

the  
**firelight**  
group





Quality • Fairness • Respect • Social Return

**THE FIRELIGHT GROUP** is a community-based research organization whose mission is to work with communities in Canada and beyond to provide high quality research, analysis and technical tools, to create solutions for our shared futures. Our work is focused primarily on supporting the rights and interests of Aboriginal communities, and is founded in culturally respectful protocols.

Our work spans eight sectors, including traditional knowledge and use, cartography, socio-economic and cultural research, health, regulatory assessment, impact and benefit agreements (IBA), policy, planning and governance, and ecological research.

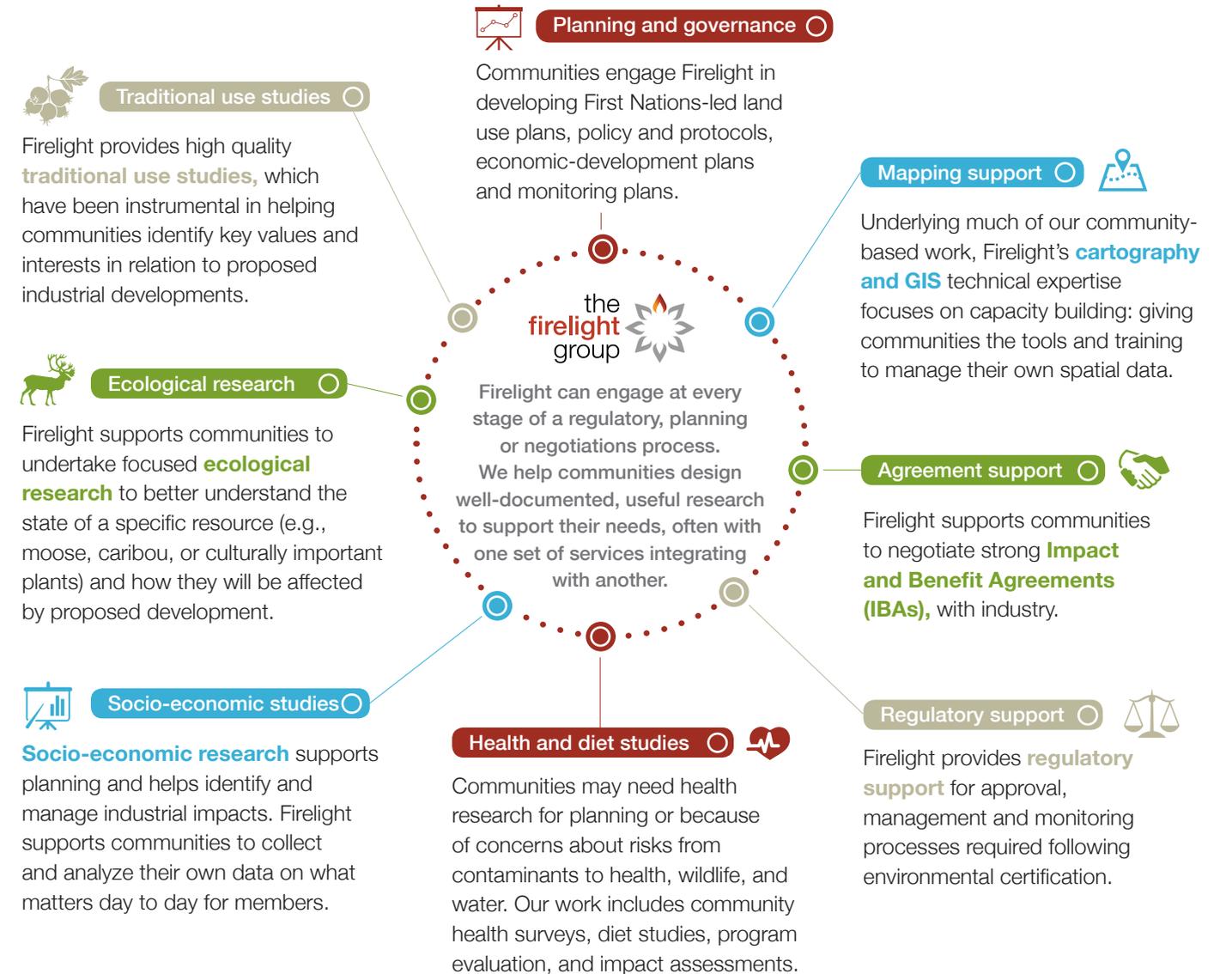


We work with communities to integrate baseline research from all of our program areas into policies, plans, and assessments that provide communities with meaningful leverage and support them in making informed decisions.

“The Firelight Group played a major part in the successful signing of Big Grassy First Nation’s Impact Benefit/Participation Agreement. Upon the successful signing of the agreement on January 9, 2015, the proponent, New Gold, as well as Big Grassy First Nation was pleased with the culmination of this project. The Firelight Group, especially Dr. Gibson, enabled Big Grassy First Nation to move forward with the confidence that the best information and advice available had been brought to the table.”

— Lynne Gavin, Band Manager, Big Grassy First Nation

We provide communities with high quality research and technical expertise.





# Traditional knowledge and use

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND USE

Traditional knowledge and traditional use studies (TUS) make up the core of our business. We work with elders and knowledge holders to map



how communities use land and water. We use many methods, including individual interviews, focus groups, archival research, and on-territory fieldwork, to document traditional knowledge and oral histories. The information gathered

helps indigenous and local knowledge to be heard in regulatory processes, environmental decisions, and planning for the lives of future generations.

Firelight's traditional knowledge and use team includes some of the foremost graduate trained anthropologists and social scientists in western Canada. Our work is critical for helping communities establish and assert their rights and interests. It also provides a foundation for work in other areas — such as ecological research and land use planning.



