



Community Energy Forum and CECC Annual General Meeting

July 31-August 2, 2025
Victoria, British Columbia

Supported By:

Canada 



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Day 1: Community Energy Co-operatives Canada AGM & Keynote

Location: Royal Roads University

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Annual General Meeting (CECC members only)

The zoom link for the AGM will be sent separately for those attending virtually.

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Keynote and Opening Social

Join us for a keynote talk by Dr. Anna Berka:

Learning to Re-Anchor: Insights from Australia on Supporting Community Shared Ownership in the Renewable Energy Sector

Anna is Lead Research at Community Power Agency, and Senior Lecturer at Massey University, with an affiliation at Griffith University's School of Environment and Science. She has worked as a practitioner, researcher and consultant in community energy and inclusive innovation over twelve years across a variety of countries, including the UK, India, New Zealand and Australia. She brings experience in impact evaluation and policy analysis and has an in-depth understanding of barriers, opportunities, delivery models and enabling contexts for shared ownership and community energy. Anna charges CPA's mission to build an evidence base for a transition to a post-carbon economy that puts environmental sustainability, civic enterprise, and local resilience centre stage.

This engaging session will be followed by an opportunity to network with fellow attendees. Light appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

Please note: The keynote will not be streamed live for virtual participants. However, a recording will be made available after the event.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Day 2: Voices from the Frontlines of Community Energy

Location: Royal Roads University

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Morning Refreshments Enjoy a light breakfast of pastries, fruit, and coffee.
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Opening Remarks Notes from CECC board president Martin Boucher.
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Talk with Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
10:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Refreshment Break
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	What We're Up Against: Challenges Facing REC Leaders A conversation with renewable energy co-op leaders about today's challenges and the path forward. <i>Speakers: Rob Baxter, Jodi Conuel, Rod Johnson, Annette Dautel</i>
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM	Lunch Break
1:15 PM - 3:00 PM	Community Energy Around the World: Policies, Practices, and Pathways Presentation on innovative initiatives from RE co-ops in the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and Denmark. <i>Speakers: Dr. Julie MacArthur, Dan Curwin, Khaoula Bengenzi and Niels Vilstrup</i>
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Refreshment Break
3:15 PM - 4:30 PM	On the Ground: Indigenous Experiences in Community Energy <i>Speakers: Leighton Gall, Garrett Russ</i>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Day 3: Charting the Pathway for Community Energy

Location: Royal Roads University

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| 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM | Morning Refreshments
Enjoy a light breakfast of pastries, fruit, and coffee. |
| 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM | Where We Stand: The Canadian Community Energy Landscape
A snapshot of RECs across Canada and a look at relevant policies and opportunities.
<i>Speakers: Dr. Martin Boucher, Karl Janelle, Josie Ward, Dr. Chad Walker, Dr. Derya Tarhan</i> |
| 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM | Refreshment Break |
| 10:45 AM - 12:30 PM | Accelerating Community Energy Transformation
Presentations from the University of Victoria's ACET project team and students.
<i>Speakers: Megan Egler, Pavel Soriano Hernandez, Zachary Gould</i> |
| 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM | Closing Remarks |

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Implementation Readiness stream
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SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Rob Baxter

Rob Baxter is a co-founder of Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-operative where he has provided consulting and project management services for renewable energy systems. He has been in the solar energy industry since 2004, and helped initiate and complete the first grid-tie photovoltaic installation in the city of Vancouver.

In 2014 he founded SolShare Energy, a cooperatively owned community energy developer which currently operates three solar energy plants in BC.

In the past he has been an active member of BC Sustainable Energy Association, a board member of Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, and taught a course on solar energy for Langara College Continuing Studies. Rob has an MBA from the University of Western Ontario.

