



Fire Rehabilitation and Recovery in the Northeast Region

**Prepared for: NE Roundtable
February 28, 2024
Bob Warner Director Of
Wildfire Recovery**

Agenda

1. 2023 Fire Season at a glance
 2. Terminology: What is Rehabilitation vs Recovery
 3. Work Presently ongoing or in planning stages
 4. Key Messages
 5. Questions
-





2023 Wildfires in NE Brief Summary

- Approximately 1.83 Million Ha of fire area in Northeast in 2023
 - 2.8M ha Provincially
 - ~5 of 10 largest fires in BC History occurred in the Northeast Region this year
- Approximately 20 million m³ of merchantable timber impacted
- Significant impacts to areas and values identified in agreements
 - BRFN HV1's, FRRAs, Watershed Management Basins, Traplines
 - Treaty 8 consensus Protection and Enhanced Management Areas
- Significant impacts to wildlife habitats, water quality, cultural values, values of importance i.e. Old Growth etc.
- 60,000 ha of Silviculture Openings
- 572 km of fire guard constructed
- 50 km of range fence burned

Wildfire Land-Based Recovery (WLBR)



DEFINED

- A phase of emergency management in which steps are taken to repair the land base affected by a wildfire itself and wildfire suppression activities. This includes restoration of impacted ecosystems to an acceptable level or, when feasible, improving sustainability and resiliency of the landscape



Rehabilitation vs Recovery

Rehabilitation:

- Is a component of WLBR
- applies to mitigating and repairing damage done by fire suppression activities
- Typically involves fireguard rehabilitation, including guard pull back, water control, seeding, and repairing fences damaged by suppression activities.
- Post Wildfire Natural Hazard Assessments (PWNHA) carried out to identify areas of public safety or high environmental concern.
- Is legislated, under section 65 of the Wildfire Act.
- Work is implemented by Ministry of Forests, Regional Operations
- Can be done in conjunction with fire response, on larger fires, will typically take 1-2 years to complete.

Rehabilitation vs Recovery



Recovery:

- applies to mitigating and repairing or restoring damage done by wildfire on the land.
- Typical activities include access management, range improvements, wildlife enhancement, and studies to determine impacts of large-scale fire.
- Salvage harvesting is a tool for recovery
- Long term, “build back better” in many cases and typically part of a longer-term plan
- Funding is not defined, nor is it a legislated activity.