**“We support communities to map and document how they use lands and waters, and to do it in ways that can make a difference in regulatory processes, at negotiating tables, and in other places where hard decisions are being made.”**

**— Dr. Craig Candler, Firelight TUS team co-lead**

For more information, please contact Dr. Craig Candler at 250.590.9017, or Dr. Rachel Olson and Steve DeRoy at 604.563.2245.



“Before working with Firelight I had never collected any traditional land use values. They walked me through the process and gave me all the knowledge I needed to perform direct-to-digital mapping, including what I would need to direct the interviews, and even walked me through transferring the information to ARCGIS including leaving me with written directions to follow. The staff are friendly and professional, and I look forward to continuing working with them.” — Delta Flood, Land and Resource Manager, Matachewan First Nation

PHOTOS: JANELLE KUNTZ/FIRELIGHT; KYLEWITH/FICKR COMMONS; SUSAN LEECH/FIRELIGHT; STEVE DEROY/FIRELIGHT



# Mapping

## CARTOGRAPHY AND GIS SERVICES

Map-making is a critical foundation of our work with communities. Our cartography and Geographic Information System (GIS) experts work with community members to map out the locations they and their



families rely on for hunting, trapping, fishing and other important activities. Using state-of-the-art software, we analyze this information to clearly show how these areas could be affected by development.



### Training and Capacity Building

The Firelight Group works extensively to enhance the research and data collection capacity of First Nation communities by providing hands-on mapping training in individual communities and larger groups. As co-hosts of Indigenous Mapping Workshops, we have helped deliver technical training on Google mapping tools so that participants can collect, host, visualize, share and publish their own map data.

In essence, these maps are a visual representation of our clients' voices and of the places that are important to them. They are used in a wide variety of ways, from technical regulatory reports prepared for government agencies, to regional planning initiatives, to documenting knowledge for use within the community.



“When we sit down with community members, the first thing we say is that we work for them — nobody else. What is put on the record must be relevant to the community and treated with seriousness and respect. This is especially important when people are sharing information about the land; they must have the opportunity to control what is said or not said.”

