



The Volvo Environment prize for 2008 is awarded to Crawford “Buzz” Holling, one of the world’s most influential ecologists

The Volvo Environment Prize, administered by an independent foundation, this year goes to Buzz Holling, Canadian ecologist and scientist, whose theories on how ecosystems deal with sudden changes have had great global influence.

Today, with many worrying about global climate change and unexpected natural disasters, Buzz Holling stresses the importance of increasing our society’s ability to be flexible and cope with change. This is necessary for the continued use of natural resources, because crisis, Holling says, is an inevitable part of nature’s way of functioning.

Buzz Holling is perhaps best known as the father of the resilience theory. Resilience is the capacity to deal with change and continue to develop. It refers to the capacity of a social-ecological system both to withstand perturbations — from, for instance, climatic or economic shock — and to rebuild and renew itself.

Loss of resilience can cause loss of valuable ecosystem services, and may even lead to rapid transition into new ecosystem stages. Examples of this are when over-fishing flips a marine environment into a totally different stage, or when a deforested area turns into savannah or desert.

Over the years, Buzz Holling’s research and theories have influenced scientists and policymakers all over the world and have increased knowledge on governing natural resources and how human society — and nature itself — deals with crisis. His thinking has also influenced the sustainable development debate. He has convincingly demonstrated that change is not only gradual, but often sudden and turbulent, putting great strain on the way humans and nature organize and how they adapt to change.

The Jury of the Volvo Environment Prize says in its citation:

“Crawford (Buzz) Holling is one of the most creative and influential ecologists of our times. His integrative thinking has shed new light on the growth, collapse and regeneration of coupled human-ecological systems.”

Buzz Hollings comments:

“I’m surprised and very honoured. After working for many years trying to understand the relationship between man and nature, it is amazing to see the interest there is worldwide for these issues. We are currently witnessing a terrific

example of an emerging crisis with climate change. Our ability to cope with it will of course depend on how we can limit the emissions of greenhouse gases, but just as important is the capacity for adaptation and understanding how the ecosystems will develop and change.”

Buzz Holling is Emeritus Eminent Professor in Ecological Sciences at the University of Florida, USA. He is retired and lives in the city of Nanaimo, close to Vancouver in Canada. He is the founder of **Resilience Alliance**, an organization of researchers in numerous countries, and his theory on resilience is the foundation for the newly established **Stockholm Resilience Centre** at the University of Stockholm. Among his most famous books is *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*, published in 2002.

Buzz Holling will come to Sweden in early November to receive the Volvo Environment Prize at a ceremony in Stockholm. Besides the diploma he will receive a cash amount of SEK 1.5 million (approximately 160,000 Euro or 250,000 USD).

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For more information on the Volvo Environment Prize and the 2008 winner, please contact Helene Bergsten, Scientific Advisor, Volvo Environment Prize, Tel: +46-31-772 4950, cell/mobile +46-730-795 833, email: helene.bergsten@chalmers.se or Claes Beyer, Executive Member of the Board for the Volvo Environment Prize Foundation, Tel: +46-709-777 623.

The Volvo Environment Prize Foundation awards the prize to individuals who explore the way to an equitable and sustainable world. The Volvo Environment Prize is awarded by an independent foundation, assisted by a Prize Jury composed of internationally recognized experts in the environmental field. Since 1990 the Prize has been awarded to 34 individuals. Among the winners are many prominent names, including three Nobel Prize Winners.

For more information on the Volvo Environment Prize go to www.environment-prize.com