Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions

A Year of Intention and Impact

Annual Report 2024/2025

University of Victoria

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY ENGAGING THE WORLD

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Contents

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Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions

A year of intention and impact

This past year (2024/2025) has been transformative for the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS). Guided by a renewed sense of purpose, we launched our new Strategic Plan, setting a clear course to accelerate climate action across British Columbia and beyond. The plan reaffirms our mission to mobilize cutting-edge research, collaboration, and knowledge exchange that create tangible, lasting climate solutions.

A central achievement this year was the launch of our renewed website, climatesolutions.ca. Designed as a dynamic hub for climate knowledge and partnerships, the site showcases our programs, stories, and opportunities—inviting our ecosystem of researchers, policymakers, communities, and other collaborators to join us in co-creating a low-carbon, resilient future.

Our programs continue to put our strategy into motion and are generating opportunities and benefits in every corner of B.C. Through the Climate Internship Program, we're connecting talented students with organizations to advance climate goals, and our Events Programs are generating needed knowledge and capacity. Our Climate Foresight Program is identifying emerging challenges to shape collaborative research informed solutions, while the Decision Impact Program is supporting decision-makers with timely insights to support pressing policy issues.

This year also marked a milestone in reconciliation and partnership. We proudly signed the historic *Relationship Protocol between First Nations Leadership Council and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions*, affirming our shared commitment to respectful, reciprocal collaboration in climate research and action. This protocol reflects our deep respect for Indigenous rights, knowledge systems, and leadership in addressing the climate crisis. We also launched the Indigenous Climate Fellows Program and an award-winning podcast with Siila Watt-Cloutier.

> OUR STRATEGIC PLAN CHARTS THE PATH, OUR WEBSITE OPENS THE DOOR, AND OUR PROGRAMS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO CREATE SOLUTIONS THAT MATTER AND MEET THE MOMENT.

The climate challenge before us is immense—especially in the context of other pressing and interlinked issues related to housing, affordability, trade, and geopolitics—but so too is our collective capacity to act. Our strategic plan charts the path, our website opens the door, and our programs bring people together to create solutions that matter and meet the moment.

Thank you to our university network and partners for your vision, dedication, and commitment.

IAN MAURO
Executive Director
Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS)

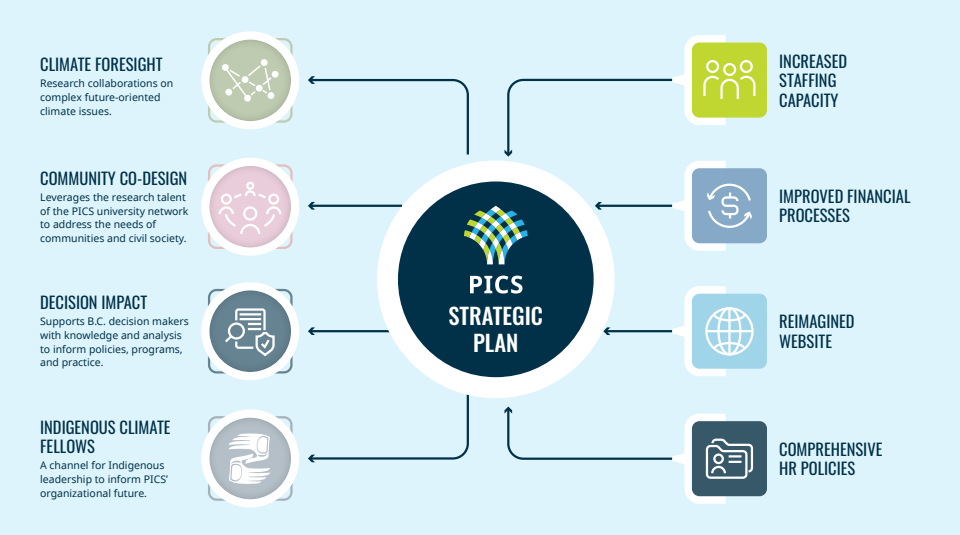
A start-up year for PICS' new strategic plan

In the spring of 2024, PICS launched its new Strategic Plan: 2024 and Beyond and began the rollout of new supporting projects and programs.

A reimagined website, climatesolutions.ca, was launched, bringing to life PICS' commitment to communications and knowledge mobilization as a core plank of its new organizational direction. Based on analysis of its audience's needs, the PICS website offers a suite of products to ensure the right information is shared with the right people in the right way.

PICS redesigned its funding programs to ensure they deliver value and meet the differentiated needs of three core constituencies. The Climate Foresight stream focuses on research collaborations on complex future-oriented climate issues, driven by the interests of scholars and students. The Community Co-Design stream leverages the research talent of the PICS university network to address the needs of communities and civil society, those living at the forefront of climate change. And the Decision Impact stream supports B.C. decision makers with evidence and analysis to inform policies, programs, and practice. Activities under these restructured programs commenced in the spring of 2025.

PICS also made key changes to its organizational structure to align with the goals and values of the new Strategic Plan. New staff were hired to align people to the new programs. A comprehensive Team Member Handbook and associated policies were developed. An energized administrative team improved the efficiency of financial services to PICS' partners. Additionally, an Indigenous Climate Fellows program was inaugurated to establish a channel for Indigenous leadership to inform PICS' organizational future, with Inuk climate leader and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Siila Watt-Cloutier serving as the inaugural Fellow.



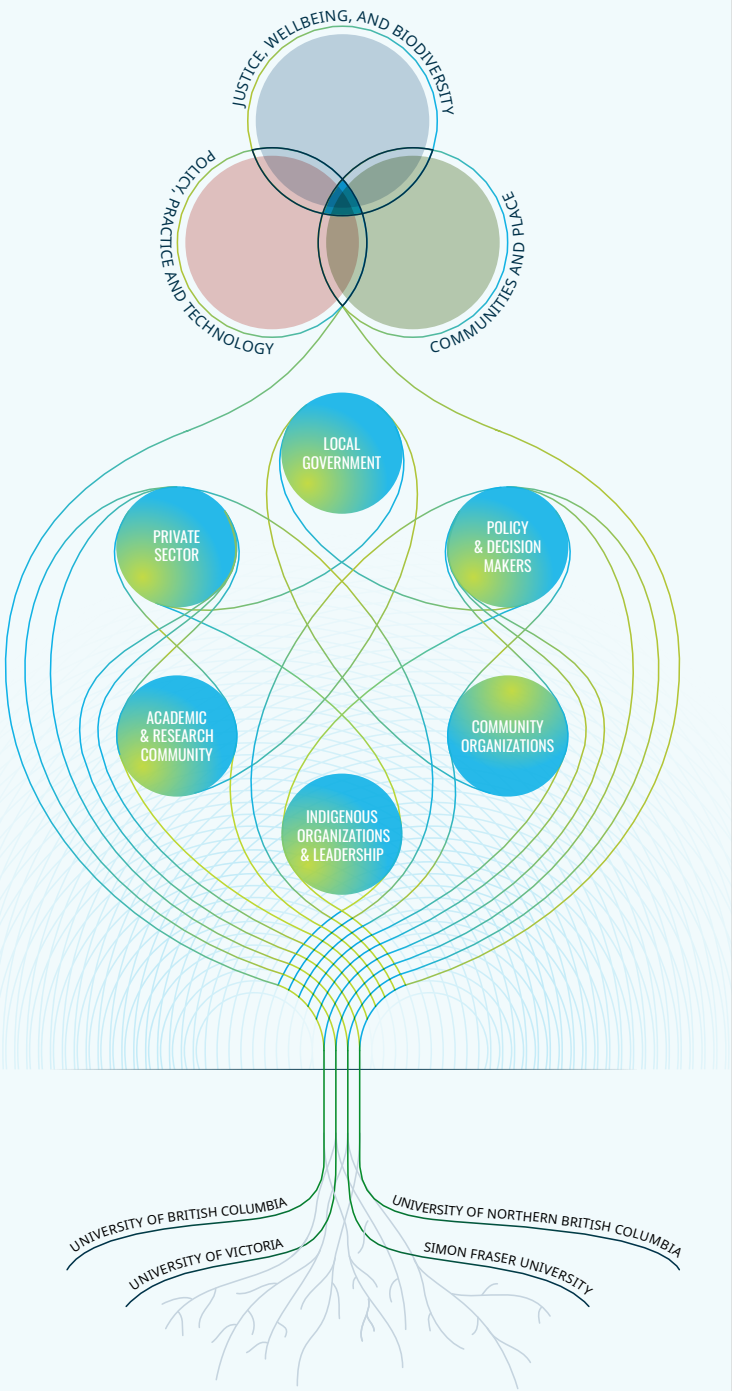
THE REVIEW PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS HIGHLIGHTED THAT "PICS' STRONG CONTRIBUTIONS TO COLLABORATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH; STUDENT CAPACITY BUILDING; AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION ARE PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY".

