

Final Report

2026 Regional Meeting & Workshop

Northeast Region, Northern B.C. Ecosystem Restoration Community of Practice



July 2026

Mae Whyte, Practices Manager, SERNbc



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Introduction and Background

About the CoP

The Northern B.C. Ecosystem Restoration Community of Practice (“CoP”) is a collective of organizations and individuals working to improve restoration capacity and effectiveness in northern B.C., which includes (but is not limited to) the Northeast, Skeena, and Omineca regions.

Our work is supported by a Practices Manager (formerly CoP Coordinator), regional organizers, and subject matter working groups. We receive oversight and guidance from a CoP Organizing Team with core members from the Society for Ecosystem Restoration in Northern BC (SERNbc), Caribou Habitat Restoration Fund (CHRF) via the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF), Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP), and the BC Wildlife Federation (BCWF).

Membership is open to individuals, organizations, and community representatives at three levels based on capacity: core members, contributing members, and participants.

Mission

To build restoration practitioner efficacy and capacity through improved knowledge sharing, communication, and collaboration

Values

The CoP’s shared values, [as defined collectively in November 2025](#), are:

- balance,
- courage (to innovate),
- diversity of ideas,

- trust,
- collaboration,
- connection,
- knowledge exchange,
- community values and two-eyed seeing (*Etuaptmumk*), and
- communication.

Priorities

We are co-creating an inclusive culture and supporting practitioners in maintaining connections. Our initiatives focus on six priority action types:

- **Knowledge Exchange:** Share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative restoration approaches.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhance the technical skills and knowledge of members through training, workshops, and peer learning with an emphasis on overcoming barriers, including especially for Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster cross-sectoral collaboration among governments, NGOs, academia, the private sector and any other restoration focused groups.
- **Informing Policy:** Support evidence-based policy making by providing technical and practical insights and recommendations.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Promote the use of standardized metrics to measure and report on restoration impact.
- **Awareness and Engagement:** Raise public awareness and engage the broader communities in restoration efforts.

Event Summary

From April 29 to May 1, 2026, fifty people gathered in Fort St. John to increase our collective restoration effectiveness. We spent two days in the North Peace Cultural Centre and a half day in the field for Montney Creek watershed site visits.

Our northeast regional group is multi-sector and interdisciplinary, which strengthens our collaborative problem-solving skills. We invited participation from First Nations communities, industry, the provincial government, non-profit organizations, naturalist clubs, farmers, and small business owners. We are all working on healing lands, waters, and relationships, and we are stronger together. We coached one another through real-life challenges in our respective practices, brainstormed ways to overcome procedural delays, and charted a course for the directions we want to grow together. Presenters shared learnings, including key takeaways from unsuccessful restoration projects *and* both emerging and established success stories.

Across all the presentations from our colleagues, one clear theme emerged: Investing in leading practices returns holistic ecosystem recovery; in other words, the time, money, and effort we put into restoration planning and actions returns dividends in restored lands, waters, and relationships. More succinctly, learn from mistakes and do it right the first time!

Centering Gratitude

Wuuḡ aasanaáá? Elder Jack Askoty from Doig River First Nation for kicking off our workshop with knowledge about healing the land and the reminder that we need to work together and *listen and learn* from one another, especially to experts who are on the Land. Thank you to Levi Davis for coordinating Elder Jack's travel and participation.

My heartfelt gratitude to everyone who volunteered time, effort, and materials. Door prizes: Katherine Wolfenden, Chelsea Regina. Mic runners and note takers: Aaron Mackay, Rob

Larson, Terra Lottermoser, Chelsea Regina. Registration desk: Aaron Mackay and Graeme Armstrong. Photographers: Ayla Malcolm and Katherine Wolfenden.

To all the speakers who took time to share your stories: We learned so much from both your challenges *and* your successes. Thank you for embodying mutualism. I count myself lucky to hold you among my teachers and cannot wait for your next chapter!

Last but not least, the sponsors. Most of the workshop's hard costs were covered through sponsorship. Thank you for keeping our events free for practitioners so that cost is never a barrier to learning, sharing, and growing. All our sponsors are in

Field Visit: Montney Creek Watershed

Our third day saw participants out on the land to witness the project Florian discussed firsthand. First, we went to the mouth of Montney Creek where it enters the Beatton and a short distance upstream to witness some of the interventions he mentioned and their relative successes. We also heard from collaborators Ian Ruttenberg (BRFN Restoration) and Barry Ortman (Peace Country Technical Services).

