

Whose Brownfields Count?

Researching brownfields redevelopment, and living up here in BC's "bottom tier"



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Road map

- **Brownfields:
definitions & grades**
- **Brownfields in context:
Northern BC**
- **Relevant theories and analytic
concepts**
- **Northern BC (Terrace) case
examples of northern
remediation**
- **A call for JUST remediation**



<https://images.canadianpostagestamps.ca/images/17823/mr-pg-prince-george-bc-canada-stamp.jpg>

'Brownfield' lands: technical

“abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination” (NRTEE 2008, p.1)

There are an estimated **4000-6000 sites** across BC, but the true number is likely higher based on scale-comparable jurisdictions (BC MOE 2007)

Tiers of Brownfields in BC

False Creek Remediation, Vancouver BC

Top tier (15-20% of sites)

- Market value greatly exceeds remediation costs



Middle Tier (60-70%)

- Market value, once remediated, close to cost of land + cleanup

Brandt's Landing CN Rail Conversion, Kelowna BC



Bottom Tier (15-20%)

- Cost of cleanup far exceeds value of land; sites often located in rural, remote or small urban areas

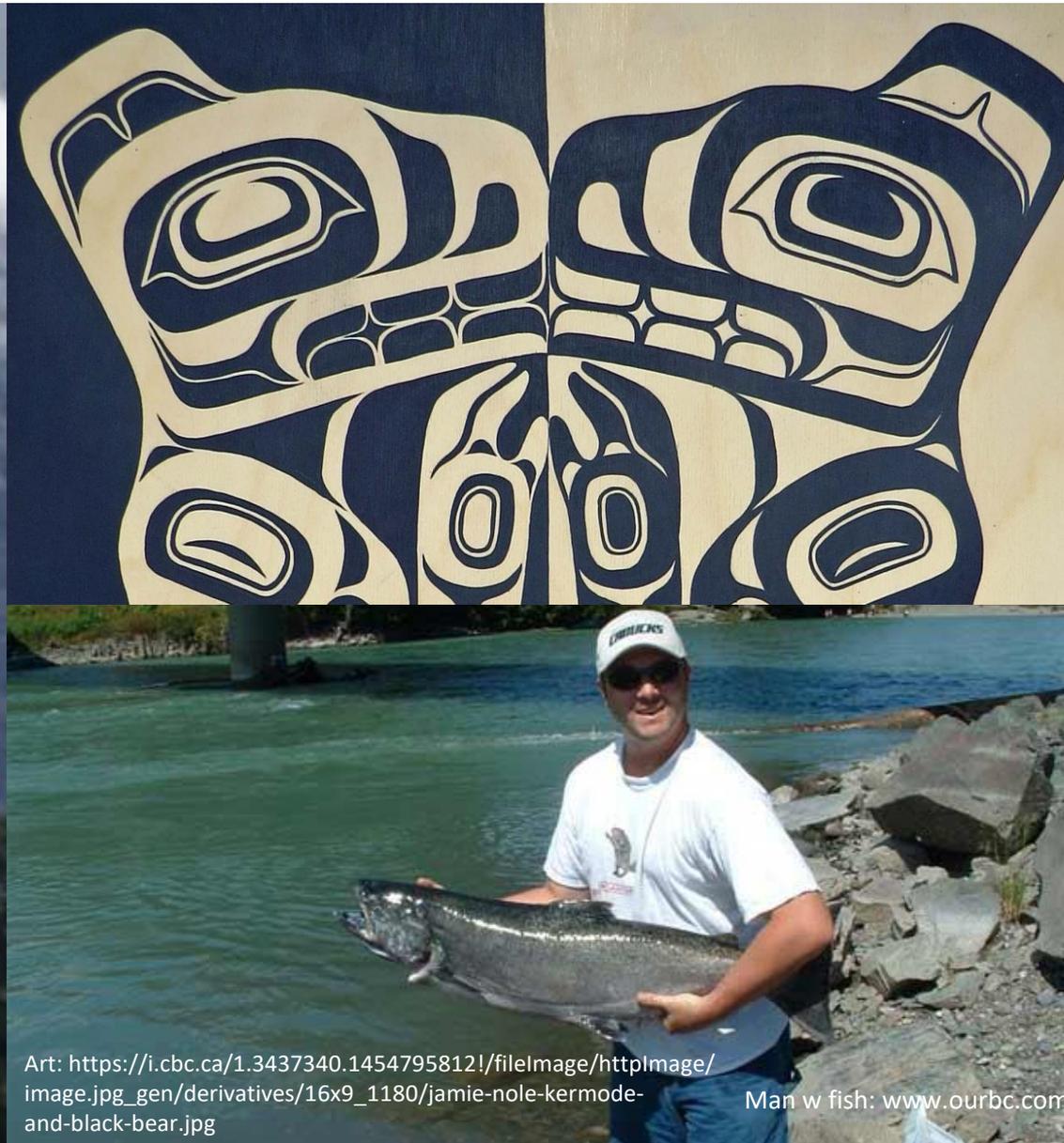
Terrace Beautification Society Reclamation of Esso Site, Terrace BC



