

What's New?

Keep up to date with new initiatives and activities that are fostering research and practice pertinent to *EcoHealth* readers. In this issue, you can find out about:

- Integrating Environment and Human Health Conference
- Asia-Pacific EcoHealth Conference
- COHAB 2007
- Summit on Evolutionary Change & Human Alteration of the Environment
- 2nd International Congress of Paris Appeal, Environment and Sustainable Health: An International Assessment
- Healing across Cultures
- Towards a New Public Health

Regular updates are also available at the *EcoHealth* website: <http://www.ecohealth.net>

INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH CONFERENCE

The National Council for Science and the Environment held their 7th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment on February 1–2, 2007 in Washington, DC, USA, with the purpose of demonstrating the interconnectedness of environmental quality and human health. The conference's theme of "Integrating Environment and Human Health" brought plenary speakers from public health, wildlife health, environmental health sciences, and governmental health agencies. Larry Brilliant, executive director of Google.org, the umbrella organization stewarding Google's philanthropic efforts, gave the 7th Annual John H. Chafee Memorial Lecture on Science and the Environment. Plenary roundtable discussions and

symposia centered on specific disease issues and case studies such as cholera and avian influenza, as well as integrative education, threats and drivers of unhealthy changes, how to foster multidisciplinary research, and how to turn evidence into action. Strategies developed will catalyze collaborations and initiatives following the conference, and will be publicized and presented to Congress, federal, state, and local governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, educational and academic institutions, and the general public.

For more information on the conference, please see: <http://www.ncseonline.org/2007conference/cms.cfm?id=1242>

ASIA-PACIFIC ECOHEALTH CONFERENCE

The Asia-Pacific EcoHealth Conference will take place November 30–December 3, 2007 in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia at Deakin University. The theme of "Ecology and Health: Sustaining People and Places in a Changing World" for this regional conference will build upon the success of the Wisconsin meeting and further explore issues surrounding the interdependent relationships of humans and their environments. Confirmed speakers include Drs. Colin Butler and Jules Pretty; other invitees include prominent indigenous speakers, parliamentarians, and representatives of the International Association for Ecology and Health (EcoHealth), in addition to other multidisciplinary speakers and facilitators from the Asia-Pacific region. Subthemes to be addressed in the workshops and symposia are culture, environments, and health; understanding and measuring ecosystem health; ecological literacies; urban environments and social well-being; and acting to promote ecosystem and human health.

For more information, please see the website at: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/events/ecohealth2007/> or contact the event organizer at: <http://www.marieke.thomson@deakin.edu.au>

COHAB 2008

Building on the success of the First International Conference on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB), held in Galway, Ireland in 2005, a formal COHAB Initiative was established to respond to the gaps in awareness and existing policies on issues linking biodiversity loss with health and international development. This Initiative “aims to establish an international, inter-disciplinary collaborative programme of work, to support existing activities on international development, biodiversity conservation and population health, and in particular to support the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

Conferences are planned to be held every 2–3 years, with the next occurring February 2008 in Galway, Ireland (dates to be confirmed); interim regional events are expected as well. Some of the goals of the 2008 conference include: highlighting the importance of holistic approaches to the implementation of the United Nations MDGs; linking biodiversity conservation with health and development; exploring the use of strategic assessment to identify and monitor health impacts associated with ecosystem disturbance; creating greater awareness of the issues among policy-makers, professionals, and the general public; and encouraging further international and cross-sectoral cooperation and networking on the issues.

The 2008 conference will open and close with plenary sessions, with working groups and other events during the intervening days. Working groups topics currently include “Disaster relief and response: utilizing ecosystem services in crisis management and support programmes”; “Strategic assessment: integrating health and environment indicators for the MDGs”; “Food resources, agriculture and trade: meeting food security and poverty challenges with biodiversity”; and “Emerging diseases: integrating biodiversity conservation and management into prevention programmes,” among others. More working groups are in development.

For more information on the COHAB Initiative and the conference, visit: <http://www.cohabnet.org>

SUMMIT ON EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE & HUMAN ALTERATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) hosted an international summit on Evolutionary Change in Human-altered Environments on February 8–10, 2007. This meeting aimed to bring the discussion beyond academic boundaries to frame real-world solutions to pressing problems. Blackwell Publishing has agreed to publish the proceedings of the summit as a special issue of the journal *Molecular Ecology*.

