

PUBLIC PRESENTATION



McLeod Lake Habitat Enhancement: Seeing the forest for more than just the trees

Guest Presenter: Brandon Geldart

Project Coordinator, Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC (SERNbc)

Wednesday, Dec 3, 2025

12:00 pm- 1:00 pm

UNBC Prince George Campus, Senate Chambers (Rm 1079, Charles

Or Register To Attend Online At:

McCaffray Hall)

https://unbc.zoom.us/webi nar/register/WN_XJ8mnp24 QH600WDnH-s4Qg

Presentation Summary:

Biodiversity loss in intensively managed plantations has been identified as a limiting factor for maintaining ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, and First Nations food sovereignty in central British Columbia. Conventional forestry practises result in the establishment of even-aged, high-density conifer stands to maximize timber production. The trade offs to this approach are a loss in structural and species diversity, forage availability, and long-term ecosystem resilience. A pilot project was initiated to explore the opportunities and limitations of silviculture treatments to provide wildlife habitat attributes, increase biodiversity, stand structure, forage, and resilience within plantations. The pilot project is located near Carp Lake Park within the SBSmk1 and SBSwk1 variants, where three 44- year-old plantations (89 hectares total) have been treated. Treatments include variable spaced thinning, gap creation, girdling, micropiling, tree stubbing, and road restoration. An objective of this pilot is to develop an economically viable model for biodiversity enhancement within landscapes that have been converted to even aged conifer plantations. Monitoring for this project includes understory vegetation response, overstory dynamics, soil moisture, snow interception, light regime, and wildlife use including moose pellet surveys. This project is a partnership between the Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC, McLeod Lake Indian Band, the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, the University of Northern British Columbia, the College of New Caledonia, the Ministry of Forests, and the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. Monitoring will continue through 2030, and while data analysis from the first year post-treatment is still underway, this project has the potential to inform the role that silviculture practises play in managing for a large range of values. By integrating ecological, cultural, and economic objectives, this project may provide a scalable framework for managing soil moisture, animal populations, and forest resilience at the stand and landscape level.

Brandon Geldart is an owner of Ironwood Resource Professionals and is a Project Coordinator with the Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC (SERNbc). With more than 15 years in the forest sector, his experience spans the full spectrum of forestry work—from tree planting, silviculture surveying, block and road layout, timber cruising, harvest operations planning, supervision of harvesting, layout, brushing and road maintenance crews. In recent years, he has focused on ecosystem restoration, leading projects on moose habitat enhancement, caribou habitat recovery, road restoration and riparian area planting. Brandon coordinated the Moose Enhancement Pilot Project working with MLİB, industry and local experts to design and deliver innovative silviculture treatments that balance community, ecological, and economic values. Based in Prince George, he spends his time outdoors with his spouse and two daughters and is also an active local musician.

All are welcome to participate. There is no cost to attend but pre-registration via the link to the left is required to participate online. The Natural Resources & Environmental Studies Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia, together with its partners, invite those with interest in learning more about this topic to participate in this presentation and discussion in-person or online.

This event is funded by the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP). The FWCP is a partnership between BC Hydro, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations, Public Stakeholders, and the Province of BC, to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in



