD Candidate, Resource Management and Environmental Studies, University of British Columbia

Zosia Brown is a PhD student at UBC, where she studies occupant comfort, productivity and post-occupancy performance of green buildings. Since receiving the PICS Graduate Fellowship, Zosia has made significant progress with her work, which includes the post-occupancy evaluation of six Canadian office buildings (three green, three conventionally designed), the survey of building occupants and the interview of design team members.

The data collection for her study is now complete, with survey and microclimate data from the six buildings collected. She is currently in the final stages of writing up her doctoral dissertation.

Zosia says the PICS scholarship provided support in the critical last quarter of her four year research project. She plans to expand her knowledge of green building design and rating systems beyond North America by working in Switzerland this Fall either within the building sector or academia. Eventually she plans to return to Vancouver, bringing an in-depth international perspective on the best in green building practice and performance evaluation.

Zosia authored and co-authored several articles in the past year in the journals of Building Research and Information and Intelligent Buildings International. She has also presented her work at several conferences, including the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) 2008 Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings.

Ian Picketts, MNRES Candidate, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, University of Northern British Columbia

Ian's research aims to increase the understanding of climate change adaptation for planners in BC, and to develop an adaptation strategy for a case study municipality; Prince George. Since receiving his PICS fellowship, Ian has reached many milestones in his work.

In 2008, he organized a Climate Change Adaptation workshop with the City of Prince George. The results of this event plus other elements of his research are now informing the Prince George Adaptation Strategy which will eventually be incorporated within the city's official community and sustainability plans. Ian has also worked with the organization Smart Growth on the Ground to incorporate climate change adaptation into its sustainability improvements for downtown Prince George.

Ian's article "Raising Awareness of Climate Change Adaptation in Planning" has been published in Plan Canada's spring 2009 edition. He is currently finalizing a collaborative document with the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC), called "Climate Change Impacts in Prince George: A Summary of Past Trends and Future Projections of Climate in North-Central BC". While at UNBC this year, Ian drew upon his environmental experience to teach a university planning class and a course on integrated resource management.

Ian plans to continue with this research through a PhD which he hopes to start in September. He already holds a degree in Environmental and Geological Engineering from Queen's University, and previously worked as an environmental policy analyst for the Pembina Institute in Calgary.

Leila Scannell, PhD Candidate, Psychology, University of Victoria

Leila Scannell is a PhD student in social and environmental psychology, who recently featured on the cover of UVic magazine The Ring. Her current research explores how to effectively communicate the issues of climate change to the public and whether individuals are more responsive to local or global climate change messages.

Leila says both the PICS scholarship and the SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship she has received are a huge support for her PhD. Leila also received the Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal for her Master's thesis on place attachment.

This summer, Leila commenced data collection in the three regions of BC, including the Kootenays, the Okanagan, and Vancouver Island. She presented preliminary findings at the Canadian Psychological Association conference in Montreal this June, and will finish analyzing her data in August. Upon completion of the study, she plans to further investigate the topic of positively framed messages and climate change engagement, as well as explore individuals' thought processes about climate change issues.

Her longer terms plans include teaching at a university as well as continuing to do research in social and environmental psychology.

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) is hosted and led by the University of Victoria in collaboration with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and the University of Northern British Columbia.

PICS was created in 2008 through BC government funding. Its aim is to: increase understanding of the magnitude and patterns of climate change; evaluate its implications; assess options and develop solutions; and communicate its findings to government, industry and the general public.

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