The sessions and working groups were divided into three topics: captive breeding and exploitation; habitat degradation and environmental and climate change; and invasive species and pathogens. Notable ecohealth-related talks given included the genetic response to climate change, the evolutionary consequences of anthropogenic changes in several fish species, modern poultry practices and the evolution of pathogen virulence, and interactions of invasive vectors, introduced disease, and endangered native avifauna.

More information on the meeting can be found at: <http://www.ioe.ucla.edu/CTR/iosymposium.html>

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE PARIS APPEAL, “ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE HEALTH: AN INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT”

Organized by the Association for Research and Treatments Against Cancer (ARTAC), in partnership with the Health and Environment Alliance and the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, held the Second International Congress of the Paris Appeal, “Environment and Sustainable Health: An International Assessment” on November 9, 2006. The Paris Appeal declares that the development of numerous current diseases is a result of the deterioration of the environment; chemical pollution represents a serious threat to children and to man’s survival; and as our own health, that of our children, and of future generations, is under threat, the human race itself is in serious danger. It aims to serve as a call to decision-makers, especially the United Nations Organization, to ban all products which are recognized as dangerous for human beings by scientific authorities; apply the precautionary principle to chemicals which constitute a danger for health; adopt programs with requirements and deadlines to achieve the elimination/

regulation of the polluting substances' emissions to strengthen the EU 2001 REACH.

The conference had several goals: It aimed to present European authorities with a memorandum promoting sustainable health and outlining concrete recommendations and measures established by international independent scientific experts; it also provided a discussion forum on policy solutions needed to make progress in reducing these health effects. The meeting strategically took place the week before the EU Chemicals policy vote in the European Parliament.

Presentations were given on a several ecohealth-related topics, including environmental health in Luxembourg; cancer as an environmental disease; and the concept of sustainable health. The program can be downloaded at: <http://www.artac.info/static/telechargement/Programme-Complet091106.pdf>

HEALING ACROSS CULTURES

The Center for Healing Across Cultures at Cleveland State University was recently launched following a forum article that appeared in the June 2006 issue of *EcoHealth* (Pesek et al., "Healing Across Cultures: Learning from Traditions"), which proposed further collaboration between modern medicine and traditional healing. The formation of the Center was based on the authors' observation that varied traditional healing cultures believe that the health and wellness of an individual is reliant on the health of the mind, body, and spirit in the context of healthful environmental surroundings, and that the importance of this environmental/ecosystem component to health is being undermined by present day practices. The purposes of the Center are to develop different approaches to collect information about the health and wellness belief systems/techniques of different cultures; to record and disseminate information on healing traditions for the benefit of contemporary and future generations; and to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary investigative and learning collaborations.

The Center coordinates a number of research projects and programming initiatives, including conferences which bring scholars, physicians, health practitioners, and students together with traditional healers in presentation, roundtable, and healing circle format to learn from one

another and to develop action plans for positive change and global health and wellness. The International Conference on *Healing Across Cultures: Learning from Traditions* conference will be held in Kerela, India, July 6–8, 2007. There is also an optional 4-day field trip with traditional healers of the region.

For more information and abstract submission, please visit the events section of their website at: <http://www.csuohio.edu/bahi/chac> or contact Todd Pesek, MD, Director, at: t.pesek@csuohio.edu or Dr. Murali Nair, Co-Director, at: m.nair@csuohio.edu

TOWARDS A NEW PUBLIC HEALTH—AN ECOLOGICAL VIEW

The Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC) held its annual conference in Vancouver, BC, Canada, on November 27–29, 2006 with the theme "Towards a New Public Health: An Ecological View." The conference opened with a keynote address by David Suzuki on "The Relationship between the Environment and Health"; the address is available on the PHABC website. Suzuki noted that health and environment are inseparable and that humans are inextricably connected to the environment though the air that we breathe and the earth that we use to grow our food.

Other keynote speakers at the conference included Trevor Hancock, a public health physician and health promotion consultant, who provided an overview of the concept of ecology and links to public health; David Marshall, the Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Council, spoke about the work that they have been doing to advance sustainability; Margo Greenwood, a Cree woman and Academic Leader of the Canadian Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, spoke about indigenous people's views of health and environment; and Ray Copes, Scientific Director of the Canadian Collaborating Centre on Environmental Health, spoke about the need for better ongoing data on the environment and health. In addition, there were numerous workshops, oral presentations, and posters on the conference theme. Presentations from the conference are available though the PHABC website: <http://www.phabc.org>