

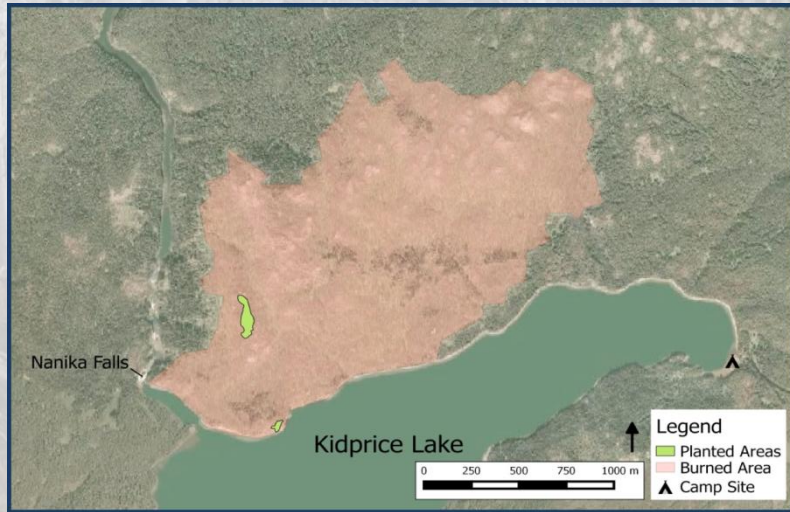


Wildfires and Whitebark Pines in Nenikëkh/Nanika-Kidprice Provincial Park

A 2004 wildfire burned 330 hectares of forest on the north-west side of Kidprice Lake near Nanika Falls. In June 2014, 340 whitebark pine seedlings were planted in suitable rocky areas to complement natural regeneration. Whitebark pine is classed as an endangered species by Canada's Species at Risk Act and is threatened by mountain pine beetle and white pine blister rust, a pathogen introduced from Eurasia.

Whitebark pine ecosystems, which are rare and in decline, were lost during the fire and this is part of an ongoing project to help restore this ecosystem to a healthy state. Damaged whitebark pines produce fewer cones and are less appealing to the Clark's Nutcracker, a bird that collects and buries its seeds. While the Clark's Nutcracker can find other food sources, whitebark pines have no other means of seed dispersal.

Clark's Nutcrackers, grizzly bears and other animals rely on the high fat content of whitebark pine seeds. The whitebark pine is considered a keystone species whose ecological value is proportionately greater than its abundance. Seeds for this project were taken from trees on the opposite side of the lake, thus preserving local pine genotypes.



This ecosystem restoration project is a collaboration between the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, BC Parks, BC Wildfire Management Branch, BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en. The park lies within traditional Wet'suwet'en territories and the two governments work together towards mutual goals related to biodiversity, the natural environment, cultural heritage and recreation.

