

Connecting Communities Through Research on Vancouver Island

TWO NEW SOCIAL SCIENCE PROJECTS

Two new social science research projects will receive \$719,044 in funding over three years by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's College and Community Social Innovation Fund.

The Walk With Me project aims to uncover the human dimensions of the toxic drug poisoning crisis in small B.C. communities. The crisis has had a heavy impact in B.C. Since it was labeled a provincial emergency in 2016, illicit drug toxicity deaths have totaled over 9,400.

The Walk With Me project also offers community walks while listening to audio stories narrated by people whose lives have been impacted by the toxic drug poisoning crisis - including people who use drugs, family members and front-line workers. For more information on attending a walk go to: <https://www.walkwithme.ca>.

The Learning Our Way project will build on long term relationships between North Island College's Nursing program and First Nation's communities on Northern Vancouver Island to leverage innovative systems change with the goal of addressing systemic racism and promoting health equity for Indigenous people and communities on northern Vancouver Island.

"We will contribute to transformative, Indigenous led, relationally oriented, wellness focused learning circles," said Joanna Fraser, lead research for the project. "Participants in the learning circles will engage with community members and Indigenous knowledge holders. They will learn from the land, from sharing stories and from being in ceremony together."

These two projects are excellent examples of how NIC can provide support to our community partners by developing projects that address a need in the community while providing rich learning opportunities for NIC students.



Nursing students participating in Field School with Huu-ah-ayt.

NEW FUNDING FOR APPLIED RESEARCH

CARTI is launching new research projects, focused on supporting innovation in BC coastal communities.

The projects are possible thanks to \$1,678,656 in grant funding from two NSERC's College & Community Innovation programs: Mobilize and Applied Research and Technology Partnership grant.

"This funding that will allow us to expand our research projects along the BC Coast, support our community partners and provide increased opportunities for NIC students to get hands-on research experience," said Naomi Tabata, CARTI manager.

The funding will support the creation of 18 student researcher positions.

The research will also cover issues facing the seafood sector related to climate change and sustainability, including ocean sensors and monitoring, shellfish and kelp productivity and the impact of microplastics. Two other projects, one dealing with oysters and the other kelp, will continue because of the funding.

CARTI STUDENT UPDATE

After finishing her summer position with CARTI and graduating from NIC's Aquaculture Technician diploma program, Maria Griffith received a job with Grief Seafood.

"I am working as an aquaculture technician on a sea-site and I love every day that I am out here," said Griffith. "I'm very grateful for all the learning opportunities and experience that NIC gave me."



NIC Aquaculture Technician Student Maria Griffith

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
SUBMITTING A STORY TO
OUR NEWSLETTER?
OR DISCUSSING YOUR
RESEARCH IDEA?
PLEASE CONTACT US
CARTI@NIC.BC.CA

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KELP PROJECT GROWING AT NIC

There is something growing at the Campbell River campus: Kelp!

Growing bull kelp in a lab at NIC is a new initiative sub-project of the Kelp Habitat Banking project which uses planted kelps beds to reduce the environmental impact of logging on marine habitat.

The project is funded by NSERC's three-year Applied Research and Development grant.

The project is also giving valuable experience to NIC students.

Sabrina Jordan has gained both lab and field work experience with the project. She has learned about current kelp restoration and farming practices while testing these principles on local bull kelp.

By cultivating juvenile kelp in the lab, the kelp is given the best environment for establishing themselves before being used in habitat restoration efforts.

The project is hoping to make a big impact in local waters while also impacting Jordan herself.

"Learning more about local, Indigenous, and global applied marine research efforts, along with the interconnected web of people working to better the future of our oceans has had a huge impact on me," said Jordan, who is working on her Biology degree, and is planning on a career in Marine Biology.

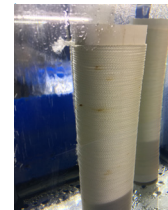
(Please see the side bar for a pictorial of the bull kelp growth)



NIC Student Sabrina Jordan tests the water content of bull kelp.

Bull Kelp Growth

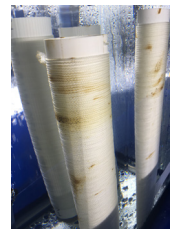
The below images show the various growth stages of bull kelp being grown at the Campbell River campus lab. The kelp is grown by taking spores from bull kelp and reproducing them in tanks.



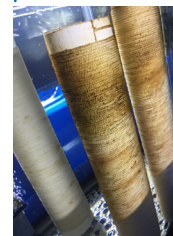
WEEK 2

Although you can barely see it, there is microscopic kelp growing on the twine.

WEEK 4



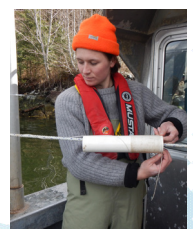
The brown patches are tiny kelp blades.



WEEK 6

The kelp blades are now around 2-mm and these spools are almost ready to be planted.

KELP BEING PLANTED



NIC Student Research Assistant Sally Enns preparing spools for planting.

BELGIAN STUDENTS COMPLETE RESEARCH AT NIC

Two Belgian exchange students spent five months at NIC's Campbell River campus looking for a green solution for BC Shellfish farms.

Wouter Jansen and Maxime Boufflette worked on an applied studies program with CARTI. They were studying how plastic equipment used in shellfish farms deteriorates, with an eye to using new, environmentally friendly and financially feasible equipment.

Logan Zeinert, Senior Research Technician with CARTI, supervised the Belgian pair in their project.

"The research they did with shellfish farming hasn't been done before," said Zeinert. "Shellfish farmers are becoming increasingly aware of the effects their gear may have on the marine environment and are working to mitigate these impacts."

Jansen and Boufflette are the first students to come from the University College of Leuven-Limburg on exchange to NIC coordinated by NIC's Office of Global Engagement.