

\$62-Million for Ocean Research ^[1]

Submitted by Rory Lattimer Fri, 2003-10-17 00:00

The Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment, Premier Gordon Campbell, and Dr. David Strangway, President and CEO of the [Canada Foundation for Innovation](#) ^[2] (CFI), today announced \$62.4 million in funding for the NEPTUNE Canada Project.

The CFI-B.C. funding investment will help the University of Victoria (UVic) develop the world's largest cable-linked seafloor observatory off North America's west coast.

Information gained through the North-East Pacific Time-series Undersea Networked Experiments, or the NEPTUNE Project, will lead to earlier warning of earthquakes and tsunamis, more accurate estimates of commercial fish stocks and improved models for climate prediction. NEPTUNE is a joint U.S.-Canada venture led by UVic in Canada and the University of Washington in the U.S.

"NEPTUNE is an opportunity for Canadian universities, led by the University of Victoria, to develop marine science and technology that will help to fill the gaps in our scientific knowledge of the waters off North America's west coast," said Minister Anderson. "This project has been many years in development. I am pleased today to see it finally come to fruition."

"By investing in this project, we are advancing B.C.'s position as a world leader in science and technology," Premier Campbell said. "Since June 2001, B.C. has committed over \$900 million to enhance post-secondary research and access. This leading-edge project will help further the economic development of B.C.'s offshore resources and strengthen the sustainability of our fisheries and ocean environment."

"NEPTUNE's goals are very ambitious and very important scientifically," Dr. Strangway said. "The CFI's investment in NEPTUNE's infrastructure has the potential to transform areas of geological and marine science by radically improving the nature, quality, and quantity of data that can be made available to scientists."

Traditional methods of ocean exploration use ships to study the oceans over short periods of time, offering glimpses of what is going on beneath the waves. The NEPTUNE Project will provide information and images from the ocean depths 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the next 30 years or more. The observatory will consist of an underwater network covering the entire Juan de Fuca tectonic plate, an area of 200,000 square kilometres off the

earthquake-prone coasts of B.C., Washington, and Oregon. Thirty undersea laboratories will be connected by 3,000 kilometres of powered fibre-optic cable. Shore-based researchers around the world will use the Internet to control their remote deep-sea experiments using an array of scientific instruments.

"I am very grateful for the leadership shown by both the CFI and the Government of B.C. in making NEPTUNE a reality," said UVic President Dr. David Turpin. "UVic's participation in NEPTUNE will help to secure Canada's place in the front ranks of ocean science."

Included in today's announcement is a contribution of \$31.9 million from the CFI, and a \$30.5-million contribution from the province of [British Columbia's Knowledge Development Fund](#) [3].

The project will create jobs in information technology, engineering and instrument development. Indirect benefits are expected in the subsea, robotics, communications, education and tourism sectors. Once the network is operational, the public will be able to log on to NEPTUNE via the Internet to learn about a wide range of ocean processes. It is expected to begin operation sometime in 2007.

UVic is recognized internationally for its excellence in earth, ocean, and atmospheric systems research and education. UVic earth sciences professor Dr. Chris Barnes directs the Canadian part of NEPTUNE.

Along with UVic and the University of Washington, the international partnership involves three other major institutions: [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution](#) [4]; NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology; and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

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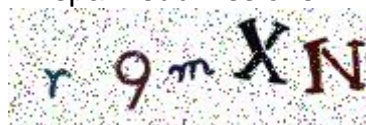
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