

Highlights of the 2015 Conference

PARTICIPATION IN THE College's 2015 Conference and AGM on March 13th once again surpassed previous years, with almost 260 individuals either participating in the live web conference or attending the event in person in Richmond. The Conference featured three distinct sessions on the topical themes of the changing roles of local governments in environmental and natural resource management, science and policy advocacy, and the changing authority of First Nations in natural resource management in BC.

Local governments & the Natural Environment

Carrie Baron, PEng and Drainage & Environment Manager for the City of Surrey impressed upon participants how much the responsibilities of municipal governments have increased over the years with respect to the environment, which is compounded by challenges with capacity and accessing appropriate expertise.

A panel of prominent municipal government politicians took the stage next and illustrated the huge variety and scale of resource development projects municipalities are grappling with around BC.

Science & Policy Panel

A panel discussion on science and policy featuring RPBios Susan Pinkus, Brian Clark, Jeff Green, and Chris Addison stimulated engaging discussion at the Conference, and provided some practical advice for participants on how to walk the line between science and advocacy while maintaining professional credibility.

The Changing Landscape of Natural Resource Management in BC

Hannah Askew, Staff Counsel on the Aboriginal and Natural Resources Team at West Coast Environmental Law, spoke about the changing legal landscape of Aboriginal rights and the possible implications it could have for natural resource management.

Chris Addison, RPBio and Director of Resource Management in the busy Peace-Liard region for the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, gave the audience insight into the varied and often conflicting factors that contribute to decision-making in the management of natural resources.

Keynote Addresses

Despite some technological hiccups at the beginning of a presentation delivered via live video feed by Dr. Justina Ray, perhaps Canada's foremost wildlife conservation biologist, the two keynote addresses that concluded the day received rave reviews. Both Dr. Ray and Dr. Bob Lackey spoke to the intersection of science, scientists, and policy, from somewhat opposing ends of the spectrum.

Dr. Lackey delivered a thought-provoking presentation that caused participants to question whether they in fact participate in normative science (information that is presented with assumed or unstated policy preferences), while Dr. Ray reminded participants of the importance of ensuring that policy-makers are armed with science-based information to inform decision-making. **cm**



Dr. Bob Lackey, Professor of Fisheries Science at Oregon State University, delivered a well-received keynote presentation.



Pierre Iachetti, College Executive Director, introduces the participants in the local government panel. From left to right: Derek Corrigan, Mayor of the City of Burnaby; Josie Osborne, Mayor of the District of Tofino; Harold Steves, Councillor of the City of Richmond; and Gwen Johansson, Mayor of the District of Hudson's Hope.