Ian shared some of the water monitoring results he has captured, noting more than a dozen parameters exceeded either federal or provincial water quality guidelines in the watershed, but the upper Montney sampling site did not have the exceedances in sulfates, cadmium, chromium, and some dissolved metals that can be measured in the lower reaches.

Florian pointed out some of the restoration “failures” he mentioned in his April 30th presentation and identified some places where interventions were more successful.



We also discussed turbidity increasing as we got lower into the watershed, which Barry pointed out as indicative of high levels of sediment infilling to the system, possibly due to stream crossings.

After going upstream a ways, we parked at a second location to look at one of the known barriers to fish passage in the watershed, a culvert that, although quite large, has quickly become perched.

Throughout the site visit, we reflected on Bruce’s presentation on “how to do stream crossings properly” and noted that retrofitting a crossing into existing transportation infrastructure is much more difficult to do “right.” We focused on what interventions could provide benefits in the system, discussing everything from beaver dam analogs to bioengineering and beyond.

Appendix 1: Workshop Sponsors.

Workshop Vision and Desired Outcomes

Our theme for this workshop was “improving restoration effectiveness,” a catchall theme meant to encourage broad participation across the restoration continuum while encapsulating our core mission of improving our collective ability to practice restoration.

Recent research confirms that connections, engagement, and knowledge sharing are critical in restoration; we need to share what works and what does not. [Alamenciak et al. \(2026\)](#) reported, “Growing ‘communities of practice’ can foster the exchange of different perspectives and knowledge systems—a bidirectional flow that helps overcome persistent barriers of transferability and applicability.”

Practitioners across northern B.C. and beyond continue to request more regional events. Each of our three regions has specific challenges, networks, and legal frameworks that guide and influence restoration on the ground. This workshop was intended to grow and strengthen our northeast regional CoP through knowledge exchange, collaboration, and capacity building. Our aim was to break down the siloes that limit our effectiveness with an eye to informing policy and organizing future capacity-building and awareness-raising events. Participants were provided resources in advance through a [shared Dropbox folder](#) that also contains presentations, photos, and notes from the workshop that were added later.

Elder Jack Askoty started us off with a welcome and reminder that we need to actively listen to folks who are working on the land. Small changes to our ‘status quo’ operations can have huge benefits for wildlife. Mae Whyte provided the workshop vision and facilitated our “speed networking” with some thought-provoking questions to guide our icebreaker session. After our first break, we launched into learning from others.

Learning From Others: Leading Practices Around the Region



Bruce Nielsen, Woodlands North

Using Technology and Results Based Learnings to Create Better Stream Restoration Projects

[Link to presentation](#)

Bruce provided copies of the Alberta Watercourse Crossing Collaborative's [Alberta Watercourse Crossing Guidebook](#) and presented on water course crossing (WCC)

restoration. After an overview of historical policy and practices, Bruce walked us through site assessment, planning, survey, and design, then concluded with results-based learnings and the importance of monitoring.

The example of the culvert that repeatedly washed out drove home the message that doing it right the first time is a huge return on the proponent's financial investment. Bruce gave us lots of helpful advice for planning and implementing WCC restoration, including the need to allow for more time than you think you need because plans will need to be revised. We

also got lots of technical recommendations, like ensuring we go upstream and downstream 200 m from the crossing to get the natural stream elevation so we can build the crossing to fit the stream instead of trying to shoehorn a living system into our crossing.

We learned that smooth is bad! Getting your abiotic factors, including topographical heterogeneity, correct will lead to the biotic factors we care about. Working with the operators on the team is critical here and will also minimize riparian impacts. Bruce concluded with a reminder to always go back and monitor your work.

Aaron Mackay, Fixed Earth Innovations

Case Study: Site Revegetation Through Native Plant Seeding

[Link to presentation](#)

Aaron shared learnings on a 0.6 ha site revegetated using native seed capsules in 2021. The site was very remote with a heavy agronomic presence, and native seed quantities were limited. They used an upland and lowland seed mix in water-soluble capsules with supporting ecosystem components like regional microbes and endophytes. Half the site was seeded in spring, the other half seeded in winter.

The winter seeding treatment had much higher germination rates. Although introduced species persisted, there were noticeably more shrubs compared to the spring seeding. Aaron concluded with the statement you can do more with native seeds than you think!

Cornelia Thomi, Boreal Outdoor Education School

Full Circle to Boreal Outdoor Education

[Link to presentation](#)

Cornelia shared her journey from working as an RPF to leading outdoor education for youth. She shifted from putting humans on 'top' of nature to a more relational approach by slowing down, and noticed her physical and mental health improved significantly. It is

important for all of us to make sure our head and our heart are not disconnected. As the future stewards of our lands, children are critical learners and teachers of this lesson.

