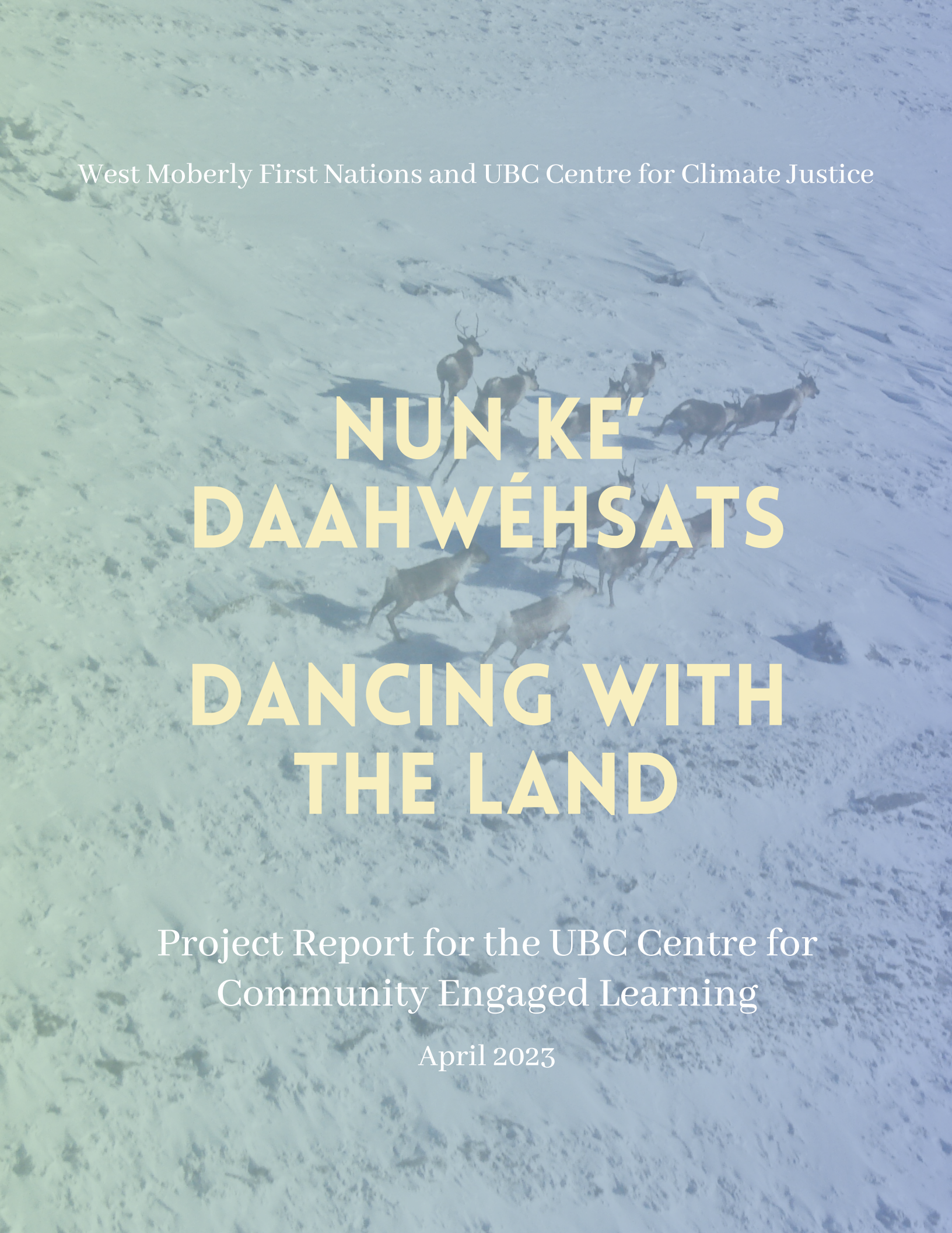


West Moberly First Nations and UBC Centre for Climate Justice

An aerial photograph of a herd of caribou running through a snowy, mountainous landscape. The caribou are in motion, with some running towards the viewer and others away. The snow is bright white, and the overall scene is captured in a cool, blue-toned light. The text is overlaid on this image.