Current Projects

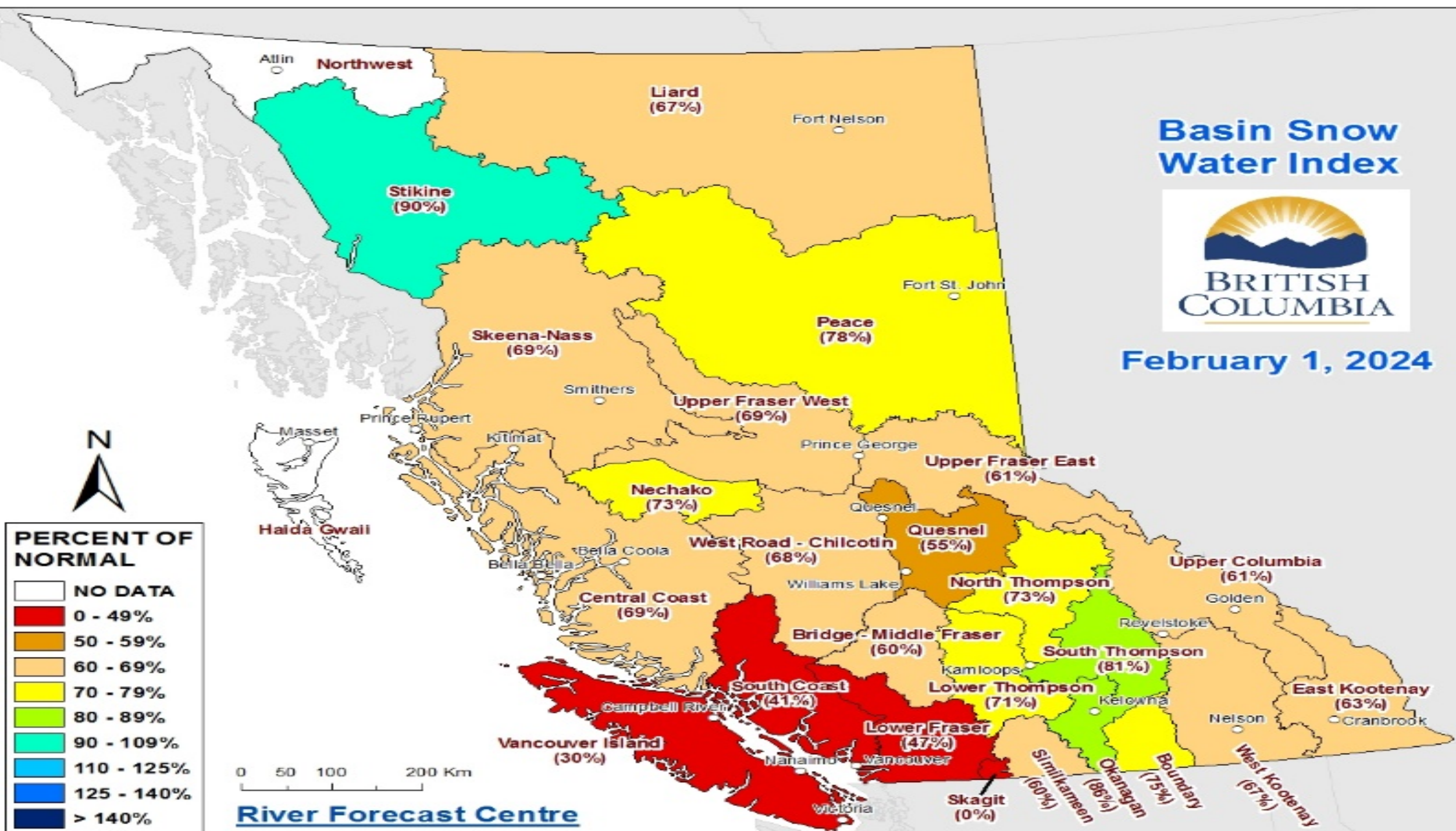
1 A. 2023 Fire Holdovers

- Lack of snow, warm temps and enormity of fires has resulted in many fires being reported.
- BCWS planning outreach to communities to hear concerns and communication preparedness/response
- Snow, and an unclear fire boundary, will delay guard construction along with warmer spring temps approaching.

Basin Snow Water Index



February 1, 2024



PERCENT OF NORMAL

- NO DATA
- 0 - 49%
- 50 - 59%
- 60 - 69%
- 70 - 79%
- 80 - 89%
- 90 - 109%
- 110 - 125%
- 125 - 140%
- > 140%

0 50 100 200 Km

River Forecast Centre



Current Projects

2. Wildfire Timber Salvage

- The standard 2+ year permitting process must be accelerated before wood deteriorates
- Working collaboratively with Nations and Licensees to target priority areas
- Burn Severity mapping done early and targeting medium to high burn severity areas for salvage
- Avoiding green wood where feasible
- Currently issued and pending permits totals approx. 430,000m³, while 170,000 m³ are in process.



Current Projects

3. Post Wildfire Silviculture Prescriptions/stocking

- 60,000 silviculture openings lost to the fires, approximately 1/3 had licensee obligations
- Changing stand structure goals to increase resiliency.
- New policy and legislation allows for catastrophic funding by area
- Working with Nations and licensees to identify high priority areas to reforest



Key Messages

- Short term Land Based Recovery focused on mitigating environmental hazards while ensuring the opportunity is taken to utilize products that have a relatively short shelf life, (Eg burnt timber for sawmills, mushrooms)
- A small percentage of the fire will be salvage harvested and will be carried out on areas of med to high burn intensity while minimizing green wood harvest.
- Work is done by partnering with Nations and collaborating with stakeholders and local governments.
- Work is ongoing in preparation for the 2024 Fire season and many activities are awaiting the right ground conditions before response is taken
- Longer term recovery work will take time to plan and can be tied in with other planning tables. High level plan can be done this fall.
- Focus in all activities is public safety



QUESTIONS?