



# 2025 Bulkley Morice Wildfire Resilience Survey

Public Summary of Key Findings - April 2025

## About the Survey

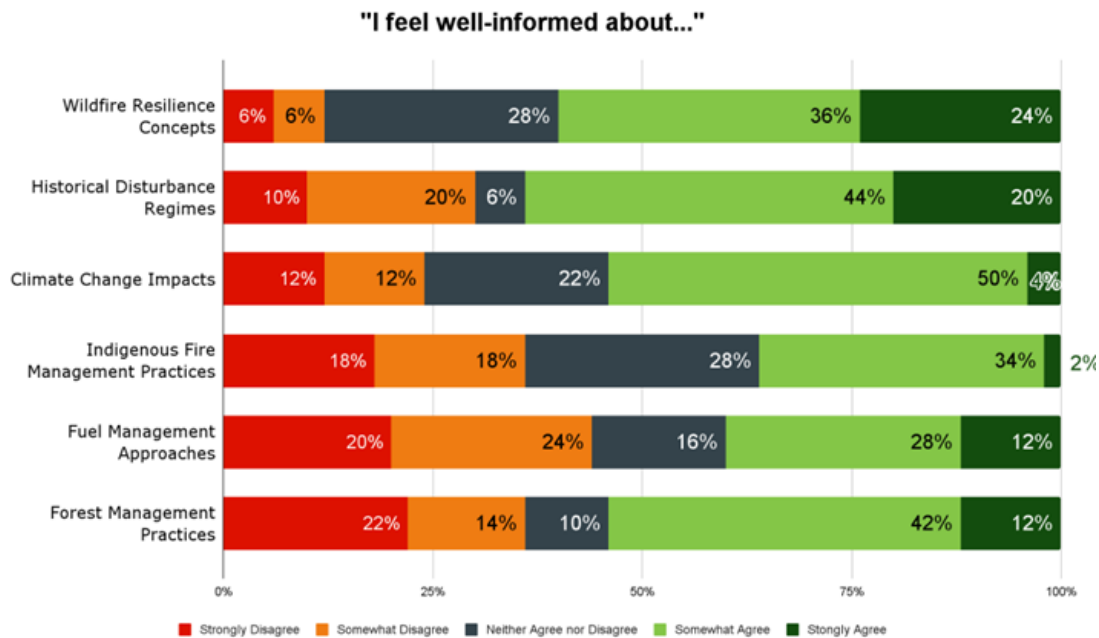
*The Bulkley Morice Wildfire Resilience Survey* was carried out as part of Phase 1 of the Bulkley Morice Wildfire Resilience Project. Funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Wildfire Resilience Initiative and delivered by the Bulkley Valley Research Centre (BVRC), the survey aimed to explore wildfire-related knowledge, perceptions, and informational needs among local land managers and stakeholders. This annual survey is designed to track changes in understanding and engagement over time, guiding future planning, engagement strategies, and management practices to enhance regional wildfire resilience.

## Who Responded?

There were 101 survey invitations sent to designated land managers and decision-makers, in addition to individuals who previously signed up for project updates. A diverse group of fifty professionals responded. These represented the provincial government (40%), resource management consulting (20%), the forest industry (12%), First Nations government (8%), academia (2%), and other sectors, including environmental scientists and retired forestry professionals (18%). Notably, 64% of respondents live and work within the Bulkley Morice region, demonstrating a strong local commitment and firsthand understanding of regional wildfire issues.

## Current Knowledge and Identified Information Gaps

Results indicate that while there is moderate baseline confidence in general wildfire knowledge, there are several common gaps in knowledge across stakeholder groups.



