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The NCSE’s annual conference will be held in Washington, DC from January 28-30, 2014 and will focus on « Building Climate Solutions ». A French-American workshop will be organized, in partnership with the Office for Science and Technology of the Embassy of France “Nature as a Source of Innovation for a Sustainable Metropolis.” This session will address the integration of nature, in all its aspects, into cities and the significant role it can play in the transition towards a carbon free economy and a more resilient metropolis with a reduced ecological footprint. The outcome aims to assist urban planners faced with the formidable task of choosing between high maintenance and environmentally costly urban nature, and multifunctional and self-maintaining natural systems.

Experiments in the use of nature will be explored from diverse angles such as: [1] reducing emissions of greenhouse gases; [2] attenuating the heat island effect; and [3] designing buildings using less energy or [4] mastering the cycle of water. Research into these issues is supported by the French Government and resulting case studies are tackled in the interdisciplinary initiative "Ignis Mutat Res, Approaching Architecture, Urbanism and Landscape through the Prism of Energy" launched by the Ministry of Culture and the Atelier international du Grand Paris, particularly in the research entitled Rooofscape, Learning from Chicago, Montreal and Paris.

These case studies will inform this session which follows and builds upon the green urban infrastructure debates and proposals made during Ecocity 2013 (The World Summit on Sustainable Cities) held in Nantes, France in September 2013.

The goal of this session is to engage researchers, public decision-makers and professionals in developing a framework for better scientific knowledge and understanding of the potential, the design criteria and the long-term evolution of natural systems that both mitigate urban contributions to climate change and increase urban climate change resilience. A common thread of the discussion will be the role of ecological services and ecohealth in urban and architectural projects, touching on particular issues related to urban rooftops seen as a new territory for sustainable development of cities. This approach also recognizes the importance of the way cities are connected to their hinterlands.

The organizers of this workshop are Patrick Monfort (CNRS) and Chantal Pacteau (Paris Research Consortium, Climate-Environnement-Society, Strategic Committee of Ecocity 2013) and Louise Vandelac (Université du Québec à Montréal and Canadian Commission for UNESCO).

The speakers are:

- Sylvie Joussaume (CNRS, Head of the Paris Research Consortium, Climate-Environnement-Society French representative in European joint programming initiative on climate, coordinator of European climate modelling infrastructure project, IPCC review editor)

- Radley Horton (Head of the Science Policy Team of the New York City Panel on Climate Change and of the New York State’s Adaptation Report)
More details on this workshop are available at: http://www.buildingclimatesolutions.org/topics/view/522d412f0cf264abcc7b9b62/

As host of the 21st Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015, France was offered the final keynote speech of the conference, which will be given by Marie-Hélène Aubert, adviser to the French President on climate negotiations.

Each year, NCSE’s flagship event gathers over 1,200 participants from academia, NGOs and the policy-making world (local authorities, Congress and Administration). The breakout sessions aim to produce recommendations for policy-makers, which are then presented to the Administration and relevant policy makers.

More details on the conference are available at: http://www.buildingclimatesolutions.org

Update 3/2/2014: Speech of Marie-Hélène Aubert, Adviser to the President of France on international negotiations on climate and environment