

Engaged research 2: honing the nuts and bolts of co-development

Student Forum 2020 –Session 2

Case Study # 2

Stakeholder engagement to reduce wildfire risk

A legacy of fire exclusion and rising temperatures due to climate change are creating an increasingly unsustainable situation in BC's forests. *A century of fire suppression has contributed to a buildup of vegetation, stocking forests with fuel for future fires. In the absence of regularly occurring fire, like those intentionally set by First Nations before colonization or those ignited by lightning, our landscapes have lost the patchiness that limited fire spread. In addition, droughts, mountain pine beetle and other insects, have taken aim at many of BC's forests, leaving whole stands of dead and flammable trees in their wake. On top of all of that, climate change has dried out these uniform and fuel-laden landscapes, priming them for large, severe, and difficult to control wildfires.* Despite consensus about the scope and scale of the problem, the path forward is contentious due to the diversity of stakeholders invested in the future of BC's forest sector.

Forests across BC are managed for multiple objectives including production of timber, maintenance of wildlife habitat and recreation areas, and preservation of cultural resources among others. Proponents working to further each objective advocate for different strategies to address the wildfire problem from enhanced logging to more aggressive conservation to the reintroduction of cultural burning on the landscape. Balancing stakeholder concerns like prioritizing land for conservation (NGOs), protecting crown lands and Provincial communities (BCWS), and safeguarding cultural heritage (First Nations) are at the heart of this conflict. In addition, the timber industry is interested in maintaining their business model.

--

The Minister of FLNRORD has selected you to lead stakeholder engagement efforts. Your first goal is to survey representatives of the Provincial government, First Nation Communities, conservationists and the timber industry to ascertain priorities and land management options.

PICS Project: [Developing strategies for wildfire and forest management that minimize climate impact and strengthen BC's bioeconomy](#)

Partners:

Researchers

Natural Resource Canada

Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences, Faculty of Forestry, UBC

US Forest Service

Canadian Forest Service

Solution Seekers

- BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
- First Nations
- Forest industry
- Government of Canada

PICS

