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Us Conservancy Sponsors Climate Change Program In Asia And Oceania

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BCT Program to Share Environmental Best Practices with Universities in Asia and Oceania

NEW ORLEANS - *eTradeWire* -- BCT, a land and cultural heritage conservancy, announced today the creation of a program to discuss and share technology, best practices, and data with universities in Asia and Oceania. The program is focused on the forestry service and climate change with support from the USDA and non-profit environmental groups.

"BCT is pleased to announce this wonderful knowledge-sharing program with universities in Asia and Oceania," said Sylvain Martel, BCT Board Member. "We hope to expand the program to include the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute and Siberian State Technological University, as they provide education and training to governments and large corporations."

The program currently includes the University of Canterbury, Papua New Guinea University of Technology TFTC, Bulolo Forestry College, and Tribhuvan University.

Robert Brevelle, BCT Board Member at Large, spoke at the opening session. "Technically, Earth is still in an ice age. We are currently in an interglacial period of the Quaternary, called the Holocene. Science and history teach us that the climate is always changing. Climate change and what some may call global warming or climate crisis are natural geological processes that have existed for millions of years before the presence of humans. These are not man-made phenomena. With that said, we cannot ignore our responsibilities. We of course must be good stewards of the environment and do what we can to reduce man-made impacts on wildlife and fish habitat by leveraging science and best practices. However, the cycle of warming and cooling is natural and unstoppable. All ice ages inevitably must come to an end."

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The program focuses on environmentally responsible forestry and farming practices, reforestation using trees better suited for the climate change affected areas, erosion control, reclamation, and preservation of cultural heritage sites. Sessions will review, in-depth, how political agendas, science, and journalism have and continue to play a role in public perception and the use of private and public funds which have had mixed results at the local and global levels.

For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, meteorologists, climatologists, scientists, professors, government agencies, and news agencies stated the Earth was cooling and headed for a very cold ice age. The National Science Board, World Meteorological Organization, American Association of Geographers, CIA, UCLA, UC-Davis, professors, Christian Science Monitor, New York Times, Newsweek, Washington Post, Time Magazine, then US President Jimmy Carter, and others for years propelled the global cooling crisis agenda and forecasted the coming of the new Ice Age.

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During this period, the focus on Earth Day was on global cooling and the coming of the new Ice Age. Global cooling displays were at science fairs, museums, universities, and the Smithsonian. An entire generation was taught to believe that the Earth was headed for a new Ice Age in their lifetime.

"As leaders and practitioners of forestry, agriculture, and environmental protection, we must do our best to temper hype and idealism. It is incumbent upon us to steer the narrative and drive action towards implementing environmentally and economically sustainable programs based on science," said Robert. "It is unrealistic to expect that next year or in 1,000 years the weather will be the same as this year. Ocean levels have always and will continue to rise and fall. Glaciers will continue to grow and retreat. For example, ice ages have covered much of the Earth in glaciers. To believe otherwise is to deny that cities such as New York have been completely covered by glaciers multiple times throughout history with ice sheets over 2 miles thick. It was an ice age such as this that brought forth the rise of mammals and humankind. Siberia and Alaska were connected with a land bridge when the Bering Sea was dry, which allowed Asians to migrate and settle in North and South America. We now call their descendants Native Americans, First Peoples, and First Nations. Even my home states of Texas and Louisiana have been entirely covered by the ocean. We cannot pick a single moment in history and expect the Earth to repeat that day, year, century, or millennium over and over. Indeed, we owe the very creation, evolution, and diverse history of our species to climate change. It is a part of us. We must adapt. We must be honorable stewards of the environment and our limited natural resources."

The forum allowed participants to share their experiences of their local governments' initiatives, public policies, and environmental impacts. From New Zealand to Nepal, it was clear that there is a lack of a unified approach or data-driven programs.

"If you decide to live in a floodplain, you should not be surprised when it floods," said Robert. "If you build a city in a desert, you should expect that access to fresh water will be a serious challenge. If you build a structure on a river or the coast, you should expect erosion and flooding. These discussions are not about building massive concrete walls in a futile attempt to hold back the oceans or building desalination plants because you want to live where humans naturally can't or grow food in the barren central deserts of California, all of which are detrimental to the local ecosystems and hurt the global environment. Instead, let us focus on improving the health of barrier islands, reefs, coastal marshes, and forests so they can protect shorelines from typhoons, tsunamis, and erosion. These same practices can help naturally clean fresh water. Let us create public policies that deliver sound building codes and urban planning so that cities are not built in floodplains or contribute to storm runoff, flash flooding, or worse. Let's stop creating mega-farms in the arid deserts of places like California and other parts of the American West that are not at all suited for production farming. Let's stop building subdivisions and cities in the desert where freshwater has to be pumped in or desalinated using immense natural resources, fossil fuels, and other costly, impractical infrastructure. For all of you tree huggers out there, you are in the right place. So put away your save-the-world t-shirts you got when you marched in some protest in college where you flew on an airplane that burnt 12,000 gallons of fuel to get you there, your \$5 plastic bottled water that was shipped on a diesel tanker from Fiji and put in a plastic bottle made in China from trash that was shipped via diesel tanker from the USA, your new \$1,000 cell phone made of rare and precious earth minerals that you will throw away when the next iPhone comes out, and let's get serious about the environment and climate change."

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The forum was not without its entertaining moments. When asked what climate change issues will there be in the next 10 to 20 years, Sylvain replied, "20 years from now? I wish they could accurately predict the weather for tomorrow or even for just a few hours ahead. If they could do that, I wouldn't have lost my sailboat... and a bit of my pride."

About BCT

BCT is a land and cultural heritage conservancy chartered to protect, in perpetuity, the diverse fish and wildlife habitat, as well as, cultural heritage sites for the Caddo Indians, early French explorers, and Creoles. BCT was formed by the merging of the La Louisiane Land Trust and

the Evangeline Conservancy. It has grown to include a community of ecologists, wildlife biologists, silviculturists, engineers, environmentalists, archeologists, farmers, ranchers, professors, and historians. With offices in New Orleans and Dallas, BCT delivers economically and environmentally sustainable conservation programs. To learn more, visit us at <http://brevelleconservationtrust.com/>.

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