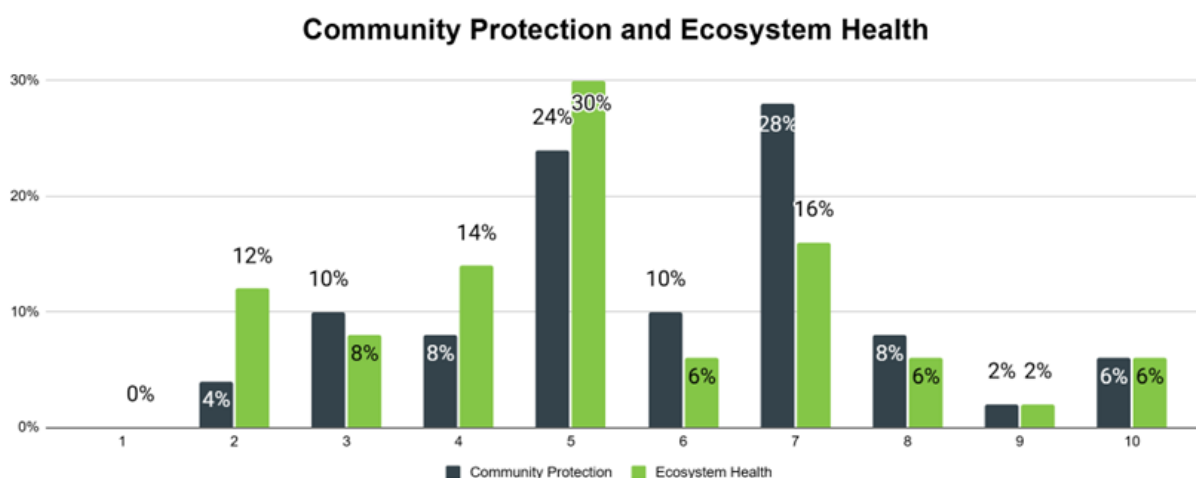
Respondents generally indicated moderate confidence in their wildfire resilience knowledge, with a median rating of 7 out of 10. Significant gaps exist, particularly in specific areas:

- **Indigenous Fire Stewardship:** Over one-third (36%) reported feeling inadequately informed about Indigenous fire management practices. Respondents highlighted the need for better integration of traditional knowledge with current forest management policies.
- **Fuel Management Approaches:** Nearly half (44%) felt they lacked sufficient knowledge about fuel management strategies, particularly regarding their effectiveness and practical application.

Those with direct fire suppression or extensive forest management experience expressed higher confidence. However, many respondents noted challenges in effectively combining scientific, experiential, and traditional knowledge, especially given emerging impacts from climate change.

## Perceptions of Wildfire Risk Reduction Treatments

Participants were asked to rate their confidence in the effectiveness of treatments to achieve community protection and ecosystem health. Perceptions about risk reduction treatment efficacy were spread across a spectrum of opinion, demonstrating the complexity of multiple contributing factors, including context, environmental conditions, implementation scale, and ecological considerations.



Participants rated their confidence in the effectiveness of risk reduction treatments as moderate, assigning an average score of approximately 6 out of 10 for protecting communities, with slightly lower ratings for ecosystem protection. Respondents emphasized that effectiveness significantly depends on:

- The type and scale of treatment applied.
- Environmental and weather conditions.
- Comprehensive integration with broader landscape management and local ecological considerations.

Many respondents advocated for balanced approaches, cautioning against overly simplistic strategies focused exclusively on fuel removal without accounting for broader ecological impacts and community priorities.

## Key Challenges and Considerations for Wildfire Resilience

The survey identified several crucial challenges affecting wildfire resilience efforts:

- **Scientific vs. Experiential Knowledge:** A recurring tension between academically derived knowledge and practical, on-the-ground experience. Respondents advocated for better integration of these knowledge types.
- **Community Safety vs. Ecological Health:** Respondents expressed concerns about achieving a balance between safeguarding communities and preserving ecological integrity, urging for strategies that support both.
- **Traditional vs. Contemporary Practices:** There is significant uncertainty regarding how traditional Indigenous fire management methods can be effectively integrated into contemporary management frameworks.
- **Local Control vs. Centralized Decision-Making:** Many emphasized the importance of local knowledge and control, expressing dissatisfaction with decisions made without adequate local input.

## **Regional Context and Specific Concerns**

Respondents shared specific local concerns shaped by recent wildfire events and unique regional conditions, including:

- Experiences from recent wildfire evacuations.
- Ecological challenges related to boreal forests and the aftermath of mountain pine beetle infestations.
- Debate surrounding logging practices and their impact on fire risks and landscape resilience.
- Practical considerations about access to popular recreational areas and community safety measures.

## **Next Steps for the Bulkley Morice Wildfire Resilience Project**

The survey results will establish a baseline of knowledge and beliefs across a range of stakeholders and inform the context and areas of focus for further project collaboration, including multiple workshops in 2025.