

FREP NEWSLETTER

Forest & Range Evaluation Program Highlights



Vision: "Collect and communicate trusted and scientifically robust natural resource monitoring information to inform decision making and improve resource management outcomes."

This is the first of what will be a bi-annual Newsletter of the FREP program. The intent is to communicate program highlights to our FREP partners and participants. We welcome any feedback. - Leah Malkinson, FREP Team Lead

FREP SPOTLIGHT ON EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

by Lisa Nordin- Aquatic Resources Stewardship Evaluation Officer

The "FREP Spotlight on Effective Practices" will be a regular article in the [FREP Newsletter](#), and will showcase effective forest and range practices. This issue's article is a recap of an article published in the [BC Forest Professional Magazine](#). It highlights effective riparian management practices.

Weyerhaeuser was selected to spotlight in this edition because of their excellent track record of leaving streams and riparian areas in properly functioning condition. The secret to their success is not in blanket prescriptions, but an approach that allows their forest professionals the flexibility to manage according to site conditions, with the expectation that results will meet or exceed standards outlined in an in-house riparian treatment document. The document was developed to communicate clear and consistent messaging around outcomes instead of the minimums identified in their Forest Stewardship Plan and is updated when new information becomes available. The company invests in contractor training and site-specific prework to ensure this information is properly communicated. They also promote continuous improvement and have engaged with FREP stewardship staff on assessment results in their operating areas. They continue to work with local First Nations to review their past results as well as any future plans. Together, these strategies have led to evolving practices that consistently produce exceptional results. The entire article can be accessed on page 12 of the Fall 2020 edition of the [BC Forest Professional Magazine](#):

[Link to Magazine Article](#)



Fish Stream in the Okanagan/Shuswap District

FEATURE: INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN FREP

by Christine Galliazzo- Cultural Heritage Stewardship Officer

The Forest and Range Evaluation Program is striving for increased collaboration and partnerships in monitoring with Indigenous communities. The relationship between the Province and Indigenous communities and licensees has been strengthened by the collaborative partnerships with interested Indigenous communities through their engagement in monitoring and co-training. In 2019, 44 Indigenous communities took part in FREP across the province. Many Indigenous community members attended 59 days of FREP training in several values: Riparian, Water Quality, Visual Quality, Cultural Heritage, and Wetlands; and participated in 94 person days of FREP co-sampling with District staff. One Nation took part in contract CHR sampling, and two other Nations delivered 10 person-days of co-training in the CHR value to District staff, First Nations, and Licensee's.

In 2020 FREP in-office training was cancelled, and the participation by Indigenous communities in FREP assessments declined due to COVID-19. However, as the field season progressed it became evident that field work could be safely carried out with safe distancing practices and one person per vehicle. To improve the funding support for the participation of Indigenous partners in FREP participation there was a major shift in 2020 from Contracts to Shared Cost Arrangements (SCA's). There were 33 SCA's prepared for Indigenous communities across the province, with actual participation in the field from 21 Indigenous communities in FREP value assessments (Riparian, Water Quality, Visual Quality, and Cultural Heritage values). District staff in the Peace, Coast Mountains, Skeena Stikine, Cascades, Chilliwack, Okanagan-Shuswap, Stuart Nechako, Nadina, and Cariboo Chilcotin are commended for their assistance in engaging with the Indigenous communities to encourage their participation in these SCA's and the FREP field assessments.

There were also two Indigenous communities contracted to complete CHR assessments within their own territories in 2020, and one contracted to prepare CHR co-training for early 2021. These opportunities highlight the direction the FREP program is taking for increasing collaboration in FREP by Indigenous communities and will be expanded in the future.



2019 FREP CHR Training with Webb Bennett leading the tour, Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site

FINDING ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

by Christine Galliazzo- Cultural Heritage Stewardship Officer

On July 9th and 10th 2019, FREP Cultural Heritage Training was held in the Thompson Rivers District by Resource Planning and Assessment Branch Cultural Heritage Lead Christine Galliazzo and Co-trainers First Nations Archaeologists Joanne Hammond, Skeetchestn and Carrie Dan, Whispering Pines /Clinton Indian Band. There were 14 First Nations from 6 Communities and 6 Licensee rep's and District staff from 3 Districts: Thompson Rivers, Okanagan Shuswap, 100 Mile House, as well as 2 Thompson-Okanagan Regional staff.

While in the field on the second day of the training Merle Fletcher from High Bar IB found an ancient First Nations smoking pipe made of nephrite (low grade jade) and copper around the elbow of the pipe (it would have had a wooden pipe stem originally, but it has since disintegrated). The Elephant Hill Fire has scorched the copper white on the exposed surface. The nephrite likely was traded from Haida Gwaii, and the copper was likely sourced from the Kamloops area. It will be analyzed at Simon Fraser University to determine its age, and what was likely to have been smoked in the pipe (e.g. kinnikinnick). This pipe is likely to be archaeological and would have been owned by someone with stature, such as a Chief of the First Nations community. This was an unexpected, important discovery during the FREP CHR training.



CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE PEACE

By Jessica Amonson- Stewardship Forester, Peace Natural Resource District

Cultural Heritage Resources (CHR) monitoring in the Peace was a great way to build relationships between First Nations, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) staff, and licensees. With new staff in all three groups it was an opportunity to put faces to names in a physically distanced environment. The program had participation from 5 members of 3 First Nations including a new Forestry Coordinator, 2 FLNRORD Stewardship staff, 2 FLNRORD First Nations Advisors, 3 consulting archaeologists, and 8 licensees.

Licensees were proud to demonstrate their practices to protect Cultural Heritage Resources. First Nations found value in strengthening connections with FLNRORD staff and licensees. All involved seemed appreciative of the chance to share information in multiple directions.

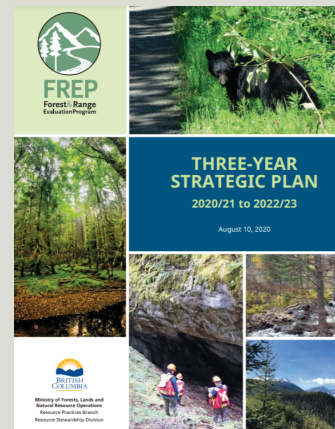


Photo Right: A Saulteau representative and Planning Supervisor- Sean West with West Fraser Chetwynd Forest Industries discussing modified harvest activities to preserve this cultural heritage value.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR FREP

By Leah Malkinson- Team Lead, Monitoring & Assessment

Where is FREP going as a program? What are we really trying to achieve? How will we know when we get there? The new FREP [3 year Strategic Plan](#) addresses these fundamental questions, to ensure FREP remains a vital part of sustainable resource management in BC. FREP remains committed to its core mandate – to evaluate the effectiveness of forest and range practices in achieving desired outcomes for resource values and support continuous improvement in stewardship. It also increasingly supports broader interests and needs for stewardship monitoring, and in building partnerships with Indigenous communities to carry out this monitoring. Read the Strategic Plan to find out more about program directions and priorities for the next 3 years.

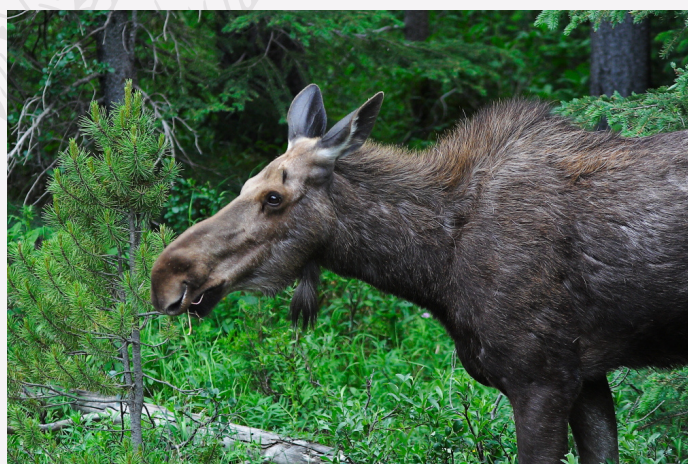


New FREP Wildlife Evaluations Underway

By Cliff Nietvelt- Wildlife Stewardship Officer

The FREP program is moving forward with new work to evaluate the effectiveness of FRPA in maintaining wildlife habitat and species across their natural ranges and over time in British Columbia – in particular the legal tools FRPA provides for designating and managing wildlife habitat. The priority wildlife evaluation question is: "Do ungulate winter ranges and wildlife habitat areas maintain the habitats, structures and functions necessary to meet the goals of the area and is the amount, quality and distribution of these areas contributing effectively with the surrounding land base (including protected areas and managed land base) to ensure the survival of the species now and over time?"

Wildlife effectiveness evaluations are typically species-specific, and protocols for each species vary depending on the question and scale. Several pilot studies were undertaken from 2010-2012 (field-based and indicator selection) and have been published to the FREP website. The pilot studies looked at species such as mountain goats, grassland nesting birds, northern goshawk, and badger. In 2017/18 the FREP program developed a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of designated areas at multiple scales, that is a foundation for work moving forward today. As of 2020, the FREP wildlife monitoring program is collaborating with the Together for Wildlife Strategy and GeoBC to evaluate FRPA wildlife designated areas, as well as areas designated under other statutes such as *Land Act*, *Oil and Gas Act* and *Wildlife Act*. Work is being carried out in two phases: 1- Assess the current state of these designations through geospatial analysis and through consultation with regional staff and other local knowledge holders; and 2- Undertake on the ground monitoring of selected designated areas to assess both habitat conditions and species use. While the FREP evaluations will focus on wildlife designated areas, cumulative effects assessments for species such as grizzly bear and moose will complement this, with information on the condition of habitat and populations across the landscape. Collaboration with regional staff and specialists in the development of monitoring protocols and assessment will be vital to the success of FREP wildlife monitoring.



