

Simulation effects of climate change on fire regime: implications for Boreal Caribou and landbird communities in the Northwest Territories

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1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this project was to support multi-species modelling objectives of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) with respect to woodland caribou and migratory songbirds. We sought to integrate models of vegetation dynamics, wildfire, and anthropogenic change with statistical models of songbird abundances and woodland boreal caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) resource selection and demographic parameters. The integration framework is SpaDES (Chubaty and McIntire 2017), a system of R packages for statistical and geospatial analysis and spatial simulation, designed for ecological forecasting applications, especially powerful over very large areas. The integrated model is used to forecast the spatial distribution of selected songbird species and the regional potential to sustain viable populations of woodland boreal caribou, under climate change over the 21st century. Other potential applications include quantifying the overlap between areas of high conservation value for birds and for caribou, and evaluating the conservation potential in these respects of specific candidate protected areas. The spatial extent of this work is Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 6 as contained within the Northwest Territories of Canada. The integrated model is implemented as a suite of eight groups of SpaDES modules. A common spatial resolution of 250m is used in all modules for processing and reporting. Most reporting is done over forested habitats only, neglecting waterbodies, wetlands, and areas of tundra vegetation or shrublands (see the **LandR** module description, and future directions, below).

This project is, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive and extensive integration of landscape and climate change effects on Species At Risk to date. It represents a novel and important contribution to ecological forecasting which, with some further development, will support ECCC in addressing both national (i.e. *Species At Risk Act*) and international (i.e. *Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Target 11*) policy mandates for biodiversity conservation today, and under anticipated future conditions.

The models contained within this project represent regional processes and are intended to support regional planning initiatives. The models incorporate the best current understanding of ecological processes, and make use of statistical relationships at regional and national scales. They may not accurately predict localized processes. Accordingly, the results should not be taken as predictions of the conditions at any particular location and time. This discrepancy between regional and local scales is well documented in ecology (Wiens 1989; Holling 1992; Levin 1992; Burton et al. in review) with direct ramifications on downscaling models (e.g. Riitters 2005; Araujo et al. 2005).

The work was conducted under EC Contract No. 30000675933. The final deliverable under this contract is intended to be a manuscript for publication in the primary literature. This report represents a draft of the Methods Section of this target manuscript, with some preliminary results.

1.1 General project components as stated in the RFP

Item #1: Species Abundance Models (SAMs) for landbirds under current conditions. Item #2: Land change simulation (2000-2100). Item #3: Demographic models for caribou, SAMs for landbirds, co-occurrence of caribou and landbirds under future conditions.

2 Integrated modules overview: Items 1, 2, and components of item 3

This integrated model is implemented as a SpaDES metamodule. The metamodule is composed of eight named groups of tightly coupled modules; there are known as “parent modules” in SpaDES parlance. Each parent implements a key model process (e.g. fire, vegetation dynamics) or component (e.g. bird abundance predictions). The modules are structured as follows, and for an overview of the concept of SpaDES modules, please see <https://cran.rproject.org/web/packages/SpaDES.core/vignettes/ii-modules.html>.

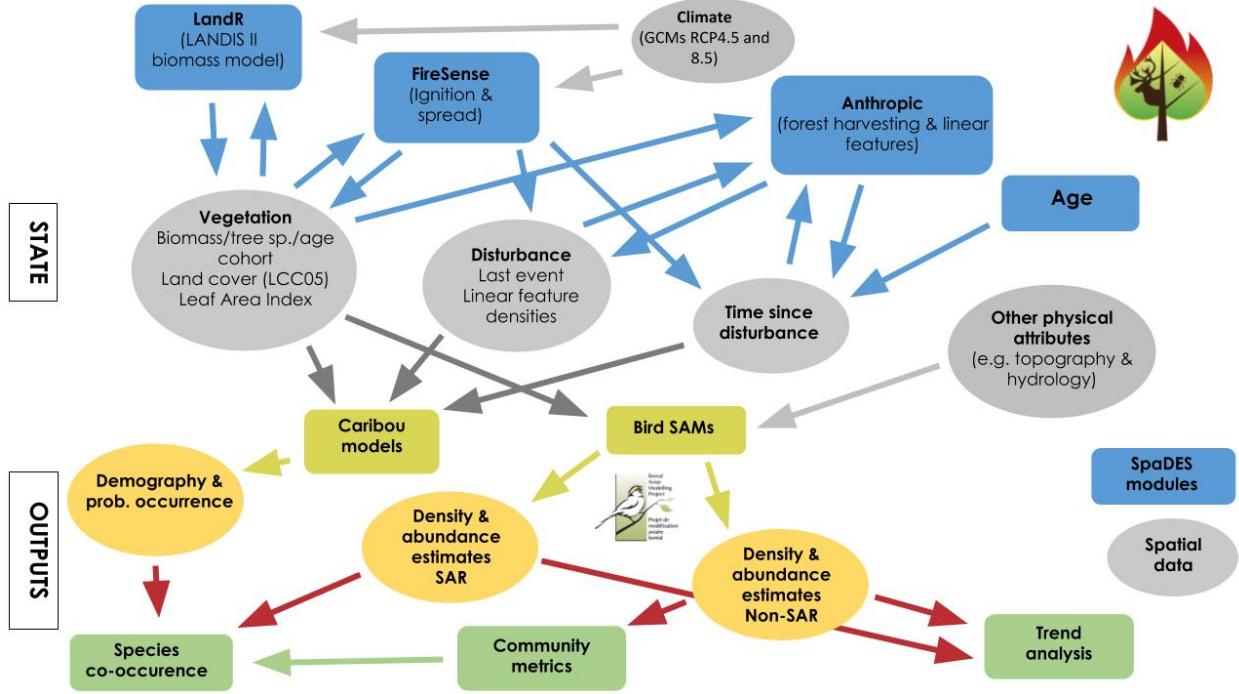


Figure 1: Figure 1. Module structure that composes the NWT project

Running the full metadmodule for a 100 year simulation over the entire study area can take many days on a 1 TB, 50 core RAM Linux computer. For the whole BCR 6 within the NWT, the following table indicates an average running time for each module group:

module	approximate duration
LandR	3.50 days
LandR.CS (climate)	...to be determined
scfm-fireSense	...to be determined
anthropogenic	...to be determined
birdsNWT (10 sp)	6.25 days
caribouRSFModel	1.40 days
caribouPopGrowthModel	3.50 days
comm_metricsNWT	3 hours
Edehzhie (10 bird sp)	3 days

The structure and methods used for each one of the modules is as follows:

2.0.1 LandR

LandR is a spatially explicit model of vegetation dynamics. It models the biomass of cohorts of tree species within cells, which interact over a landscape by the process of seed dispersal. The **LandR** group of modules is composed of one data treatment and parameterisation module, and a group of modules that simulate biomass succession dynamics. The paramaters governing biomass change are estimated for the study area specified. The methods and results of these estimations can be found in Appendix 1.

The first **LandR** module, **Boreal_LBMRDataPrep**, calculates site-specific parameters needed by the biomass succession modules - for this project these site specific parameters are estimated for Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 6 within the Northwest Territories. For instance, maximum biomass, above-ground net primary productivity (aNPp), and establishment probabilities from seed germination are calculated separately depending on tree species cover and biomass, ecodistrict, land cover class (from the Land Cover Map of Canada 2005; LCC2005), and stand age. This module also provides other parameters, such as species tolerances to shade, and other plant traits (e.g. longevity, ability to resprout, etc.). These traits were obtained from trait tables used in LANDIS-II, a popular forest-landscape simulation model. All these are available in Dominic Cyr’s GitHub page: (https://raw.githubusercontent.com/dcy/LANDIS-II_IA_generalUseFiles/master/speciesTraits.csv)

The group of modules, named **LandR_Biomass** form the core of the vegetation succession model. These modules began as a re implementation in SpaDES of the LANDIS-II Biomass Succession module (v3.2.1), but have since been changed in several ways (Barros et al. in prep). They consist of (1) **LBMR**, the **LandR** module responsible for vegetation aging, dispersal, updating biomass following other modules’ events, and producing summary figures and tables; (2) **LandR_BiomassGMOrig**, the **LandR** module responsible for cohort growth and mortality; and (3) **Biomass_regeneration**, the **LandR** module which handles post-disturbance biomass regeneration (e.g. fire; Appendix 1). **LandR** needs at least the first two modules (**LBMR** and **LandR_BiomassGMOrig**) to produce sensible vegetation dynamics.

In brief, the **LandR** modules simulate biomass changes by cohort (species-age combinations) as a function of age, between-cohort competition for light, seed dispersal and germination, regeneration following a disturbance, and mortality due to senescence, competition or disturbance.