In the fall of 2024, PICS underwent the periodic external review required for the renewal of mandates for all research centres at the University of Victoria. This examined PICS' objectives, goals and activities over the previous six years, based on a comprehensive self-assessment produced by the PICS staff. The review panel's conclusions highlighted that *"PICS' strong contributions to collaborative and interdisciplinary research; student capacity building; and knowledge mobilization are particularly noteworthy".*

The panel also stated that "PICS' research programs have resulted in a large volume of original, high-quality, co-designed, climate-solutions research" and suggested the new strategic plan helps to integrate and leverage PICS in meaningful ways with our partner ecosystem.

Our ecosystem

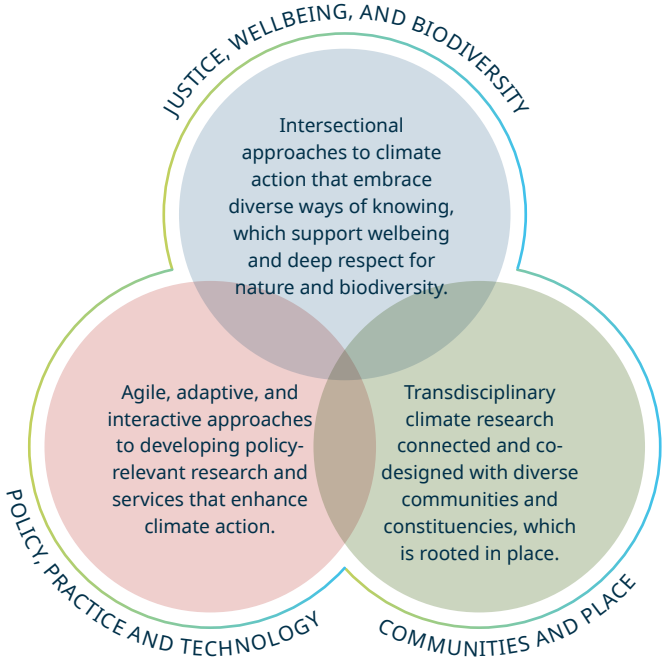
Rooted in partnership, the PICS ecosystem grows through collaboration. Our four founding universities anchor a network of researchers, governments, and communities whose connections nurture the ideas and actions that lead to lasting climate solutions.



Advancing our intended impacts

From April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, PICS built on the foundation of our latest Strategic Plan. Our Intended Impacts—advancing climate solutions at the intersections of Justice, Wellbeing, and Biodiversity; Policy, Practice, and Technology; and Communities and Place—shaped our efforts throughout the year.

The stories in this annual report highlight how these guiding commitments are not only driving progress today but also laying the groundwork for the transformative climate action still to come.



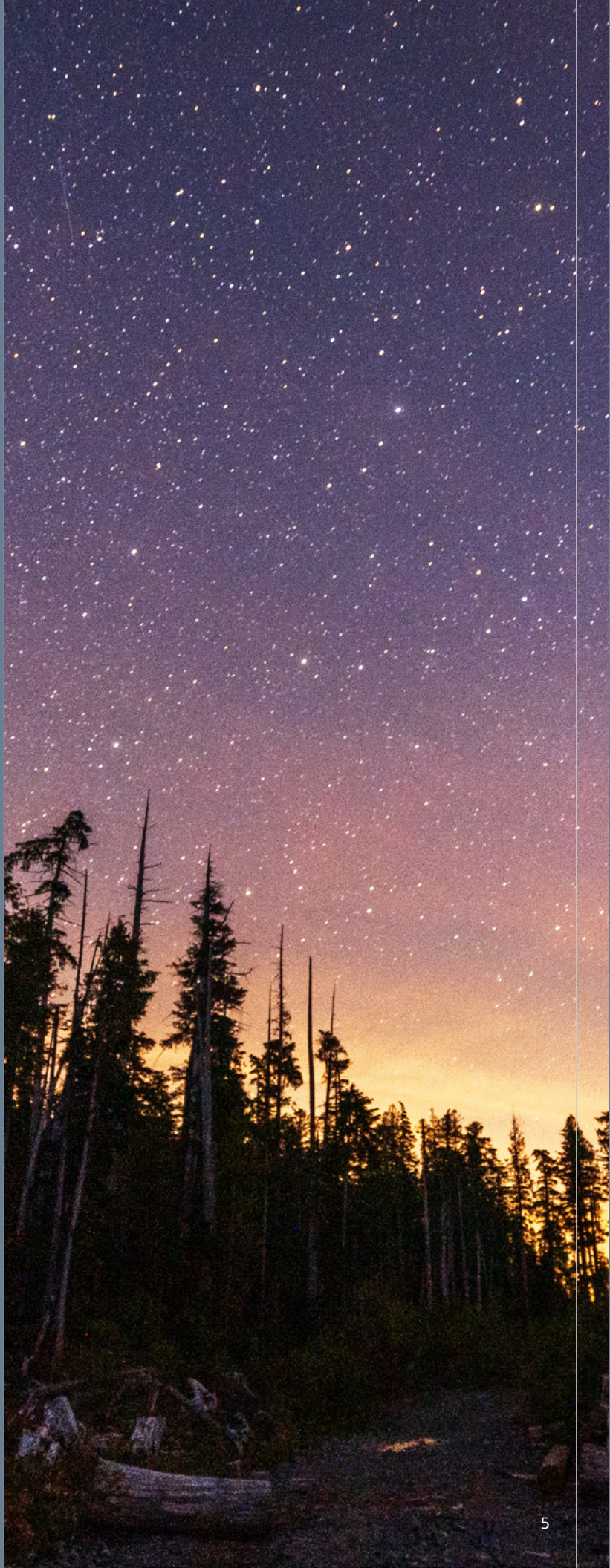
Explore our impact across B.C.

Scan the QR code to view an interactive map of PICS-funded climate research and action across the province. Each marker represents a funded project, event, or internship from 2024–2025.

Intended Impact 1

Justice, Wellbeing, and Biodiversity

Durable, fair, and effective climate solutions begin with respect for human, Indigenous, and other beings' rights. In 2024/25, PICS supported initiatives that advanced reconciliation, safeguarded wellbeing, and strengthened the connections between people, culture, and ecosystems. From forging a first-of-its-kind Relationship Protocol with the First Nations Leadership Council and restoring Indigenous fire stewardship in the Gitanyow Lax'yip, to decarbonizing B.C.'s energy system and supporting biodiversity, this work demonstrates how climate action and justice are deeply interwoven.



Relationship Protocol advances First Nations climate solutions

In January 2025, PICS and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) signed a first-of-its-kind Relationship Protocol to support First Nations climate leadership across British Columbia. This voluntary agreement establishes a collaborative foundation for advancing climate priorities while upholding and uplifting First Nations title, rights, and climate knowledge.

Through the protocol, PICS is supporting the FNLC in implementing the B.C. First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in B.C. Both frameworks set out a bold vision for First Nations-led climate action and emergency management, grounded in self-determination and responsibility to care for the land and future generations.

By investing in capacity building, research, and education, PICS is helping create space where Indigenous rights, community wellbeing, and ecological stewardship come together. This work reinforces the principle that climate solutions must be rooted in justice, support the wellbeing of people and communities, and safeguard the biodiversity that sustains us all.

A. *After signing the Relationship Protocol (L to R): Hugh Braker, First Nations Summit; Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs; Nasu?kin Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit; Regional Chief Terry Teegee, B.C. Assembly of First Nations; Dr. Ian Mauro, PICS; Janna Wale, PICS; Dr. Fraser Hof, University of Victoria.*

B. *PICS Executive Director, Dr. Ian Mauro, speaks at the B.C. Cabinet & First Nations Leaders' Gathering in January 2025.*

C. *Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, signs the Protocol.*

D. *B.C. Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Terry Teegee signs the Relationship Protocol, observed by PICS Executive Director Dr. Ian Mauro.*

E. *PICS Indigenous Research and Partnerships Lead, Janna Wale, speaks at the B.C. Cabinet & First Nations Leaders' Gathering in January 2025.*

