

Project Profile

Project Name:	Improving Disturbance Data in Northeast British Columbia
Project Number:	Rest-2026-01
Proponent:	Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (WLRS)
Funding Envelope:	Restoration
Timeframe:	January 1, 2026 – May 2, 2027

Project objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

- develop an enhanced, operationally viable disturbance dataset for the Northeast Region of British Columbia that supports accurate cumulative effects (CE) assessments and informed land-use decision-making.

An enhanced, operationally viable disturbance dataset will create the opportunity for more transparent, consistent, and effective land-use planning across the region, laying the foundation for clearer regulatory processes, industry certainty, better environmental outcomes and stronger relationships with Treaty 8 Nations. Current datasets, developed under the Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) and the Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment (RSEA), offer landscape-level insights but lack the precision needed for site-specific planning, threshold tracking, and restoration planning.

Project description

To achieve the project objectives, the project will:

1. **Adjust existing data to be reflective of on-the-ground conditions**
Existing line work will be adjusted to be reflective of current, high resolution satellite imagery (2.5m resolution).
2. **Classify and Characterize Areas of Natural Regeneration**
Identify, in a GIS environment, areas of natural regeneration for further field investigation to support the development of stronger classifications of how disturbances evolve over time, enabling better restoration planning.
3. **Enable Operational Use**
Produce a dataset that meets the needs of regulators, industry, and Treaty 8 Nations for site-specific planning, disturbance tracking, and restoration planning.

4. **Collaborate and Build Trust in the Data with Treaty 8 Nations**

Work closely with Treaty 8 Nations to design and implement the approach to ensure it addresses their priorities and fosters trust and shared stewardship.

The proposed work will improve the accuracy of disturbance datasets by integrating LiDAR, high resolution imagery, manual digitization, and field validation to better characterize disturbances and identify areas undergoing natural regeneration.

Parallel work is underway with each of the data custodians and permitting agencies to improve permitting datasets, in a manner that will avoid future inaccuracies. The intent of this work is to ensure that linework adjustments are ingrained into the system going forward, and become a regular and repeating element of disturbance mapping in the Province of B.C.

Complementary work is also underway by GeoBC to establish a restoration data portal to track permitting data and field-assembled data for areas demonstrating a natural regeneration trajectory.

These improvements will enable more reliable decision-making, inform disturbance caps, reduce land-use conflicts, and support restoration planning.

This initiative will be developed in collaboration with Treaty 8 Nations, ensuring that their perspectives, needs and knowledge are embedded into the process.

Project Team

- **Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS)**—project lead; planning, executing and quality assurance over spatial activities to update disturbance datasets; planning and managing field work to validate updated datasets; project management, reporting and engagement with members of the Project Team.
- **Treaty 8 Nations**—providing feedback on data and end uses along with field guardians assisting with ground truthing and field verification.
- **Steering Committee**— comprised of senior level staff from the BC Energy Regulator (BCER), WLRS and Ministry of Energy & Climate Solutions (ECS). Stakeholders such as the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) will provide input, datasets (where appropriate) and ongoing feedback.

Project deliverables

The deliverables from this project include the following:

1. **Adjusted Human Disturbance Data for NE BC**—to be published in the BC Data Catalogue once completed, making it available for use by all interested parties.
2. **Final Report**—describing project activities, results, recommendations and next steps.