

Collaborating to unlock the mysteries of the Arctic

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is supporting an innovative marine science project at the site of the HMS Erebus.

September 2, 2015

With almost a decade of support, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has given grants to almost 200 scientists and is the largest private supporter of northern scientific research in Canada. In 2015, the Foundation is proud to support marine science research projects taking place alongside Mission Erebus and Terror.

The Foundation is providing \$300,000 in funding to Parks Canada, ArcticNet, and Québec-Océan to support scientific research at the site of the *Erebus* wreck, which will provide a key learning opportunity about the impact of human intervention in the Arctic. This funding also ensures a local Inuit community presence during the research in Theoran Kopak, as a Research Assistant.



From L to R: Lisa Treau De Coeli (Biology Research Assistant, Université du Québec, Rimouski), Marc-André Bernier (Underwater archaeologist and Head, Underwater Archaeology Team at Parks Canada), Theoran Kopak (Scientific Research Assistant Intern, Parks Canada), and Nadia Ménard (Ecologist, team leader, Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park, Parks Canada)

Photo credit: Parks Canada

Biologists Nadia Ménard, Lisa Treau, Underwater Archeologist Marc-André Bernier and Scientific Research Assistant Theoran Kopak were involved in the first phase of this year's pilot project. By the end of August, they collected base-line data that will inform Canada's future understanding of how the *Erebus* wreck has affected the local marine environment. Their work will also offer clues for how our fragile Arctic is being affected by a rapidly changing environment.

Dr. Louis Fortier, Scientific Director of ArcticNet and 2011 recipient of the prestigious Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research, is co-organizing project logistics in tandem with Parks Canada.

"The priority of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is to collaborate with government, scientists and Inuit communities in unlocking the mysteries of the North so that we make better and more informed decisions," said Geordie Dalglish, Chairman of the Northern Committee, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation.

According to Dr. Fortier, the ecology of the Arctic is still not understood and yet it is changing each year. In addition, the site of the *Erebus* appears to have created a reef effect, giving clues to how human intervention will further alter the local ecosystem.

The second phase of this work will take place in late September when the ArcticNet research icebreaker CCGS *Amundsen* will arrive on site to provide additional capacity along with Weston Family Northern Scientists Caroline Bouchard and Maxime Geoffroy. Dr. Bouchard is a specialist in Arctic marine ecosystems and graduate student Maxime Geoffroy specializes in Arctic zooplankton and fish acoustic detection.



Dr. Louis Fortier, 2011 Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research and Scientific Director, ArcticNet

ArcticNet is a Network of Centres of Excellence of Canada that is comprised of more than 1000 researchers, graduate students and research associates from 34 Canadian universities. It involves 20 federal and provincial agencies and departments and further collaborates with more than 150 partner organizations in 14 countries.

Advancing Northern Science

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation sponsors scientific work that studies the past and will inform the future. Since 2007 the Foundation has provided substantial support and opportunity to graduate students and Postdoctoral Fellows as they transition to careers in Northern science. Weston scientists are playing an active role in the international conversation about our changing northern climate.