Khaoula Bengezi

Khaoula Bengezi is a PhD candidate at the Department of Politics and a graduate associate at the Centre for Feminist Research at York University. Currently Khaoula is researching global responses to climate change in the Sahara Desert through renewable energy transitions vis-à-vis clean energy technologies. She is particularly interested in examining how environmental expertise are constructed, legitimized and articulated in sustainable development projects in North Africa through a multi-scalar case study approach. Her work centres the experiences of local small-scale farmers, particularly women and how the construction of climate mitigation technologies have affected their ability to survive in the desert. Khaoula's approaches are informed by an array of intersecting interdisciplinary approaches including global environmental governance, critical science and technology scholarship and decolonial political ecology. Moreover, for the past three years she has been the program coordinator for Righting Relations Hamilton, a movement of adult educators and community organizers who work towards decolonization and social change on Turtle Island.

Anna Berka, PhD

Anna is Lead Research at Community Power Agency, and Senior Lecturer at Massey University, with an affiliation at Griffith University's School of Environment and Science. She has worked as a practitioner, researcher and consultant in community energy and inclusive innovation over twelve years across a variety of countries, including the UK, India, New Zealand and Australia. She brings experience in impact evaluation and policy analysis and has an in-depth understanding of barriers, opportunities, delivery models and enabling contexts for shared ownership and community energy. Anna charges CPA's mission to build an evidence base for a transition to a post-carbon economy that puts environmental sustainability, civic enterprise, and local resilience centre stage.

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Martin Boucher, PhD

Dr. Martin Boucher is the Research Chair in Sustainability and leads the Community Energy Innovation Centre (CEIC) at NorQuest College. He is an applied researcher and national leader in community energy and sustainability, known for building cross-sector partnerships that turn research into real-world impact. Martin's work focuses on energy diversification, community wealth building, and local economic development, with projects spanning Canada, the United Kingdom, and Europe. He has secured over \$2 million in research funding to support initiatives in energy poverty, workforce development, cooperative innovation, and community energy policy design. His PhD—conducted across Canada, the U.S., and Sweden—explored decentralized socio-technical energy transitions, examining how communities shape more democratic and sustainable energy systems. Martin is the founding president of Community Energy Cooperative Canada (CECC), a national organization advancing community-led energy initiatives. He also serves on municipal and provincial advisory committees focused on climate resilience, energy policy, and just transitions. Prior to NorQuest, he was a faculty member at the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan, where he led the development of the online Master of Public Administration (MPA) program and helped grow it into one of the school's flagship offerings.

Jodi Conuel

Jodi Conuel is a sustainability leader and project manager with expertise in renewable energy, climate action, and community engagement. As the former Shift Climate Transitions Program Coordinator at the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, she led the development and impact measurement of key climate initiatives, including a community energy feasibility study that catalyzed the creation of the Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative (BVGEC), where she continues to serve as a founding board member. Jodi recently joined the staff at CECC as Manager and RECEI Project Lead. She brings firsthand experience in building a renewable energy cooperative from the ground up and is now focused on supporting the growth and success of RECs across the country.

Dan Curwin

Daniel Curwin is a Ph.D. student at Concordia focusing on cross-sector partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and governance in community energy projects. As a strategic leader with expertise in business development, regulatory affairs, and market strategy in the energy and environmental sectors, he has held senior roles at an energy storage company, leading market development and collaborations with utilities, governments, and municipalities on projects across Atlantic Canada, New England, and New York. Dan has consulted for energy storage, modeling, tidal energy ventures, and climate strategy initiatives for provincial governments and industry associations. He also served as a policy analyst with the New Brunswick Dept. of Environment and Local Government. He holds an M.A in Environmental Practice from Royal Roads University and a Certificate in Public Sector Management from the University of Victoria.

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Annette Dautel

Annette has successfully managed projects and consulted companies of all sizes for over 10 years in Germany and various other countries. Her excellent skills in strategic planning, project setup, and project management are needed whenever vision and strategy is converted into operational business.

She ensures the involvement of all stakeholders and that every detail of a project is taken care of. Since 2013, Annette has focused on projects advancing renewable energies, specifically solar power. For four years she has been part of a small leadership team that created the solar business of one of Europe's largest utilities, growing it from zero to a market share of 20% and selling 3,000 solar installations every year.