*Current limitations of the **LandR** module*

The purpose of the module **Boreal_LBMRDataPrep** is to estimate parameters of the vegetation succession modules directly from data. This is done “automatically” should the data or study area change. However, this automatic parameter estimation has been tested in only a few places and there is still the need to test how this calibration is responding to new study areas. We have identified some limitations arising from this:

1. Initial decreases in biomass during the first decades of the simulation are most likely due to starting ages (Canada national stand age map: “<http://tree.pfc.forestry.ca/kNN-StructureStandVolume.tar>”) being too close to species’ longevity parameters (from LANDIS-II Biomass Succession v6.2 traits table). This results in many cohorts either dying immediately, or almost immediately, at the beginning of the simulation leading to a decrease in total biomass. Stand age maps and tree longevity are known to be flawed. On the one hand, estimating stand age can be tricky and often relies on allometric relationships which can vary immensely across environmental gradients. On the other hand, tree longevity is frequently estimated from the average maximum “observed” ages (i.e. realized age) for a given species; observed age is greatly dependent on the environment and disturbance conditions to which populations are exposed, rather than the potential maximum age of a tree under favourable conditions. There isn’t a clear answer as to what is the best way of dealing with these issues, but see below for some potential suggestions.
2. Because the **LandR** model is designed to model the dynamics tree species on patches of forest. It does not represent shrubs, grasses or non-vascular plants, and can not reproduce the processes that cause large areas of the northern forest to be dominated by these taxa. Therefore, pixels initially assigned to non-forested land-cover classes are assumed to remain in that state, independent of **LandR** predictions. Model results are summarised only for pixels that were in forested classes initially.

*Future versions of the **LandR** module group could include:*

1. A spin-up similar to LANDIS-II (simulating cohort growth from time 0, minus stand age) to address the potential maximum tree age and biomass conditions. This also comes with its own set of problems, as only even-aged stands (single cohorts) can be generated in this way and biomasses will still need to be adjusted at the end of the spin-up so that they match more closely the observed biomass.

This can be especially tricky in cases where the current biomass was measured in forests with complex age structure and species admixture. An alternate solution may be to let the model run for a few hundred timesteps (*i.e.* a stabilization phase) until vegetation dynamics reach quasi-equilibrium, before introducing the subsequent modules within this project that rely on results from **LandR** (*i.e.* **birdsNWT**, **caribouRSFModel**, and **caribouPopGrowthModel**). These solutions would address current **LandR** limitation #1.

2. Models such as **LandR** will often overestimate tree cover and biomass in open habitats because they lack quantified ecological mechanisms that limit tree growth in these areas (*i.e.* differences in growing season length, soil nutrient and water availability, competition from non-vascular plants, or herbivory). Future versions of the **LandR** modules could (1) ignore this limitation and restrict simulation dynamics to currently forested pixels; (2) incorporate estimates for these mechanisms allowing **LandR** to predict for areas that do not correspond to purely forested areas; or (3) set a maximum biomass limit for **LandR** projections. These changes would address current **LandR** limitation #2.

Current state: Currently, **LandR** (non climate sensitive) is working and has been tested in the whole BCR6/NWT. We do not present these results yet in the current report, as the species components haven't yet been integrated with this landscape simulation module. **LandR.CS** (climate sensitive tree growth and mortality) is in final testing phase for BC/Yukon before it will be tested in the BCR6/NWT area.

2.0.2 scfm-fireSense

scfm-fireSense is a hybrid of two structurally similar landscape fire models, **scfm** and **fireSense**. In each model, wildfire is simulated as a process of fire ignition (or "arrival", the occurrence of a detected, recorded fire) and fire spread on a raster grid, in this case the 250m resolution extent determined by the model template **rasterToMatch**. The overall approach is a variant of the class of landscape fire models based on a simulated percolation process (Hargrove et al. 2000). In percolation models, fire spread iteratively from burning cells to unburned neighbours with some probability, in the simplest case this probability is constant in time and space. Fires are extinguished when no further spreading occurs. The arrival (or ignition) process is modelled by stating fires within cells according to some probability.

The original version of **scfm** is described by Cumming et al. (1998), with a more accessible version in Armstrong and Cumming (2003). It was recently implemented as a collection of SpaDES modules by Cumming, McIntire, and Eddy (in prep), with the addition of automated parameter estimation for fire management records. **Scfm** models fire as a three stage stochastic process of ignition, escape and spread, with each process represented by a dedicated module. Ignition and spread have already been described. The escape stage models the effect of fire suppression, or other ecological or sampling effects that alter the lower end of the fire size distribution. The empirical quantity is the "escape probability", the probability that a fire will attain a final size greater than the size of a single pixel. This is simulated in the model by determining an initial spread probability such that the probability that a fire stays within its cell of origin equals the escape probability, after accounting for the effect of lakes and other non-flammable geographic features on fire spread. In effect, this distinguishes the first step of the iterative fire spread process. These three modules are used to simulate a fire regime, in terms of the number of fires that start, the escape probability, and the mean fire size.

In addition to the **scfmIgnition**, **scfmEscape** and **scfmSpread** modules, **scfm** makes use of several support modules involved in parameter estimation and model calibration. Fire regime parameters for ignition, escape, and a mean fire size, are estimated from historic fire data obtained from the Canadian National Fire Database (Canadian Forest Service, n.d.). Spread probabilities are tuned to replicate the empirical mean fire size by a newly implemented calibration procedure. First, the study region raster is buffered by a set distance and a flammability map is generated for the buffered region using the 2005 Land Cover Map of Canada (Latifovic et al., 2005). Landcover classes such as open water, rock, and ice are classed as non-flammable. Next, several thousand fires are ignited at random locations in landscape and spread with probabilities randomly sampled from a given range (typically 0.18 to 0.24) of spread probabilities. Fires do not start within the buffer area, but may spread to and from the buffer. This effectively removes the influence of edge effects

in determining mean fire size, provided the buffer is “wide enough”. Then the spread probabilities and resulting fire sizes are fit with a shape-constrained additive model (SCAM) (Pya and Wood, 2015). The SCAM is monotonic to ensure fire size increases for any incremental increase in spread probability. Lastly, a function minimiser, coupled with the `scam predict` method, is used to find the spread probability that will reproduce the estimated mean fire size for the region. Parameterization and calibration of the model can be done separately for all the polygons in a given shapefile (e.g., by ecoregion), allowing spatial variation in fire regime parameters among regions.

This version of the model considers lightning-caused fires only, which is not a serious limitation within BCR6, based on analysis of historical fire records from 1965-2016. The spread model returns an object to the sim environment that identifies all burned cells. In many applications, this would be inputs to other modules that maintain a forest age structure or updated vegetation state to simulate the effects of fire. This model does not simulate variation in fire severity, so typically fires are presumed to be stand initiating. These processes result in irregular patches of variously sized burns. The model tracks the number and size of simulated fires in each time step. The fire spread module is such that considerable interannual variation in area burned is observed even when the fire model parameters are constant. However, `scfm` does not account for effects of vegetation type (other than nonflammable types) or of fire weather on fire model parameters.

The `scfm-fireSense` model can be regarded as a generalisation of `scfm` where fire ignition and escape probability vary according to vegetation / land-cover type and fire weather. This is implemented by generating parameter maps based on the current year’s vegetation and fire weather, so that parameters vary in space and time.

`scfm-fireSense` is a landscape fire simulation module where fire regime attributes are sensitive to both climate and vegetation; it reproduces the spatial and temporal variation of both the number of fires, and fire escape probability. `fireSense` is composed of two groups of modules; a group that prepares and formats the data (`climate_NWT_DataPrep`, `fireSense_NWT_DataPrep`, and `MDC_NWT_DataPrep`), a module that translates between `LandR` vegetation state and `fireSense` fueltypes (`LBMR2LCC_DataPrep`), and a group of modules that implements the algorithms needed to simulate fire (`fireSense_FrequencyFit`, `fireSense_FrequencyPredict`, `fireSense_EscapeFit`, and `fireSense_EscapePredict`).

Briefly, the `scfm-fireSense` data preparation modules consist of:

`climate_NWT_DataPrep` downloads climate data from the AdaptWest project website, performs GIS operations on climate layers and makes them available to other modules.

`MDC_NWT_DataPrep` computes the Monthly Drought Code from annual climate data following equations in Bergeron et al. (2010) and makes the resulting layer available to other modules.

`fireSense_NWT_DataPrep` performs GIS operations on fire and vegetation data, as well as a number of operations to prepare the data for analysis/prediction and makes the resulting datasets available to other modules.

`LBMR2LCC_DataPrep` translates `LandR_Biomass` outputs into seven of the nine land cover classes as needed by `fireSense` (Table 1); the other two classes are the “non-fuel” class, which is assumed to be static in time, and the “recently disturbed” class which is not based on biomass but on age. These fuel types are defined by an iterative partitioning procedure starting from a single fuel type containing all vegetation classes, continually refined until no additional fuel types could be statistically distinguished based the fire ignition model. `fireSense` depends on a fueltype classifier built within the XGBoost library (Chen and Guestrin 2016) that predicts fuel type from `LandR` vegetation state. Table 2 summarises the accuracy per land cover class for the validation dataset. The non-fuel class is equivalent to the distinction between flammable and nonflammable cells used in `scfm`, as described above. Pixels are considered disturbed if the time since last disturbance is less than 21 years.

