

Revitalizing active fire management in Tsilhqot'in territory

Context

In the aftermath of devastating wildfires, Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwetin First Nations are revitalizing active fire management on their lands. Gathering Voices Society (GVS) is working with Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in to design and implement an active fire management program that can help both First Nations adapt to a changing climate which offers more risk of wildfire. GVS will coordinate an active network of fire and carbon scientists to explore the development of a carbon standard, so that carbon credits can be produced and marketed from this program.

Key Elements

- A. Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in are part of the Tsilhqot'in National Government in central British Columbia. Both First Nations have Aboriginal title lands, and assert authority over the Dasiqox Tribal Park area (both areas cover more than 300,000 hectares).
- B. Recent wildfires in 2017 impacted tens of thousands of hectares in the Chilcotin region, harming forests, threatening communities and infrastructure, and releasing thousands of tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere. Climate models suggest wildfires will become more regular in the region.
- C. In 2017, GVS held discussions with leadership from Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in to explore the development of an active fire management program in the region. This project is currently being advanced, with funding being obtained for community awareness programs, fire management training, and the development of a pilot program in early spring 2019.
- D. In Australia, the creation of Aboriginal fire management programs has produced positive ecological, social and economic results. These programs generate tens of millions of dollars for communities from carbon mitigation funds, employ thousands of Indigenous Australians on their lands, and reduce wildfire and carbon emissions significantly. Learning from experts involved in these programs is an important part of this project.