**The impact of wildfires on the movement of water, sediment and contaminants in BC watersheds**

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**Phil Owens** is a Professor and Research Chair in the Department of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at UNBC. He is part of the Landscape Ecology Research Group at UNBC. His research investigates natural and anthropogenic disturbances, such as climate change, agricultural activities, mining and wildfires, on hydrological and geomorphological processes in watersheds.

**Description**

As wildfires have impacted nearly every corner of the province of BC in recent years, researchers at UNBC have been investigating how landscapes and watersheds respond to wildfires. This presentation will describe some of these research activities, with an emphasis on how wildfires influence water flows and soil erosion. Wildfire also causes changes in how important nutrients and detrimental contaminants cycle in watersheds. Using research conducted over 20 years throughout BC, I will present some of the main findings and on-going work on these topics. I will also describe the impacts on land and water resources and aquatic ecosystems, especially salmon habitats and populations. In particular, I will talk about an exciting, multi-institutional project – Tsecmenúl̓ecwem-kt (We Repair the Land) – investigating postfire recovery and restoration following the severe 2021 Sparks Lake wildfire near Kamloops.