

NRES WEEKLY NEWS

November 26-30, 2007

A newsletter for faculty, staff and students
who participate in the
Natural Resources & Environmental Studies Institute
and NRES Graduate Programs

COMING EVENTS

NRESI RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES



Dr. Gail Anderson

Associate Professor
Associate Director
School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University

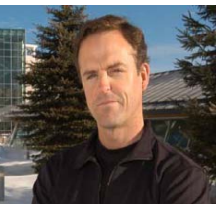
Tomorrow

IMPACT OF MARINE SUBMERGENCE ON DECOMPOSITION AND TIME OF DEATH ESTIMATION IN HOMICIDE VICTIMS

Friday, November 23, 2007

3:30—4:30pm

Canfor Theatre, 6-213



Dr. Michael Murphy

Associate Professor, Political Science
Canada Research Chair, Comparative Indigenous State Relations

Prisons of Culture: Indigenous Rights to Land and Natural Resources in Australia, Canada and New Zealand

Courts in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand frequently define indigenous rights in relation to the traditional laws, customs, and practices of pre-contact indigenous societies. Many elements of this framework of recognition have significant appeal to those seeking a more generous and robust judicial recognition of indigenous rights. The emphasis on traditional laws, customs or cultural practices locates the source of indigenous rights, not in the common law, but in the pre-existence of ancient and enduring indigenous societies at the time of colonization. The appeal to indigenous traditions indicates a judicial sensitivity to indigenous perspectives regarding the scope and content of indigenous rights, and flags the importance attached by indigenous peoples to the survival and flourishing of their distinctive cultures. Yet the fatal flaw of this judicial focus on tradition is its simultaneous deployment as a means of limiting or denying indigenous rights claims. Specifically, where traditional laws, customs or practices have been substantially altered or disrupted, the capacity of indigenous peoples to prove their rights to land and natural resources is compromised or possibly even eliminated. This cultural framework of recognition is discriminatory, practically unnecessary, and out of line with the right to development in international law.

Friday, November 30, 2007

3:30—4:30pm

Lecture Theatre, 7-150

REMINDER: Share your information about recent publications, grants, and /or other honours you may have received with others interested in NRES issues.

**PLEASE EMAIL ALL INFORMATION AND MATERIAL to
Elissa Zemlak: zemlak@unbc.ca**

We're on the web at: www.unbc.ca/nres/newsletter

A NEW MODEL TO SIMULATE FOREST GROWTH

The Algorithm Engineering Group at the UPM's School of Computing has developed, in conjunction with a forestry engineer from the University of Córdoba, a simulator modelling the evolution of a forest. This tool, called Vorest, is a forestry engineering research aid and an excellent example of how to apply computational geometry to real-world problems.

Tree development within a forest largely depends on how much space they have both on the ground and in the air, around the treetops. Trees compete to dominate the space they need to develop, and this relates these biological systems directly to Voronoi diagrams. A Voronoi diagram can be seen as the space partition as a result of expanding the sites in the diagram.

Vorest users can examine what impact the space the trees take up has on the development of a forest. This includes the space transfer dynamics between neighbouring trees dictated by their life strategies, and the outcome in terms of tree growth and mortality. Vorest's simulation process is based on the fact that any tree is surrounded by an influence region of variable size that determines the future growth of the individual tree.

The model was developed by Manuel Abellanas and Carlos Vilas from the Department of Applied Mathematics at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid's School of Computing and by Begoña Abellanas from the Department of Forestry Engineering at the Universidad de Córdoba. They were advised by **Professor Oscar García** from Canada's Northern British Columbia University, who was a visiting professor at the Department of Applied Mathematics this year.

THESIS DEFENCE

Zoë Meletis (ORTM) successfully defended her PhD thesis this past week, with a 'clear pass'.

Wasted Visits? Ecotourism in theory vs. practice at Tortuguero, Costa Rica
Duke University

PUBLICATIONS

Cherry, J. E., L.B. Tremblay, M. Stieglitz, G. Gong, and **S.J. Dery**, 2007. Development of the pan-Arctic Snowfall Reconstruction: New land-based solid precipitation estimates for 1940-1999. *J. Hydrometeorol.* (8: 1243-1263).

Campbell, L.M., N.J. Gray, and **Z.A. Meletis**, 2008. Political ecology perspectives on ecotourism to parks and protected areas (pp 200-221) in K.S. Hanna, D.A. Clark, and D.S. Slocumbe, (eds). *Parks and Protected Areas— Policy and governance in a changing world*. New York and London: Routledge and Taylor & Francis Group.

TRAVEL

Kathy Parker will attend the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) meeting in Vancouver on November 26-28. She and co-authors will present their findings on using stable isotopes to track diet and metabolism in caribou.