**NUN KE'
DAAHWÉHSATS
DANCING WITH
THE LAND**

Project Report for the UBC Centre for
Community Engaged Learning

April 2023

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Nun ke' Daahwéhsats (Dancing with the Land) is a collaboration between West Moberly First Nations (WMFN) and the UBC Centre for Climate Justice (CCJ) that seeks to advance understanding of how climate science, policies, and solutions will impact Indigenous self-determination, cultural values, and rights. To accomplish these goals, WMFN and CCJ have partnered to establish a cooperative climate research agenda (CCRA), to establish priorities and fill these knowledge gaps in line with WMFN community values, and objectives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, the UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning awarded the Chapman and Innovation Grant to Nun ke' Daahwéhsats (Dancing with the Land). This grant was used to convene West Moberly First Nations (WMFN) and UBC researchers on the topic of climate justice. The objective of the workshop was to share knowledge about ongoing climate research at UBC and to explore potential climate-related research projects that would support WMFN's ability to plan for their territorial lands with regard to climate change in the short and long term.

Development of the cooperative climate research agenda (CCRA) at the 2023 workshop will inform a multi-year process of collaborative research. This will allow WMFN to co-investigate applied research on climate impacts, and solutions, while also creating opportunities for UBC faculty and graduate students to participate in a long-term research project with implications for climate justice and Indigenous self-determination. These areas for future research are outlined in more detail below.



BACKGROUND

Industrial Disturbance, Environmental Impacts & Climate Change in Northeastern BC

BACKGROUND

Dunne-za (Beaver people), the ancestors of West Moberly First Nations (WMFN), have successfully navigated climatic and ecosystem changes for the past 15,000 years. Colonial systems have significantly increased the pace and scale of this change over the past few hundred years. WMFN is now confronted with rapid, human-driven climate change that may result in further losses to their Indigenous way of life. Despite this, climate impacts are not currently well-factored into WMFN's decision-making and environmental planning and management. Nor are they presently considered within the scope of government-to-government consultation (G2G) processes pertaining to land uses and activities that may contribute to climate change or exacerbate climate impacts. This is in part due to a lack of information about how climate change will impact WMFN territories, and what can be done about it. Understanding the impacts of climate change on these landscapes is of particular importance given ongoing struggles to protect these ecosystems and their cultural value from the existing impacts of industrial development in northeastern BC, namely from the forestry, mining, and energy sectors.

DEVELOPING A COOPERATIVE CLIMATE RESEARCH AGENDA (CCRA)

The CCRA uses a community-based research model, which means that the foundations of research questions and objectives come from WMFN, including in the initial stages of project development. In contrast to traditional academic research plans, the CCRA will be drafted by the partners and distributed for feedback from WMFN community members. After community feedback and revision, the final CCRA will be produced and used as a basis for fundraising and project formation, thus ensuring that the climate research plan addresses wider community priorities.

Image courtesy of the Land Use Department of West Moberly First Nations.

2023 WORKSHOP

2023 WORKSHOP AT UBC

In the winter of 2023, the Chief and Lands Department staff of WMFN met with UBC faculty and researchers at the UBC campus in Vancouver. The objective of this workshop was to advance meaningful and consequential relationship-building, knowledge exchange, and research planning around climate change impacts and policies. Through exchanges between WMFN Chief and staff and UBC professors with expertise in climate-related research, we contextualized what is known and unknown about existing and projected climate change and charted some initial directions for research to support Indigenous self-determination and climate justice in WMFN territory.

