

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HABITAT RESTORATION IN FNFN TERRITORY FOR US, BY US



FORT NELSON FIRST NATION

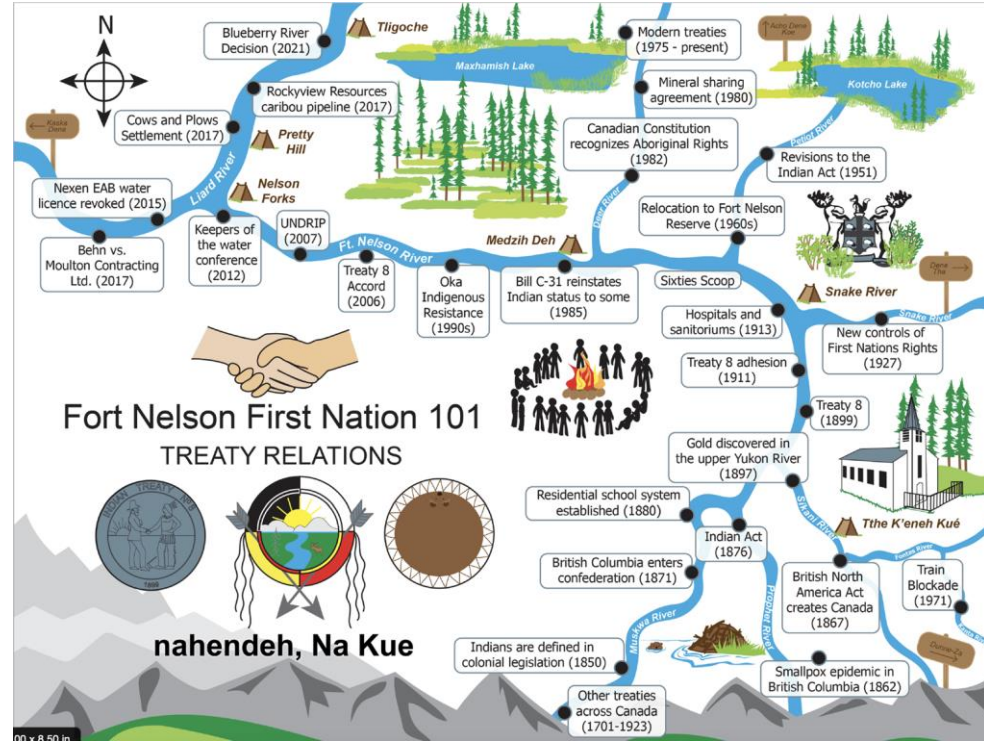
FOR AS LONG AS THE SUN SHINES, THE GRASS GROWS AND THE RIVERS FLOW.

- Strong leadership & governance over our Traditional Territory
 - *Planning, decision-making, control*
- Proud Cree and Dene Culture, > 800 members
- Signatory to Treaty 8 (1910)



GOVERNANCE

- Indigenous communities interact with government in Canada differently than in the US.
 - Canada signed UNDRIP
 - Increased collaboration for decision-making
 - **For FNFN, this means shared decision-making, 'For Us, By Us'**
 - Legal decisions in favour of Indigenous communities
 - Yahey Decision
 - BC failed to uphold Treaty 8 rights
 - Compensation in \$ and decision-making for development



INDUSTRIAL LAND USE HISTORY

- Long history of big oil & gas plays - since the early 1950s
 - *E.g., Horn River Basin*
- Exploration & production occurred everywhere, forestry in some places
 - *Many boom-bust cycles, since last bust in ~ 2014 no new boom*
- Expansive disturbance footprint
 - *Many overlapping tenures & dispositions, many different players*



1960: Road from Keg River, AB to Fort Nelson, BC

1960: Seismic acquisition

1958: Sleigh camp



LONG TERM IMPACTS

- The disturbance footprint persists & accumulates
- Lasting ecological & cultural impacts
 - Animal populations and distributions, invasive weeds, changes to forest types and stand age
 - Hunting and traditional uses of the land

USING CARIBOU TO RESTORE THE LANDSCAPE

- Woodland Caribou

- Federal & BC species at risk
 - Precipitous population declines from cumulative effects;
 - Need big, intact peatlands
- Cultural connection
- Access to research, conservation, & restoration funds

- For Us, By Us

- IG leadership & partnership with BC
 - Negotiate common ground on vision
- FNFN to lead planning & implementation
 - Landscape level prioritization
 - Identification of treatment targets
 - Plan & deliver restoration