Wildlife Infometrics led the Williston school ecology program, an integrated program with stations led by volunteers, including biologists, foresters, and Elders. The Boreal Outdoor Education School was started when Cornelia took on the portfolio and chose to grow the program as a grassroots collective. Programs have been delivered in Fort St. James, Hudson's Hope, and Mackenzie areas, with plans to expand into the northeast region this year. Cornelia also had a call to action: If anyone wants to fund this work or volunteer time in support of our future stewards, there are lots of opportunities including joining the nonprofit's Board of Directors. She concluded with the statement we all need to be brought back and connected with the rest of nature.

Updates on Community of Practice Initiatives

After lunch, Mae updated the room on behind-the-scenes progress within the CoP. Milestones requested by practitioners include hiring 1 regional organizer, hosting monthly meetings, forming subject matter groups, concluding a fulsome webinar series, kicking off small-group coaching sessions, collaborating in the Slack workspace, building out the online hub including the practitioner and project database.

Mae also shared her hope that the group is co-creating a shared vision and stressed the need for input from restoration practitioners in every sector. Hers is a servant leadership role benefitting a connected network of practitioners who have increased efficacy and capacity for doing ecosystem restoration. To make the dream a reality, we need to shift focus away from competition towards collaboration.

Facilitated Session: Expediting Permitting Applications

Mae introduced the facilitated session by providing context that despite recent innovations and pilots in the permitting landscape, practitioners still share that permitting is a barrier to

effective restoration. Hearing this at the November 2025 workshop, we developed a survey to collect more information. We heard a number of challenges and solutions through the survey and amplified practitioners' voices by sharing summarized results with funders and decision makers. Mae also provided resources related to the [recent engagement conducted by the Province](#), e.g., expanding eligibility for stream restoration activities.

As a CoP, we can affect process by advocating for change and creating resources to support one another in our work. We brainstormed together in small groups to come up with what we still need and what we will work towards together.



Much of the discussion centered around changes practitioners want to see from the provincial government. However, we came up with some ideas to improve things as a collective for mutual benefit:

- Coordinating place-based knowledge sharing;
- Convening partners (government, industry, local governments, Indigenous governments); who may have different permitting processes or expedited permitting in specific areas; and
- Creating outreach documents to improve clarity around timelines and processes, e.g., flow charts with decision trees to help inform what permits may be needed.

Facilitated Session: Small-group Coaching



We started fresh on day two with small-group coaching sessions. In groups of six, we took turns sharing a challenge and hearing what our colleagues had experienced that was similar. These sessions are confidential and based on sharing one's own experiences, not solving other practitioners' problems.

Practitioners expressed their appreciation for the time to hear from others' varied backgrounds and learn what transferrable skills might be valuable for their respective dilemmas. Each coaching session concluded with sharing what could be actioned from what had been shared.

Specifics are confidential, so that's enough said!

Learning From Others: Montney Creek Restoration and Fish Passage

Florian Kund, Ministry of Transportation and Transit

A Story of Infrastructure Maintenance, Site Restoration, Lessons in Failures and the Power of Cooperation

[Link to presentation](#)



Florian shared successes and failures of restoration actions to benefit bull trout in the lower Montney Creek watershed, including installation of in-stream and riparian features. He reviewed some of the research done in collaboration with Blueberry River First Nations

to confirm whether the species persists in the stream given uncertainty around a 1987 report found in Habitat Wizard. Florian concluded that bull trout were still using Montney Creek, and there is still a lot of work that needs to be done collaboratively to support this species and everyone using the watershed.

Learning From Others: New Initiatives



Chelsea Regina, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program

Renewing Our Approach to Project Funding

[Link to presentation](#)

Chelsea shared an overview of the FWCP, including its strategic approach to compensating for dam impacts. She shared a summary of the Peace Region Action Plan and the program's current approach to funding projects. FWCP is working on a new approach for compensation projects to bring their process into stronger alignment with their mandate and with improved focus on implementing restoration on the ground. Chelsea shared the timeline for engagement and decision on the new funding priorities and requested audience members complete an [engagement survey](#).

Nadia Mori, Peace River Forage Association

Evaluating the Use of Prescribed Fire to Rejuvenate Forage Pastures and its Impact on Soil

[Link to presentation](#)

Nadia provided an overview of the PRFA, including their prescribed fire programs and research. Getting “good fire” on the landscape provides mutual benefit for local communities, farmers, and ranchers. She identified some areas of inquiry around carbon and climate, shared partnerships on the ground with local ranchers, and told us about monitoring everything from soil microbiology to forage quality after a burn. Nadia reminded us that fire prevention and preparedness are part of this conversation, and shared a wildfire school being offered in May.

