

Canada's aquatic ecosystems research gets boost from NSERC

Thanks to a funding boost of \$4.4 million, the NSERC Canadian Network for Aquatic Ecosystem Services (CNAES) will play a key role in ensuring well-informed decisions are made when it comes to this country's wetlands, lakes and rivers.

The funding, from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, in conjunction with \$4.3 million dollars of support from partner organizations, was recently announced as part of the government's Strategic Network Grants program which encourages large-scale, multidisciplinary, collaborative research projects that could improve Canada's economy, society and environment within the next decade. The CNAES is a consortium of 27 researchers from 11 universities, Canadian government scientists, industrial partners and environmental and technology associations that conducts research and training in aquatic ecosystems.

"Our network addresses research concerns related to large northern wetlands, connections between healthy forests and healthy rivers, and lake ecosystems in Canada," says Don Jackson, director of CNAES, an aquatic ecologist in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and interim director at the University of Toronto's School of the Environment. "Canada is subject to significant global environmental stressors, as well as pressures to develop its natural resources. The CNAES provides a means to develop the tools and knowledge essential to inform government, industry and other stakeholders in making informed decisions regarding development and environmental protection."

"In our case, we consider the 'goods and services' that are provided by nature, such as nutrient processing, water retention by wetlands and the production and quality of fish in lakes and rivers," says Jackson. "The economic value of such goods and services is estimated at \$60 billion a year for southern Ontario alone."

"We have an excellent group of researchers encompassing the academic, governmental and industrial sectors from across Canada. We draw on a breadth of expertise that includes remote sensing, biogeochemistry, fish ecology, modeling, and hydrology," says Jackson. "We look forward to addressing the challenges facing Canada and the international community in generating the science to inform policy development, and to training the next generation of leaders in this field." Participants in the CNAES include: University of British Columbia, University of Guelph, Laurentian University, McGill University, University of New Brunswick, Nipissing University, Université du Québec à Montréal, University of Toronto, Trent University, University of Waterloo and Western University.

Research partner organizations include: Alberta Innovates Technology Futures, DeBeers Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Kongsberg Maritime, Le Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, NRCan – Canadian Forest Services and Parks Canada

MEDIA CONTACT:



[Donald A. Jackson](#), University of Toronto

Email: don.jackson@utoronto.ca

Phone: 416 978-6526