College of New Caledonia

NEWS RELEASE

For release on Thursday April 17, 2014

CNC receives largest research grant in college's history

CNC officially received its largest research grant ever Thursday, which will see more than $2 Million invested into forestry innovation in central BC.

The college received $1.88 million from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and $200,000 from the CNC Research Forest Society to research innovations in the forestry industry.

"Our goal is to help the forest industry become more innovative and competitive, while giving our students opportunities to work on cutting-edge technology and innovation opportunities facing the sector today," said Hardy Griesbauer, CNC's Director of Applied Research and Innovation. "The forest industry faces a number of challenges, including reduced timber supply from the mountain pine beetle, a skilled labour shortage, and a range of impacts from climate change. At the same time, emerging technologies and information may be able to help forest companies overcome these challenges."

"We would like to thank NSERC and our partners for this very large investment in applied research at CNC."

CNC will work with Canfor, Dunkley Lumber, BC Timber Sales, Lakeland Mills and possibly others on advancements for the forestry industry.

"Canfor relies on the skills training available through CNC," said Ralph Hausot, Chair of the CNC Research Forest Society and Canfor planning supervisor. "Demand for skilled workers is growing in the forest sector, and our industry has a bright future. This significant funding from NSERC will provide critical support as the industry works with educational institutions to train the people we need to grow the economy in the North."

CNC signed a 10 year harvest and joint management agreement with Dunkley Lumber last fall, and an expanded partnership agreement with the forest company this spring, all in support of good forest practices and student development.

"We are excited to partner with CNC in the management of the research forest. The expanded research opportunities that this funding provides will help to explore and develop

solutions for forest management issues relevant throughout the central and northern interior," said Doug Perdue, Chief Forester of Dunkley Lumber. "In addition to forest management benefits, the opportunity to involve the CNC Natural Resource and Environmental Technology students in the research activities will enhance their educational experience. The skills the students develop will continue to pay dividends as they take their place in our local communities after graduation."

Outcomes from this research will support sustainable and enhanced innovation throughout the forestry sector, thus helping forest companies address challenges and capitalize on new opportunities.

"This project is a perfect fit with our future forest stewardship objectives," said Frank Varga, BC Timber Sales practices forester. "The research these students are doing will provide valuable knowledge about the effects of climate change on northern B.C. forests and help us determine which tree species are best-suited to the region."

Students involved in research projects benefit through enhanced training with new technologies and forest practices, and opportunities to further develop their innovation and technical skillsets while working directly with local companies on industry-led research.

"Focusing research investment dollars towards unique challenges faced by the forest industry in the central interior will have long term benefits for CNC students, the forest industry and our working forests," said Les Dillabaugh, Lakeland Mills Silviculture Forester.

CNC's 12,500 hectare research forest, located near Prince George, provides an ideal research facility for industry and researchers to collaboratively address a range of forest industry research needs. College faculty and students will work with industry and partners on a range of research projects including: innovative forest harvesting techniques to protect streams and lakes, planting new tree species in central BC as an adaptation to climate change, and using geomatics data to improve forest planning and operations.

"Students will have opportunities to work on teams made up of industry, government, and college experts, and look at a range of innovation and technology solutions that will help the forest industry," Griesbauer said. "These opportunities help our students develop important skills for today's workforce, such as critical thinking, effective communication, problem solving, and teamwork.

CNC's research forest is governed by the CNC Research Forest Society Board, which is comprised of local companies, three local First Nations, and academic and government forestry experts. The CNC Research Forest Society annually funds applied forestry research projects with proceeds from timber harvested on the research forest, thus providing a model for financially sustainable research funding.

CNC invites companies who would like to innovate or use technology to solve business challenges to call 250-562-2131 local 5541.

The College's Office of Applied Research and Innovation links companies together with College teams of instructors, staff and students to work on company-specific challenges or opportunities.

"If you like research, there's never been a better time to be a student or faculty member at CNC," Griesbauer said.

The CNC NSERC grant was part of $40 million handed out Thursday by Ed Holder, Minister of State Science and Technology to colleges across Canada to support applied research and development (R&D) activities with industry. See attached news release.

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