Nathan Prince, McLeod Lake Indian Band

McLeod Lake Moose Habitat Enhancement: Seeing the Forest for More than Just the Trees

[Link to presentation](#)

Nathan shared a project he launched in response to concerns about moose population health and stability based on marked declines in abundance. The habitat enhancement

work aims to promote McLeod Lake's food sovereignty through benefitting the moose populations in a phased approach that can be replicated throughout the territory. Restoration treatments, including thinning, strategic retention, and critter piles, were informed by forest management approaches used in other countries and strengthened through collaborative partnerships on the ground. Road reclamation, girdling, and fuel risk applications were also implemented. Now to monitoring!

Ayla Malcolm, Charlie Lake Conservation Society

Charlie Lake Conservation Society Events 2026

[Link to presentation](#)

Ayla shared some of the events CLCS has coming up this summer centered around the interpretive theme "Science all around us: The importance of citizen science" that centers on a museum exhibit running until mid-September. We heard about plant, bird, and bat walks; their annual Curious Critters event; nature painting en plein air, and using apps that are free and accessible to the general public. They ended with an invitation to join the May 26th AGM.

Lynn Harvey, Nan wúújq anawúúdle Restoration Society

Elders Lead the Way: Elders Engagement Hosted by Lynn Harvey

[Link to presentation](#)

Lynn shared how Elders are being centered in the work Nan wúújq anawúúdle is funding on the land. In particular, she noted site visits are important to connect youth and Elders for learning. Lynn also shared stories from her journey and personal growth into striving to make relationships more meaningful. Making Elders a priority brought them to "Elders lead the way" as a signpost. From there, she has been able to coordinate events to benefit Blueberry River First Nation Elders, including Christmas dinner, New Year New Goals, and Honouring the Women and Men (respectively).

Facilitated Session: Looking Forward and Building Together

We closed out our second day in the cultural centre by putting our minds together yet again, this time in pursuit of future direction. We worked in groups to identify what kinds of in-person events we want more of in our northeast regional CoP. We also talked about what kinds of strategies can help us maintain connections. Notes from the “share back” session follow, however, all groups’ brainstorming notes are collected in Appendix 3.

WHAT WORKS?

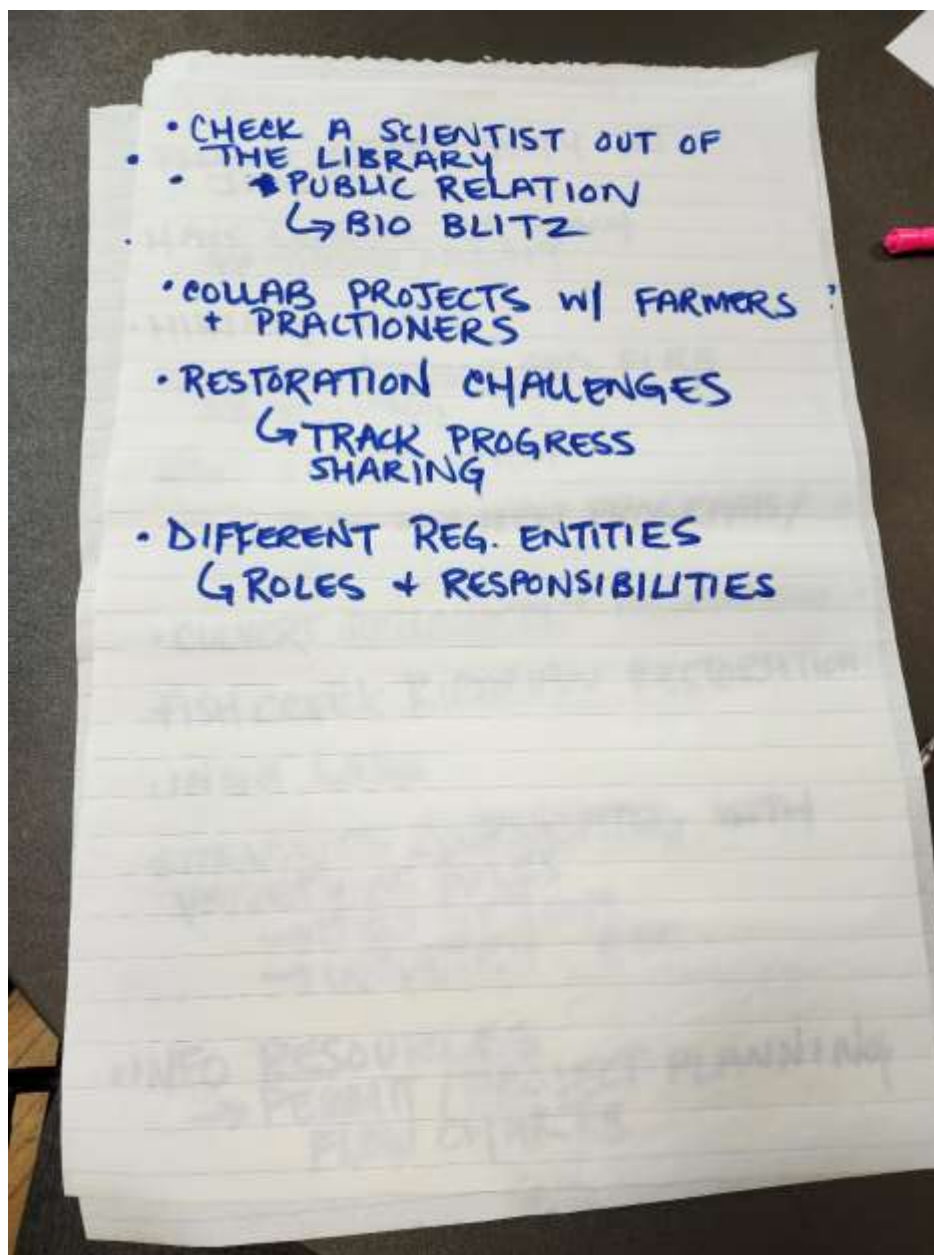
WHAT WILL YOU BRING FWD?

