



National Indigenous
Fire Safety Council

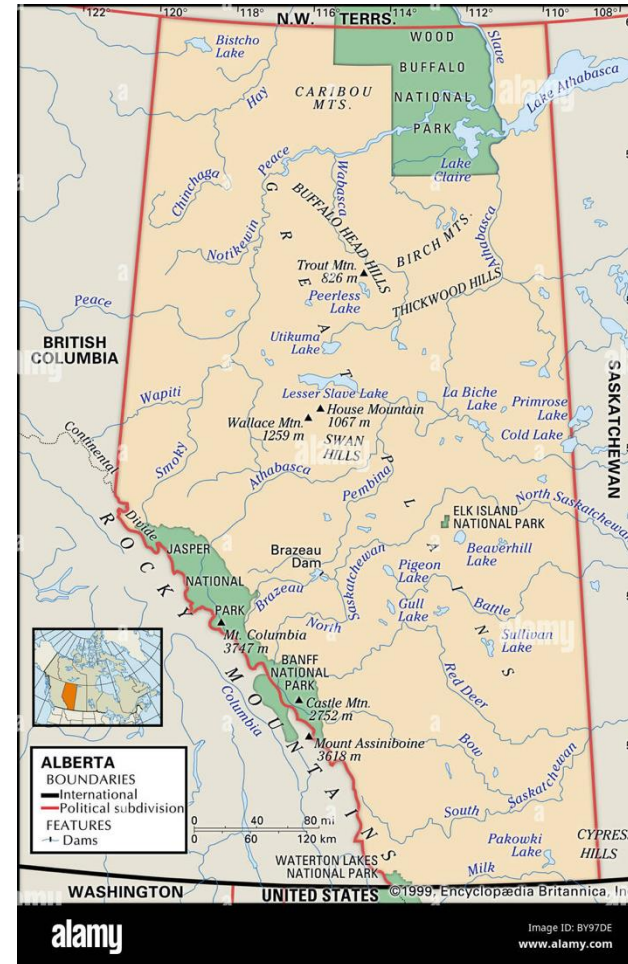
Conseil national
autochtone de la sécurité incendie

The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC)

Beth Weckman Hannah Odia Len Garis Simon Lefebvre

Land Acknowledgement

- I would like take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta
- Métis Nation of Alberta is also located in the city of Calgary



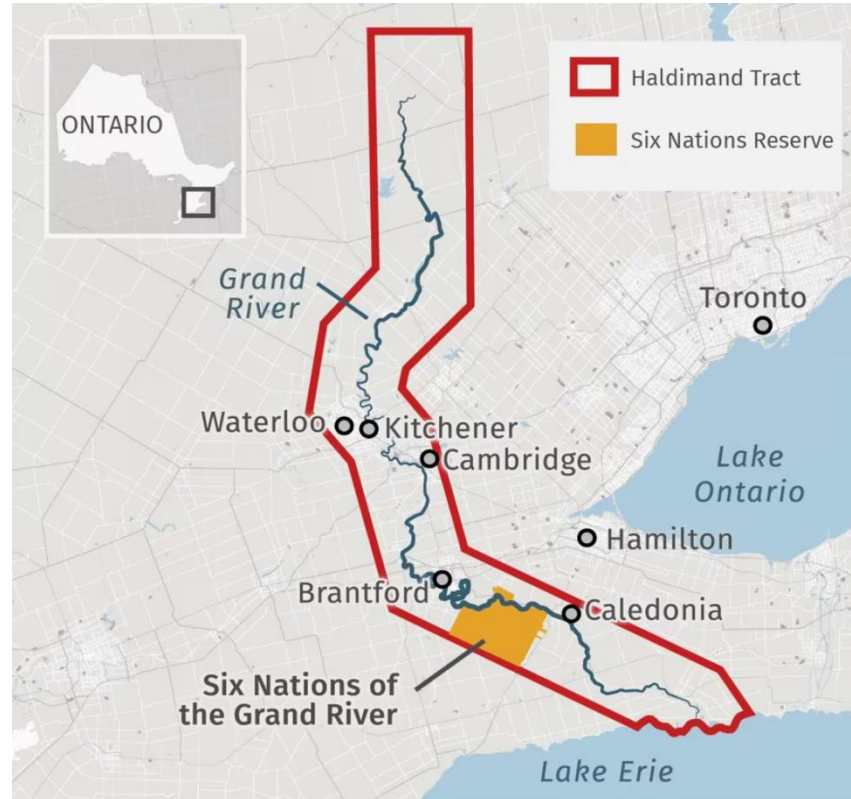
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Land Acknowledgement

- The University of Waterloo is located on the Haldimand Tract
- This is traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples



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Hannah Odia, Simon Lefebvre

- Public Health Student – University of Waterloo
- Long distance runner, lover of music, reading, camping
- Wildfire Research Advisor at NIFSC
- Wildland/Structural, Teacher, EM
- Hunter, trapper, backcountry enthusiast