[Table 1. Correspondence between the land cover classes used by **fireSense** and code from the Land Cover Map of Canada 2005]

Land.cover.class	Land.cover.map.of.Canada.2005.original.code.s.
Conifer medium-density	7
Herbs and shrubs	16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
Mixedwood conifer-dominated	13
Non-fuel	33, 36, 37, 38, 39
Open conifer	20
Other conifer	1, 6, 8, 9, 10
Other treed	2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 15
Recently disturbed	34, 35
Wetlands	19

[Table 2. Classifier accuracy per landcover class on the validation dataset]

Land.cover.class	Land.cover.map.of.Canada.2005.original.code.s.
Conifer medium-density	7
Herbs and shrubs	16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
Mixedwood conifer-dominated	13
Non-fuel	33, 36, 37, 38, 39
Open conifer	20
Other conifer	1, 6, 8, 9, 10
Other treed	2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 15
Recently disturbed	34, 35
Wetlands	19

Briefly, the **scfm-fireSense** simulation modules consist of:

fireSense_FrequencyFit is an implementation of the method described in Marchal et al. (2017); it fits a statistical model used to parameterize the fire ignition component of **fireSense**. Marchal et al. (2017) introduced climate sensitivity using the Monthly Drought Code (MDC) of July and introduced vegetation sensitivity using five vegetation classes. In this project, we use the MDC of June along with nine vegetation classes (fuel types) of Table 1, all of which are derived from the 39 classes of LCC2005 (Table 1). We did not estimate the fire frequency for the “non-fuel” class as it will not burn - it is defined to be 0. This module outputs a fitted model object of class **fireSense_FrequencyFit**.

fireSense_FrequencyPredict uses the model object provided by **fireSense_FrequencyFit** to predict fire frequency, or rates of fire counts. The output of this module is a probability surface describing the expected fire frequency at a 250 m resolution. This probability surface is updated annually, and used to feed the ignition component of **fireSense**.

fireSense_EscapeFit fits a statistical model used to parameterize the fire escape component of **fireSense**; a fire escapes when it propagates outside the pixel in which it started. We used logistic regression to introduce climate and vegetation sensitivity to the fire escape component. We expressed the probability that a fire escapes as a function of the Monthly Drought Code of June, and the nine classes of land cover (Table 1). This module outputs a fitted glm model object.

fireSense_EscapePredict predicts fire frequency, or rates of fire counts, using the model object provided by **fireSense_EscapeFit**. The output of this module is a probability surface describing the expected probability of fire escape at a 250 m resolution. This probability surface is updated annually and used to feed the escape component of **fireSense**.

`scfm-fireSense` uses the probability surface predicted by `fireSense_FrequencyPredict` to determine where to start fires. At the spatial and temporal scale used in this study, the probability of two or more fires per year is negligible, thus one may use the Bernoulli approximation, as in Armstrong and Cumming (2003). This parameter map is used to start fires by sampling uniform random variables for each flammable pixel, and starting a fire when the random value is smaller than the Bernoulli probability. For each ignition, fire escapes are evaluated using the probabilities estimated by `fireSense_EscapePredict`. The state of all escaped fires is passed to `scfmSpread` (see below), which spreads the fires using the per-polygon spread probabilities.

At the spatial and temporal scale used in this study, the probability of two or more fires per year is negligible, thus one may use the Bernoulli approximation, as in Armstrong and Cumming (2003). From those fires that started, `fireSense` determines which fires escape. `scfm-fireSense` then passes the information on pixels that are burning to `scfmSpread` (see above), which spreads the fires using the per-polygon spread probabilities..

Assumptions of the `scfm-fireSense` module

1. The number of fires per unit area has a negative binomial distribution conditional on land-cover class and fire weather.
2. The fire detection process was constant over the period of record.
3. The statistical relationship between fire regime parameters, fire weather, and vegetation, will remain constant over the simulation period.
4. The land cover class “non-fuels” is static throughout the simulation period, because it represents permanent and nonflammable landscape features such as rock outcrops, urban areas, and water.

Limitations of `scfm-fireSense`

The full version of the `fireSense` module has spatially and temporally variable spread parameters that vary with fueltype and annual fire weather. It was not possible to test the software needed to estimate these parameters within the scope of this contract. Therefore, `scfm-fireSense` is less sensitive to variation in vegetation and to changes in fire weather than the complete `fireSense` model would be. Experience shows, however, that the vegetation and climate sensitivity of the ignition and escape modules produces already considerable spatial and temporal variation in patterns of area burned. Currently, we are integrating LandR and `scfm-fireSense`, as well as LandR.CS and `scfm-fireSense` to allow for climate sensitivity.

Current state: While `scfm` has been tested and calibrated for the BCR6/NWT (results not shown as species haven’t yet been integrated with this module and LandR) and integrated with LandR, `scfm-fireSense-LandR` integration is still being implemented. after this implementation, `scfm-fireSense` will be implemented with LandR.CS, bringing a bigger spectrum of climate sensitivity to the species predictions.

2.0.3 anthropogenic

The **anthropogenic** parent module aims to represent current and project future anthropogenic disturbances, and to produce metrics of anthropogenic disturbance as required by other modules. These metrics include:

1. road density in km/km² per pixel calculated over a radius of 10km
2. maintain a disturbance layer defined by the union of 500m buffers around all anthropogenic disturbances

There are three submodules: `anthrDisturbanceNWT`, `lineDensity`, and `Buffer`. It provides information to the `birdsNWT`, `caribouPopGrowth`, and `caribouRSFModel` modules.

The `anthrDisturbanceNWT` module loads, prepares, and merges all anthropogenic disturbance vector data layers into a layer called `anthrDisturb`. This layer is updated by adding predefined disturbance features as

indicated in a feature update schedule file `anthrDisturbSchedule.txt`, found in the module's data directory. The file specifies a planning schedule or scenario for the addition of new features. It contains columns with information on planned timing, feature selection, source url and other feature descriptives (i.e. `planTime`, `Class`, `name`, `shortName`, `IDcol`, `featureID`, `targetFile` and `url`) of the future disturbances. Currently, only the proposed extension of the McKenzie highway is included.

The `anthrDisturbanceNWT` module initializes `anthrDisturb` from two data sources:

1. the “Boreal ecosystem anthropogenic disturbance” (BEADS) vector data for anthropogenic features. BEADS is current to 2008-2010. It is available from (<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/afd0ce47-17c3-445c-b823-2f86409da2e0>);
2. The 2010 road network file for the NWT (NWT ROADS) is available from (<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/ab807d3f-9112-4d67-b17b-12bf83ff81e2>).

There are seven feature classes:

1. airstrips (BEADS)
2. pipelines (BEADS)
3. powerlines (BEADS)
4. railways (BEADS)
5. roads (NWT ROADS)
6. seismic lines (BEADS)
7. unknown (BEADS)

The `lineDensity` module computes the total density all specified linear feature classes within a specified radius around each raster cell, expressed as magnitude per-unit area (km/km^2). The default input object is `anthrDisturb`, from which features can be selected. In this model only the roads layer of `anthrDisturb` is used. The default radius is 10 km, as per the requirements of the caribou RSF model. The road density output `LFDensityMap` is masked to `waterRaster`, such that water cells have no road density.

The direct method of calculating `lineDensity` would be extremely compute-intensive, requiring to define a circular buffer of 40 pixel radius around each pixel. We use an approximation. First, lengths of linear features within each raster cell are calculated. The values for line length within each raster cell are then spread out over all neighbouring cells within a 10km radius and summed where they overlap using fast fourier transforms (fft). This is equivalent to summing total line length within a 10 km circle around each cell divided by circle area. These calculations can be done on smaller ‘tiles’ of the study area to reduce computational requirements and computation time (but has not been parallelized yet). The magnitude-per-unit area (km/km^2) is calculated by dividing these summed values by pixel area (which makes m/m^2) and multiplied by a factor 1000 to convert them to km/km^2 . These road density estimates are used in the `caribouRSFModel` module.

The `Buffer` module computes a buffer layer (`bufferMap`) of buffers with a specific radius around a set of features from the `anthrDisturb` object. The buffer radius can be varied but is 250m here.

The default raster identifies all cells that are covered by the buffer layer. Buffered cells have a value of 1, other cells have a value of 0. These raster computations can be done for by feature class, defining a raster brick of up to seven layers, or aggregated into a cumulative disturbance later, as here. The resultant object, `bufferMap`, is masked to `waterRaster`, removing road density values in cell that represent water. `bufferMap` is used in the `caribouPopGrowth` module.

Important limitations of the anthropogenic module

1. All linear features are created at initialisation, regardless of feature length.
2. Anthropogenic features are fixed. They do not deteriorate, recover or become otherwise restored over time. This is problematic for seismic lines, especially.

3. The adequacy of the Fast Fourier Transform approximation used in module `lineDensity` has not been verified.
4. Only spatial line objects are considered in defining `bufferMap`. Point and polygon objects are neglected.

*Future versions on the **anthropogenic** module could include:*

1. Specific phases of linear feature development that are scheduled within the simulation (to address assumption #1).
2. Deterioration or recovery of anthropogenic features through time (to address assumption #2)
3. Inclusion of other anthropogenic features (e.g. development of forestry roads, new seismic lines, etc.). This option could include a link to a future module simulating timber harvest that keeps track of cut-block location and age. A review of preliminary forest harvesting modules written by Cumming for use in SpaDES teaching found that they were not ready to be adapted to a situation with multiple yield curves; also the cut-block layout and sequencing algorithms are too slow to run over entire FMAs. Some development work is required, which is planned for the summer.
4. Interaction between `LandR` and this **anthropogenic** module so that pixels that intersect with disturbance features can be classified as disturbed in vegetation succession models, or so that the proportional area of a pixel that is disturbed can be accounted for in biomass calculations.
5. Enable road replacement where new roads are ‘constructed’, e.g. (parts of) new roads may ‘replace’ already existing roads. Adding these features, without replacing old features where they overlap results in an overestimation of road densities.
6. replace the FFT approximation with external python code to emulate ArcMap’s `lineDensity` function (sensu Environment Canada 2011, Appendix 7.3).
7. Incorporation of spatial objects other than spatial lines (to address assumption #4).
8. An output could be provided to calculate the percentage of a cell within the `BufferMap` that is covered by the buffer layer of each feature class.
9. The ability to vary the buffer widths by feature class, which would allow testing of the effect of buffer sizes on caribou recruitment and population growth rate.

