

CONFERENCE PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

Guiding principles for Bulkley Valley Research Centre conferences

Located in the midst of many diverse and fragile cultures and ecosystems, Smithers is an ideal location for hosting conferences and workshops about natural resource research and management. The Bulkley Valley Research Centre has built a reputation for organizing timely, relevant and engaging conferences designed to link scientific research, professionals and community members. The Centre takes pride in the caliber of its conferences and is building on its past successes. Subsequently, the Centre expects the following principles to be followed for all of our conferences.

Utilize the Centre network

The Centre has an extensive network that adds value to our conferences. In a community not previously regarded as a hub for international conferences, we have invested time into sourcing items, researching venues and using local services that provide the most positive experience possible for conference speakers and delegates. As a result, the Centre is well equipped to provide the best conference experience possible.

Assure quality of service

Conferences are designed to offer a top-notch format for participants to collect and disseminate the latest information about natural resource research. The Centre is committed to using only the best venues, services and sound systems to create an atmosphere that is conducive to networking and learning. To improve upon past conferences, the centre collects feedback through evaluations and applies suggestions to future events. We take great pride in our reputation as a respected organization that collects and disseminates current cultural and natural resource research. The centre won't embark on a project or event unless it can deliver it to the caliber that our members have come to expect.

Emphasize local capacity

Centre conferences strive to create community and encourage discussion about things that are important to residents of the Bulkley Valley, northern BC and further a field. They are also designed to engage visitors with the region by promoting local businesses, recreational opportunities and lifestyle. As hosts for an array of high-profile professionals, researchers and academics that attend our conferences, the Centre attempts to connect delegates with the local region and its concerns and cultures. Some of the ways we do this are by:

- Timely conference topics, such as salmon habitat in the Skeena watershed, planning for Crown interface lands, and issues relevant to BC's important forestry industry;

- Promoting tourism and recreation opportunities in the region with special discounts offered exclusively to conference delegates through local businesses and tour operators;
- Wherever possible, using local materials, foods and suppliers to serve conference delegates.

Integrate First Nations' interests

Smithers is located within the traditionally claimed territory of the Wet'suwet'en and, as such, aboriginal interests, concerns and culture all play an important role in Centre events. The centre is proud to host aboriginal speakers, caterers and hereditary chiefs at its events as a means to communicate First Nations' values to a wider audience and we strive to engage aboriginal communities from throughout northwestern B.C. with our events.

Focus on sustainability

Centre events highlight sustainability from the ground up: We promote conservation and management of local resources through our research right down to our conference materials. Conferences focus on reducing waste and materials used by offering a paper-free conference package option, which provides all conference materials in a digital format rather than paper hardcopy. When paper is used for Centre events, it is recycled and all efforts are made to reduce waste. Wherever possible, Centre events use reusable, rather than disposable, items like plates, cutlery and cups. As well, sourcing materials locally reduces Centre events' carbon footprints and supports our local economy.

Ensure extension of research

Research dissemination is extremely important as a means to increase the knowledge base upon which research management decisions are made and to allow for more informed decision making. The Centre firmly believes that research and science should have a practical purpose and results should be applied to community needs. In keeping with this, the Centre takes pride in delivering comprehensive proceedings following its conferences. Posted to the Centre website, proceedings include abstracts, photos, speaker biographies, an audio recording of each presentation, and a copy of each speaker's PowerPoint presentation. Proceedings connect the centre to our community, allow those who didn't attend to benefit from the conference experience, and provide a reference platform for valuable research information shared at conferences.

Engaging with the Centre

Centre events must be original, contribute to the knowledge base, and be sufficiently funded to provide the conference experience the Centre has become known for. The Centre encourages the public to approach centre staff to discuss potential conference ideas. At the very least, the following must be in place before the Centre can engage in a conference project:

- Funding is established
 - In order for us to engage in a conference project, the majority of necessary funding should be in place. The Centre is willing to risk manage parts of the project budget, however, 75 percent of the total conference funds, along with a plan to secure remaining funding, is required to proceed with conference planning.

- Strategic and operational committees are in place
 - The Centre is responsible for event outcomes and answers to its board and membership; as such, the centre maintains control over assembling the operational and strategic coordination teams, and proceeding with conference logistics. This provides the necessary balance and objectivity in our project delivery.

If you have a conference idea you feel would be a good fit for the Centre, please contact Research Program Manager Rick Budhwa at rick.budhwa@bvcentre.ca or (250) 847-2827.