— Steve DeRoy, Firelight Cartography team lead

For more information, please contact Steve DeRoy at 604.563.2245.

PHOTOS: STEVE DEROY/FIRELIGHT

# Socio-economics



## SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RESEARCH

Firelight works with communities to conduct research on social, economic, health and cultural changes — critical work that supports planning and is used to assess and manage potential impacts of industrial development. Our services include community-led censuses and surveys, baseline socio-economic research, food and diet studies to establish harvest baselines, workforce, training and employment surveys, impact assessments, and health research.

Firelight has conducted socio-economic studies for a broad range of projects from large scale coal mines, hydro dams, gas pipelines, LNG terminals, and oil sands projects, to smaller scale (but no less important) projects like winter roads in the north. Our team includes leading social scientists with decades of research experience, who are familiar with national and international standards of practice.

We support communities to undertake their own impact assessments that identify and address what matters most to them. Community priorities can include how development could change life in the community and the way community members live on the land, including accessing traditional foods, engaging in cultural activities, and accessing jobs and training.

**“Data that is available publicly on communities rarely measures what matters to them. We work with communities to make sure they have the data needed to make informed decisions about whether or not the potential changes from industry are acceptable and, if the project proceeds, monitor the impacts against what matters to members in their daily lives.”**

**— Diana Gibson, Firelight Socio-economic team lead**

For more information, please contact Diana Gibson at 250.590.9017.



## HEALTH

Firelight team members have experience in health policy, program evaluation and impact assessment. We focus on priorities established by the community, and use a holistic approach driven by Aboriginal social determinants of health. Our approach is based on looking at the whole person and their relationship to their environment and culture. Firelight’s work in this area includes conducting community-led health baseline studies, analysis, planning and impact assessment. Firelight has worked with communities concerned with the health impacts of contaminants from different types of industry, including spills that have affected water, fish, and wildlife.



# Planning

## POLICY, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE (PPG)

Our PPG team members support our clients to improve and build capacity in a number of areas. Land use planning and implementation planning can help communities to strategically get out ahead of development pressures. Consultation protocols, referrals procedures, and monitoring programs can help smooth governance. Business planning and economic development planning can help communities achieve their own vision and preferred outcomes.

We work with knowledge holders in the community by bringing complementary expertise and skills to the table. Our products are tailored to support clients in dealing strategically with other players — such as governments and development proponents — to best advance our clients’ rights and interests.



**CASE STUDY:** Firelight supported Fort Nelson First Nation in preparing its strategic land use plan — a Lands Department project identified as a priority by Chief and Council. The project combined existing data, community engagement, compliance with the Nation's Consultation Protocol, and implementation work with the referrals team. *Respect for the Land: Fort Nelson First Nation Strategic Land Use Plan*, was adopted by Chief and Council on June 18, 2012, and was described as a “game changer” by the Nation’s legal counsel.

“We provide advice and products that are practical and outcome-oriented, because our clients want on-the-ground, strategic results. So we listen carefully, we bring in our expertise, and — most importantly — we take direction from our clients.”

— Dave Thompson, Firelight PPG team lead

For more information, please contact Dave Thompson at 250.590.9017.



PHOTOS: CRAIG CANDLER/FIRELIGHT; STEVE DEROV/FIRELIGHT; JENNI SCHINE/FIRELIGHT



# IBA negotiation

## IMPACT AND BENEFIT AGREEMENT (IBA) NEGOTIATION

Our IBA experts support communities as they seek to create negotiated agreements with companies while protecting their land and taking care of their resources. We take direction from the community, often working alongside a strong community-based negotiator, and with community-based teams, to ensure the agreement will take care of the land and their way of life, and build what they need to ensure a strong and sustainable future. Corporate and resource analysis as well as financial review is often required. Our work can be tailored to needs, from short training workshops to extensive community-based support in negotiations.

