

**Your Name:** Olivier Jumeau

**Tentative title of your thesis:** Time-after-fire regeneration of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) habitat in Ulkatcho Territory

**Supervisor's name or names if co-supervised:** Dr. Jill Harvey

**Committee member's names:** N/A

**Abstract of your research:** The Ulkatcho of the West Chilcotin have relied on whudzih (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*, woodland caribou) for subsistence and spiritual ceremony since time immemorial. Elders recall hunting caribou in large groups and sharing the meat among the whole community, however woodland caribou in what is now west-central British Columbia (BC) are Threatened, with all three herds in Ulkatcho Territory in long-term decline. The Charlotte Alplands herd, despite numerous translocations and extensive radio-monitoring, are believed to be extirpated. The Rainbows Mountains herd (population 32) currently have an unsustainable calf recruitment rate. Indigenous harvest of woodland caribou in Ulkatcho Territory is nonviable and was banned in 2019, with current caribou populations unknown. Across the nation-state of Canada, wildfire severity and extreme burning conditions are increasing, with wildfire occurrence expected to double in BC by the end of the century. In the last six years, four of the largest wildfire seasons on record occurred in BC (2017, 2018, 2021, 2023). As Ulkatcho caribou habitat continues to shrink due to forestry and pine beetle kill, the impacts of wildfire on caribou habitat are yet to be described. Suitable winter habitat is a key limiting factor to woodland caribou in Ulkatcho Territory, with Ulkatcho herds studied to avoid burnt areas due to uncondusive conditions for lichen growth and predator avoidance. This research will characterize lichen and forest structure regeneration across historic wildfires in Ulkatcho Territory, integrating traditional ecological knowledge and Dakelh linguistics in methods design, data collection and manuscript writing.