**Burning Tree Participatory Geohub by Tobler’s Acolytes**

The Burning Tree Participatory App is a community mapping tool designed to both inform Indigenous Fire Management and Traditional Fire Response measures. Using a wildfire geospatial risk analysis produced for the Province of British Columbia, this tool: 1. presents geospatial data on areas of high risk of fire occurrence and 2. gathers local knowledge prompted by questions through a Survey123 form regarding wildfire management prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery measures. The central goal of this app is to provide opportunities for First Nation communities to engage in all stages of wildfire management and planning process and increase capacity for community resilience to manage wildfires. This application is the first of its kind to record community experience and participatory mapping for the use of wildfire management in relation to reconciliation. The data obtained from the Burning Tree Participatory App is intended to be used to policy makers, wildfire management specialists, crew leaders, land planners, and program managers in developing wildfire mitigation strategies that can support or enhance cultural features, spaces, and values of First Nations communities across British Columbia.

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**Mission Statement:**

Across Canada, more than four million people live near forests. Climate change will see more frequent and more severe weather events. Higher temperatures and uncertain precipitation events mean that forests face increasing risk of fire events. The harms associated with forest fire events will be increasingly felt by Canadians. Fire events impacts are not evenly distributed across the population; a recent study found that First Nations reserves and peoples account for nearly one third of all evacuees and evacuation events from recent decades. In British Columbia, it is no surprise that First Nations communities are experiencing the front-line effects of Canada’s changing climate.

In 2021, the Government of British Columbia reported over 1600 wildfires, with over 8700 square kilometres of land burned. First Nations communities are disproportionately affected by wildfires, and recent research suspects that they are faced with tree times higher risk of wildfires than other communities in Canada.

Traditionally, First Nations managed their own lands to combat wildfires using methods of controlled burning. Controlled burns were conducted during specific times and locations based on the traditional knowledge accumulated through the generations. As stewards of the land, conducting controlled burns were a vital component of ensuring the long-term prosperity of their lands.

With the increase pressures from climate change on the natural environment, effective wildfire management and planning will be dependent on the knowledge of First Nations and their peoples. Many calls to action have surfaced from First Nation Chiefs and communities across the province of British Columbia, to revive the practice of Indigenous Fire Management; the time to facilitate the knowledge sharing between those who understand the land best and the wider Canadian population is now.

**Geohub Page Description**

**Home**

Features a collection of participatory mapping, experience sharing, and site identification can act as one resource in coordinating appropriate response planning to support Indigenous fire management. Below, you will find a collection of the Burning Tree, which features community participatory apps for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery planning.

**Risk**

Given that wildfires pose significant threats to the landscape in various forms, it is necessary to identify the risks that posed by wildfires in order to develop cost-effective prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies. The results of the wildfire risk analysis combined with participatory mapping elements enable First Nation leaders and their communities to safely and adequately make decisions about Indigenous Fire Management and Traditional Fire Response measures.

**Prevention**

Informing community members with regards to the risks associated with wildfires can have lasting impacts. Prevention of wildfires can be achieved through public education, awareness and pre-suppression, which may allow community members to gain insight on the resources required to individually respond to wildfire events.

The following Burning Tree Participatory App allows community members to identify areas that require wildfire prevention, such as trimming or controlled burning, or resources that are necessary to adequately prevent greater risks in their community.

**Preparedness**

Based on wildfires that have historically happened within the Province of British Columbia, First Nation communities have the capacity to change the way fire is managed within their lands. The data obtained from the Burning Tree Participatory App is intended to be used to policy makers, wildfire management specialists, crew leaders, land planners, and program managers in developing wildfire mitigation strategies that can support or enhance cultural features, spaces, and values of First Nations communities across British Columbia.

**Response**

Response planning can help First Nation firefighters to plan ahead areas where suppression in areas that are at high-risk for wildfires is needed. Historical events have highlighted that communication is a key role to supporting communities that are experiencing the effects of wildfires. As such, this participatory application intends to serve as a resource for comprehensive response planning.

**Recovery**

First Nations communities experience challenges in obtaining full and timely reimbursement for expenses incurred, which can affect the recovery from a fire event. Recovery from a wildfire is a challenging undertaking for any community. Once a forest has been affected by wildfire, it can take years for life to return to normal. Participatory mapping and experience sharing can help facilitate areas where there is a need to improve support for Indigenous communities recovering from a fire event.

**Data Sources:**

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**Images:**

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**https://c.tenor.com/IdI2MVW2htEAAAAC/john-wick-burning.gif**