The topics of the discussion, based on faculty presentations, included:

Rachel White	Climate projections, impacts and knowledge gaps for British Columbia
Tongli Wang	Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification modeling for WMFN territory
Jeanine Rhemtulla	Aligning habitat restoration with cultural values and forest change
Jocelyn Stacey	Tsilhqot'in Nation's Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement
Kaitlyn Gaynor	Impacts of wildlife, extreme weather and climate change on animals
Dawn Hoogeveen	Health and climate impacts, and Indigenous health impacts
Bernard Perley	Language, environmental change, and self-determination



West Moberly First Nations' Chief and Lands Department Staff met with UBC Faculty to identify knowledge gaps and pathways for research in northeastern BC

Image courtesy of Oliver Mann, UBC Community Engagement.

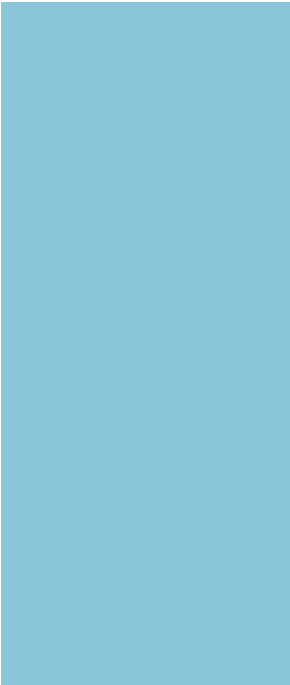


RESEARCH AGENDA 1

UNDERSTANDING THE ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Spatialize the potential and projected climate impacts upon ecosystems in WMFN territory, through further Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) modeling and connection with on the ground impacts

Study climate impacts with regard to harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing and other cultural practices on species of key importance to both Indigenous ways of life and overall ecosystem health



Examine how the projected vegetation change affects ecosystems change by establishing and initiate monitoring programs

Engage WMFN community
around existing climate
information and projects in
order to develop priorities for
both further research and for
policy and planning action

Establish cultural and climate-
informed plans for protection
and restoration of significant
ecosystems facing threats from
industrial development and
climate change impacts

RESEARCH AGENDA 2

**ASSESSING THE POSSIBILITIES AND
PRIORITIES FOR PREVENTING OR
AMELIORATING IMPACTS ON
CULTURAL PRACTICES AND RIGHTS**

As a part of this event, West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Wilson gave a public lecture on land, culture, and cumulative effects in Northeastern British Columbia

Image courtesy of Oliver Mann, UBC Community Engagement.

RESEARCH AGENDA 3

PLANNING FOR EXTREME WEATHER AND DISASTER EVENTS IN WEST MOBERLY TERRITORY.

Pursue more accurate weather predictions at a small scale for WMFN territory in the face of climate change, in order to understand what types of extreme events may impact the WMFN community

Assess the potential climate-related impacts of hydroelectric development on WMFN territory

Create community plans to prepare for extreme weather, recognizing the rights of WMFN to establish their own emergency protocols in the face of events such as wildfires and extreme heat

NEXT STEPS

REFINE AND DEVELOP THE CCRA

These initial areas of research and collaboration came out of the Winter 2023 workshop and will be taken back to the WMFN government and community for input and prioritization

After community feedback and revision, the highest priority research projects will be further refined and developed as the first research plan of the CCRA, which can be used as a basis for fundraising for these research projects

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The collaborators behind this project would like to acknowledge that this workshop took place on the unceded ancestral lands of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

We would also like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this project: Sally Otto, Nicola Love, Mary O'Connor, Sara Nelson, Naomi Schwartz, Jennifer Williams, Jacquie Kwok, and Shayla Walker.



**West Moberly
First Nations**

West Moberly First Nations is a unified and self-sustaining community that is in control of our own future, uniting our community in building for the future. Our mission is to positively enhance the progression of West Moberly First Nations ethics with respect, honesty, fairness, integrity, and self motivation by promoting open communication with members, Chief & Council and staff.

<https://westmo.org/>



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre for Climate Justice

The Centre for Climate Justice works with movements, communities, students, and policy makers to develop research and analysis that addresses climate breakdown in connection with multiple, interlinked, and cascading crises. We believe that climate justice at its best is the labour of repair, redistribution, and world building.

<https://climatejustice.ubc.ca/>