

Return to flame:

A case study of aboriginal burning and its implications in
Lytton, British Columbia.

Michael Lewis, B.A., MEM



York et al., 1993

2014 Wildfire Canada Conference
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Introduction

- Introduction
- Acknowledgements
- 'Society in Fire'



Lytton archives, 2013

In Aboriginal communities with a history of fire use as a tool, to what extent has use returned following a period of prohibition?

Fire 'managers'

- Major shift in fire management
- Canada's first fire 'managers'?
- Precedent for aboriginal fire use as an ecosystem management tool.



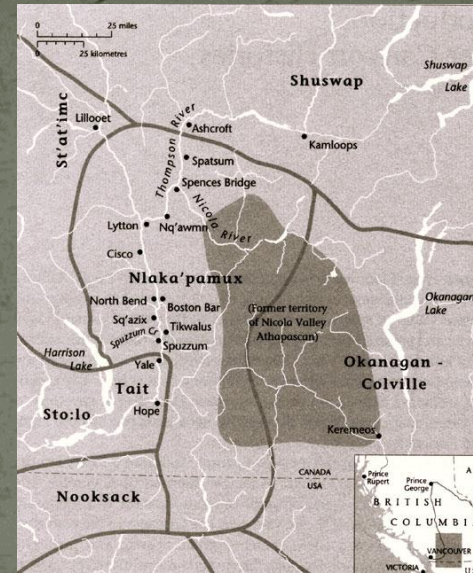
Lytton archives, 2013



Lytton archives, 2013

Lytton

- Geographical location
- Lytton First Nation
- Nlaka'Pamux peoples
(ing-klə-kap-mə)
- Continuous inhabitation
- Climate
- Historic fire use rationales



BCGoldrush.com, 2014



BC archives, 2013

Historical conditions

- Three distinct biogeoclimactic zones
- Sagebush-Bunchgrass
- Ponderosa Pine
- Interior Douglas Fir
- Burning practices



Ministry of Forests, 1997



Ministry of Forests, 1997



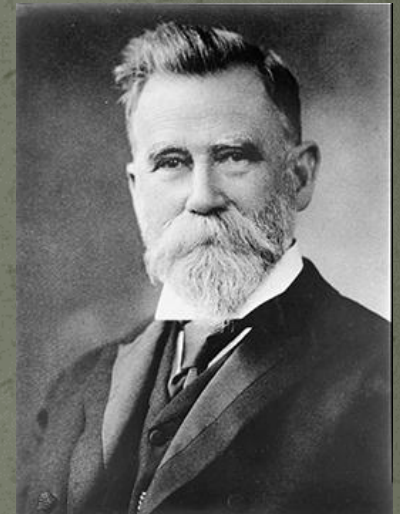
Ministry of Forests, 1997

European colonization

- Initial limited
- Mineral and Lumber exploitation
- Initial perceptions
- Legislation
- Creation of the BCFS
- Suppression policies



BCFS, 2012



BC Archives, 2013

“...travellers who are not Canadian, who do not place any value upon the preservation of timber and who are too ignorant or careless to bother to put their fires out”

Change on the horizon

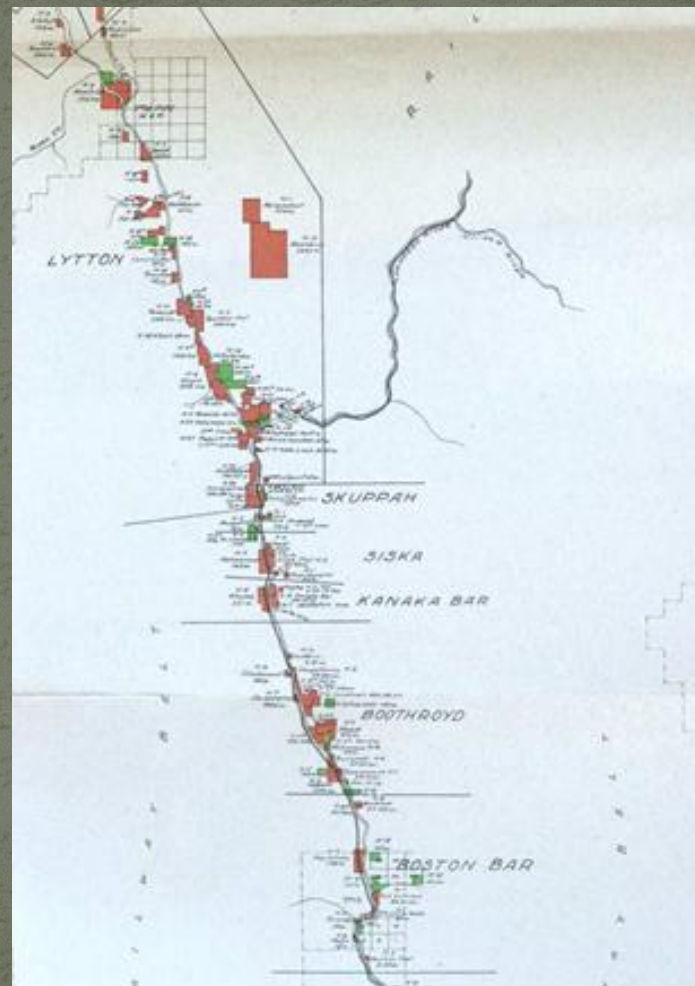
- Blank-cheque firefighting
- Increasing intensity
- Declining forest health
- Scientific community
- Fire regimes altered
- Encroachment of Ponderosa Pine



BCFS, 2012

Changing tides

- New perspective on fire
- Legislation dismantled
- Burning OK'd
- Effects on aboriginal burning?
- Project rationale
- Project methodology



Results

- 92% Used fire
- Age factor
- Foodstuffs
- Understanding of season
- ‘Smokey the bear’ effect
- 73% use fire only personally



BC archives, 2013



BCFS, 2012

Results

- Scientific-Traditional link
- Understanding of role in forest health
- Agricultural activities
- 58% concern over edible foods



NPS, , 2013



NPS, , 2013

Findings

- People aware of historical precedent, but
- Small spatial scale
- Undesirable outcomes visible
- Negative age effect (50+ v. 50-)
- Differing rationales
- Understood, but not practiced.



Lewis, 2013



Lewis, 2013

Findings

- Negative effect on foodstuffs
- Validation of earlier work
- Keen interest in community
- Strong desire to pass on information
- Application for ecosystem management



Aboriginalbc.com, 2013



Aboriginalbc.com, 2013

Conclusion

- Current status
- Changed rationales
- Personal vs group benefit/activity
- Learning opportunities
- Looking forward



Infotel.ca, 2014



Lewis, 2014