Both moose and grizzly bear are species that are evaluated under FREP and Cumulative Impacts.

A CLOSER LOOK AT WETLANDS

by Lisa Nordin- Aquatic Resources Stewardship Evaluation Officer

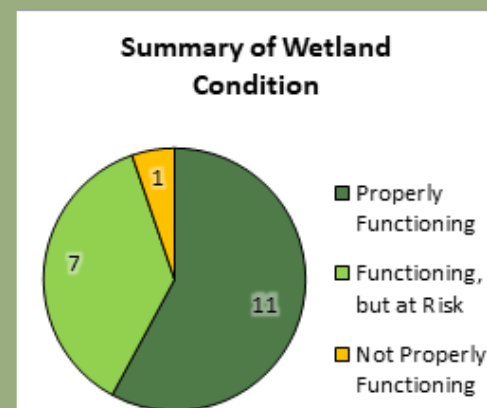
Wetlands are a critical part of the environment and provide essential services with respect to water and air quality along with habitat for a diversity of plants and animals. The FREP Wetlands Assessment Protocol was developed in 2018 in response to increasing interest in the condition of this important aquatic resource. Since then, training in the protocol has been delivered to stewardship staff, First Nations, and contractors from 11 different resource districts.

The assessment uses indicators similar to the riparian (stream) assessment, which are rolled up to 15 main questions that are answered yes or no to determine functioning condition. This alignment made it easier for stewardship staff currently involved in FREP evaluations to learn, although the pilot testing revealed that the weighted calculations were a little daunting. In 2020, a solution was provided in the form of a Filemaker app, which calculates all of the formulas automatically. An online training package and technical guidance document have been developed and will be available by the end of March 2021.

In 2018 and 2019, a total of 19 wetland samples were submitted by five districts. Functioning condition outcomes have been good overall, with just one assessed as not properly functioning because of disturbance from livestock and beavers. It is anticipated that over time we may see that animal disturbance is more prevalent in wetland systems compared to streams, especially when there is an increase in access from logging activity, but good management practices such as fencing and cattle guards in range areas can often mitigate these impacts. While wetland samples are considered optional at this time and only counted as part of the riparian target for those districts with established consistency in their past stream results (check with value lead), any district with an interest in assessing wetlands is encouraged to participate in training and sampling, submit their results, and communicate these to forest licensees in the interest of continuous improvement. To read more about the evolution of this assessment, see pg. 14 of the Sept/Oct 2018 edition of the [BC Forest Professional magazine](#). To review the protocol and field cards, please refer to the riparian/fish protocol page of the [FREP website](#).



2019 wetland training in Prince George.



Results of 2018/19 Wetland Sampling



Contrast of riparian condition on opposing sides of a fence

What's New in Reporting?

- Map-based viewing tool: [FREP Dashboard](#)
- FREP Technical Guidance Report: [Integrating GIS and Group-Based Methodologies With Pour-Point Sample Design for Routine-Level Watershed Assessment](#)
- [Thompson Rivers Natural Resource District Multiple Resource Value Assessment Report \(MRVA\), June 2020.](#)
- [Quesnel Natural Resource District Multiple Resource Value Assessment Report \(MRVA\)](#). (Chrome works best with this one).

STEPHANIE WILKIE AWARD

By Kristine Wilker, Stewardship Officer, Cariboo-Chilcotin Natural Resource District

The Stephanie Wilkie FREP Peer Award is to recognise individuals who exhibit the same values that Stephanie Wilkie had, as they carry out the FREP field work. The values are leadership, team player, enthusiasm, ethics, and environmental awareness.

Don Coombes was the winner of this award for the 2019 field season. In the Cariboo-Chilcotin Natural Resource District, Don led the FREP program from 2008 – 2019. His enthusiasm never waned as he tried new and updated protocols over the years. He had a strong belief that FREP was a tool to improve forest practices.

Don was an avid supporter of training opportunities to ensure a high standard of work for himself and others. He was always ready to mentor summer and full-time staff on FREP protocols. In his unassuming way, his wealth of forestry knowledge always came through. Rain or shine you would rarely find Don in the office as the field was his favorite place to be. He has now retired, and his expertise is missed– Congratulations Don!



Don Coombes, all smiles, is the proud recipient of the Stephanie Wilkie Award 2019.

HAPPY

Holidays

To provide feedback on this newsletter or propose content for future newsletters, please email Chris Lohr:
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