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Overview of Today's Presentation

- Project Introduction
- Literature Review Summary
- Risk Framework Overview
- Historical Wildfire Analysis
- Next Steps
- Anticipated Outcomes



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Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety in Canadian Indigenous Communities

- **Our Story**

- Our team is driven by a passion for environmental stewardship and to Indigenous fire stewardship

- **Our mission**

- Respect and recognize Indigenous knowledge
- Establish relationships built on reciprocity and trust
- Spotlight Indigenous perspectives and wisdom



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Our Goals

- To **reclaim** Indigenous fire safety knowledge through:
 - Understanding existing knowledge
 - Embracing cultural practices
 - Centring Indigenous leaders and perspectives
- To **vitalize** community-wide resilience to wildfires by developing resources, including:
 - Visuals
 - Storytelling
 - Print
 - Indigenous-based risk frameworks



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Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety in Canadian Indigenous Communities

- **Phase 1**
 - Collect and understand Indigenous WUI fire safety knowledge, practices, and unique community requirements
 - Review existing literature, fire/census data, case studies, and other info sources
 - Complete a comprehensive literature review



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Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety in Canadian Indigenous Communities

- **Phase 2:**
 - Develop WUI Indigenous community risk criteria
 - Develop strategies and technologies for vulnerability assessment and community resilience



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Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety in Canadian Indigenous Communities

- **Phase 3:**
 - Develop Indigenous-informed WUI fire safety awareness and educational programs
 - Create final WUI Indigenous community risk framework/tool
 - Empower communities to proactively protect shared values placed at risk by wildfires



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Discussion Break

- Are traditional forms of fire management still practiced today in your community?
- Would you be willing to share a story about your experience with traditional practices related to forestry/fire?

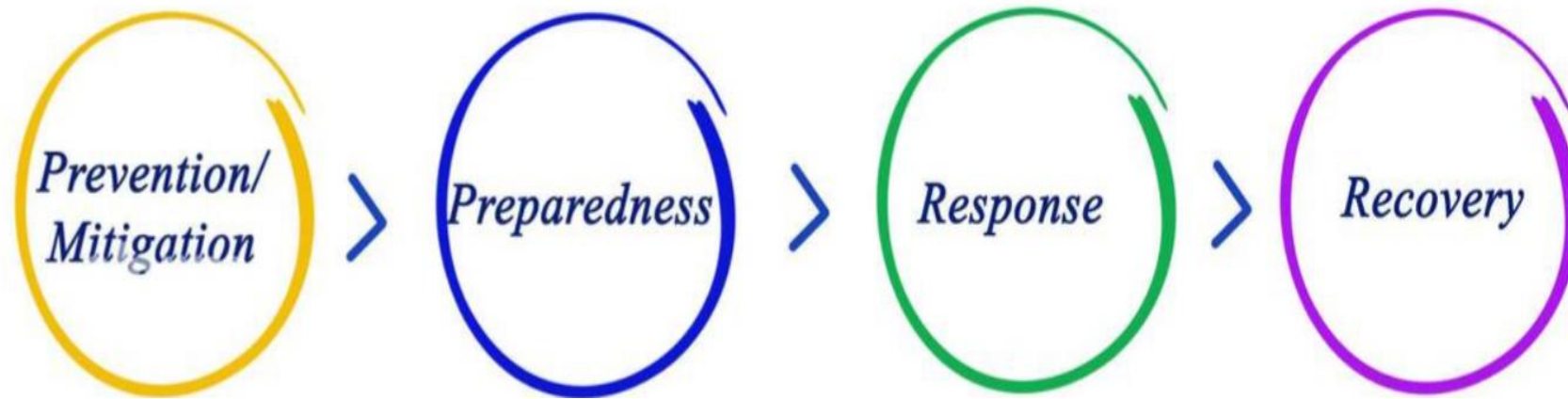


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Wildfire Risk Awareness



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Prevention



- Historically fire prevention was
 - Influenced by the unique requirements of the region
- **However**, cultural practices are hindered by:
 - Losses of cultural connection to land
 - Bureaucratic processes managed by non-Indigenous agencies



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Prevention



- Fire is a **life-giving** force:
 - Living part of ecosystem
 - Human/animal/plants are equals
- Fire renews forests/landscapes
 - Cultivates the land
 - Acts as ecosystem maintenance
- Cultural burns are successful at:
 - Mitigating risk
 - Intergenerational teaching



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Preparedness



- Current challenges
 - Inflexible approaches to fire management
 - Undervalued expertise
 - Ineffective communication between communities and partner agencies
 - Financial constraints



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Preparedness



- All communities possess unique knowledge/capacity
- There is a need to empower:
 - Genuine collaboration
 - Indigenous fire knowledge in wildfire research
 - Innovative community-informed methods of fire management



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Discussion Break

- What does meaningful collaboration in fire prevention look like to you? Would you be willing to share a story?
- Would you be willing to share some of your perspectives on risk in your community?



