

Title: Assessing wolf denning ecology in relation to restoration efforts and wildfire in Fort Nelson First Nation Territory

Level: MSc Student

Location: Prince George, BC, and Fort Nelson, BC

Start date: Flexible. There is potential to work as a field technician in July-August of 2026, followed by starting graduate studies in September 2026 or January 2027

Duration: 2-3 years

Opportunity description: Oil and gas exploration and extraction activities have substantially altered wildlife habitat and predator-prey interactions in northern boreal forests. The Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN) has undertaken substantial efforts in their territory to restore ecosystem function and promote expected predator-prey interactions. Restoration efforts, however, are complicated by extensive drought and wildfire events.

Accordingly, FNFN has established research programs to understand the effects of restoration and wildfire on culturally important species, including wolves. As part of this research, FNFN and partners are seeking a graduate student to better understand wolf denning ecology in recovering landscapes within FNFN Territory. The graduate student will join a collaborative team to conduct this research. The student will be based at the University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George Campus, in Dr. Heather Bryan's [Wildlife and Ecosystem Bioindicators Lab](#), and will collaborate closely with Katherine Wolfenden from the [FNFN Lands Department](#), and Jesse Tigner from [SwampDonkey Solutions Inc.](#) The field portion of the project will be based in Fort Nelson, BC, where the student will work with a number of partners.

The graduate student will draw on existing datasets and field-collected data to address key questions identified by FNFN. A key objective is to assess den site selection by wolves in relation to wildfire events and prey availability, including beaver, moose, and caribou. The student will address this objective using data from >58 collared wolves from multiple packs along with data from annual den site visits, prey abundance surveys, and spatial datasets. The student will work closely with FNFN community members and project partners to further develop these questions, conduct fieldwork, and implement the research. The research will inform land stewardship and restoration efforts by the FNFN aimed at promoting culturally important species and landscapes.

Required Qualifications:

- BSc in ecology, wildlife biology, conservation, or similar discipline
- Ability to understand different perspectives and to incorporate community-identified values and ideas into research questions, approaches, and interpretations
- Experience working in remote field settings



- Strong verbal and written communication skills. The student will be expected to convey data and information in a variety of settings and for a wide variety of audiences. Both technical and plan-language skills are a must
- Previous experience with data management and quantitative data analysis using programs such as R
- Valid class 5 driver's license

Stipend:

The graduate student will be invited to apply for a Mitacs Fellowship in partnership with Swamp Donkey Consulting, which will provide a minimum stipend of \$27,000/year for two years. The student will work with project partners to identify and apply for additional scholarships.

Include with application:

- Cover letter
- CV
- Unofficial academic transcripts
- Name and contact information of three references

To Apply:

Please email your application as a single PDF file with your name and "Wolf Denning Ecology Graduate Student Application" in the subject line to:

Heather Bryan, heather.bryan@unbc.ca

Applications received on or before April 8, 2026, will receive full consideration; however, applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The UNBC Commitment to Diversity and Employment Equity

The University of Northern British Columbia is fully committed to creating and maintaining an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment that is accessible to all. We are devoted to ensuring a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination. This commitment is woven into our motto and mission. In the Dakelh language, UNBC's motto 'En Cha Huná translates to "he/she/they also live" and means respect for all living things. Through the respect for all living things, we are able to grow and learn better together, each bringing our own unique individual differences and contributions to inspire leaders for tomorrow by influencing the world today.

Employment equity requires that we remove barriers and overcome both direct and indirect discrimination. In this way, the pool of excellent candidates increases substantially. We encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the B.C. Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person.



About the University and its Community

Since its founding in 1990, the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) has emerged as one of Canada's best small research-intensive universities, with a passion for teaching, discovery, people, and the North. UNBC's excellence is derived from community-inspired research, hands-on learning, and alumni who are leading change around the world.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have walked gently on the diverse traditional territories where the University of Northern British Columbia community is grateful to live, work, learn, and play. We are committed to building and nurturing relationships with Indigenous peoples, we acknowledge their traditional lands, and we thank them for their hospitality. UNBC's largest campus in Prince George is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh, in the spectacular landscape near the geographic centre of beautiful British Columbia.

UNBC's three regional campuses are located in Quesnel, Fort St. John, and Terrace. The South-Central campus in Quesnel is situated on the traditional territory of the Lhtako Dené (Red Bluff Band), Nazko, Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation (Kluskus Band), and Esdilagh First Nations (formerly Alexandria Band). Lhtako, Nazko, and Lhoosk'uz are Dakelh First Nations, and Esdilagh is a member of the Tsilhqot'in Nation. The Peace River-Liard campus in Fort St. John is situated on the traditional territory of the Doig River, Blueberry River and Halfway River First Nations. They are the Dunne-Za people. The Northwest campus in Terrace is situated on traditional Ts'msyen (Tsimshian) territory of the Kitsumkalum and Kitselas First Nations. It includes a satellite campus in the coastal community of Prince Rupert.

UNBC consistently ranks in the top three in its category in the annual Maclean's university rankings. UNBC also recently placed among the top five per cent of higher education institutions worldwide by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. With a diverse student population, the University is friendly, inclusive, and supportive. Prince George is a city of ~74,000 people with impressive cultural, educational, and recreational amenities. For more information about living and working in Prince George, please refer to <http://www.unbc.ca/experience> and <https://moveupprincegeorge.ca>. Make your mark with this leading post-secondary institution.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. We thank all applicants for their interest in UNBC however, only those applicants selected for further consideration will be contacted.