Current state: Currently, both caribou RSF and Population growth predictions are using a static disturbance layer that doesn’t contain the McKenzie Valley Highway (MVH) disturbances as this last has not yet been finalized.

2.0.4 boreal birds

This module projects species abundance of bird species under forecast landscape and climate conditions. The module develops boosted regression tree (BRT) models from avian point-count data and associated covariates using the `gbm.step` function in the ‘`dismo`’ package (Hijmans et al. 2011) with a Poisson distribution and 10-fold cross-validation. BRT settings are as recommended by Elith et al. (2008) and are consistent with Stralberg et al. (2015). The module includes a ‘`brtplot`’ function that, for a given BRT model object, summarizes cross-validation statistics and variable importance (csv output), generates partial dependence plots (pdf output), generates spatial predictions from input data layers (geotiff format), and generates maps of spatial predictions (png format). The ‘`cvsum`’ function summarizes cross-validation statistics across species. Individual species results are posted here: (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cpt-AKDbnlUEi6r70Oow2lEPrbzQfVpt?usp=sharing>). The cross-validation statistics serve as the indicators of model performance required in the Statement of Work. We note that AUC and similar diagnostics were mentioned in the Statement of Work, but these are not appropriate to count data.

Avian data for Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 6 were extracted from the Boreal Avian Modelling project avian dataset (Cumming et al. 2010, Barker et al. 2015) and supplemented with data from automated recording units (ARU) collected by Environment and Climate Change Canada (Haché et al. unpublished data) and the University of Alberta Bioacoustic Unit (Bayne et al. unpublished data). Density offsets were calculated according to methods described in Sólymos et al. (2013), and were based on the assumption that ARU data detectability is similar to detectability by human observers (Yip et al. 2017).

Bird models were based on a restricted set of covariates that were either (a) assumed static over time or (b) direct outputs of the **LandR** biomass module, and **scfm** or **scfm-fireSense**. We intentionally excluded climate covariates that also drive changes in vegetation and fire, given the assumed lag in vegetation response to climate, and associated statistical decoupling of these covariates over time (Figure 1).

Model covariates assumed static through simulation periods included the following landcover covariates derived from the Comission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) North American Landcover 2005:

WAT = water (1/0)

URBAG = urban/agriculture (1/0)

LED25 = water proportion within 5x5 moving window (continuous)

DEV25 = development proportion within 5x5 moving window (continuous)

We also included a categorical landform covariate derived from AdaptWest’s land facet layer (Michalak et al. 2015), with the following class definitions:

1. Valley
2. Hilltop in Valley
3. Headwaters
4. Ridges and Peaks
5. Plains
6. Local Ridge in Plain
7. Local Valley in Plain
8. Gentle Slopes
9. Steep Slopes

Model covariates allowed to vary according to simulation outputs were tree species biomass estimates (g/m²) derived from Beaudoin et al.’s (2017) predicted biomass layers for 2001 or 2011, depending on the date of survey (pre-2006 was associated with 2001 vegetation; 2006 and later was associated with 2011 vegetation). Biomass covariates for the following speices were included:

Abies balsamea, *Betula papyrifera*, *Larix laricina*, *Picea glauca*, *Picea mariana*, *Pinus banksiana*, *Pinus contorta*, *Populus balsamifera*, *Populus tremuloides*

Models were developed for 71 passerine and near-passerine species that a) currently breed either in the Northwest Territories or Alberta portions of BCR 6, b) for which density offsets were available, and c) for which data were sufficient to fit cross-validated BRTs (see list below). For this report, predictions were performed for 10 species, including:

speciesCode	Common.and.scientific.names
OVEN	Ovenbird (<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>)
AMRE	American Redstart (<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>)
BLPW	Blackpoll Warbler (<i>Setophaga striata</i>)
PAWA	Palm Warbler (<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>)
CAWA	Canada Warbler (<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>)
FOSP	Fox Sparrow (<i>Passerella iliaca</i>)
WCSP	White-crowned Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>)
RUBL	Rusty Blackbird (<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>)
RCKI	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)
OSFL	Olive-sided Flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>)

The limit of 10 species was necessary at this time because running the full set of species would have increased runtime length by several days.

Important assumptions of the `birdsNWT` module

1. The relative abundance of bird species is based on an environmental niche modeling approach with associated assumptions (Wiens et al. 2009). variation in occurrence, rather than variations in movement (Stewart et al. 2018; Neilson et al. 2018).
2. Density offsets assume that ARU data detectability is similar to detectability by human observers (sensu Yip et al. 2017).
3. We assume a lag in vegetation response to climate and therefore do not include climate covariates within this module.

Future versions of the `birdsNWT` module could include:

1. Incorporation of additional covariates, such as linear feature density.
2. Simulation for the remaining 61 species of passerine and near-passerine birds that breed either in the NWT or Alberta portions of BCR6. A full list of 71 possible species include:

Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*), American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*), American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*), Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*), Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*), Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*), Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*), Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*), Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*), Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*), Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*), Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*), Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), Black throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*), Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*), Clay colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*), Cedar Waxwing (*Bombicilla cedrorum*), Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*), Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*), Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*), Common Raven (*Corvus corax*), Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*), Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*), Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*), Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*), Golden crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*), Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*), Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*), Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*), Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*), Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*), Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*), Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*), Nashville Warbler (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*), Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*), Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*), Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*), Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*), Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*), Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*), Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*), Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*), Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*), Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*), Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*), Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*), Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Vesper Sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus*), Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*),

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), *Western Tanager* (*Piranga ludoviciana*), *Western Wood-Pewee* (*Contopus sordidulus*), *Wilson’s Warbler* (*Cardellina pusilla*), *Winter Wren* (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), *White-throated Sparrow* (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), *White-winged Crossbill* (*Loxia leucoptera*), *Yellow-bellied Sapsucker* (*Sphyrapicus varius*), *Yellow-bellied Flycatcher* (*Empidonax flaviventris*), *Yellow-rumped Warbler* (*Setophaga coronata*), *Yellow Warbler* (*Setophaga petechia**)

Current state: This module is completely functional, but depends on the model objects being accessed and loaded in R for the predictions. Separating the model estimation from the forecasting procedures is not ideal in that human intervention is required, and many opportunities for error are introduced. Further, when new observational data become available, or the use of new covariates is indicated, coordinated efforts of several people are required to update the simulation model, which is difficult to arrange and introduces additional sources of error. This is why the SpaDES approach emphasises tight integration of statistical and simulation modelling. A fully reproducible automated workflow (i.e. statistical model estimation from raw data + predictions) should be incorporated in the next version of this product.

2.0.5 caribou

The `caribou` group of modules has two main components: `caribouRSFModel` and `caribouPopGrowthModel`. Each module applies Environment Canada’s (2011) statistical models to forecast caribou occurrence and demographics. The statistical models respond to the amount and location of landscape disturbances due to anthropogenic processes (`anthropogenic` module) and wildfire (`scfm-FireSense` module), and to the state of vegetation (`LandR` module). Caribou occurrence is modeled as the probability of habitat selection at the pixellevel. Population parameters are calculated over specified regions that could be interpreted as herd or subpopulation ranges.

The specific statistical models selected were those appropriate to our study area of BCR6 in the NWT, which corresponds closely to the Taiga Plains ecozone.

2.0.5.1 caribouRSFModel

The statistical relationships between caribou telemetry locations and habitat characteristics have been summarized (Environment Canada 2011) by resource selection function (RSF) models (sensu Manly et al. 2002) for various parts of Canada, under alternate hypothesis on the importance of various environmental characteristics. We used the top RSF model for the Taiga Plains ecozone (Environment Canada 2011; Table 46). This model was estimated from caribou location data collected from 24 Alberta, 50 British Columbia, and 169 NWT collared adult female caribou between 2000 and 2010 (Environment Canada 2011; Table 39). The analysis used a habitat use-availability design, so the RSF models predict relative, not absolute, selection probability (Manly et al. 2002)

According to the RSF model we selected, relative probabilities of habitat selection by adult, female, boreal caribou are best described by

$$\text{selectionProbability} \sim \text{Elevation} + \text{Elevation}^2 + \text{Vrug} + \text{Vrug}^2 + \\ \text{RoadDensity} + \text{Deciduous} + \text{Shrub} + \text{Herb} + \text{Water} + \text{RecentBurn} + \text{OldBurn}$$

[Eq. 1]

The definitions and units of measurement for each covariate can be found in Table 40 of Environment Canada (2011). The methodology is described in Appendix 7.3 of Environment Canada (2011).