- #1 **MAINTAIN & REBUILD TRUST**
COMMUNICATION
→ WELL & OFTEN
- #2 **COLLABORATION'S**
"WE HAVE BETTER SOLUTION'S
TOGETHER"
- #3 **IF ENVIRONMENT COLLAPSES
WE COLLAPSE**
BRINGING DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS
TOGETHER IS POWERFUL
- #4 **KNOWING SOMETHING IS AN
ISSUE → BRING IT UP**
FIELD TRIPS → LOOKING AT
CONCERNS TOGETHER
LOOKING AT WHAT NOT TO DO
AT A SITE
- #5 **HEARING EACH OTHER**
BAD NEWS HAPPENS QUICKLY
= WRECKING BALL
GOOD NEWS HAPPENS SLOWLY
= FERTILIZER FOR GARDEN

REGIONAL EVENT IDEAS

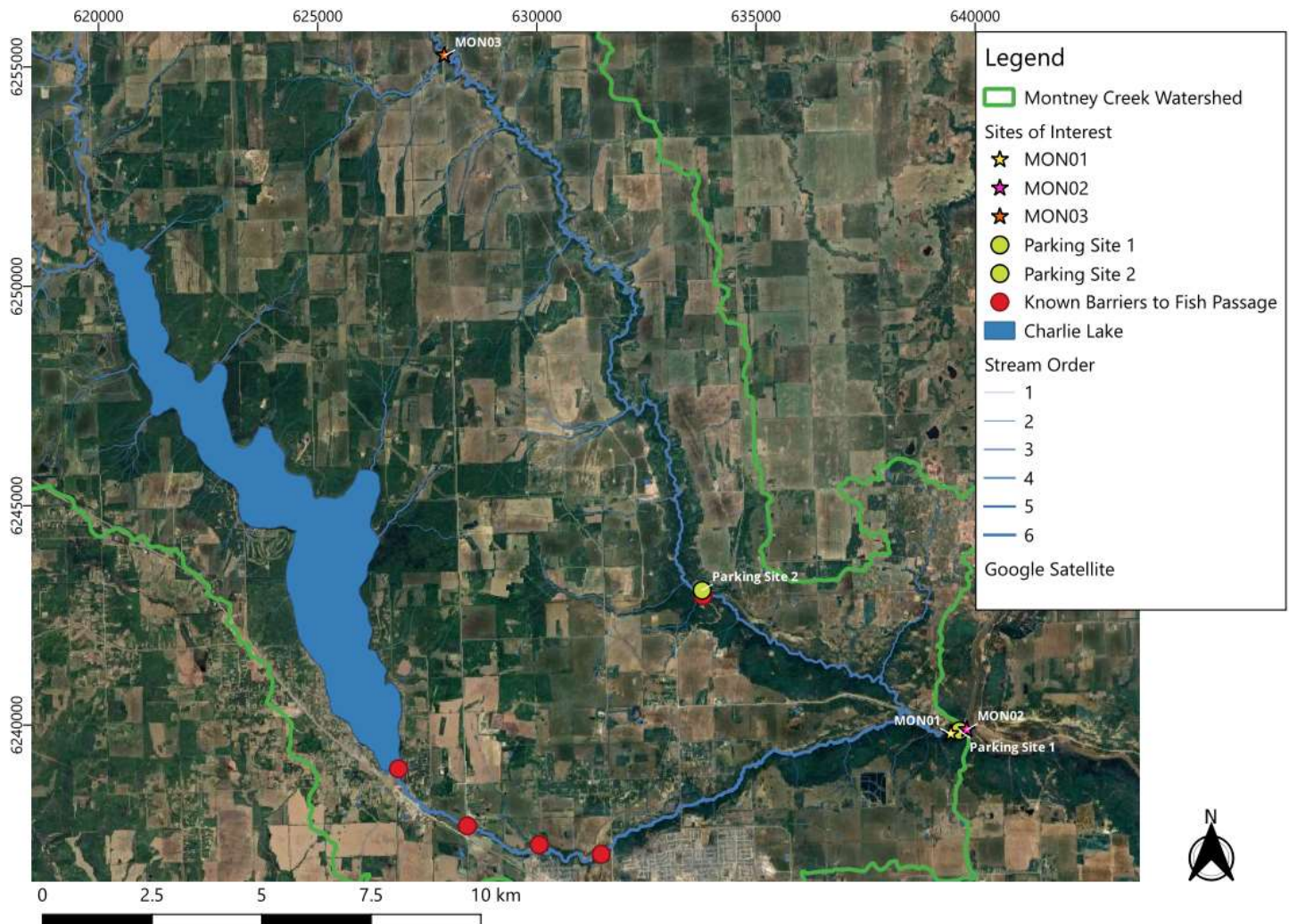
- AGROLOGISTS & OPERATORS WORKING TOGETHER 
- FEEDBACK ON RECLAIMED SITES
 - ↳ WAS WHAT WE TRIED SUCCESSFUL? TIMELINES, ETC.
- FOCUS ON MOOSE HABITAT
 - ↳ CONNECTIVITY, CORRIDORS
 - MACROSCALE COLLABORATIONS
- CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL SHARING
 - ↳ MORE WORKSHOPS!!!
- TRAINING FOR WILLOW STAKING
- LESSONS LEARNED SESSIONS
 - ↳ SAFE SPACE TO LEARN FROM MISTAKES
- TRAINING AT CAMERON LAKE
- DEMONSTRATIONS + TRAINING
- ORPHAN SITE FIELD VISITS
- RESEARCH TRIALS

- NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE
R&D
- WETLAND RESTORATION
GRADES 1-3
