Resilient Forests
Seminar Series 2012

West Kootenay Climate and Resilience Project: A Summary of Key Results and Some Thoughts on Now What?

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Abstract

Climate change is with us, and is having visible effects on the forests in the West Kootenay today. Future changes are predicted to be significant in terms of increasing temperatures and shifts in precipitation – particularly in summer. These changes have the potential to cause very significant shifts in the ecosystems we are familiar with today, and in how they currently function.

A two year integrated Vulnerability Assessment has been completed for the West Kootenay region of British Columbia aimed at exploring these future changes. The main goals of the assessment are to increase knowledge about climate change and ecological resilience, and enhance the capacity of forest managers to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

In this talk, we will present results from the work that summarize – a range of potential climate futures for the West Kootenay Region, the potential implications for the current ecosystems based on these potential climate futures, some potential adaptation options, plus an overview of barriers and opportunities for moving ahead with adapting to climate change within forest management in BC.

In addition to commenting on how the results of our work are relevant locally in the Kootenays, we will also highlight key messages that have larger ramifications for ecosystems, and everyone involved in managing them, across the province. Results and information for the project are available at: www.kootenayresilience.org

Biography

Rachel Holt, P.h.D., R.P.Bio. Rachel is a biologist with a range of experience applying conservation biology principles to land management issues in B.C. She has been involved in the field developing management standards and ecosystem based management standards, and also has extensive experience managing larger strategic projects.

Gregory Utzig, M.Sc., P.Ag. Greg is a conservation ecologist and land use planning consultant with over 35 years experience in environmental impact assessment, terrain and vegetation mapping, watershed analysis, habitat inventory and modeling, and a wide range of activities related to forest management and biodiversity protection. At present his focus is on adapting biodiversity conservation measures to the realities of rapid climate change.