For Immediate Release

September 10, 2024

**Líl̓wat Forestry Ventures and BC Wildfire Service Lead**

**Cultural Burn in the Tenquille Creek Area**

**Mount Currie, B.C. –** Líl̓wat Forestry Ventures (LFV), in partnership with the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), completed a cultural burn in the upper Tenquille Creek drainage area by the end of June 2024. The burn, designed to enhance biodiversity, stimulate berry production, and improve wildlife habitat, will also aid in reducing the overall wildfire risk in the Tenquille Creek watershed.

“A cultural burn is essentially putting fire back into the landscape, often in a forested or previously forested area, with the purpose of enhancing and preserving cultural values,” explained Klay Tindall, general manager of Forest Operations for LFV. “These fires require extensive planning, sometimes months in advance, and must be managed carefully to ensure they do not negatively impact community members.”

The Tenquille Creek cultural burn occurred in previously harvested cut blocks, covering approximately 14.6 hectares. According to Tindall, grizzly bear habitats and traditional plant growth in this area were severely impacted in the past due to wildfires, compounded a result of human intervention through fire suppression in the area for many decades.

“Our goal was to preserve the area in a way that promotes the regrowth of important resources for the benefit of the ̓’wat Nation. By reintroducing fire to stimulate huckleberry growth, we can support the grizzly bear population while also providing community members with more opportunities to harvest these traditional plants,” added Tindall.

By increasing the huckleberry supply at higher elevations, the Tenquille Creek cultural burn will encourage bears to stay in this area rather than moving to lower elevations and potentially into nearby communities. This is expected to reduce bear sightings in valley bottoms and near schools in Whistler.

The burn plan was completed together by both LFV and BCWS. A burn plan provides an overview of the project and its objectives, the potential values that could be impacted, and mitigation actions to take in the execution of the burn.

BCWS played crucial role in this cultural burn, not only by providing funding support for the project and assisting with the shared burn plan, but also by helping apply the fire and monitor the burn to ensure it did not impact nearby communities.

“Our collaboration with the BC Wildfire Service has been ongoing for about 10 years, with many of their staff being members of the Líl̓wat Nation,” explained Tindall. “This is not the first time we have collaborated with them on Lil’wat Nation traditional territory either. In 2022, we worked together on a prescribed burn project in the Owl Creek Drainage, nine kilometers north of Pemberton. That project had similar intended outcomes as the Tenquille Creek one.”

With more experience, LFV has gained valuable insight, particularly regarding the importance of pre-planning for cultural burns.

“Weather is a crucial factor in controlling the fire and ensuring it remains manageable. The pre-planning process involves ensuring there is good road access to facilitate worker safety, and that all plans are in place ahead of time so the work can be done when weather conditions are suitable for burning,” said Tindall.

To stay up to date on the work done by LFV and learn more about their projects, visit: <https://lilwatbusiness.ca/our-divisions/forestry-ventures/>

**About Líl̓wat Forestry Ventures**

Líl̓wat Forestry Ventures Ltd. is a leading forestry management corporation within the Líl̓wat Nation, managing an Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) of 100,000 cubic meters of timber. This accounts for approximately two-thirds of the AAC across the entire Líl̓wat Traditional Territory. The corporation is strategically divided into two primary operations: contracting and harvesting. Their extensive portfolio includes tree planting, spacing, brushing, slashing, and falling, alongside road rehabilitation and construction. Additionally, Líl̓wat Forestry Ventures handles BC Hydro transmission slashing contracts, firefighting, fuels management, and other specialized tree service work. For more information, visit: [www.lilwat.ca](http://www.lilwat.ca)

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