



## Lilwat Nation River Valley Prescribed Fire Project

Fall 2020/Spring 2021

The Land is central to Lilwat culture and identity as expressed in the Ucwalmícwts phrase

“Pal7míntwal i ucwalmícwa  
múta7 ti tmicw”

*The land and people are together as one.*

In 2019, the Lilwat Nation, staff from the BC Wildfire Service’s Pemberton Fire Zone, and Frontera Forest Solutions, Inc. collaborated on the development of a prescribed fire burn plan. It is expected that prescribed & controlled fire will be applied to the Lilwat Nation’s river valley this fall or next spring as a means of wildfire risk reduction.

Prescribed fire is one fuel management strategy that is used to mitigate wildfire risks and reduce the intensity of future wildfires. Prescribed fires are pre-planned and lit intentionally. These planned fires are well resourced with fire suppression staff and equipment to control and manage the fire and meet the objectives in the prescribed fire burn plan. It’s an effective tool for reducing fire hazards because it helps decrease fuel loads (i.e. combustible material, such as underbrush, dead wood and accumulations of cured grasses) on the landscape. Prescribed fires also help reduce the intensity of future wildfires by removing understory vegetation (i.e. vegetation that grows on the ground underneath the forest canopy). Other methods for managing fuels include thinning, pruning, and mechanical removal of vegetation. It is often necessary to use a combination of these methods to safely and effectively to meet land management objectives.

### WHERE

The river valley meadows are located about 1 km south of the community center of Lilwat Nation. The meadows contain primarily grass and deciduous shrubs in a low elevation flood plain that, over the years, has been cleared and grazed for agriculture. The two parcels that have been identified are roughly 87 Hectares and 32 Hectares in size.

### WHY

Land clearing and grazing has resulted in a mosaic of flashy, easily ignited fuels that have accumulated around community values. The river valley meadows have supported two wildfires within the last six years, which led to the development of prescribed fire as a means of fuel reduction.



*A large-scale oblique photo of the River Valley soon after it burned in April 2019.*

Through the development of the plan, the project team identified the following objectives:

- Reduce flashy fuel loading and thus reduce the risk of wildfire to nearby homes and infrastructure,
- Provide a site for ongoing prescribed fire training and education, strengthen local wildfire response capacity within the region and build upon the existing partnership between Lílwat and the B.C. Wildfire Service,
- Demonstrate the use of cultural burning to members of the Lílwat Nation and to non-Lílwat community members,
- Reduce tree and shrub cover within the proposed treatment area, and
- Avoid harming wildlife.



*Example of dry grass fuels within the proposed burn area.*

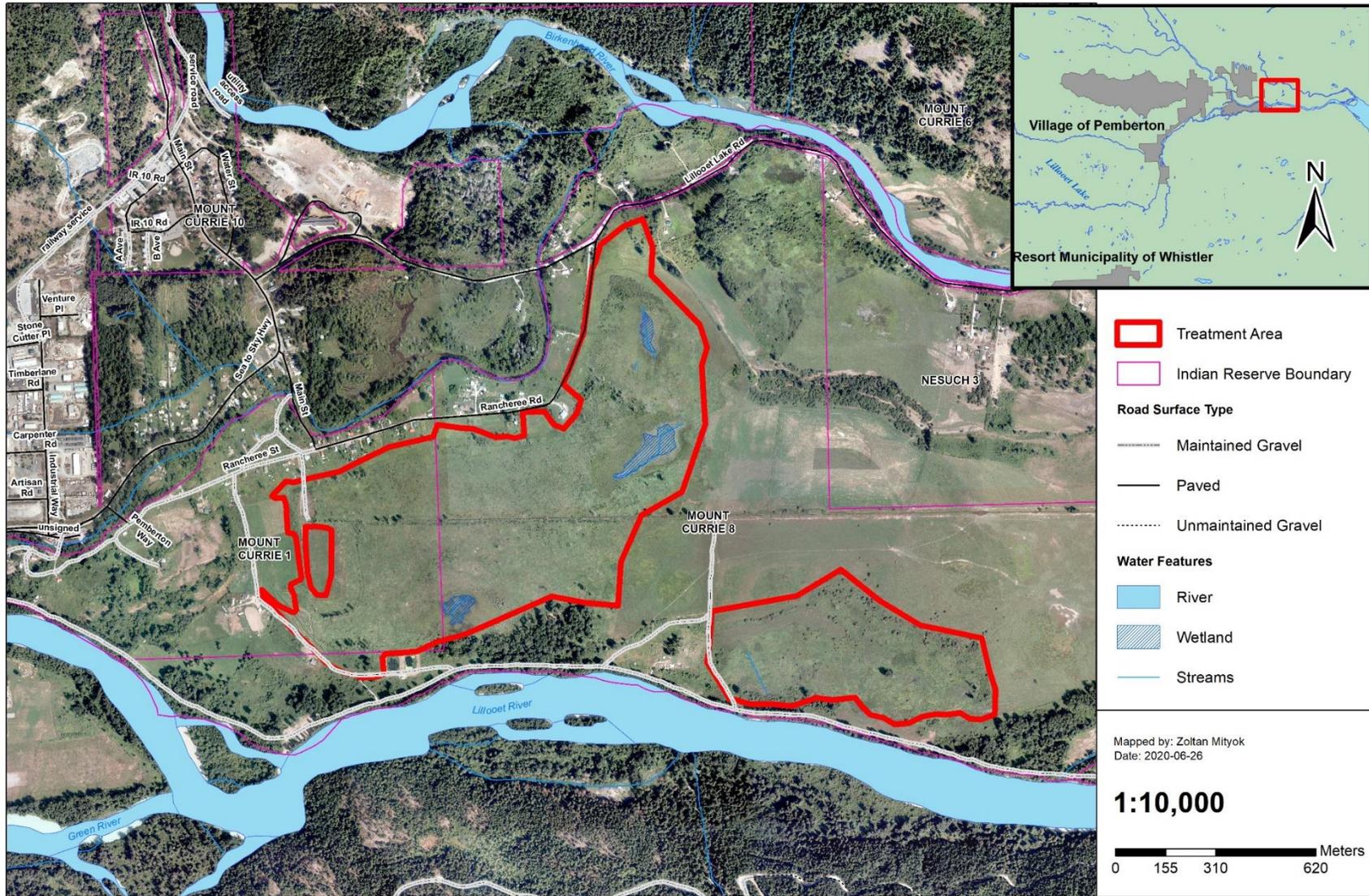
#### WHEN

Prescribed fire is often conducted during the spring or fall when grass fuels are dry and available for combustion, when fires burn at a lower intensity, and when less smoke is produced than unplanned wildfires. The team will be looking at implementing this burn in the fall of 2020 or the spring of 2021. We will have to monitor weather conditions, curing of fuels, fire weather indices and venting (air quality; smoke management) to burn within the parameters of the burn plan, and anticipate that our first window to complete the project will be towards late September into October.

#### Further Information:

If you are looking for more information on this project or have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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Overview map of the prescribed burn area.