

TAKING STOCK

EVERYTHING WILL BE ON THE TABLE, AS RESEARCHERS AND DECISION MAKERS CRITICALLY EXAMINE GOVERNANCE IN THE NORTH

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NORTHERN GOVERNANCE POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 3-5, 2009 YELLOWKNIFE, NT, EXPLORER HOTEL

The first meeting of its kind, the landmark Northern Governance Policy Research Conference will take place in Yellowknife from November 3 to 5, 2009. Hosted at the Explorer Hotel, the conference will bring together 150 northern researchers, community leaders, and government officials to discuss how to connect effective research in the service of policy for aboriginal and community organizations.

"In our conference, we aim to empower researchers who work for indigenous governments to identify the policy research skills they use every day and share them widely. We also, of course, have to identify the gaps and figure out how to tackle these," says conference lead, Stephanie Irlbacher Fox.

"We are here to figure out one of the most powerful tools to develop more effective policy in the north, the efforts of our research community, can actually inform decision making," says the keynote speaker, John B. Zoe. John B. Zoe will speak at the Explorer on Tuesday evening during the opening gala.

Conference topics will range from self-government, service delivery, and the impacts of mining, oil, and gas exploration, to social healing, wellness, and knowledge development. An Elders' knowledge workshop will also take place concurrent to the conference.

The conference is particularly timely as it will provide an opportunity for researchers from across the Canadian Arctic to take stock of the enormous transformations in governance that have taken place in the North over the last three decades. From the 1984 Inuvialuit Agreement and the 1999 creation of Nunavut, to the 2003 Tłı̄ch̄q and 2005 Nunatsiavut self-government agreements, the north has seen a patchwork of jurisdictions, local bodies, and land use plans emerge through the generalized processes of land claims settlement and federal devolution.

How they have addressed or plan to tackle the daunting economic, social, cultural, and environmental challenges of the North with its resource-driven economy, legacy of colonization, young population, and vast land mass, is a crucial question that researchers will attempt to answer in this conference.

Conference organizers also hope that the dialogue generated by the conference will highlight the importance of both university and community-based policy research, especially as governments attempt to set policies that are at once reflexive to changing conditions and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities rather than external institutions or funding bodies.

That research likewise contributes to capacity building and community development, especially in regards to negotiating or implementing land claims and self-government, will be stressed.

At the end of the conference, a clearer picture of the northern policy landscape will emerge as participants convene to make recommendations for effective policy-making and monitoring. Most importantly, the conference will ask the big questions about governance and how research can be better supported and funded to investigate the pressing concerns of communities.

The conference was conceived in partnership with the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, the Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, the Dene Nation, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and the Tłı̄chq Community Services Agency and is being sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, BHP Billiton, Canadian North, and the Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board.

DETAILS

WHO WILL ATTEND?

- university and community-based researchers
- federal, territorial, and Aboriginal government officials
- regional board officials
- community elders

WHERE WILL THE CONFERENCE TAKE PLACE?

- Most of the venues of the conference are located at the Explorer Hotel, with a satellite meeting across the street at the Northern Visitor's Centre.

WHO ARE THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS?

- Tuesday Nov 03, 6 pm John B. Zoe, LLD, Tlı̄chq Government (Conference Keynote)

Lunchtime Keynotes:

- Tuesday November 3, 12:30pm: Premier Floyd Roland of the NWT
- Wednesday, November 4, 12:30pm: Dr. Larry Emerson, Diné, Arizona, USA
- Thursday, November 5, 12:00pm: Dr. Peter Russell, University of Toronto

WHAT INFORMATION CAN I GLEAN FROM THE WEBSITE?

- rationale for the conference
- conference program
- abstracts of the presentations
- brief biographies of all the presenters

CONTACT

Conference Website:

<http://ngprc.circumpolarhealth.org>

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