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Response



- Challenges during evacuation
 - Unforeseen problems emerge
 - Evacuee displacement
 - Emotional and mental impact
- Challenges during fire response
 - Confusion among emergency response teams



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Response



- Facilitators
 - Highlighting capacity
 - Utilizing Indigenous knowledge
 - Decentralizing management
 - Reclaiming sovereignty



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Recovery



- Negative long term effects of evacuation
 - Mental health crisis'
 - Loss of place attachment
- Post return issues
 - Confusing/lengthy reimbursement process



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Wildfire Risk Awareness: Recovery



- Communities with past experiences are uniquely informed
 - Necessary to listen and take action based on the experiences/stories shared by communities

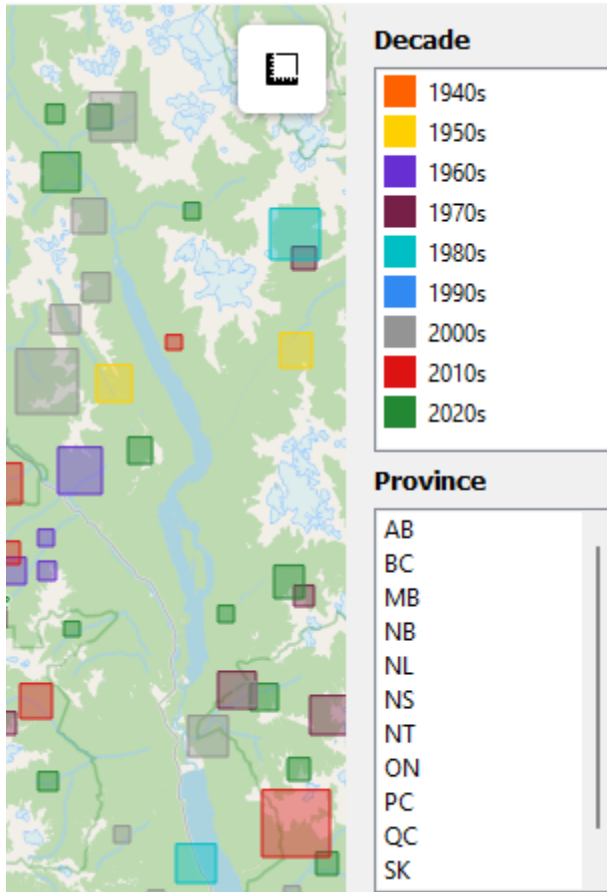


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Historical Wildfire Analysis



- Historical records show where wildfires may commonly occur
- An application has been created which maps this historical record
- Mapping the fire events enables us to “see” the data and analyze it by the factors that we know (e.g. cause, year occurred)



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Risk Factors and Framework

- The creation of a wildfire risk framework was a crucial step in the community selection process
 - Developed using a combination of socio-economic and technical risk criteria
 - Applies at both the individual and population level
- Socio-economic criteria
 - Housing quality (Total # of major and minor repairs needed)
 - House ownership levels
 - Unemployment rates
- Technical criteria
 - Wildfire risk
 - Location



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Next Steps

- Connect with communities through **real** relationships
- Abide and maintain OCAP principles
- Learn from your community about wildfire
- Share indigenous knowledge about fire-safety with other indigenous communities through storytelling
- Help communities build specific wildfire preparedness and evacuation plans



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Anticipated Outcomes

- Build long term relationships with WUI Indigenous communities
- Develop Indigenous-informed fire safety awareness and education tools
- Create an Indigenous-informed WUI community fire risk assessment framework



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Anticipated Outcomes

- Share adaptable/universal advice
- Spotlight community leadership
- Strengthen local collaborations
- Reintroduce Indigenous fire knowledge to younger generations



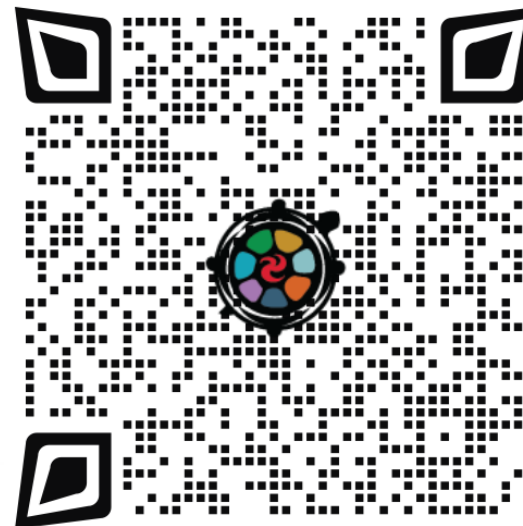
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Conclusion



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