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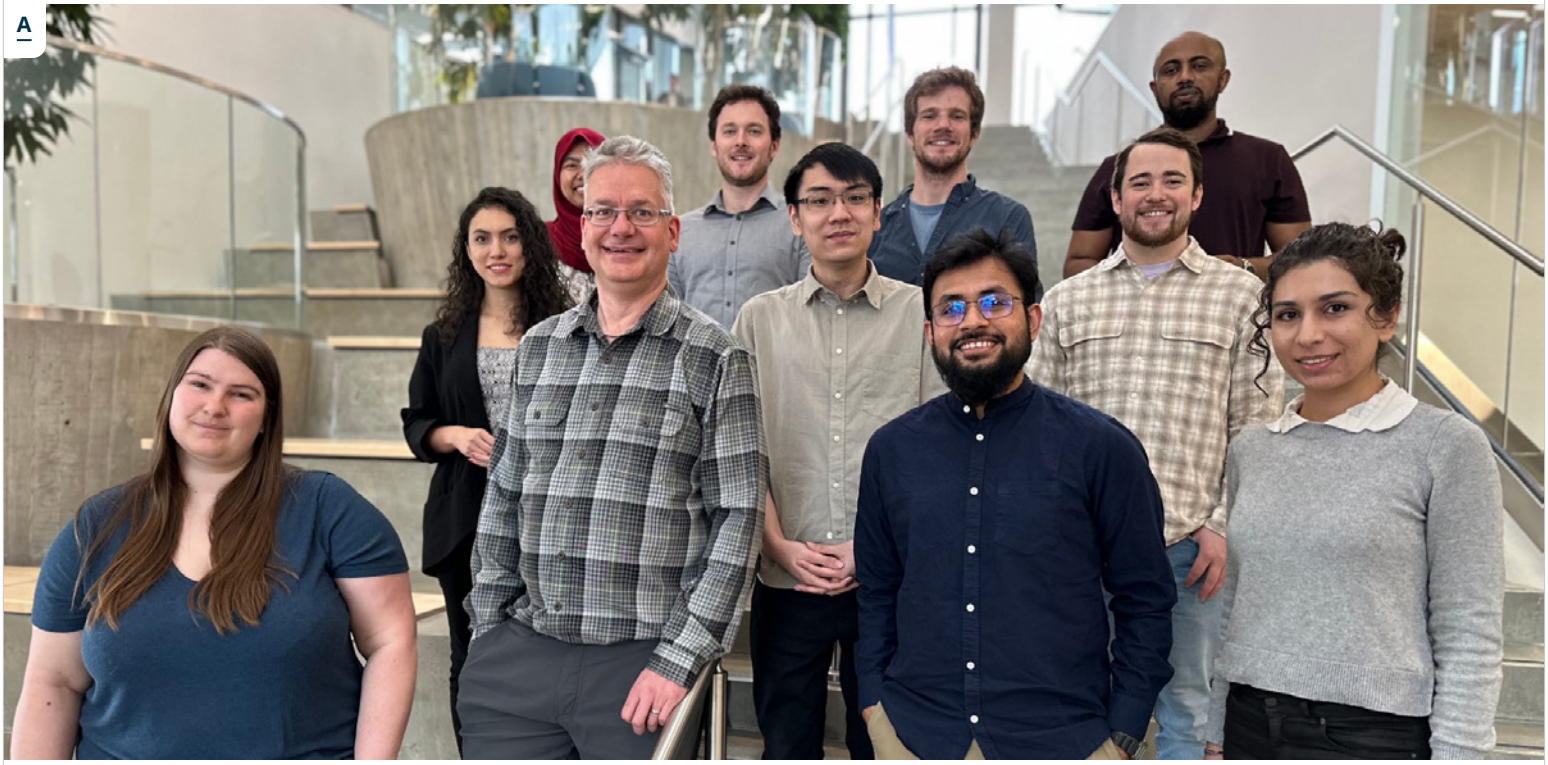

Decarbonizing B.C.'s energy system and supporting biodiversity

With support from a $180,000 PICS grant, Dr. Taco Niet and their team at Simon Fraser University are exploring how British Columbia's clean energy transition can advance climate goals while protecting biodiversity, ecosystems, and supporting community wellbeing.

As new technologies like hydrogen, heat pumps, and electric vehicles emerge to reduce carbon emissions, there's an expectation of rising electricity demand. Meeting that demand will require expanding renewable energy generation—such as wind, solar, and hydropower—but without careful planning, this growth could create new pressures on land, water, and biodiversity.

To help guide sustainable development, the research team developed an integrated modelling framework for B.C. that brings together three key models: the BC Nexus model, which links climate, land, energy, and water systems; the RESource model, which assesses renewable energy potential and spatial impacts; and the PyPSA BC model, which simulates how the electricity grid operates and evolves. Together, these tools help identify technology pathways that minimize ecological disruption, reduce transmission bottlenecks, and promote more equitable energy planning.

The findings show that while B.C. has abundant renewable energy potential, land use restrictions, environmental exclusions, and grid accessibility costs limit viable sites for development. Coordinated planning across policy, land management, and infrastructure domains will be critical to ensure that renewable energy expansion supports biodiversity and community values—helping build an energy future that is both low-carbon and just.

The BC Nexus model

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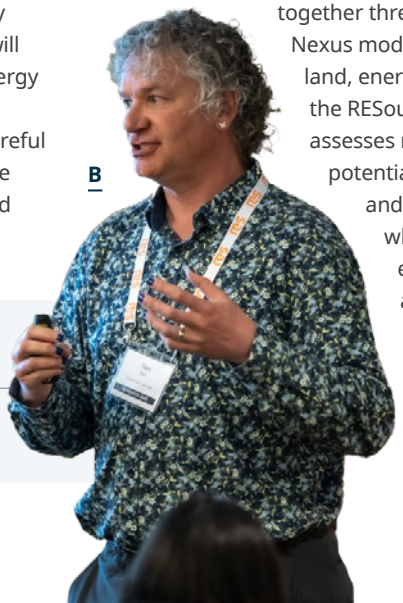

A. *The ΔE+ Research Group at SFU. Provided by: Taco Niet*

B. *Dr. Taco Niet speaking at Generate 2025 in May.*

Fighting fire with food

The Gitanyow Nation has long stewarded its lands through cultural burning. The Nation has used fire to maintain healthy ecosystems, manage food and medicinal plants, and support wildlife. With support from a PICS grant worth $180,000, Dr. Lori Daniels and Dr. Kira Hoffman at UBC partnered with the Gitanyow Lax'yip Guardians to revitalize these practices, combining historical knowledge, Indigenous expertise, and ecological monitoring.

Over the past year, the project expanded its cultural burn areas to cover more than 500 hectares of forest and grassland ecosystems, completing burns on over 100 hectares. Higher elevation sites were incorporated to support huckleberry management, and Elders' knowledge guided fire prescriptions to support the growth and availability of key plants like huckleberries, nodding onion, nettles, riceroot, as well as habitats for moose and grizzly bears. Local school students and residents visited burn sites, harvested culturally important plants, and engaged in workshops and public presentations, including a panel moderated by Elder Darlene Vegh alongside Dr. Daniels and author John Vaillant. Camera trap photos and harvested seeds have been shared with the community to connect residents with the ecological and cultural significance of fire stewardship.

> OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE PROJECT EXPANDED ITS CULTURAL BURN AREAS TO COVER MORE THAN 500 HECTARES OF FOREST AND GRASSLAND ECOSYSTEMS, COMPLETING BURNS ON OVER 100 HECTARES.

The project has also helped to achieve important policy advancements, working with provincial authorities and forest licensees to amend silviculture prescriptions and remove timber harvesting obligations within parts of the Gitanyow territory. These changes give the Gitanyow Nation greater authority to care for their lands using fire to balance cultural, ecological, and economic values. By restoring cultural burning practices, the project is simultaneously strengthening ecosystem resilience, supporting food and medicine security, and rebuilding relationships that sustain the Gitanyow Nation's stewardship of their territory for generations to come.

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A–C. *Kira Hoffman, Gitanyow Elder Darlene Vegh, and members of the Gitanyow Lax'yip Stewardship Guardians assist in performing a Gitanyow-led cultural burn at Xsit'ax (Kitwanga River) on Wilp Gwaas Hlaam lands in northwest B.C. Credit: Marty Clemens*

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D. *Dr. Kira Hoffman (left) with Gitanyow Elder Darlene Vegh (right). Credit: Marty Clemens*

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Siila Watt-Cloutier joins PICS as inaugural Indigenous Climate Fellow

A. *Siila Watt-Cloutier and Dr. Ian Mauro speak at a PICS event at UVic in spring 2025.*

B. *Siila Watt-Cloutier is honoured with a Blanketing ceremony during a PICS event at UVic.*

C. *Respected Inuk climate leader and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Siila (Sheila) Watt-Cloutier. Credit: Carson Tagoona*

In spring 2024, respected Inuk climate leader and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Siila (Sheila) Watt-Cloutier became the inaugural Indigenous Climate Fellow at the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions.

A lifelong advocate for Inuit rights and a leading voice for climate action, Watt-Cloutier used her fellowship to inspire the next generation of climate-conscious leaders across PICS partner universities. Her fellowship centred on climate leadership grounded in culture, human rights, and intergenerational responsibility.

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> "IT'S ABOUT BUILDING TRUSTING ALLIES AND PARTNERSHIPS—ACROSS WAYS OF KNOWING AND ACROSS ALL OF HUMANITY—SO THAT WE ADVANCE RECONCILIATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CLIMATE ACTION AS A SHARED GOAL WITH INTENTION." **SIILA WATT-CLOUTIER**

One of the fellowship's key legacies was *A Radical Act of Hope*, a limited-series podcast produced by PICS in collaboration with Everything Podcasts, co-hosted by Watt-Cloutier, PICS' Executive Director Ian Mauro, and Janna Wale, the Indigenous Research and Partnerships Lead at PICS. The series explores Watt-Cloutier's life, work, and teachings, and features conversations with Indigenous women changemakers Leena Evic, Dr. Nicole Redvers, and Aleqa Hammond on climate-conscious leadership rooted in Indigenous knowledge and collective care. In 2025, the podcast earned two top honours at the Signal Awards—a Gold Award from the judging academy and Listener's Choice in the Activism, Public Service & Social Impact category—reaching listeners globally and amplifying Indigenous climate leadership far beyond B.C.