The model includes most static and dynamic covariates. Static covariates were determined from initial conditions. Dynamic covariates were derived from raster layers maintained by one or other of the ecological process modules. Covariate types and sources are given in the following table:

1. Elevation (static; AdaptWest)
2. Vrug (static; topographic ruggedness (Sappington et al. 2007) taken from AdaptWest.

3. RoadDensity (static; **anthropogenic**)
4. Deciduous (dynamic; **LandR**)
5. Shrub (static; LCC05)
6. Herb (static; LCC05)
7. Water (static; Ducks Unlimited Canada Hybrid Wetland Layer)
8. RecentBurn (dynamic; **scfm-fireSense/scfm**)
9. OldBurn (dynamic; **scfm-fireSense/scfm**)

The RSF model is applied on a yearly time step. The output is a raster layer of relative resource selection probabilities across the study area. A measure of model prediction error is also produced. .

*Important assumptions of the **caribouRSFModel** module*

1. Caribou are distributed in an ideal free distribution (Fretwell and Lucas 1970).
2. Resource selection probability is positively correlated with population fitness and population density (Manly et al. 2002). .
3. The RSF model reliably predicts the relative probability of occurrence for woodland boreal caribou. See Section 6.2.4 of Environment Canada (2011) for reasons why this assumption may be violated.
4. Shrub and Herbaceous landcover remains constant over the simulation period (2010 to 2110), independent of fire, succession, or other processes.
5. Caribou location data are unbiased.
6. Caribou do not display seasonal habitat selection; the RSF model used here is based on annual caribou occurrences. Data were not stratified by season.

*Future versions of the **caribouRSFModel** module could include:*

1. Consider using the national RSF model (Environment Canada 2011; Table 43) which has higher prediction reliability than the Taiga Plains RSF modeled here. However this would require statistical prediction of some dynamic covariates such as Net Primary Production, which would introduce possibly large new sources of forecast error.

2.0.5.2 caribouPopGrowthModel

The **caribouPopGrowthModel** is based on the statistical relationships between landscape condition and demographic parameters that underpin Canada’s national boreal caribou recovery strategy (Environment Canada 2011; 2012). The critical demographic parameter is the annual calf recruitment rate (R) of caribou calves per adult female. This is estimated from the observed ratio of caribou cows to calves during winter survey periods. The data are estimated for “caribou ranges”, in effect the various spatial units over which the young-at-heel surveys were conducted. The best statistical model of these data (Environment Canada 2011; Table 55, Model M3) was found to be

$$R \sim totalDisturbance$$

[Eqn. 2]

where “total disturbance” over a “range” area is “the percent total non-overlapping fire and anthropogenic disturbances (Environment Canada 2011, Table 54). **Anthropogenic disturbance** is mapped from the union of 500m buffers applied to all anthropogenic disturbances, not counting hydroelectric reservoirs.

Fire disturbance in the proportional area burned within the past 40 years. For methodological details, see Appendix 7.6 of Environment Canada (2011) (Appendix 7.6).

R is predicted over each polygon within the two coverages shown in [Figure 2] and [Figure 3]. The total disturbance covariate is calculated for each polygon from raster layers maintained by the `scrm-fireSense` and `anthropogenic` modules. These rasters are overlaid and summed to calculate the percentage non-overlapping area of total disturbance within each polygon. The calculation is annual.

The demographic parameter actually reported for each polygon is the estimated annual per-capita population growth rate λ . Assuming a two-stage population structure of adult females and juveniles, we can calculate

$$\lambda = (1 - M)/(1 - R),$$

[Eqn. 3]

where R is juvenile female recruitment as predicted from Eq. 2, and $M = 1 - S$ where S is the adult female survivorship. We assume fixed $S = 0.85$. We report λ periodically for the regions in Figure 2, and Figure 3. We note that any desired reporting units could be accommodated given the appropriate shapefile. That there exists a relationship between λ and landscape disturbance is well supported for both caribou and other ungulates (Hatter and Bergerud 1991; McLoughlin et al. 2003; Sorensen et al. 2006; Hervieux et al. 2014):

Important assumptions of the `caribouPopGrowthModel` module

1. The statistical relationship between recruitment and the landscape described by Environment Canada (2011; Table 56, Model M3) applies to all Northwest Territories boreal caribou local population units. This relationship was estimated from 24 boreal caribou units across Canada ($N = 24$). Fire is the dominant disturbance agent only on a few of these (EC 2011, Figure 67).
2. Adult female survival is constant over time and does not vary among spatial units.
3. We assume that caribou are homogeneously distributed throughout the reporting polygons.
4. Movement rates of individuals between reporting polygons are negligible, i.e. these polygons are functionally isolated from one another.

Future versions of the `caribouPopGrowthModel` module could include:

1. Revised model parameters or demographic values
2. Compare predictions of alternate statistical models. In particular, the output of the `caribouRSFModel` could be used as covariate in a version of the `caribouPopGrowthModel` statistical model, linking cell-level habitat quality with demographic parameters (e.g. Environment Canada 2011, Table 55, model M12).
3. NWT-specific relationships between recruitment and survivorship rates and landscape condition could be developed using local data, addressing assumptions 1 and 2 above.
4. If some form of density dependence could be included, the predictions of demographic parameters could be used to model population dynamics and extinction risk.

Current state: Both these modules are functional, and currently depend only on having outputs from LandR and a landscape fire model. It remains to evaluate the results however for ecological realism.

2.1 Integrated modules component of SOW Item 3: Community metrics, and an analysis of the Edehzhie

2.1.1 community metrics

This module computes a series of avian community metrics based on a stack of species-level predicted abundance maps, as provided by `birdsNWT` module. Metrics are calculated every 10 years. These community

metrics were A raster brick of metrics is saved. A list of per-polygon tables is maintained which keep the mean of every index for each reporting period.

At present, four metrics are calculated:

1. Expected Species Richness: Expected Species Richness is the summed probability of occupancy for each species on each pixel: expected mean

$$S : 1 - \exp^{-\lambda} = 1 - P[X = 0|\lambda]$$

where random variable X is the number of individuals present in the cell, assuming a Poisson distribution with mean λ .

2. Shannon diversity index:

$$H' = - \sum_{i=1}^S p_i \ln p_i,$$

where p_i is the proportion of individuals of species i among all individuals present. This index assumes that individuals are randomly sampled from a large community, and that all species present are represented in the sample (Magurran 2004).

3. Simpson diversity index:

$$1 - D = \sum p_i^2,$$

where p_i is the proportion of individuals of species i among all individuals present. This index estimates the probability of any two individuals drawn at random from an infinitely large community belonging to the same species (Magurran 2004).

4. Rao's Quadratic Entropy:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{S-1} \sum_{j=i+1}^S d_{ij} * p_i^2,$$

where d_{ij} is the ecological distance between species i and j as measured in trait-space (Botta-Dukat 2005, Knaggs 2018), and p_i is the proportion of individuals of species i among all individuals present.

Current limitations of the `comm_metricsNWT` module

1. Species richness and diversity indices summarize information about the relative abundance of species within a community but ignore the degree of difference between species. They do not account for differences in uniqueness or ecological importance among species.
2. Rao's Entropy depends on the choice of distance metric, which in this case depends on the choice of functional traits to be used in comparing pairs of species.

Future versions of the `comm_metricsNWT` module could include:

1. Additional species richness estimates (e.g. Cowell, Clench, or Chao; Gotelli and Colwell 2011)
2. Different choices of reporting regions, or multiple regionalisations, as for the caribou modules.
3. Species turnover based on community dissimilarities under alternate landuse or climate scenarios (sensu Stralberg et al. 2009)

2.1.2 Edehzhie

For the third deliverable, we have conducted a limited multi-species analysis over the proposed Edehzhie protected area. Over this region, we calculated Bird species abundance (`birdsNWT`), caribou population growth (`caribouPopGrowthModel`), and caribou and relative habitat selection (`caribouRSFModel`). We calculated these same indicators for two other nearby polygons of the same size and shape. The purpose was to assess the performance of the proposed new protected areas with respect to these indicators.

Figure 4: LandR biomass simulation per species per decade. Average biomass in tons/ha.