Annette's goal is to use her knowledge and experience in her new home Edmonton, and help the Albertan energy market shift towards a sustainable future built upon renewable energy sources. Annette holds a Master's degree in Business and Economics from one of the top Universities in Germany, WWU in Münster. She has also certified as a NetPromoter Associate along with her many projects using NetPromoterScore as a measurement for customer centricity and company success.

Megan Egler, PhD

Dr. Megan Egler is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Victoria School of Public Administration, working with the Accelerating Community Energy Transformations (ACET) Initiative. Her current research explores public perceptions of energy transitions within rural and medium-sized communities in Western Canada and the effective and inclusive design of policies for advancing both climate and justice goals.

Leighton Gall

Leighton Gall is the Indigenous Energy Lead for the Ultradeep Geothermal program. He is a Métis energy expert specializing in geothermal systems and directional drilling. Leighton integrates Indigenous knowledge with a global business perspective, drawing on extensive international work experience. He holds a Master of Global Management from Royal Roads University.

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Zachary Gould

In an effort to make modern municipalities run more like natural ecosystems, Zachary has committed his career to integrating renewable energy, agriculture, and sustainable technologies more seamlessly into the built environment. In light of increasingly volatile climate patterns and rapid population growth, he strives to minimize the natural resource consumption it will take to maintain comfortable living environments in which both people and plants can collaboratively thrive. He sees buildings as beautiful biological case studies and is eager to continue leveraging lessons from billions of years of evolution to help our species live more lightly on this earth.

Karl Janelle

Karl Janelle is a PhD candidate and lecturer at HEC Montréal, where he studies the transformative role of community initiatives in the energy sector. An advocate of engaged research and civic life, he chairs the Montreal Climate Coalition, an association that promotes citizen participation in the challenges of the socio-ecological transition. He also sits on the board of Community Energy Co-operatives Canada, on the executive committee of the youth wing of Chantier de l'économie sociale, and on the executive committee and housing working group of Transition en Commun, an alliance between civil society organizations, researchers, the City of Montreal and other institutions for the socio-ecological transition in Montreal neighborhoods.

Rod Johnson

Rod has an M.Sc. in biogeography and B.Sc. (ADV.) in biochemistry, both from the University of Saskatchewan where he taught for over 40 years in the fields of physical geography and environmental studies. Currently, co-facilitates the Geography Work Experience Cooperative in the Geography and Planning department (U of S).

He is also a principal in an environmental consulting partnership and a personal participant in generating solar power. A long-time member of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES), and veteran board member of the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council (SWRC). Rod has served on the SES Solar Co-op's board since its inception, including in the role of president since 2020. Rod is currently secretary / treasurer of Community Energy Co-operative Canada (CECC).

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Julie MacArthur, PhD

Dr Julie MacArthur is an Associate Professor and the Canada Research Chair in Reimagining Capitalism at Royal Roads University and Resident Fellow in Energy Systems Transformation at the Cascade Institute. Her SSHRC and Royal Society (New Zealand) funded research investigates the political economy of low carbon transitions, with a particular focus on how grassroots and community-led initiatives can scale up to make radical democratic and transformative impacts to both adaptation and mitigation. She has published widely on community energy initiatives in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, on participatory policy design, Green New Deal politics, and the gendered employment trends across energy sub-sectors. She is the author of *Empowering Electricity: Co-operatives, Sustainability and Power Sector Reform in Canada* (UBC 2016), co-editor of *Environmental Politics and Policy in Aotearoa New Zealand* (University of Auckland 2022).

Elizabeth May

Elizabeth May served as Leader of the Green Party of Canada from 2006 – 2019 and returned as leader in November 2022. She is the Green Party of Canada's first elected Member of Parliament representing Saanich-Gulf Islands in 2011. She continues as the Member of Parliament.

In 2005, Elizabeth May was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of her decades of leadership in the Canadian environmental movement. She graduated from Dalhousie Law School and was admitted to the Bar in both Nova Scotia and Ontario. She practiced law in Ottawa with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre prior to becoming Senior Policy Advisor to the federal minister of the Environment (1986- 1988). For seventeen years Elizabeth served as Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada. A proud mother and grandmother, she lives in Sidney, British Columbia, with her husband John Kidder.

