

# REVITALIZING CULTURAL BURNING

INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS CULTURAL VALUES INTO WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING

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## CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDFIRE

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL LIKELY INCREASE ANNUAL AREAS BURNED, INTENSIFY FIRE SEVERITY AND LENGTHEN THE FIRE SEASON.  
(FLANNIGAN, CANTIN DE GROOT & WOTTON, 2013; HAGER, 2017; MORITZ ET AL., 2012)

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

A MULTI-YEAR, COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE TO REDUCE IMPACTS OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES.

## METHODOLOGY

GATHERED ORAL HISTORIES FROM ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CULTURAL BURNING PRACTICES

ASSISTED IN DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY-BASED BURN PLAN FRAMEWORK

## SHACKAN INDIAN BAND

THE SHACKAN INDIAN BAND IS AN NLAKA'PAMUX FIRST NATIONS GOVERNMENT. IT IS ONE OF FIVE BANDS WHO COMPRISE THE SCW'EXMX - THE PEOPLE OF THE CREEKS.

SINCE COLONIZATION, MUCH OF THE KNOWLEDGE ON FIRE PREVENTION, MITIGATION, AND RISK REDUCTION ACTIVITIES WAS LOST.



When I was young, I would go hunting.

From Shulus, we would walk north up towards Mamit Lake.

Grandfather would light some fires on the way up. He would tell me why.

"The area is full of ticks. The birthing areas for deer should have the grass area burned so that they have fresh food, be free of ticks and can see their predators."

On our way down, we would look back and see the Ministry of Forestry putting out our fires.

He would say, "I wish they would just let it burn. It won't go anywhere but up the hill. It's spring time and will just go out on its own."

But at that time, it was illegal to burn.

- JOE GILCHIRST

REDUCES PEST INFESTATIONS

IMPROVES LAND FOR FOOD PRODUCTION, HARVESTING AND FORAGING

PROMOTES GROWTH OF MEDICINAL PLANTS

OPENS WATER FLUMES/DITCHES AND OVERGROWN CREEKS

LATE FALL BURNS IMPROVE LAND PRODUCTIVITY AND HUNTING CONDITIONS

EARLY SPRING BURNS IMPROVE GRAZING FOR ANIMALS

ON AND OFF RESERVE BURNING SITES IDENTIFIED, PRACTICES CONNECTED TO SEASONS

LOW INTENSITY BURNS CRITICAL TO SOIL HEALTH

AN ACTIVITY FAMILIES DID TOGETHER ON THE LAND

FIR-PITCH USED TO CREATE "DRIP-TORCH"

ACORNS USED TO SPREAD FIRE

CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

## KEY FINDINGS

CONTROLLING BURNS MORE DIFFICULT GIVEN SIGNIFICANT OVERGROWTH

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

TERRITORY AND WEATHER MORE VOLATILE - EXTREME FLOODING AND EROSION

IMPACTS OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS ON KNOWLEDGE BASE IN COMMUNITY

CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION CREATE BARRIERS

PRIVATIZATION, POPULATION GROWTH AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY MAKE BURNING MORE DIFFICULT

## NEXT STEPS

- DEVELOP AN INDIGENOUS-INFORMED CULTURAL BURNING FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW PROCESS FOR FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES IN BC
- SEEK INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BUILDING LOCAL RESOURCES AND CAPACITY TO PLAN FOR AND ADAPT TO EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
- NURTURE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND LINKS TO THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION



Welcome to the NICOLA VALLEY