



NEWS RELEASE: Local Community Forest leads wildfire risk reduction work in the Barriere Lakes Area

October 15, 2024

Traditional Territory of Simpcw First Nation: The Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society (LNTCFS) is actively reducing wildfire risk in the communities around its tenure area in the Barriere Lakes area, east of Barriere, BC. Since creating its Wildfire Risk Management Plan in 2019, LNTCFS has implemented key strategies in designated harvest areas to enhance forest resiliency against wildfires while protecting vital community values.

In 2021, the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) awarded LNTCFS with funding through the province's Economic Recovery Initiative, specifically for Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction. This funding enabled LNTCFS to develop fuel treatment prescriptions for approximately 200 hectares within their tenure area. To date, treatments have been carried out on roughly 140 hectares.

"It's great to see Wildfire Risk Reduction projects happening within the Wildland Urban Interface. These harvest areas have attracted positive public attention – not only for their FireSmart outcomes, but also for the aesthetic and recreational values that they create in high-use areas." – Sky Jarvis, LNTCFS Forest Technician.

The LNTCFS was one of 15 community forests across the province supported by the BCCFA's Economic Recovery Initiative, in collaboration with BC Wildfire Service. Between 2021-2024, this initiative funded 45 wildfire risk reduction projects around rural BC communities. Projects included operational wildfire treatments, fuel management prescriptions, prescribed and cultural burns, and inventory and analysis surveys. The initiative also contributed to local job creation, one of the many positive outcomes.

"This multi-year project has successfully met the objectives outlined in the Fuel Management Prescriptions and has led to a reduction in fuel loading and wildfire risk in the area." - Mike Francis, LNTCFS General Manager

In addition to the work completed through the Economic Recovery Initiative, community forests across BC have collectively treated over 8,000 hectares prior to 2023, investing over \$9 million of their own resources, while managing an additional \$17 million in grants and external funding, including support from the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC).

"This project not only reduced wildfire risks but also allowed us to process larger roadside piles for utilization by Arrow, funded separately by FESBC," added Sky Jarvis.

With support from the BCCFA's Economic Recovery Initiative, LNTCFS has laid the groundwork for future wildfire mitigation work on a significant portion of forested land east of Barriere. As the frequency of high-intensity wildfires increases, community-led efforts in wildfire risk reduction and preparedness are more crucial than ever.

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To learn more about LNTCFS visit: <https://lntcfs.org/>

If you are 19+ and reside or own property within the TNRD electoral district "O", McLure fire protection area (electoral district "P"), or the district of Barriere, consider becoming a member of the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society - membership is \$5 for five years and is aimed at demonstrating community support for our operations rather than generating revenue.

For more information and a summary report of the Economic Recovery Initiative program visit: <https://bccfa.ca/wildfire-risk-reduction/>

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