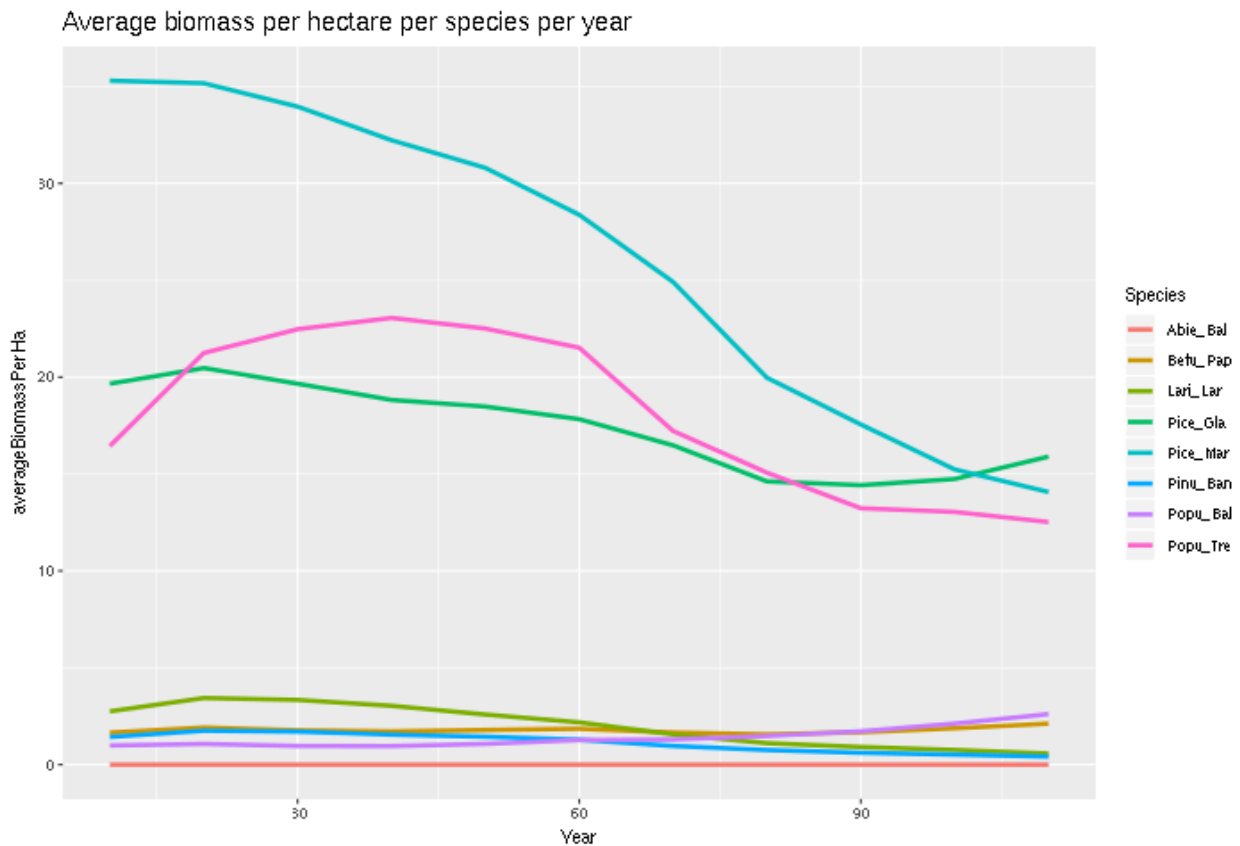


Figure 5: American Redstart (AMRE) and Overnbird (OVEN) abundance prediction without climate sensitive vegetation (LandR) or fire (scfm).

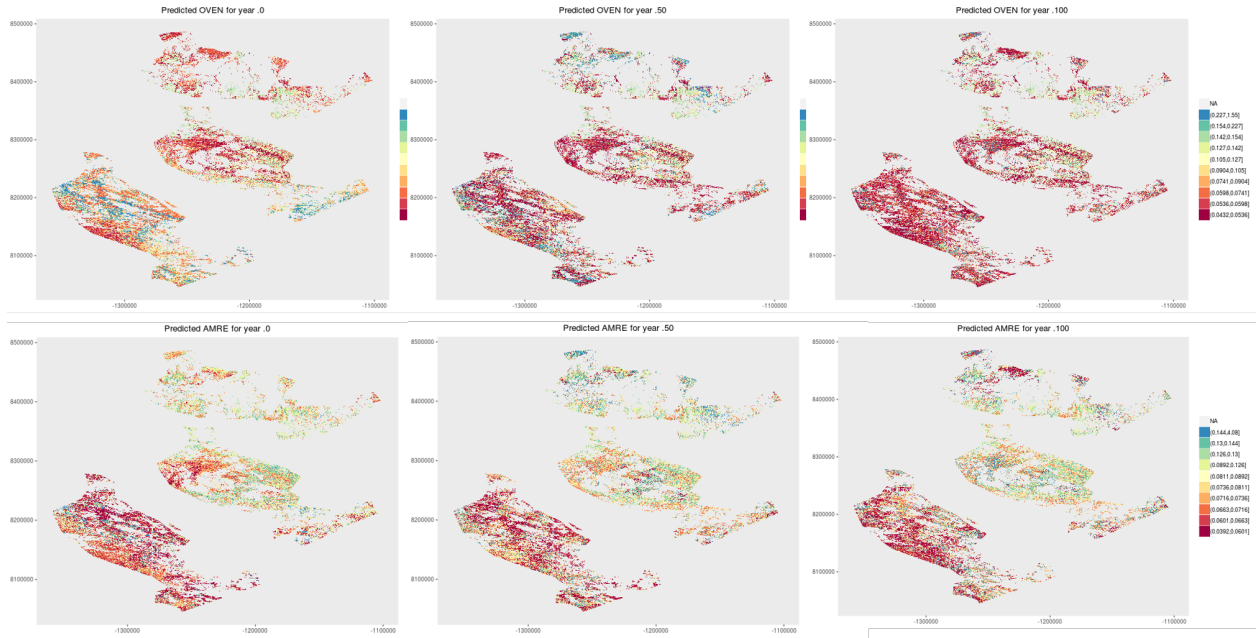


Figure 7: Caribou selection preference over the three areas.

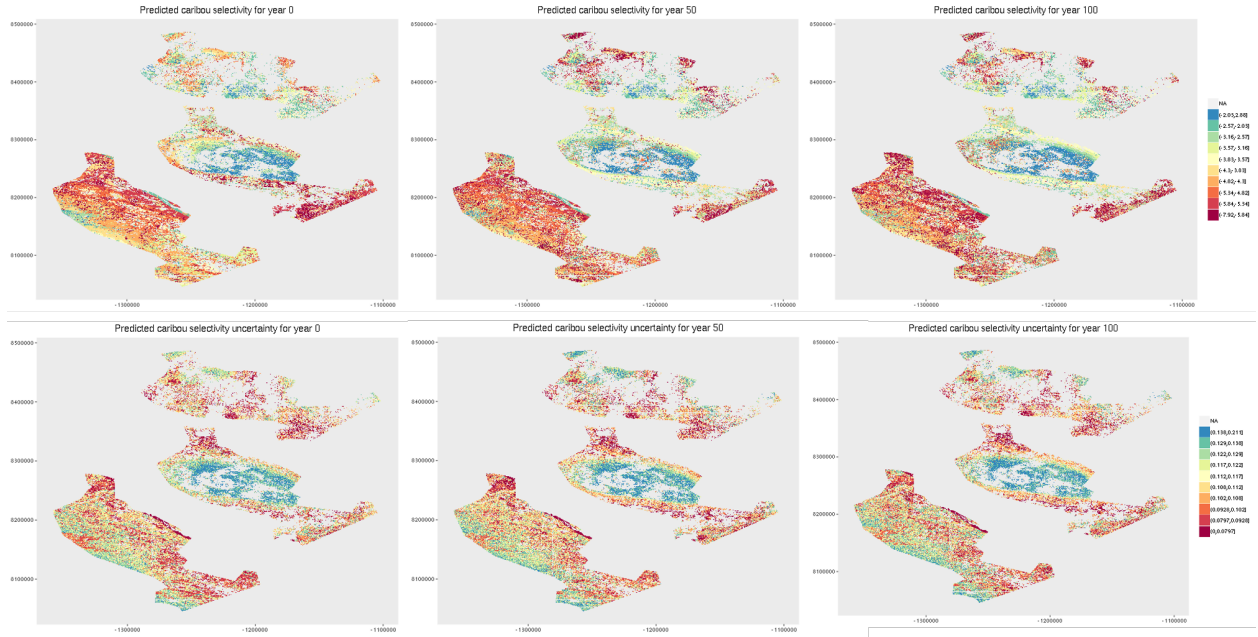
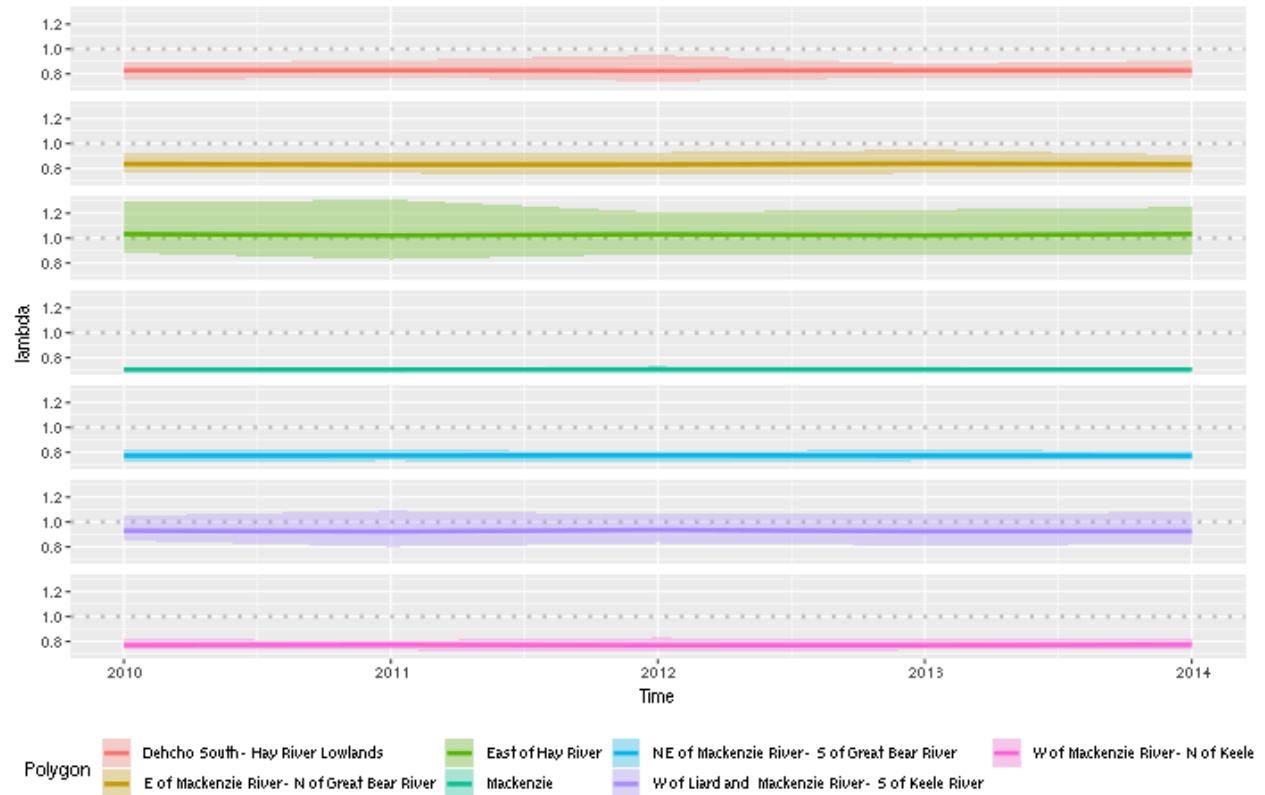