(STUDENT LABOUR)
- SEED COLLECTION TRAINING
 - ↳ COLLECT
 - ↳ UTILIZE
 - ↳ STORE
 } YOUTH?
- BRIDGES + CULVERTS
- WILSON RESERVOIR SITE VISIT
SOILS, SEEDING, ETC.
- SITE & SOIL VISIT
DUST/WIND EXPOSURE
- HANDS-ON TRAINING OPPS.
 - ↳ TAG-ALONG W/ EXISTING TRAININGS
- BIODIVERSITY MONITORING
PLANT I.D.
INVERT / AMPHIBIAN I.D.
- TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS
- MONTHLY MIXER → THEMED
E.G. UPLANDS, LOWLANDS → PPT /
SHOW + TELL



Each group's contribution can be viewed in Appendix 3.

Field Visit: Montney Creek Watershed



Our third day saw participants out on the land to witness the project Florian discussed firsthand. First, we went to the mouth of Montney Creek where it enters the Beatton and a short distance upstream to witness some of the interventions he mentioned and their relative successes. We also heard from collaborators Ian Ruttenberg (BRFN Restoration) and Barry Ortman (Peace Country Technical Services).

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but the upper Montney sampling site did not have the exceedances in sulfates, cadmium, chromium, and some dissolved metals that can be measured in the lower reaches.

