

# CFCAS News

*Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences (CFCAS)*



## Message from the Executive Director

On February 2, 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released the Science part of its Fourth Assessment Report. The Report represents the consensus of the international scientific community on the state of the world's climate. CFCAS hosted an information session on the Report that drew intense media interest and over 120 participants.

On March 1, the Canadian Government launched International Polar Year, the largest ever international program of scientific research focused on the earth's Polar regions. Arctic and cryospheric research remain a priority for CFCAS, which has already dedicated \$28 million to initiatives in these areas: the work is already yielding valuable results.

Closer to home, a formal evaluation of CFCAS was completed in February 2007. It confirmed the key role of the Foundation and its efficient, cost-effective delivery of research grants. Given that CFCAS funds are fully committed, the Foundation has intensified its efforts to obtain new resources. We warmly thank the scientific community for their letters to the Prime Minister and other leaders requesting renewed support for climate research.

*Dawn Conway*

## Understanding Drought

The Canadian Prairies have always been susceptible to dry spells, but the life-cycle of a major drought is still little understood. That's about to change. Scientists from six Canadian universities and federal and provincial governments launched a joint study: the Drought Research Initiative (DRI), in Saskatoon on January 11, 2006. With funding from the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences, DRI scientists are examining the physical characteristics of, and processes influencing, prairie droughts in order to understand them better and to improve drought prediction. The five-year study is led by Ronald Stewart (McGill) and John Pomeroy (University of Saskatchewan). Early results show the complexity of the multiple atmospheric circulation patterns that helped establish and maintain the major drought of 1999-2005. DRI has attracted a range of stakeholders including the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Manitoba Water Stewardship, Alberta Environment, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, and Manitoba Hydro.



**Right:** Prairie drought, photo: Craig Douglas, CWB



**Top:** the DRI Network Scientific Committee (L to R): John Pomeroy, Rick Lawford, Kit Szeto, Al Woodbury, Masaki Hayashi, John Hanesiak, Ron Stewart, Patrice Constanza, Charles Lin and Barrie Bonsal. **Missing:** Matt Regier, Ken Snelgrove and Elaine Wheaton.

## New Minister of the Environment

On January 4, 2007 Prime Minister Harper appointed John Baird as Minister of the Environment. Baird represents Ottawa-West-Nepean. He was President of the Treasury Board of Canada during 2006.



## Coast guard ship joins Dalhousie project

A CFCAS-funded project on environmental conditions in Lunenburg Bay has obtained the use of a former coast-guard cutter to support its field operations. The *Arcadie*, a former Fisheries and Oceans patrol vessel, was declared surplus in 2005. Recognizing the value of the project and ongoing work at Dalhousie University, the cutter was turned over to the university's oceanography department in December 2006. Dr. John Cullen, co-lead for the Lunenburg Bay project, will use the 12.8 metre ship to expand research into the open sea. The LProject currently monitors conditions and collects data from a series of moorings stationed in the Bay. This data is used in making environmental predictions for the area — information valuable for scientific research, as well as for the fishing industry, tourism and public safety.

## Major International Climate Report Released

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** released the 'Science' chapter of its Fourth Assessment Report, at a press conference in Paris, February 2, 2007. The Report represents the consensus of the international scientific community on the state of the world's climate.

The **Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences** hosted a briefing in Ottawa on the same day. It allowed journalists, policymakers, federal agency representatives and others to hear from Canadian authors of the Report, from university and government. The Canadians outlined major advances in climate change knowledge since the last (2001) IPCC report, and implications for Canada. Speakers were: Richard Peltier (University of Toronto); René Laprise (Université du Québec à Montréal); Gregory Flato and John Fyfe (Environment Canada). Andrew Weaver (University of Victoria) participated by teleconference. Gordon McBean, CFCAS Chairman, chaired the event which was widely reported in Canadian print and broadcast media. Over 120 people attended; the speakers and chair were also highly solicited for media interviews.

Working Group II's report on impacts, adaptability and vulnerability will be released April 6, 2007. CFCAS will host a briefing in Ottawa on April 10.

### In Brief

CFCAS has recently assumed the role of Secretariat for the **International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFAG)**. Dawn Conway, Executive Director of CFCAS is Chairing the Consortium for 2007 & 2008. [www.igfagcr.org](http://www.igfagcr.org)

**Sir Nicholas Stern**, noted British economist and ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, made headlines in October 2006 with the release of his report on the economic implications of global climate change. He spoke about the report in Toronto on February 19, 2007. The report was commissioned by the British Government. [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economics\\_climate\\_change/sternreview\\_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm)

The **European Union (EU)** has announced its Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013) and is calling for proposals in areas including climate change, pollution and risks. Canadians can partner on EU proposals. **ERA-CAN**, a clearing house for information on Canadian-European cooperation, has been established by federal agencies in partnership with the EU. ERA-CAN information sessions will be held in Toronto, March 12; Ottawa, March 14; and Montreal, March 16. For information see : [www.era-can.ca](http://www.era-can.ca)

### Did You Know?

- ⇒ CFCAS funds flow through 30 universities in 9 provinces and benefit over 400 researchers;
- ⇒ CFCAS has invested over \$109 million in research in Canada since it was established;
- ⇒ Research partners have provided additional cash or in-kind contributions of \$137 million;
- ⇒ 50% of CFCAS grant funds support training of students and research personnel. By 2010, over 2,500 students will have received training through involvement on CFCAS initiatives.

### Canadian Carbon Program

The Canadian Carbon Program was formally launched in Ottawa on March 9, 2007. The new network builds on the success of the Fluxnet-Canada Research Network (FCRN), which held its final Annual Meeting in Ottawa, March 9-11, 2007. The meeting included an overview of the accomplishments of FCRN. [www.fluxnet-canada.ca](http://www.fluxnet-canada.ca)



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CFCAS's **2005-2006 Annual Report** is available online ([www.cfcas.org](http://www.cfcas.org)) or at the CFCAS office