Figure 6: Caribou population growth rates. These figures show forecast demographic paramaters with standard errors for the two sets of reporting regions provided Boreal caribou NT1 range planning regions 2018 and the Units for ECCC modeling project 2019. Results are shown for the first four years of the simulation period only, as a sample of the preliminary results.

Caribou population dynamics



Caribou population dynamics

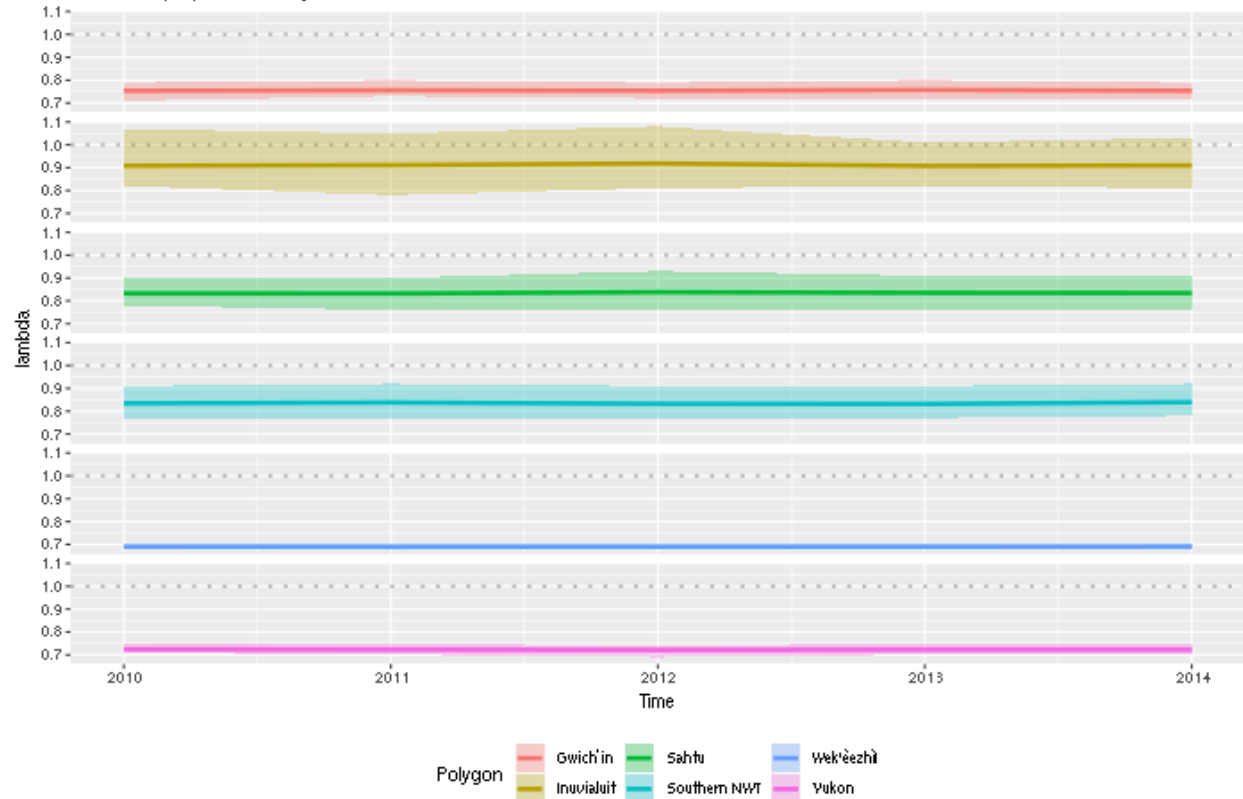
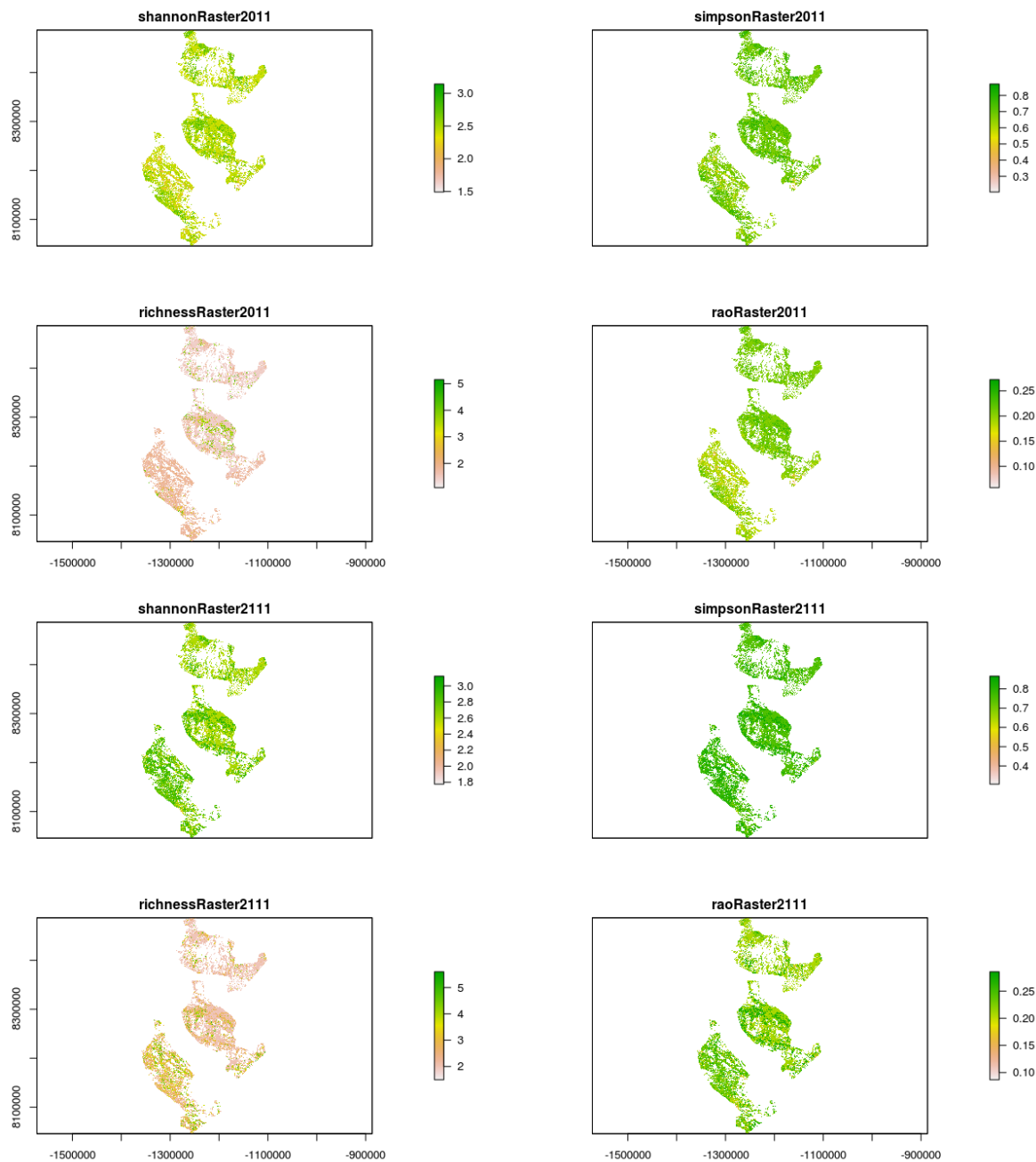


Figure 8a and b: Community metrics for the three areas, showing 4 diversity indices in 2011 and 2111.