LAND BASED OPPORTUNITY



- **Large Traditional Land base**
 - *Encompasses many boreal & mountain caribou ranges*
- **Internal decision-making capacity**
 - *Integrates different values & cultural practices*
 - *Links economy & restoration goals*
- **Strategic vision**
 - *Links landscape & culture*

APPROACH TO RESTORATION

- **Holistic approach**
 - Restoring for caribou, ecosystem integrity and cultural opportunity
- **Integrated values**
 - Restoring landscapes & creating sustainable businesses for band members and the community
- **Local knowledge**
 - Restoration using local, not imported, perspectives and values



METHODS OF RESTORATION

- **Trial & error**
 - What works here, what doesn't?
 - What is effective & realistic?
- **Transplanting**
 - Hummocks & islands to rebuild microsites and ecosystem processes with local soil, microbes, and plants
- **Manipulation**
 - Soil demcompaction, incorporating CWD, stem bending



ADAPTABILITY

In 2019, never again



In 2022, actually it works



MONITORING

Are the treatments effective?



Target & Secondary Tree Growth



Plant Survival, Hummock
Dimensions, Moisture, Temperature
Gradients

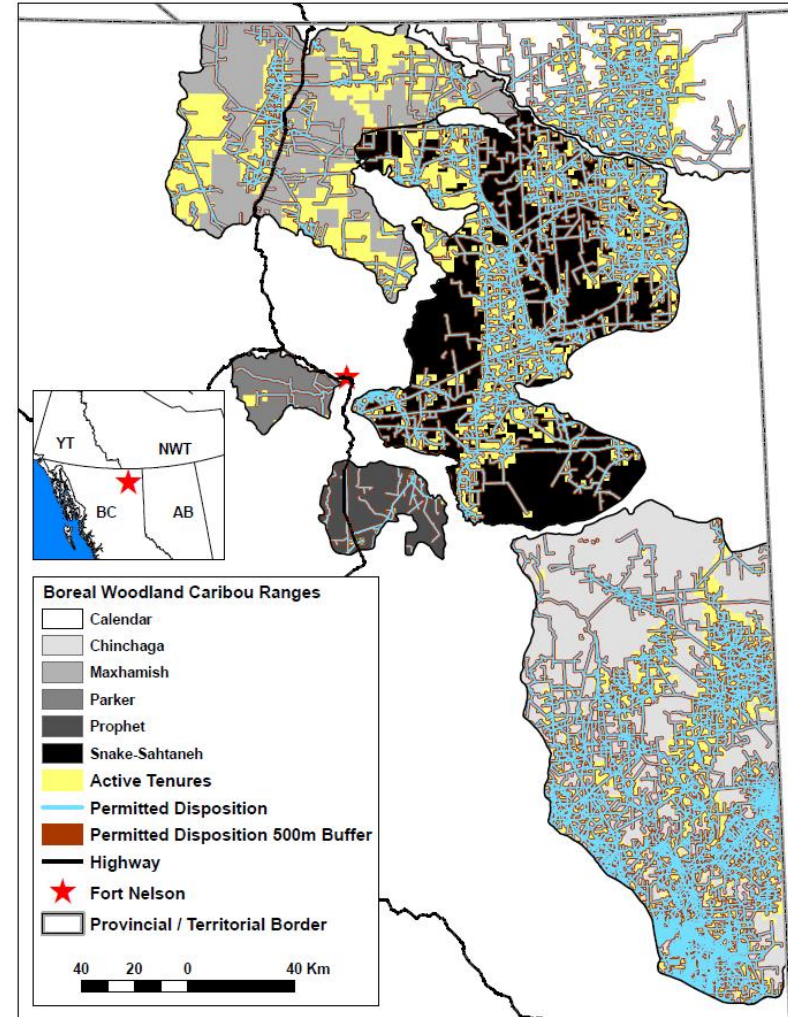


Hummock Coverage and
Anchoring

**Must be part of every
project!**

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Restoration economy
- Guardian program
 - *Employment of FNFN members in restoration, environmental and cultural projects*
- Retire unused dispositions
- Legally protect restored lands
- Funding and partnerships

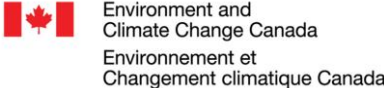


NEXT STEPS

- **Restored & monitored to date**
 - *92 km of lines & 9 pads restored*
 - *927 veg monitoring plots*
 - *42 wildlife cameras*
 - *17 ARUs*
 - *4,000 km aerial surveys*
- **Transitioning from project- to program-based**
 - *125 linear km this winter*
 - *Expanding moose, beaver, wolf monitoring*
 - *Climate change and permafrost monitoring*



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS



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