

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The world to learn about Sudbury's regreening initiatives

Sudbury professors forge agreement on recent trip to Russia

Sudbury, ON, May 21, 2008 – A scientific research collaborative program is in the making between Moscow State University, Research Institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, MIRARCO's Centre for Environmental Monitoring (CEM) and Laurentian University.

Dr. Graeme Spiers, Director of CEM, and Dr. Peter Beckett, Professor of Biology—both members of Sudbury's Regreening Committee—recently returned from a two week long tour across Russia, Kazakhstan and Siberia. They spoke to diverse scientific audiences at conferences, universities, and Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Research Institutes. The proposed new research collaboration program will pool the knowledge of numerous Canadian and Russian scientists and academics.

"The goal of this new initiative is to further our understanding of ecosystem processes in northern and permafrost regions that have been impacted by emissions from copper-nickel mining and smelting operations," said Spiers.

"Sharing and furthering knowledge on ecosystem restoration using Sudbury as a model is a key component," added Beckett.

Professors Beckett and Spiers were welcomed at the CleanSoil International Workshop held at Moscow State University and sponsored by the European Commission. Spiers gave the keynote address—one of many lectures about environmental chemistry and ecosystem remediation Professors Spiers and Beckett delivered across the country.

Of particular interest was a visit to the Karabash region in the Ural Mountains. Copper smelting scarred the land and turned it into the kind of moonscape for which Sudbury was so well known prior to its regreening initiatives.

"The development of an international research initiative with Russia and Canada will lead to exciting new scientific knowledge...[that] will allow us to develop new remediation strategies and perhaps further adapt the Sudbury Model to permafrost regions in Siberia," said Dr. Lukina, Deputy Director, RAS, and one of the main drivers of this collaboration.

Russia devotes a large amount of resources and energy to the study of soil. The Faculty of Soil Science at Moscow State University has about 300 soil researchers including 125 Ph.D., 50 Dr.Sc., 90 post-graduate students and 450 students—more soil scientists than can be found in all of Canada's universities combined.

"Russian academics have a lot of scientific knowledge to offer in this area of study, I'm certain this new program will be mutually beneficial," said Spiers.

"I see a tremendous opportunity for students to participate in international academic and research exchange programs," said Dr. Koptsik of Moscow State University.

As it stands, the steering committee is preparing a memorandum of understanding between the Canadian and Russian institutions. This initiative is not limited to the current academic and research institutions. Other organizations, as well as government and industrial partners from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia and Canada will be invited to join the initiative.

MIRARCO- Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corporation, founded in 1998, is a not-for-profit applied research and technical service company formed through collaboration between Laurentian University and the private and public sectors. Located in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, MIRARCO promotes mining innovation and provides a bridge between researchers and industry.

Russian Academy of Sciences is a civil, self-governed, non-commercial organization chartered by the Russian Government. Headquartered in Moscow, it is a network of scientific institutes located across the Russian Federation. The academy is made up of research institutes and auxiliary units such as libraries and publishers.

Moscow State University is a major educational institution in Russia that offers training in almost all branches of modern science and humanities. Undergraduates may choose one of 57 qualifications while doctoral students may specialize in 168 different areas. MSU is famous for its major scientific schools and has 11 Nobel Prize winners among its professors and alumni. The total number of MSU students exceeds 40, 000.

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