To further share this message with students and academic communities, PICS hosted an on-campus conversation with Watt-Cloutier at the University of Victoria in spring 2025. The event brought together students, staff, faculty, and community members for a powerful discussion on climate, human rights, and the role of youth in shaping a more just future. Attendees heard firsthand how leadership rooted in consensus, wisdom, and stewardship can guide climate action with humanity and hope.

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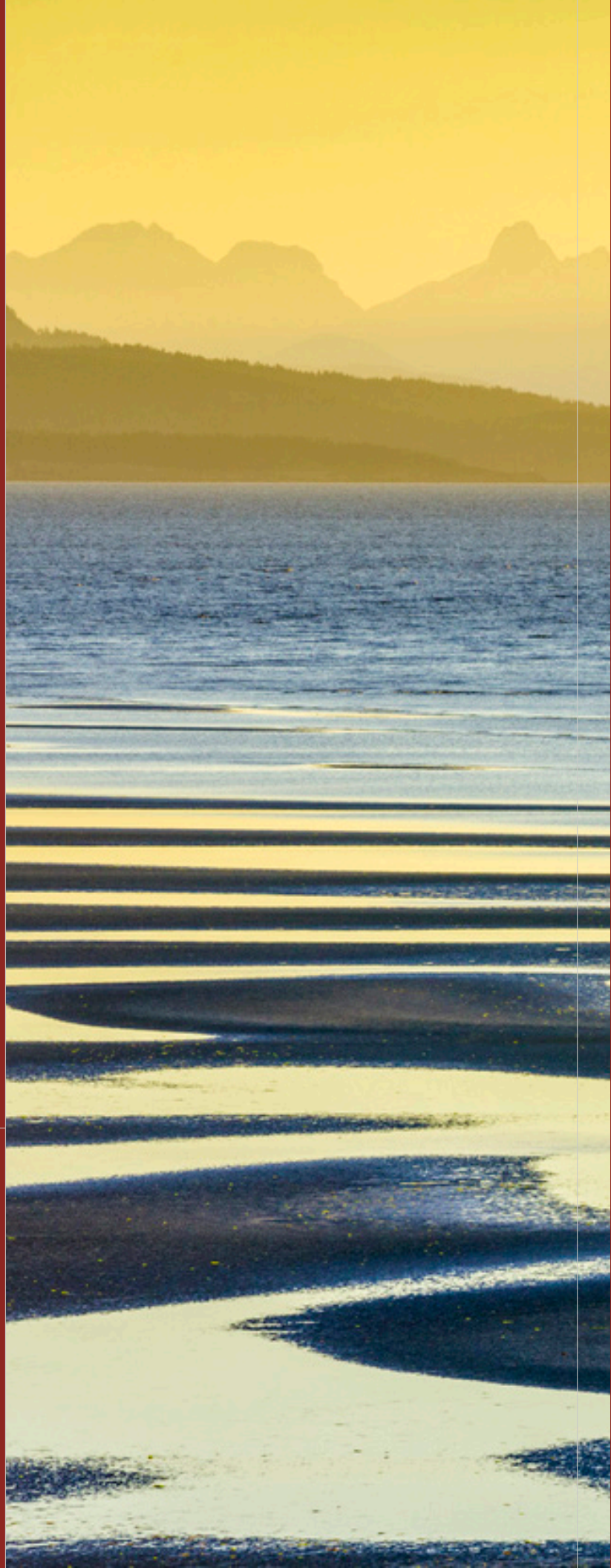
Together, the fellowship, podcast, and campus engagement ignited dialogue, shifted perspectives, and equipped emerging climate leaders with a values-based model of change, one centred on integrity, reciprocity, and collective action.

Intended Impact 2

Policy, Practice, and Technology

Evidence and knowledge are key building blocks for effective climate action. This past year, PICS invested in catalyzed research and analysis by convening experts, commissioning whitepapers, and targeting research grants. This work includes synthesizing climate risk assessment best practices and research gaps, exploring barriers to climate engagement, and examining methods for cost benefit analysis. Together, these efforts demonstrate how targeted research and knowledge mobilization can inform policy and practice.



Credit: iStock

From research to resilience: Enhancing climate risk assessments

Climate change risk assessments are widely used to understand threats and prioritize adaptation opportunities, but practices across B.C. vary in quality and effectiveness. Over the past year, PICS has led work to strengthen these practices through a collaborative initiative that convened more than 200 experts and knowledge holders across four workshops and 20 interviews.

The resulting report, Bridging climate research and risk assessments: A research and knowledge mobilization agenda, identifies common pitfalls that can lead to incomplete or ineffective assessments. This work is informing ongoing provincial risk assessment processes and regulations. It has guided the creation of PICS' wildfire and extreme heat primers that support local governments in applying comprehensive climate research to their planning and preparedness efforts.

By highlighting best practices and gaps, this work helps guide organizations—both public and private—to adopt more robust, evidence-based approaches.

As the province's next round of climate risk assessments move forward, PICS' guidance aims to increase the ambition, capability, and accountability of risk assessments in B.C., ensuring communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure are better prepared for a changing climate.

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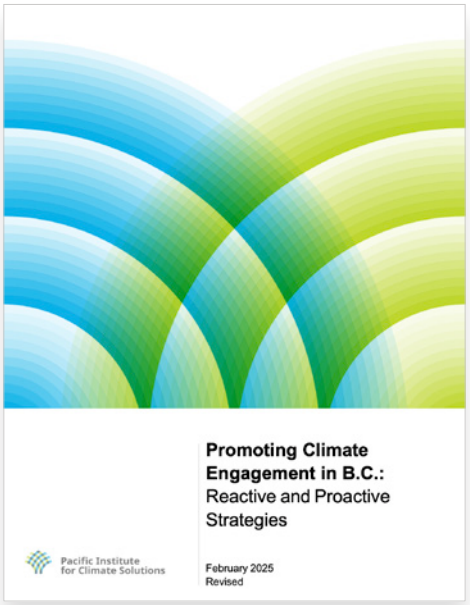
A-B. *The Integrated Research into Risk and Resilience Assessments Wildfire Hazards Workshop on Syilx territory (Kelowna). June 3, 2024*

How to get B.C.'s climate groove back

Long regarded as climate leaders, British Columbians seem to be faltering in their climate ambitions.

Despite increasing climate disasters, climate change ranks as a voting priority for only four per cent of British Columbians, behind housing, health care, and economic concerns. Our 2025 report, Promoting Climate Engagement in B.C.: Reactive and Proactive Strategies, and subsequent peer-reviewed paper, identifies the key causes of climate disengagement in B.C. and suggests reactive and proactive strategies to address the situation.

The report identifies opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders to align climate policies with the values and priorities of British Columbians. By focusing on strategies such as improving communication, engaging the public through climate assemblies, and holding opposing actors accountable, this report and its short Explainer directly inform how climate initiatives can be implemented and scaled in the province. These findings provide a roadmap for more effective, evidence-based approaches to fostering public and institutional engagement with climate policy.



DISCOURSES OF CLIMATE DELAY

Summary of the most relevant climate delay discourses in B.C. and Canada. Discourses are grouped into four categories according to whether they "redirect responsibility" for climate action, "push non-transformative solutions" to the climate crisis, "emphasize the downsides" of climate policy, or push the public to "surrender" to climate change.

Someone else should take actions first: **redirect responsibility**	INDIVIDUALISM	Individuals and consumers are ultimately responsible for taking actions to address climate change.
	WHATABOUTISM	Our carbon footprint is trivial compared to (*), therefore it makes no sense for us to take action, at least (*) does so.
	THE 'FREE RIDER' EXCUSE	Reducing emissions is going to weaken us. Others have no real intention of reducing theirs and will take advantage of that.
Disruptive change is not necessary: **push non-transformative solutions**	TECHNOLOGICAL OPTIMISM	We should focus our efforts on current and future technologies, which will unlock great possibilities for addressing climate change
	FOSSIL FUEL SOLUTIONISM	Fossil fuels are part of the solution. Our fuels are becoming more efficient and are the bridge towards a low-carbon future.
	ALL TALK, LITTLE ACTION	We are world leaders in addressing climate change. We have approved an ambitious target and declared a climate emergency.
	NO STICKS, JUST CARROTS	Society will only respond to supportive and voluntary policies, restrictive measures will fail and should be abandoned.
Change will be disruptive: **emphasize the downsides**	APPEAL TO SOCIAL JUSTICE	Climate actions will generate large costs. Vulnerable members of our society will be burdened; hard-working people cannot enjoy their holidays.
	APPEAL TO WELLBEING	Fossil fuels are required for development. Abandoning them will condemn the global poor to hardship and their right to modern livelihoods.
	POLICY PERFECTIONSIM	We should seek only perfectly crafted solutions that are supported by all affected parties; otherwise we will waste limited opportunities for adoption.
It's not possible to mitigate climate change: **surrender**	CHANGE IS IMPOSSIBLE	Any measure to reduce emissions effectively would run against current ways of life or human nature and is thus impossible to implement in a democracy.
	DOOMISM	Any mitigation actions we take are too little, too late. Catastrophic climate change is already locked-in. We should adapt, or accept our fate.