Postcards from Northern BC



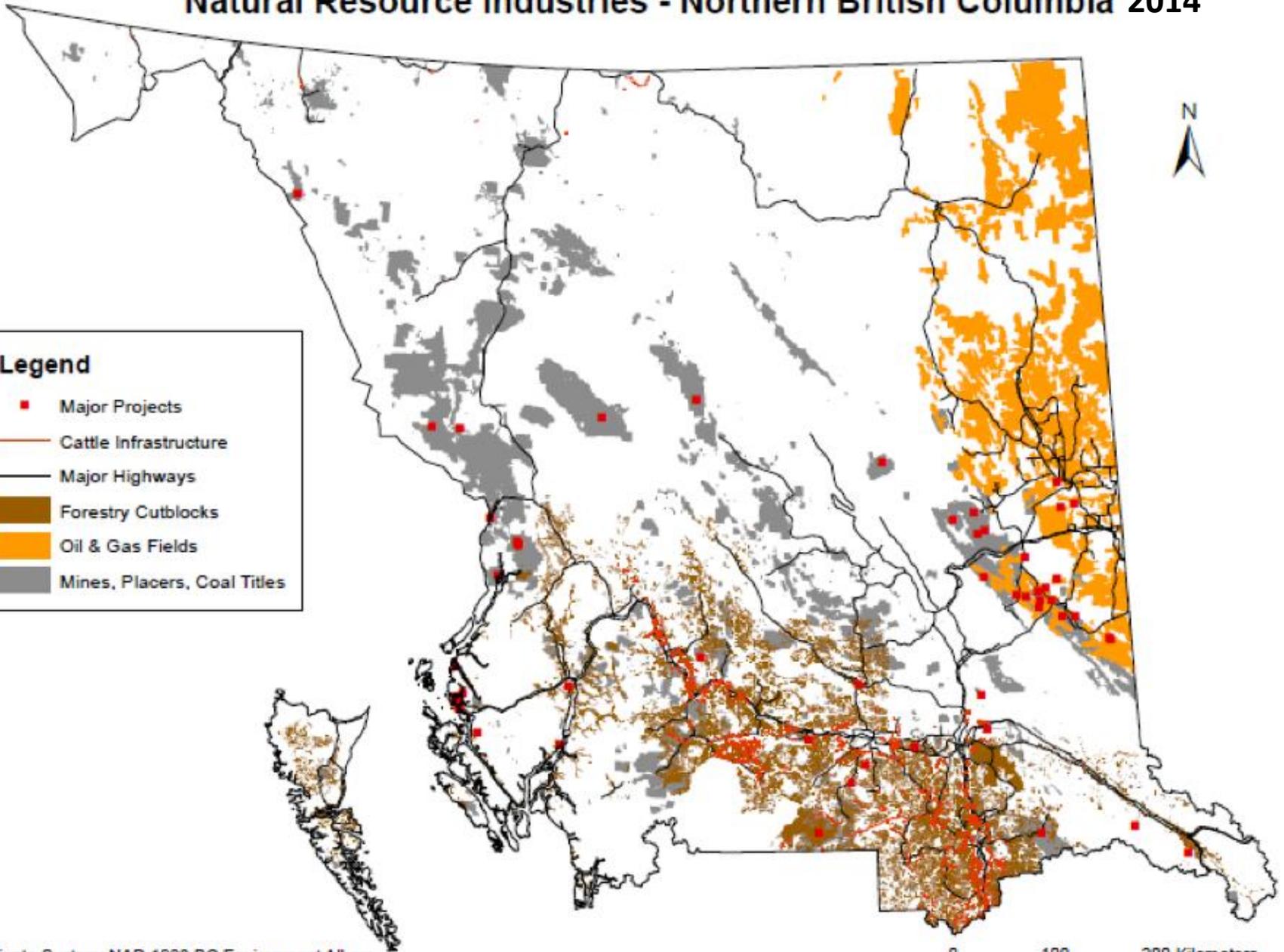
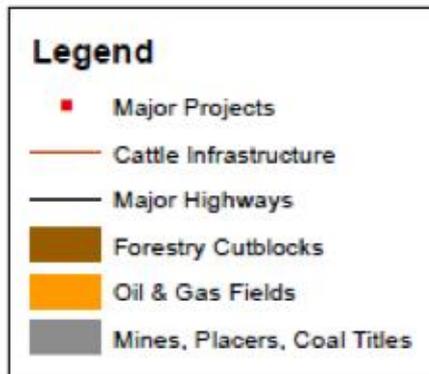
Photo credit: Chris Buse 2016



