

# BVRC conference adds it all up

## Participants seek balance between benefits and cumulative effects

By Percy N. Hébert  
*Smithers/Interior News*

Judging by the turnout, the Bulkley Valley Research Centre's conference, Adding It All Up was a success, gathering more than 200 participants.

"It was great, we had really good feedback and everyone seemed really pleased," BVRC spokesperson Amanda Follett said of the three-day conference held at the Hudson Bay Lodge.

"It's not an easy job to get all those voices to the table."

Those voices included a variety of speakers from government ministries, research groups, aboriginal resource managers and industry representatives, all with a singular focus, the cumulative effects of resource extraction.

Keynote speaker, Lorne Greig, a systems ecologist, was impressed with the conference.

"I haven't seen a forum like this in other places," Greig said.

"To have multiple levels of government led by a community-based research centre engaged in discussion around cumulative effects is completely unique and badly needed."

Views of the impact of potential impacts of resource extraction differed in perspective, but the consensus was the impact on ecosystems must be considered.

Identifying an ecosystem's threshold is not an easy matter, Greig admitted, as is a

unified perception of the threshold.

"You need a sense of how far you've already come and have a sense of how far you think you can go.

"There will be different perceptions."

Another challenge Greig said, is the difficulty in making predictions, especially predictions spanning decades.

"When you go 20, 30 or 100 years out it gets harder," Greig said.

"We need to look out a long way, but we need to understand when we look out there, it gets pretty fuzzy.

"So we need to ground our predictions with where we are now."

Andrew Thrift, manager environment and community affairs with the Galore Creek Mining Corporation, said the conference was of value and he was impressed by the local capacity and knowledge in the community at large and at the BVRC.

When considering cumulative effects and environmental thresholds, Thrift said he looked to science for the answers.

"We are always supportive of good science," he said.

"If science shows we've reached a threshold then we have to have a good discussion about stopping a project."

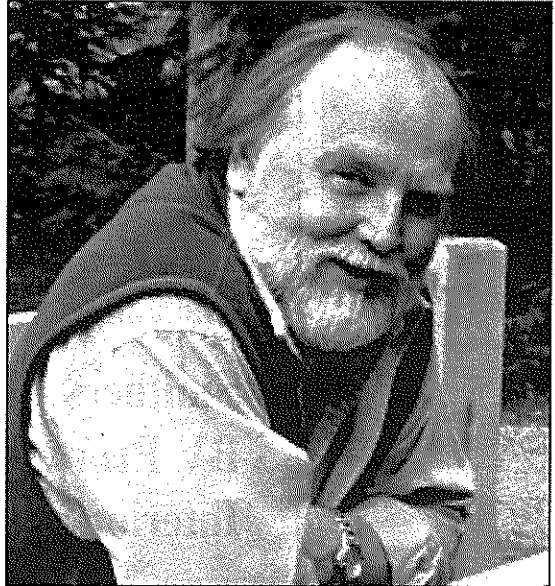
For Follett the special moment of the conference came on the first day.

It was a talk by Gerald Amos, Director of Community Relations, Headwaters Initiative from the Haisla First Nation.

The talk, which Follett described as really heartfelt, addressed the fact that talk is not always followed by action.

"There is a worry about a lot of talk and no action, but I think if we can keep the talk going then things will progress," Follett said.

"Hopefully we'll have another event to keep the dialogue going."



Lorne Greig, systems ecologist, was the keynote speaker at the Add it all up conference hosted by the Bulkley Valley Research Centre.

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