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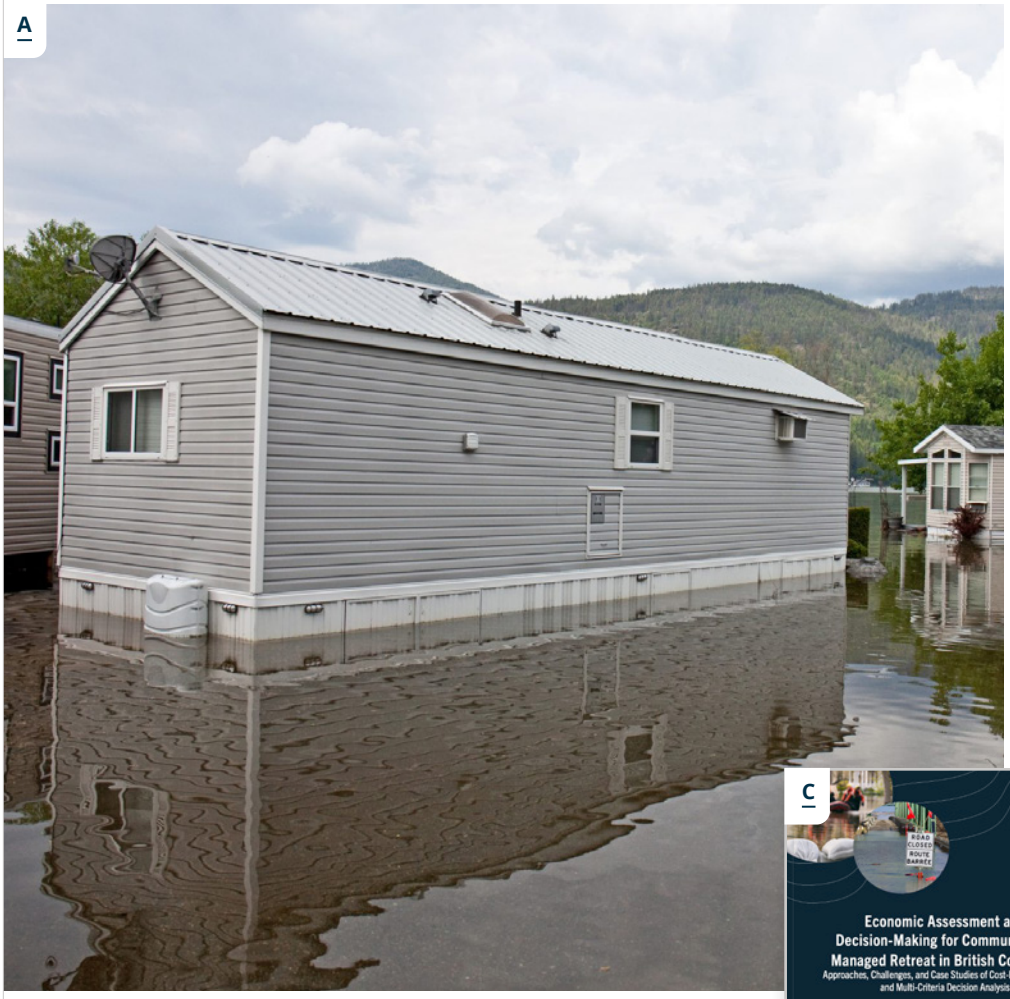

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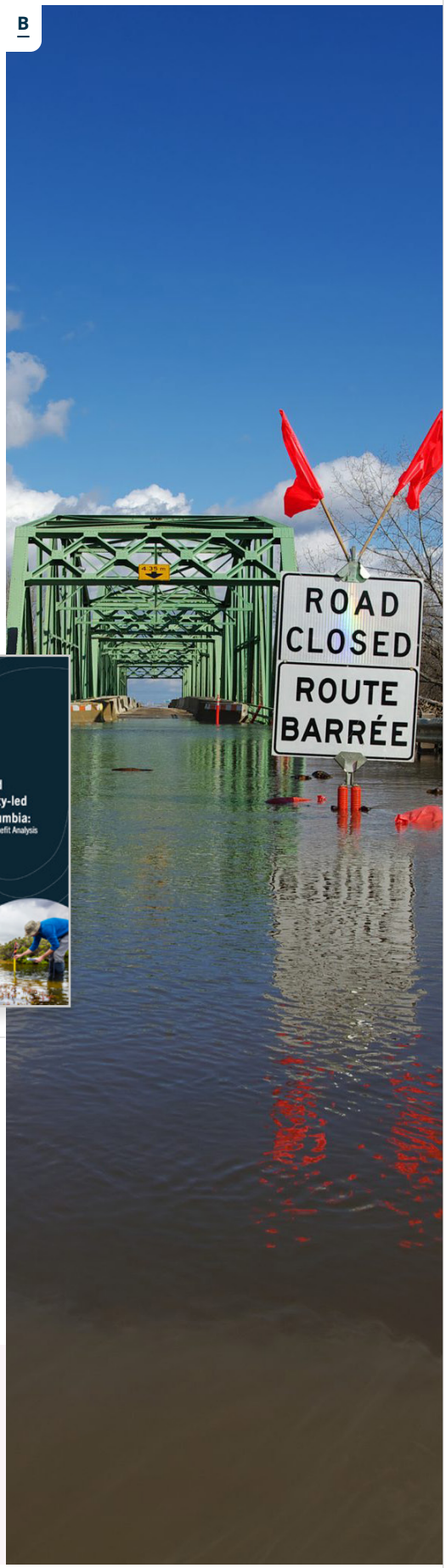

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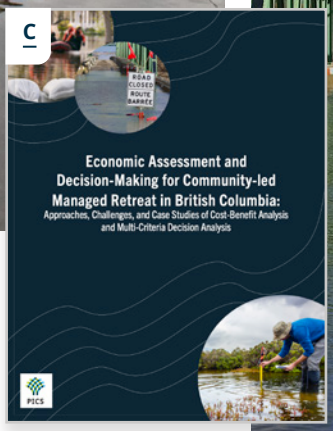


The cost of cost-benefit analysis

Flooding events are becoming increasingly severe in B.C., and communities face tough choices about adaptation, including managed retreat. PICS-funded research through the Living With Water project examined how cost-benefit analysis is applied to these decisions and highlighted its limitations in capturing social, cultural, and environmental factors.

Our 2024 report, Economic Assessment and Decision-Making for Community-Led Managed Retreat in British Columbia, advocates for integrating multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) alongside cost-benefit analysis to better reflect community values and encourage inclusive decision-making. By translating research into actionable guidance, this report helps local governments and decision-makers consider the full range of costs, benefits, and trade-offs when planning retreat strategies. This work exemplifies how research can shape policy and practice to better support resilient, climate-informed communities.

A. *A flooded trailer park in British Columbia. Credit: ImagineGolf/iStock*

B. *View of a flooded road. Credit: iStock*

C. *The cover of the "Economic Assessment and Decision-Making for Community-Led Managed Retreat in British Columbia" report.*

Innovation policy meets climate policy

Cutting emissions from heavy industries is essential for meeting climate goals—but it's a complex challenge. Sectors like oil and gas, cement, mining, pulp and paper, and aluminum are major emitters, but also emissions-intensive and trade-exposed (EITE)—meaning they face global competition that can make low-carbon transitions harder. With support from a $180,000 PICS grant, Dr. Mark Jaccard and Dr. Elicia Maine at SFU explored how these industries can move toward low- and zero-emission solutions while staying competitive in B.C. and across Canada.

The research looked at how companies can develop and adopt new zero-emission technologies, and what mix of policies can best support this transition. It examined how climate policies, such as carbon pricing, can work alongside innovation-supporting policies that help companies invest in research, development, and new technology.

Using a new energy-economy model, the project tested different policy combinations to see how they affect industrial emissions, technology adoption, and the risk of "carbon leakage" (when companies move operations outside Canada to avoid climate regulations). The goal was to find the most effective pathway to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 while keeping Canada's EITE industries competitive.

> A RANGE OF TECHNOLOGIES COULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN HELPING EITE INDUSTRIES DECARBONIZE.

The findings show that a range of new technologies—such as electrification, hydrogen, digitalization, carbon capture and storage, and direct air capture—could play a major role in helping these industries decarbonize. Carbon removal technologies become especially important once emissions get close to zero and further reductions become costly.

The research also highlights an opportunity: regions with oil and gas resources could transition to producing zero-emission electricity and hydrogen by pairing fossil fuels with carbon capture. This would help Canada maintain economic growth while building a cleaner, more competitive industrial sector for the future, especially in the context of increasingly challenging trade barriers.