Elizabeth is the author of nine books, including her most recent revised book, *Climate Change for Dummies*.

Garrett Russ

Garrett Russ is the Climate Action Coordinator for the Skidegate Band Council, where he leads community-based energy initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions across Haida Gwaii. Garrett began his journey with SBC in 2022 as an Energy Efficiency Worker and quickly became an integral part of the Council's green energy strategy, stepping into his current role in 2024.

In his position, Garrett oversees the planning and logistics of a range of sustainability projects—from heat pump installations and home air sealing to solar array maintenance and energy assessments along with various other green energy projects. His hands-on approach and technical knowledge ensure that each project is both practical and impactful.

Grounded in a deep connection to Haida Gwaii and its people, Garrett is passionate about developing renewable energy systems that are resilient, locally driven, and reflective of community values. Outside of work, he enjoys fishing, hunting, and spending time on the land and ocean. Garrett looks forward to continuing conversations around building a sustainable, renewable energy future rooted in Indigenous leadership and community empowerment.

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Pavel Soriano Hernandez

Pavel is a PhD Candidate in Geography examining the financial and justice implications of community-led renewable energy projects in Canada. My research integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the role of financial instruments in shaping sustainable energy transitions, with a focus on equity, governance, and place-based dynamics.

Derya Tarhan, PhD

Derya Tarhan's research and teaching focuses on the theory, practice, and intersections of social and solidarity economy (SSE), community and capacity development, and just and participatory socio-environmental change. In his research, Derya investigates the impact, limitations, and potential of SSE organizations, including but not limited to co-operatives, in enacting socio-environmental change, with a keen eye on popular democratic participation and social justice. Weaved through his research program are public policy design and implementation processes, social movements and community-based activism, and adult education and learning. Dr. Tarhan has also been involved in renewable energy co-operative development in Ontario and serves as a board member of the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation.

Niels Vilstrup

Niels Vilstrup is a Danish renewable energy expert with over 17 years of international experience in district energy, renewable energy, low-carbon solutions, and project development. As the Founder and President of GreenTechNA Consulting Inc., he focuses on driving advancements in renewable energy production, low-carbon district energy systems, and sector coupling across North America and Europe. Niels holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering, specializing in Energy Construction and Thermodynamics.

Previously, Niels served as Deputy Director at Lonsdale Energy Corporation in North Vancouver, where he led significant renewable energy projects, developed carbon-neutral strategies, and provided strategic advice to city leadership. Prior to that, he was the Head of the Danish District Energy Advisory (DDEA) in North America at the Royal Danish Embassy in Washington D.C., where, in five years, he facilitated over \$2 million in district energy export initiatives and projects, and built strong partnerships with developers, universities, municipalities, and public institutions.

SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES

Chad Walker, PhD

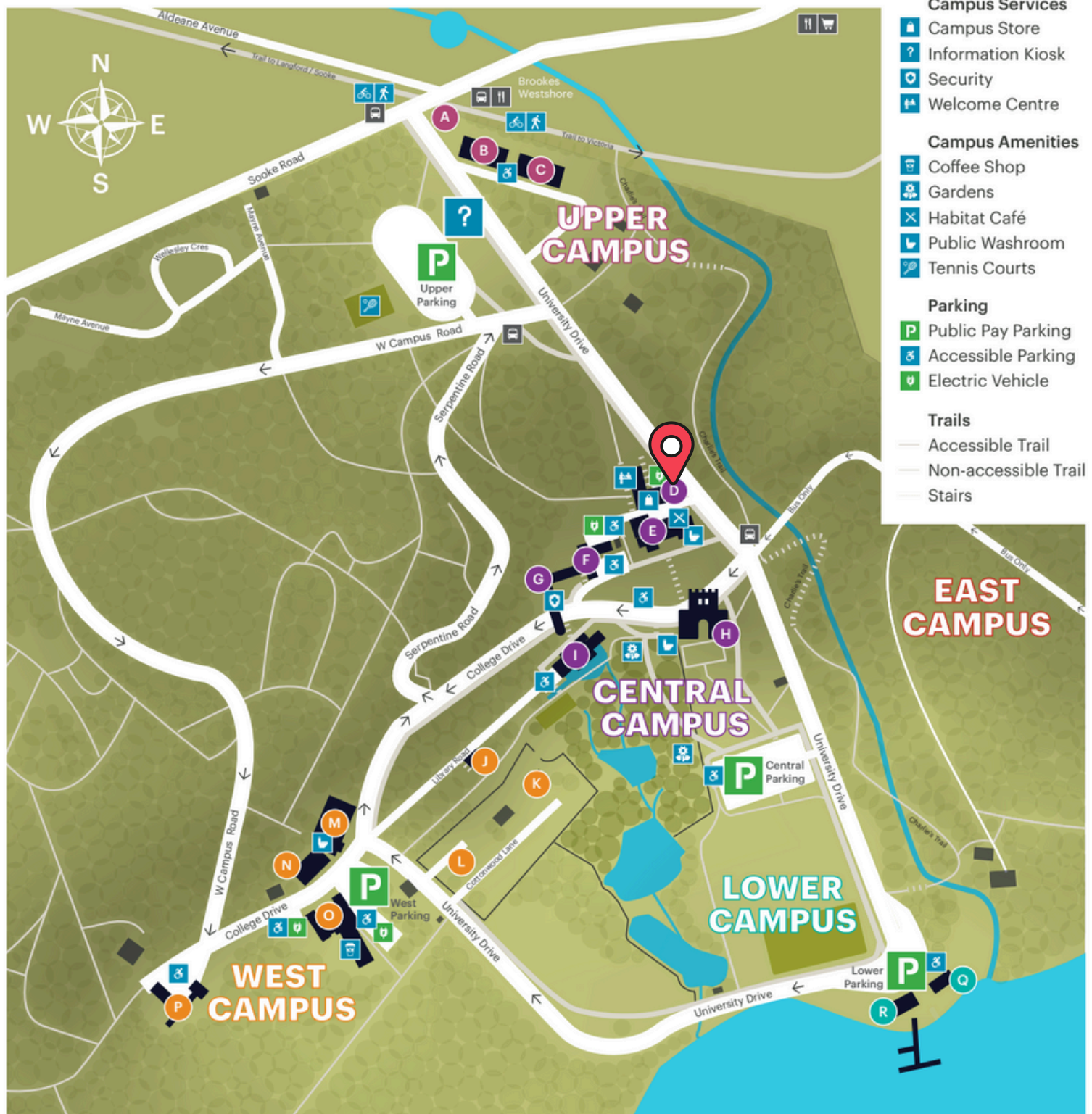
Chad Walker is an interdisciplinary environmental social scientist and Assistant Professor of Low-Carbon Transitions at Dalhousie University. There he holds a faculty position in the School of Planning and is cross-appointed with the School for Resource and Environmental Studies. Chad is also a Research Associate in Geography at the University of Exeter (UK).

Josie Ward

Josie Ward is a research assistant at NorQuest College and the University of Saskatchewan, where she combines her expertise in sustainable development and renewable energy. She holds a Master of Environment and Sustainability from the University of Saskatchewan, where her research focused on leveraging renewable energy projects as tools for community development. She also holds a Master of West Nordic Studies, Governance, and Sustainable Management from the University of the Faroe Islands. Her current research involves evaluating provincial policies aimed at advancing renewable energy cooperatives, with the goal of creating policy frameworks that support sustainable, community-driven energy initiatives.

Campus Map

RRU



UPPER CAMPUS

- A Gate House
- B Arbutus
- C Garry Oak

CENTRAL CAMPUS

- D Sequoia Building
- E Grant Building
- F Nixon Building
- G Millward Building
- H Hatley Castle
- I Library

WEST CAMPUS

- J Rose Garden House
- K Commandant's House
- L Vice Commandant's House
- M Recreation Centre
- N Dogwood Auditorium
- O Sherman Jen Building
- P Justice Institute of BC (Cedar Building)

LOWER CAMPUS

- Q Sneq'wa e'lun
- R Boathouse