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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Interface conference coming to Smithers

Culture, recreation and industry are only some of the activities that vie for space in local Crown lands. As our northern communities expand, proposed land use changes in rural private lands and potential development of adjacent government-owned land will increasingly be under debate. How will these lands be used? Who will they serve? And who will make these decisions?

Planning for the Crown-Settlement Interface Lands seeks to provide a learning experience in planning land that straddles Crown and private property. In Smithers, these lands are valued by a diverse set of interests—agriculture, trail users, residential development and local First Nations, to name a few—making the community an ideal location to host this precedent-setting conference.

Organized by adjunct professor Ray Chipeniuk, through the University of Northern British Columbia's School of Environmental Planning and in association with the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, this three-day event is expected to draw up to 100 urban and regional planners, academic researchers from as far away as New Zealand and the U.S., planners working with First Nations, and members of citizen-based planning groups.

According to conference coordinator Steve Osborn, interface lands are what make the Bulkley Valley such a desirable place to live.

"That's what the valley is all about—the fact that we have these settlements next to Crown land. That's why people love it," Osborn says. "At the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, we credit Ray with bringing us this important topic at a time when planning for our surrounding countryside is becoming increasingly important."

The conference will be held at the Friendship Centre in Smithers on June 16 and 17 and at the Old Church on June 18. Topics including current state-of-the-art interface planning, public participation in interface planning, and the relationship between interface planning and community development be explored through presentations, workshops and local, bottom-up examples of community development planning.

For more information, visit www.bvcentre.ca/interface2010. Conference coordinator Steve Osborn can be reached at 250.847.9344; conference chair Ray Chipeniuk can be reached at 250.847.5758.