A. *Decommissioned natural gas pipeline segments. iStock*

B. *Coal power plant. iStock*

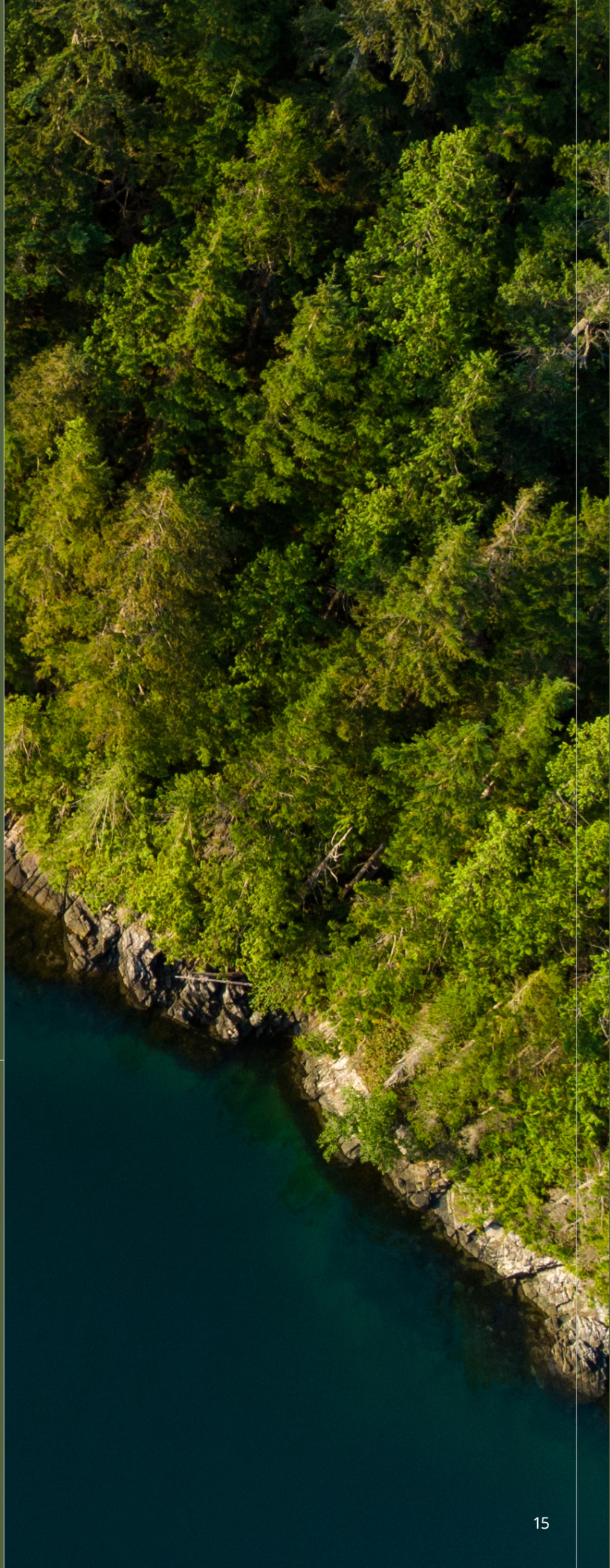
C. *Crude oil seen separated from sand for collection. Near Fort McMurray, Alberta. iStock*

D. *Industrial paper mill. iStock*

Intended Impact 3

Communities and Place

Communities and their environments are at the heart of meaningful climate action. This past year, PICS engaged diverse communities—across culture, geography, and interest—to understand their climate experiences and priorities, and to co-design solutions that have tangible impact. This work includes supporting community-led climate action events, internship projects that connect students to real-world climate solutions, and research on the unique challenges faced by mountain, rural, and remote communities. By centering local knowledge and collaboration, these efforts help ensure climate action is relevant, inclusive, and lasting.



Internship program invests in next generation of climate leaders

The PICS Climate Internship Program strengthens communities across British Columbia by connecting B.C. organizations with skilled university students. The 2024 internship cohort included 25 students, all of whom applied their knowledge to advance projects ranging from public engagement and low-carbon transportation to Indigenous-led food and ecosystem initiatives.

Backed by a generous $100,000 contribution from Coast Capital Savings, the program gave 25 organizations the capacity to engage in climate action projects that might not otherwise happen. Interns like Matthew Edwards, Juliana Janot, and Marcela Faralhi Daolio supported community-based projects—from DIY air cleaner workshops to mapping regional climate action groups and climate adaptation planning in Haida Gwaii—bringing meaningful impact to the people and places they served.

By embedding students in local initiatives, the program strengthens community networks, supports place-based solutions, and fosters knowledge exchange that benefits both current and future climate action leaders. These internships demonstrate how hands-on learning and local engagement together create lasting benefits for communities and the environments they depend on.

A. *Dr. Anne Marie Nicol and research assistants Matthew Edwards (PICS intern) and Sameen Fatima at CBC Vancouver Studios in May 2024 with a DIY air cleaner prior to Dr. Nicol's feature on CBC Radio.*

B. *Frack Free B.C. Gathering attended by PICS intern Juliana Janot and her host organization West Coast Climate Action. Credit: Juliana Janot*

C. *Jacqueline Van Horne and PICS intern Jessica Warll doing high elevation work on Shannon Lake. Credit: PJ Butler of Living Lakes Canada*

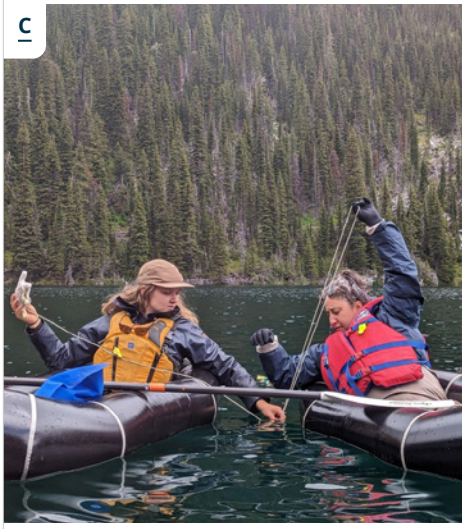
D. *PICS intern Marcela Faralhi Daolio harvesting huckleberries during her internship with the Skidegate Band Council. Credit: Marcela Faralhi Daolio*

E. *PICS intern Jamie Tseng volunteering with Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) for the "BEST Move" Event in Vancouver. Provided by: Jamie Tseng*

F. *PICS intern Juliana Janot and her supervisor Tara Shushtarian at a Frack-Free B.C. Gathering. Provided by: Juliana Janot*

G. *Oliver James (PICS intern), Nini Nytepchuk (supervisor), and Kylie Bevan sharing their work at the B.C. Active Transportation Summit. Provided by: Oliver James*

H. *PICS intern Marcela Faralhi Daolio fishing off the coast of Haida Gwaii with friend Matthew Peck. Credit: Marcela Faralhi Daolio*



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Small grants, big impact: Supporting local climate action across B.C.

A-B. *UNBC Green Week. Photos provided by event organizers.*

C. *2024 SFU Housing That Connects Us event. Photo provided by event organizers*

The PICS Climate Action Events program includes two streams: one supporting communities and First Nations, and another for our university partners. Both streams fund events that empower people to turn ideas into tangible climate solutions. In 2024/25, 27 events across B.C. received support, fostering collaboration, skill-building, and dialogue around climate challenges.

Through the community stream, PICS supported nine events across the province. Highlights included the Victoria Native Friendship Centre's Stepping into Story: Learning on the Land—a six-week Indigenous-led course connecting participants to land, water, and climate justice—and the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust's Regional Climate Action in Clayoquot Sound, which brought together planners, leaders, and community members to celebrate local climate wins, map existing projects, and identify future opportunities.

> THESE EVENTS DEMONSTRATE HOW MODEST INVESTMENTS CAN SPARK LASTING, PLACE-BASED CLIMATE ACTION.

The university stream also connected research to local priorities. At UNBC, Green Week encouraged hands-on sustainability through local food fairs and composting workshops. At UVic, the Garry Oak Ecosystem: Reconnecting People with the Land event combined place-based education with planting Indigenous food species. And at SFU, the Climate Innovation: A Community-Centred Approach event convened researchers and community partners to explore collaborative pathways for impact.

Together, these events, whether hosted by communities or universities, demonstrate how modest investments can spark lasting, place-based climate action rooted in equity, reciprocity, and collaboration.

C

A

B

Reducing landslide, rockfall, and flood risks

A. *Yellowhead Highway in Mt. Robson Provincial Park with Mount Robson in the background. Credit: iStock*

B. *Mackenzie Ostberg and Samiullah Sofizada, UNBC students, in front of the weather station installed at the future Valemount Community ski hill*

C. *PICS project team and knowledge seekers after the project's first meeting in Valemount, June 2023*

Communities in the Robson Valley face growing risks from climate change, including water scarcity, shifting snowpacks, and slope instability. With support from a $180,000 PICS grant, Dr. Joseph Shea and his team at the University of Northern British Columbia have partnered with local residents, community groups, and the Ministry of Forests to provide timely information to prepare for and adapt to these hazards. By combining real-time monitoring, hazard modelling, and community-based insights, the project equips communities to make informed decisions about safety and sustainability.