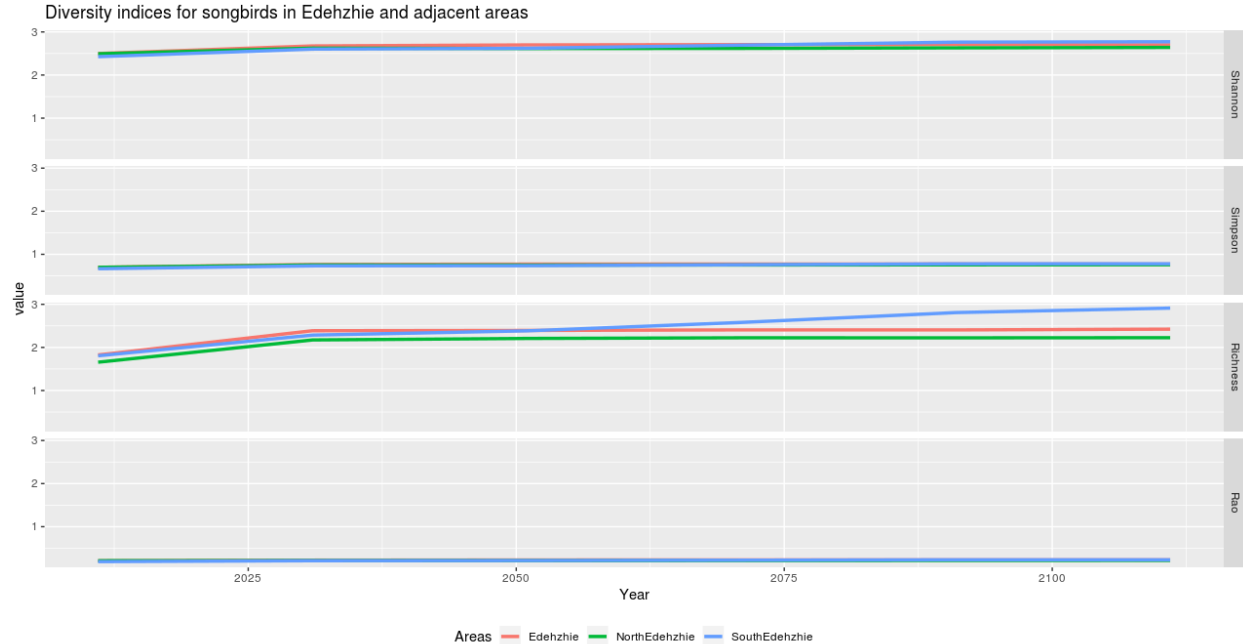


Figure 2: Figure 9

Figure 9: Community metrics for the three areas showing 4 diversity indices for each polygon for every 10 years of simulations.

3 Integrated modules final component of Item 3: Species co-occurrence

One deliverable was to conduct species co-occurrence analyses for bird Species At Risk and caribou within projected areas and elsewhere, to evaluate potential for multi-species conservation planning. It was not possible to complete this analysis by deadline. We will pursue it in April.

4 Concluding remarks

4.1 Data to decisions: integrated, spatially explicit, multispecies forecasting for BCR6, in SpaDES.

This project represents a first comprehensive effort in data integration and ecological modelling to demonstrate a multi-species approach to managing populations and habitats of Species At Risk in the Northwest Territories, if not in all of Canada. This project illustrates the potential of large initiatives involving multiple Departments of government and academic researchers collaborating to solve complex problems at the nexus of science and policy. The project also demonstrates the potential of open source modelling tools and reproducible work flow.

Recovering Species at Risk is mandated nationally under the federal Species at Risk Act, and internationally under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Target 1. However, the ideal location and strategies required to recover species may vary with spatial and temporal landscape change. These strategies may also require tradeoffs in natural resource development such as altered anthropogenic landuses

(mining, oil and gas, forestry) with conservation strategies (such as protected areas). The ideal location and configuration of such spatial tradeoffs are best evaluated if we can anticipate landscape change, and the effect of this change on the indicators of interest. To solve these problems requires the use of well-founded statistical and ecological models closely, verifiably and reproducibly linked to the best available data, than can account for the future state of our ecosystems under environmental change, not simply representations of current or past conditions. Thanks to the growing maturity of the enabling technologies, primarily SpaDES, the collaborative team approach used in this project can now be applied to other complex problems elsewhere in Canada.

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5 Appendix 1

5.1 LandR vegetation parameter estimates for Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 6

5.1.1 This section is in progress.

`Boreal_LBMRDataPrep` uses available data on species percent cover (% cover), stand age, total biomass, ecodistricts and land cover class (LCC) (see `LandR` documentation for product links) to estimate species-specific parameters of maximum biomass (`maxB`), seed establishment probability (SEP) and aboveground net primary productivity (`aNPP`), and to build initial unique communities to populate the landscape and start simulating vegetation dynamics. The selection of tree species entering the simulation was based on species cover for the study area from the kNN Species Map Layers available from the Canadian Forest Service (<http://tree.pfc.forestry.ca/>). Jack pine, Black spruce, White spruce, Balsam poplar, Trembling aspen and Paper birch were selected after removing species that occupied < 5 pixels in the study area. Prior to parameter estimation, incongruencies between stand age, % cover and total biomass datasets were addressed and species-specific biomasses were estimated. For instance, we detected pixels with 0 % cover across all species layers, but where stand age and biomass had > 0 values. Given that biomass and stand age are generally more problematic in terms of estimation than % cover, we decided to trust % cover estimates and thus assigned 0 total biomass and 0 stand age to any pixel where no cover was detected. In pixels where the sum of % cover across species was $> 100\%$, species % covers were adjusted so that they totalled to 100%. Biomass per species was then calculated per pixel as a fraction of total biomass according to the species % cover in that pixel. Finally, stand age also had to be corrected with respect to species longevity parameters (obtained from LANDIS-II species traits tables). This was achieved by fitting a statistical model relating “correct” age observations (those already corrected for 0 cover and that were not $>$ longevity) against the interaction of observed biomass (`totalB`) and species identity (`speciesCode`) and % cover, accounting for the random effect of combination of ecodistrict and LCC (`ecoregionCode`):

$$age \sim totalB * speciesCode + \%cover + (1|ecoregionCode)$$

[Eq. 1]

This model was then used to predict missing age values, bounded to 0 on the lower limit.

Parameters `maxB` and `aNPP` were then estimated from a linear mixed effects model reflecting the response of species-specific biomass (`B`) to the interaction between age (on the log scale, `logAge`) and species and % cover and species, accounting for the random effect of `ecoregionGroup` on the calculated slopes (per species) and intercepts:

$$B \sim logAge * speciesCode + cover * speciesCode + (speciesCode|ecoregionGroup)$$

[Eq. 2]

Estimates of SEP based on a generalized mixed effects model relating % cover and species, accounting for the random effect of `ecoregionGroup` on the intercepts. In this case, species % cover was treated as the number of times a species was observed (no. of pixels with cover > 0) per `ecoregionGroup`, thus following a binomial distribution that was account for in the model with a logit link function:

$$\text{logit}(p_i) \sim speciesCode + (1|ecoregionGroup) \quad \text{[Eq. 3]}$$

where p_i is the probability of finding a non-zero amount of cover of species i in an `ecoregionGroup`. In other words, is the species’ prevalence, or the proportion of pixels wherein it occurs.

For both models, coefficients were estimated by maximum likelihood. Model goodness-of-fit was calculated as the proportion of explained variance explained by fixed effects only (marginal r^2) and by the entire model (conditional r^2). For the biomass model, marginal and conditional r^2 were 0.70 and 0.77, respectively, and for the percentage cover model (Eq. 3) they were 0.18 and 0.26.

To estimate maxB we predicted biomass for unique combinations of species and ecoregion code assuming maximum age (i.e. longevity). aNPP was then calculated per species and ecoregionGroup as maxB/30 (following LANDIS-II). Before estimating SEP, the predicted values of % cover per ecoregionGroup per species (obtained from Eq. 3) were temporally integrated to reflect the simulation timescale (10 years) as $1 - (1 - \text{predictedCover})^1$. These estimates were then multiplied by $(1 - \text{resprouting probability})$ of each species, so that SEP reflects only the probability of seed germination (note that resprouting probabilities were taken from the LANDIS-II species trait tables). Remaining parameters, i.e. species traits, were obtained from LANDIS-II trait data (see above for reference) and can be consulted in Table A1

Complete tables for all estimated parameters will be added to a later version of this document.. <!-- [Table A1: Species trait values and estimated values of seed establishment probability (establishprob), maximum biomass (maxB) and maximum aboveground net primary productivity (maxANPP) by combination of ecodistrict and land-cover class (ecoregionGroup)] !>

The **Biomass_regeneration** module simulates post-disturbance regeneration, in this case after fire events, assuming stand-replacing fires. In each burnt pixel, the module resets pixel biomass to 0 and activates post-fire resprouting and, or, serotiny depending on species' abilities to resprout, their seed establishment probabilities (SEP) in that pixel (i.e. the pixel's ecodistrict and land-cover classes), and their tolerance to shading conditions (which, in this case, is no shade given that biomass is totally removed after fire) (see Table A1 for trait values)). The module algorithm first assesses for which species serotiny will be activated according to shading and SEP (light-loving species and higher SEP will increase the probability of serotiny being activated). It then assesses for which resprouter species resprouting will be activated, depending on whether they are within resprouting age limits, shading and resprouting probability (again, light-loving species and higher resprouting probability will increase the probability of resprouting being activated). For any given pixel, resprouting is limited to resprouter species for whom serotiny was not activated. This provides some advantage to serotinous species which would otherwise be quickly shaded and out-competed by resprouters.