This work is based on research done in many areas – traditional use and knowledge, ecology, socio-economic – which highlights opportunities and barriers. As part of the work, our team members may also provide a review of how the benefits could be implemented, or an analysis of the gaps in implementation.

### Training and Capacity Building

The Firelight IBA team has helped communities build their capacity by conducting IBA training with individuals and communities. Dr. Ginger Gibson of Firelight is the co-author of the *IBA Community Toolkit*, a free resource for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada considering impact and benefit agreements, specifically those with mining companies.



The goal of the toolkit is to help communities, negotiators and consultants achieve positive agreements for Aboriginal communities. Download the 2015 edition at [ibacommunitytoolkit.ca](http://ibacommunitytoolkit.ca)



**“We are currently supporting a chief negotiator who is working with many communities in negotiations. It has been hard, often fractious work, but the unity among these communities has never fallen apart. It is incredibly moving to see the friendship and self-determination at the table. These strong relationships are also an outcome of the IBA process.”**

**— Dr. Ginger Gibson, Firelight IBA team lead**

For more information, please contact Ginger Gibson at 780.760.1255.

PHOTOS: ANDREW TYLOSKY, PICTURE BC; JANELLE KUNTZ/FIRELIGHT

# Ecology



## ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Our team of ecologists and professional biologists builds on traditional knowledge and use mapping by conducting focused research on specific ecosystems, landforms and waterbodies, in collaboration with our clients.

Working closely with elders and other traditional ecological knowledge holders is key to ensuring that their expertise forms the basis for the community studies, plans and assessments.



Our research answers questions like: Why are we seeing changes in wildlife or water? Why is a particular species moving away, and how can we bring them back? Why does the government say there aren't any of this species here when we know there are?



### Training and Capacity Building

Firelight's ecology team provides capacity building to communities to develop community-led environmental monitoring programs, using parameters that respect community protocols for looking after the land, water, and animals.



"We focus on the plant and animal species that are important to the communities and their culture. We couldn't do this work without the expertise of the traditional knowledge holders. They provide a depth of knowledge that isn't available through scientific systems. Collaring animals will tell you where they are now, but it won't tell you where they were a hundred years ago."

— Carolyn Whittaker, Firelight Ecology team lead

For more information, please contact Carolyn Whittaker at 250.590.9017.



# Environmental assessment process support

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REGULATORY PROCESS SUPPORT

Facing an environmental assessment or regulatory process for proposed new projects can be intimidating for communities. Our team members have extensive experience with provincial, territorial and federal environmental assessment (EA) and regulatory processes, and have worked on major project assessments for mining, road building, oil and gas development, and hydro-electricity, among



other sectors. We provide strategic support and technical analysis for our clients, using our knowledge of the Crown process to help government and

industry listen to — and make changes to accommodate — the community’s concerns.

EA and regulatory support includes analyzing options, providing strategic advice, and writing formal



submissions in EAs and permitting processes. This support is critical for Aboriginal groups attempting to protect their rights and the lands, waters, and natural resources they rely upon, in a rapidly industrializing world. Firelight bridges the gap between collecting data on what matters most to our clients, and developing meaningful mitigations and monitoring systems on the ground.

**“Aboriginal groups are at a disadvantage during formal EA and regulatory processes. They are highly technical and bureaucratic; they focus on scientific knowledge at the expense of traditional ways of knowing; and timelines are increasingly rapid. All of these factors create barriers for meaningful input. Firelight provides support to our clients to remove or reduce these barriers, and allow the communities we work with to tell their own, often very different story of change, benefits and risks.”**

**— Alistair MacDonald, Firelight EA team lead**

For more information, please contact Alistair MacDonald at 780.760.1255.