Art: https://i.cbc.ca/1.3437340.1454795812!/fileImage/htmlImage/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/16x9_1180/jamie-nole-kermode-and-black-bear.jpg

Man w fish: www.ourbc.com

Natural Resource Industries - Northern British Columbia 2014



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 BC Environment Albers
Projection: Albers - Created for Cumulative Impacts Research Consortium

0 100 200 Kilometers

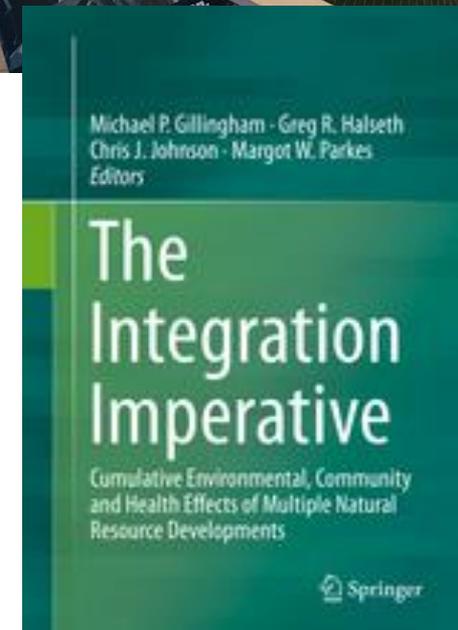
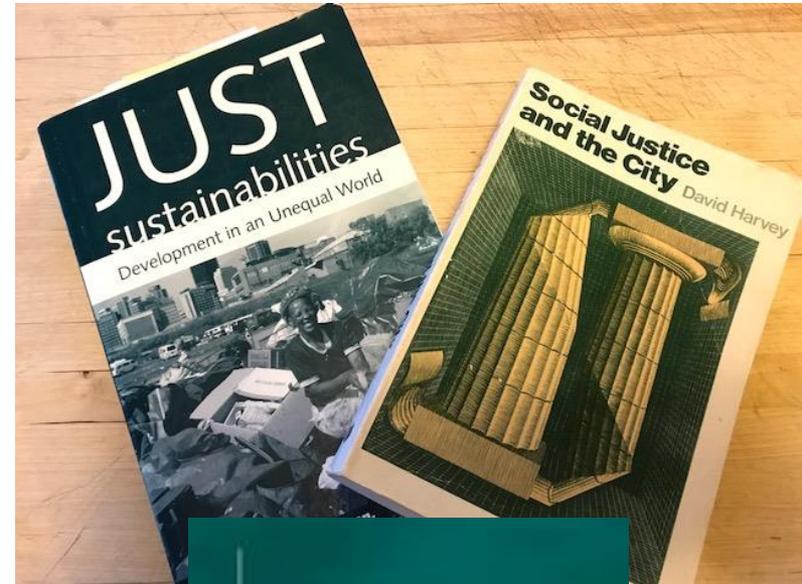
Concepts to frame brownfields in northern BC....