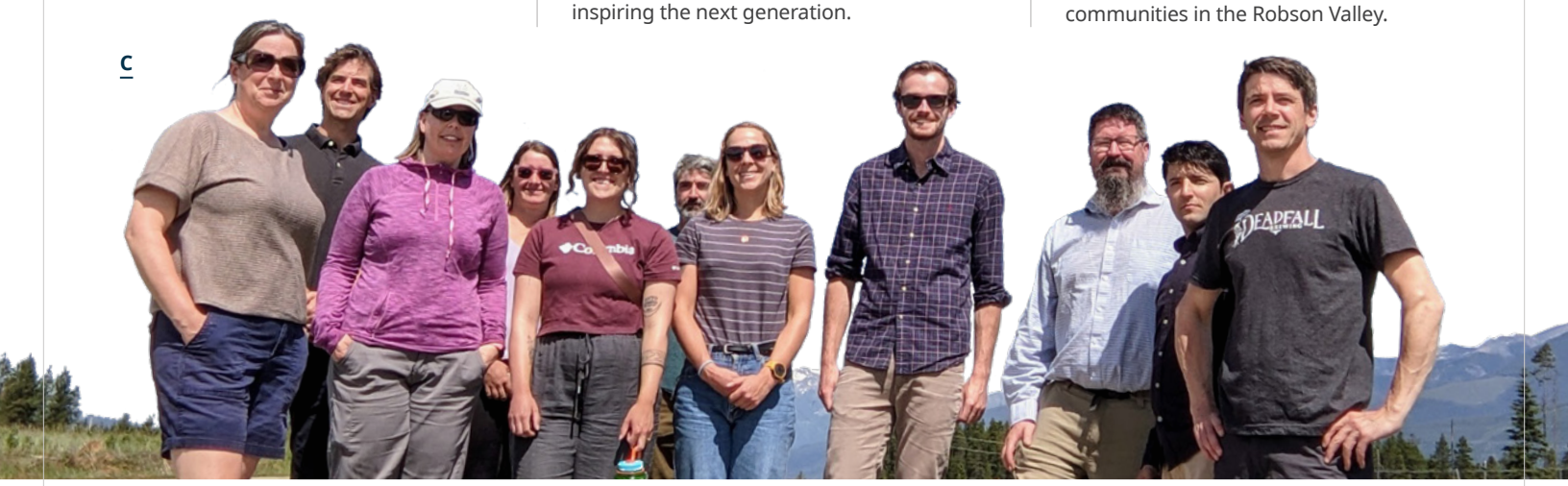
Throughout the past year, the team has engaged deeply with residents in McBride and Valemount, focusing on vulnerabilities to water shortages and slope hazards. The team held adaptation-focused workshops and community consultations to ensure local knowledge guided the project's research priorities.

PhD student Samiullah (Sami) Sofizada, supported in part by the PICS grant, designed low-cost sensors for community-based slope monitoring around Valemount. Sofizada won Best Poster Presentation at the 2025 Canadian Association of Geographers conference for his research, and plans to bring his expertise into local high schools, inspiring the next generation.

Meanwhile, McKenzie Ostberg, who completed her master's degree with the project, returned to the Robson Valley this fall to lead adaptation-focused community workshops.

PICS funding also helped leverage additional resources, including a workshop grant to study community adaptation strategies, and support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and BC Parks Living Labs program to install detailed snow observatories in the region. Together, these efforts are creating a network of tools, data, and local knowledge that strengthens the resilience of mountain communities in the Robson Valley.

C



Preparing for and adapting to sea level rise and flooding

The four-year, $1-million PICS-funded Living With Water project focuses on empowering communities to prepare for and adapt to sea level rise and flooding. In its fourth and final year—rather than focusing solely on technical solutions like infrastructure, Living With Water explored what adaptation looks like when it's grounded in community values. This kind of values-based approach reshapes both the questions that are asked and the pathways that are imagined, opening space for more just, inclusive, and locally relevant responses to sea level rise.

Over 2024/25, the project produced a range of impactful publications and resources to support decision-making and community adaptation. Key outputs include the Economic Assessment and Decision-Making for Community-Led Managed Retreat in British Columbia report, which examines the role of cost-benefit analysis in managed retreat decisions and the Flood Governance Mapping Report which summarized workshops conducted in 2023 and 2024 and highlighted the usefulness of timeline mapping for planning and responding to flooding events. The project also engaged broader audiences through the Living With Water podcast, featuring experts and researchers in coastal adaptation.

A. *Migrating birds flocking on the shoreline of Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island. Credit: iStock*

B-C. *Living with Water members collaborate and reflect at final workshop in spring 2025.*

A

Practical solutions for rural communities on the climate frontlines

Rural and remote communities are on the frontlines of climate change, facing challenges like wildfire, changing ecosystems, and energy insecurity. The four-year, $1-million PICS-funded Serving Rural and Remote Communities project is co-developing practical, place-based solutions alongside First Nations and rural communities.

In its second year, the project team has recognized that impact doesn't always unfold the way you first imagine. Originally envisioned around in-depth community case studies, the team shifted its approach to prioritize workshops, handbooks, and scalable tools that reach more communities at once. For example, the project's *Community Fire Resilience Handbook* has been shared at multiple workshops and forums, incorporating feedback from First Nations housing and climate managers across B.C. This pivot acknowledges the many demands on rural and First Nations communities' time, while still ensuring their voices guide the project's outputs.

> THE PROJECT CONTINUES TO BUILD TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS WHILE EQUIPPING COMMUNITIES WITH ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES.

Through values-based engagement, Indigenous-led workshops, and new initiatives like developing an "impact narrative," the project has continued to build trust and relationships while equipping communities with accessible resources.

B

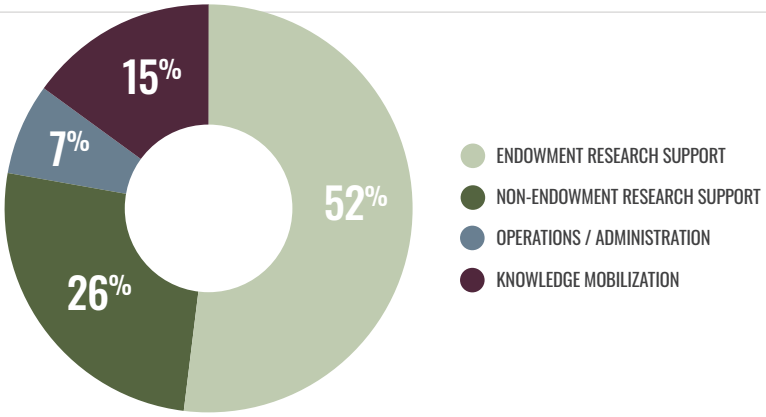
A. *Aerial panoramic view of Sicamous, a small town in the interior of B.C. iStock*

B. *Bearskin Bay, Haida Gwaii. iStock*

Looking ahead, the team will launch a website, release a podcast series on solar and battery backup systems, and continue to share findings and resources through policy briefs, academic publications, conferences, and workshops—ensuring that the tools created are not just about research, but about resilience where people live.

Stewardship towards impact

2025 EXPENDITURES	
ENDOWMENT RESEARCH SUPPORT	$ 2,670,785.00
NON-ENDOWMENT RESEARCH SUPPORT	$ 1,064,856.00
OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION	$ 400,135.00
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION	$ 1,037,738.00
TOTAL	$ 5,173,514.00



Amplifying impact

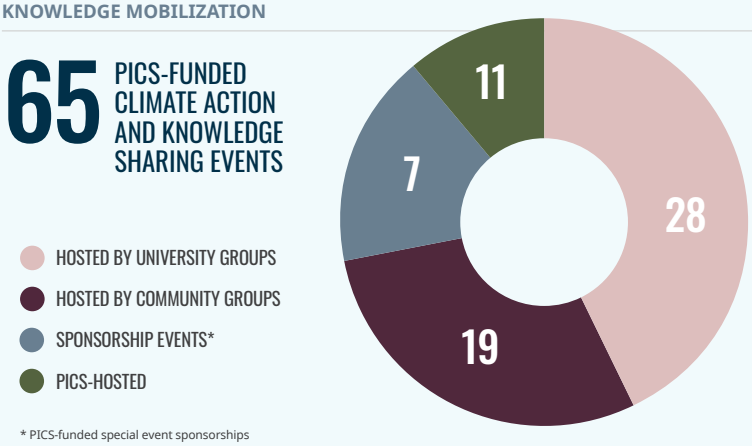
PROJECT NUMBERS

50 PICS-SUPPORTED RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

* Academic journal articles and conference papers produced through PICS-funded or co-funded research
† Reports and Explainers produced through PICS funded research

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

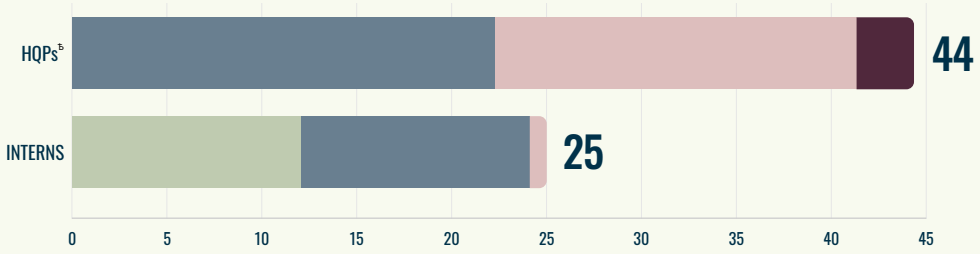
65 PICS-FUNDED CLIMATE ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENTS



* PICS-funded special event sponsorships

STUDENTS

69 PICS-FUNDED STUDENTS



[5] Student research opportunities wholly or partially funded with PICS research grants

MEDIA

571 NEWS MEDIA MENTIONS

748M POTENTIAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED

WEBSITE

341% INCREASE IN WEBSITE CLICKS

59% INCREASE IN WEBSITE VISITORS

VIDEO CONTENT

45,800 YOUTUBE VIEWS

1,720 HOURS OF CONTENT WATCHED

Who we are

Our work is made possible by a talented team of staff and an extensive network of partners across B.C.