PHOTOS: CAPOLYN WHITTAKER/FIRELIGHT; CRAIG CANDLER/FIRELIGHT; CRAIG CANDLER/FIRELIGHT

# Firelight has worked on hundreds of projects with communities across Canada

Some groundbreaking examples include:

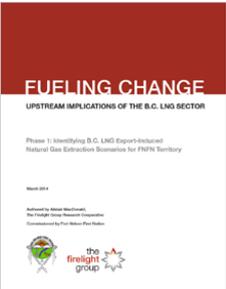
**ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE AND LAND USE REPORT AND ASSESSMENT** for Shell Canada's Proposed Jackpine Mine Expansion and Pierre River Mine. A ground-breaking baseline report and assessment that resulted in the first ever finding of significant effects on treaty and Aboriginal rights in the oil sands by a federal environmental assessment panel.

**FORDING RIVER OPERATIONS SWIFT PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CERTIFICATE APPLICATION, SECTION C: KTUNAXA NATION INTERESTS.** The Firelight Group and Ktunaxa Nation Lands and Resources worked with Teck Coal to develop a collaborative assessment of impacts to Aboriginal rights and interests for inclusion in Teck's application within the B.C. environmental assessment process.

**CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ON THE ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF CARRIER SEKANI TRIBAL COUNCIL FIRST NATION: THE COASTAL GASLINK PROJECT.** This report used a "sufficiency of resources" approach to present a realistic portrait of existing and future cumulative effects on the rights and interests of Carrier Sekani nations. It was instrumental in allowing the Carrier Sekani to push for meaningful accommodation agreements in relation to the proposed Coastal GasLink Project.



**TŁIČHŦ NATION TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND USE STUDY FOR THE PROPOSED NICO MINE PROJECT.** Firelight worked with the TłičhŦ nation to conduct a knowledge and use study in relation to Fortune Minerals Ltd. NICO Mine project. This study was key to a decision by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.



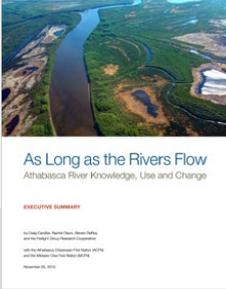
**FUELING CHANGE: UPSTREAM IMPLICATIONS OF THE B.C. LNG SECTOR.** This two-part study developed

realistic scenarios for future LNG exports from B.C. and the proportion likely to come from Fort Nelson First Nation territory. The report filled an important knowledge gap by clearly reviewing the likely implications of low and high LNG exports on this upstream First Nation.



**NÍH BOGHODI: WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF OUR LAND.** This study identifies protection and stewardship zones for caribou and bison within ACFN territory, clearly delineating

where and how development must be curtailed to protect these species.



**AS LONG AS THE RIVERS FLOW: ATHABASCA RIVER KNOWLEDGE, USE AND CHANGE.** Written with the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Mikisew

Cree First Nation, this ground-breaking study assessed how water level and quality changes are affecting the practice of treaty rights downstream from oil sands facilities.

**SOCIAL RETURN** is one of Firelight's four founding principles. Each year we dedicate a portion of our revenues to support communities to undertake important projects that can't easily be funded elsewhere. Projects funded include stewardship of grave sites and sacred areas, indigenous mapping conferences, spending time on the land to document oral histories, and supporting communities to publish and circulate reports and information they want made public.



PHOTO: JENNI SCHINE/FIRELIGHT



**VICTORIA HEAD OFFICE:** 253 – 560 Johnson Street, Victoria, B.C., V6W 3C6, 250.590.9017

**VANCOUVER:** 505 – 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 1L8, 604.563.2245

**EDMONTON:** 201, 10441 – 124 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 1R7, 780.760.1255

**HAIDA GWAIL:** Box 1519, Second Beach Road, Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, B.C., V0T 1S1, 250.599.7885

[info@thefirelightgroup.com](mailto:info@thefirelightgroup.com)

[thefirelightgroup.com](http://thefirelightgroup.com)