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Appendix 1: Workshop Sponsors



Ecosystem Restoration Community of Practice Northeast Regional Workshop Sponsors

Diamond Willow



Green Alder



FIXED EARTH

Bog Birch



Fireweed



Appendix 2: Workshop Agenda

Day 1: April 29, 2026

North Peace Cultural Centre, Fort St. John, BC

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
08:00 - 09:00	Coffee & Networking; Registration Opens
09:00 - 09:15	Cultural Welcome Elder Jack Askoty, Doig River First Nation
09:15 - 09:30	Opening Remarks and Vision for this Workshop
09:30 - 10:15	Icebreaker: Speed Networking <i>A chance to meet colleagues through creative and fun networking with questions sent in advance for those who like time to plan</i>
10:15 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:30	Learning From Others: Leading Practices Around the Region <i>A chance to learn from colleagues and hear about restoration projects and experiences – followed by a panel discussion and group debrief.</i> Bruce Nielsen, Woodlands North 1045-1115 Aaron Mackay, Fixed Earth 1115-1145 Cornelia Thomi, Boreal Outdoor Education School 1145-1215
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch & Networking Lunch sponsor: Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program
13:30 - 14:30	Updates on Community of Practice Initiatives
14:30 - 15:00	Break
15:00 - 16:15	Brainstorming Together <i>What can we create to support expedited permit applications? Looking beyond our zone of influence, where can we advocate for change?</i>
16:15 - 16:30	Closing Remarks
17:00-19:00	Social Mixer, Mighty Peace Brewing Co. taproom (19+) 10128 95 Ave, Fort St John Mixer sponsor: Fixed Earth <i>Graze and libate with your community of practice at one of Fort St. John's local brewpubs.</i>

Day 2: April 30, 2026

North Peace Cultural Centre, Fort St. John, BC

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
08:00 - 09:00	Coffee & Networking
09:00 - 09:15	Opening Remarks
09:15 - 10:45	Small-group coaching <i>In groups of six, you will provide feedback to <u>three</u> practitioners in your group who are seeking confidential support with a restoration challenge.</i>
10:45 - 11:15	Break
11:15 - 12:00	Learning From Others: Montney Creek Restoration and Fish Passage <i>Florian Kund (MOTT) presents on restoration work completed in the Montney Creek watershed as well as next steps and desired future conditions. Opportunity for Q&A or discussion.</i>
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch & Networking Lunch sponsor: Recon Environmental, Ltd.
13:00 - 14:30	Learning From Others: New Initiatives <i>A series of lightning talks with a panel Q&A</i> 1300-1315 Chelsea Regina, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program 1315-1330 Nadia Mori, Peace River Forage Association 1330-1345 Nathan Prince, McLeod Lake Indian Band 1345-1400 Ayla Malcolm, Charlie Lake Conservation Society 1400-1415 Lynn Harvey, Nan wúújq anawúúdle Restoration Society
14:30 - 15:00	Break
15:00 - 16:15	Regional Events <i>Brainstorming in small groups – what do we want to create in the northeast? How will we grow together? We will reconvene to report back and complete a live survey to commit to an action.</i>
16:15 - 16:30	Closing Remarks, Door Prizes