DANIEL ARBOUR
Partnerships & Grants Specialist

CHRISTY ASCIONE
Communications Specialist

STEPHANIE CAIRNS
Senior Director, Strategy & Foresight

DYLAN CLARK
Director of Research Mobilization

CORY DOUGLAS
Finance Assistant

ALYSSA HILL
Project Analyst

KATHLEEN LAIRD
Assistant to the Executive Director

CINDY MACDOUGALL
Communications Manager

SHAUNA MACKINNON
Engagement & Knowledge Mobilization Specialist

EMILY MACNAIR
Director of Programs & Partnerships

DR. IAN MAURO
Executive Director

MATT MILES
Climate Change Video Storyteller

DR. SARA NELSON
Climate Foresight Lead

JEREMY RIISHEDE
Administrative Manager

JANNA WALE
Indigenous Research & Partnerships Lead

Network

PICS brings together the research strengths and capacity of our university network to advance transformative climate solutions.

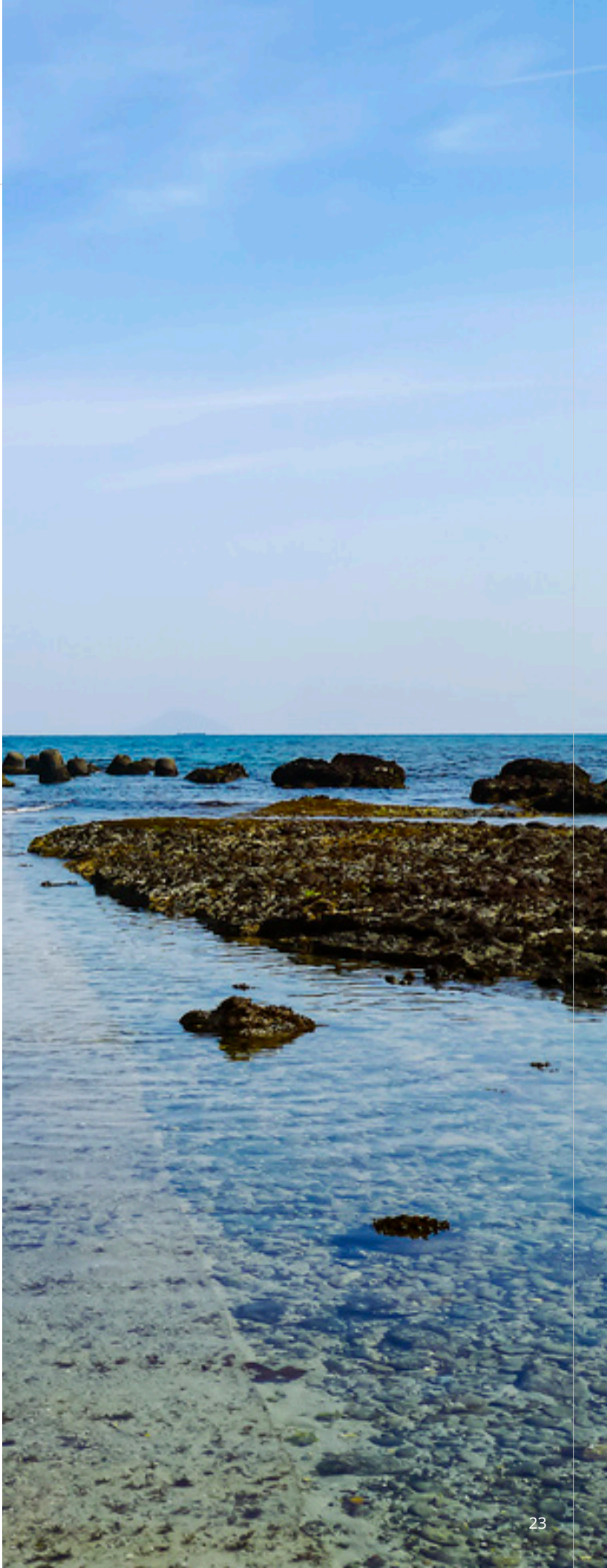
Our network is our unique strength and includes the University of Victoria (UVic), the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), and the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Governance

PICS is hosted and led by the University of Victoria and is overseen by an Executive Committee, which is primarily responsible for strategic direction and financial oversight.

The Executive Committee comprises the following members:

- Vice-Presidents of Research and Innovation from the
  - University of Northern British Columbia
  - Simon Fraser University
  - University of British Columbia
  - University of Victoria (chair);
- The University of Victoria Vice-President Indigenous;
- The University of Victoria Dean of Social Sciences;
- A representative from the Government of British Columbia, Climate Action Secretariat;
- A representative from the Government of Canada, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; and
- The PICS Executive Director.



Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions

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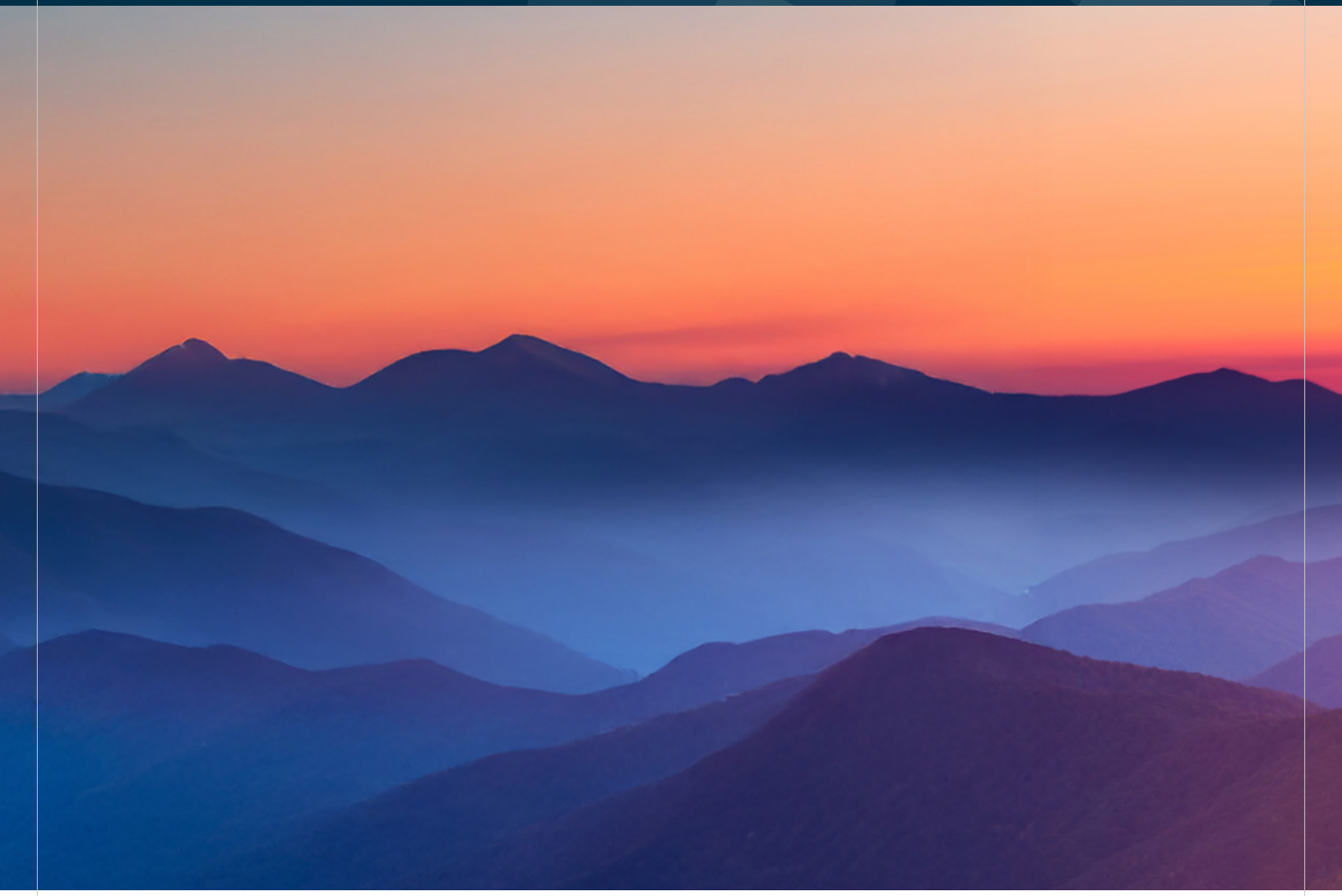
The PICS main office is located at the University of Victoria campus. We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory UVic stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



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