Day 3: May 1, 2026

Muster at NPCC Parking Lot

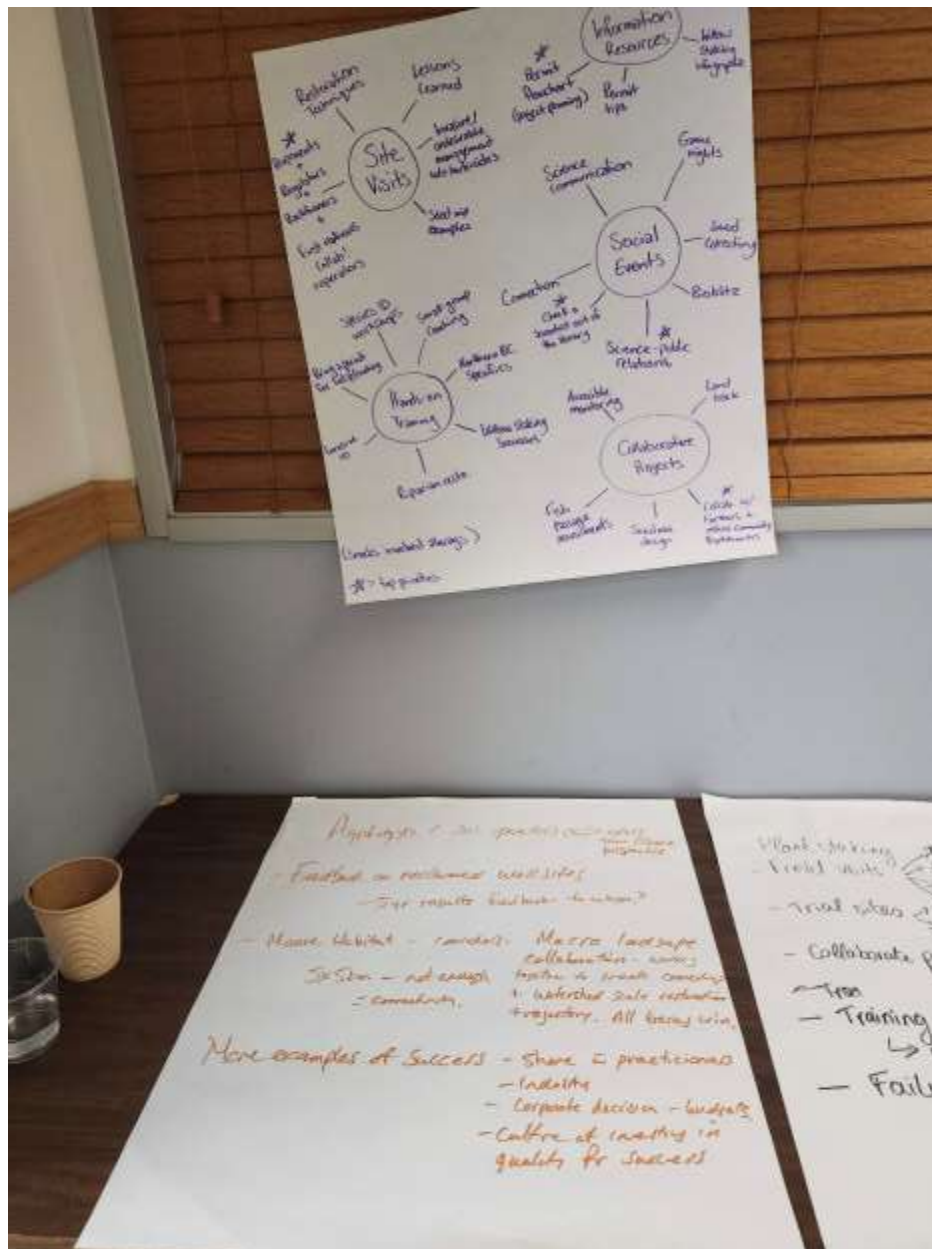
LIMITED parking at [56.283049, -120.744095 off Cecil Lake Rd.](#) ~ 15 minute drive

N.B. No cell service on site; please carpool and convoy safely

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
09:00 - 09:15	Muster at NPCC Parking Lot – Carpool to first site
09:30-11:30	Tailgate safety meeting Place-based presentation from BRFN Restoration staff Tour and group discussion <i>If you are not joining at the second location, please sign out with your Coordinator and get tips on local scenery and hiking or recommendations for spots to eat your lunch.</i>

This agenda is subject to change. A final detailed agenda will be provided to participants prior to the event.

Appendix 3: Group Brainstorm Images from Growing Forward Facilitated Session



- Plant staking
 - Field visits
 - Trial sites
 - Collaborate projects (multi-disciplinary).
 - Training
 - Failures Exchange: we talk only about failures in a super positive way!
- Training at Camp Cameron
 twin sisters greenhouse demonstrations
 orphan site
 research which overlap with different interests
 Northern Lights College

(notes)
 - trees, planters ... willow cuttings, breadfruit, get ready = school program
 - Swallow restoration = grade 3-6 (BC curriculum)
 - leads on training
 - Project/short = collaborative project / fit groups, combined, it = expertise design space more options for grants.
 - Site visits = Williston Reservoir + land or dust issue in spring and see how/alternatives
 - Seed collection training & group/collaborative uses.

Collaborative Projects

- 3 different implementations on Boston Bay?
- Fish dome - riparian education
- Community-based
- Charlie Lake issues

Some think it's helpful also

How to get a group of people to do things? How to get a group of people to do things? How to get a group of people to do things?

Hands-on training + site visits

Eg - BDA construction workshop in the field

- controlled/peterson live training/workshop
- ESC installation
- amphibious exclusion

thought is to invite Carl Fong to already underway projects - to learn + share

Socials

Restoration years Social (one week in summer)

- Bimonthly evening social (get together in social from here?)
- Working?

What in-person events do you want to see in the Northeast for this CoP?

- ★ Hands-on training
 - ↳ Fish Salvages (specific workshops)
 - learning (everyone is understaffed)
 - ↳ Biodiversity Monitoring
 - ↳ Plant ID (medicinal/invasive/Native)
 - ★ Social/Networking Mixer (monthly?)
 - ↳ Themed - Permits/Monitoring/Uplands/Lowlands
 - ↳ Quick Presentation
 - ↳ Show + Tell
- Technical Advancement