Environmental Justice and Brownfields

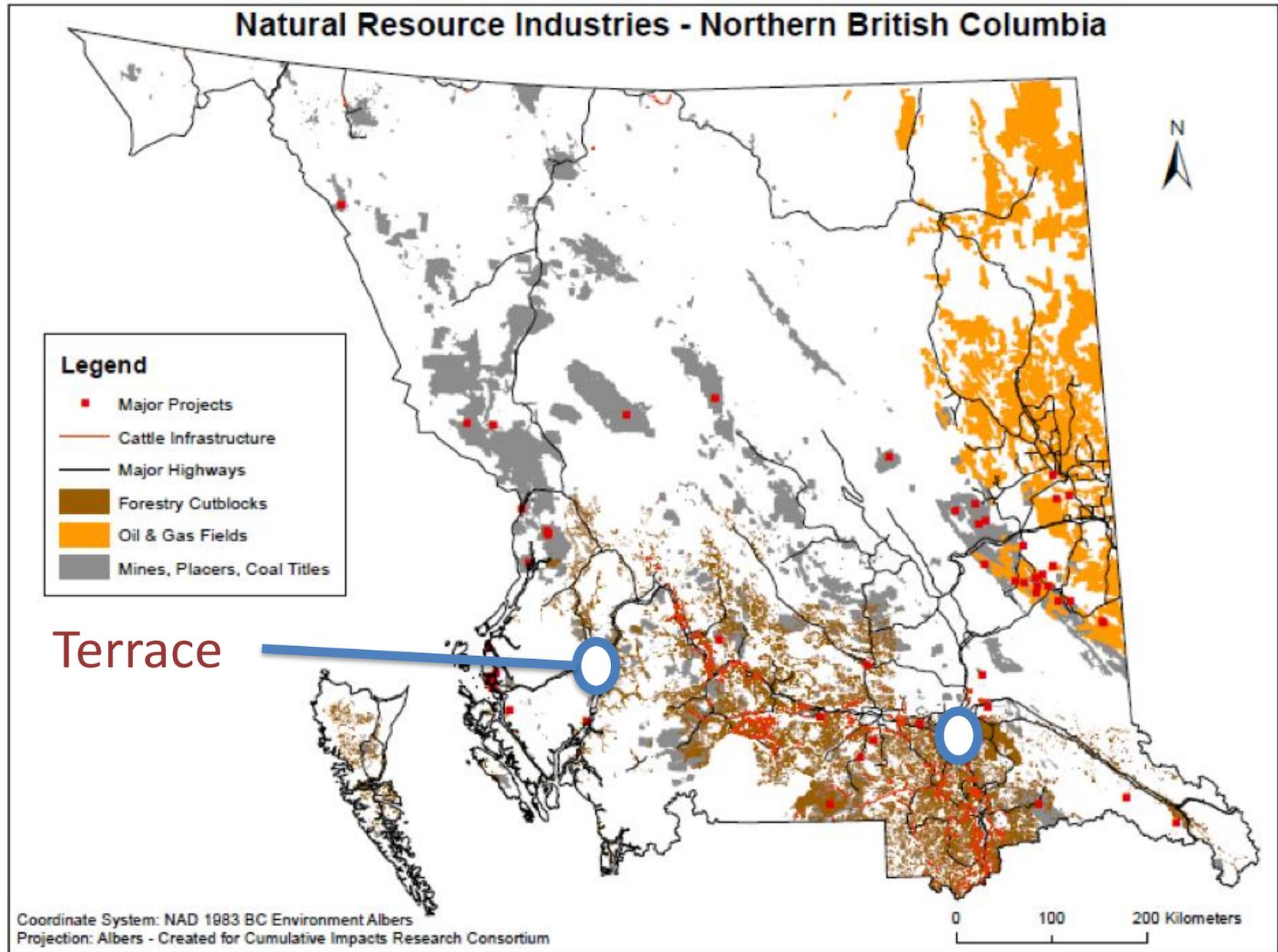
- EJ is a theoretical framework and social movement that seeks to merge social justice into environmental issues writ large (Schlosberg 2013)
- EJ—in relation to brownfields—involves questioning, understanding and responding to what is ‘right’, ‘moral’, or ‘fair in the protection of public goods (Agyeman 2008, Bullard 2005, Coburn 2005), as well as considering:
 - **Distributive justice**: ameliorating inequitable exposure to undesirable land uses by marginalized populations (Eckerd and Keeler 2012; Lee and Mohai 2010)—and improving access to desirable environments
 - **Procedural justice**: ensuring equal access to information, resources and representation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes (Felton 2006; Noonan 2008; Rowan and Fridgen 2005)

Injustices of Heartland/Hinterland

- **Accumulation by dispossession (Harvey)**
- **Sustainable rural planning (with adequate supports)**
 - Integrating impacts, reimagining local economies (beyond tourism/resource extraction), sensitivity to place/identity
- **Just sustainability (Agyeman)**
 - **Towards ‘just’ remediation?**



Two Cases of Rural BC Brownfields in Terrace, BC



Terrace, BC



COMMUNITY VISION, OCP

We will celebrate our diversity in heritage and culture and the social strength that comes from all ages and walks of life working together to create an inclusive, affordable and vibrant city. We will strive to meet the health and educational needs of residents and visitors alike, achieving community vitality.

- Population of 11,643
- Pop. Growth of 1.4% since last census
- On Highway 16 in the Skeena River Valley
- Service hub for the northwest region

Case 1:

Brolly Square, Terrace



- **Then:** Esso gas station (demolished in 1998)
- **Now:** Community garden & park (opened in 2012)
- **Size:** 0.12 ha (4 city blocks)
- **Cost:** \$64 000 + In-kind support & volunteer hrs
- **Funds:** small grant; community fundraising
- **Lead organization:** Greater Terrace Beautification Society (GTBS)

Case 2: Keith Estates, Terrace



<http://www.terracestandard.com/news/city-reports-progress-on-developing-brownfield-sites/>

- **Then:** Skeena Cellulose sawmill & log sort
- **Now:** *plan includes light industrial, commercial, residential & recreational*
- **Size:** 29 ha
- **Cost:** TBD;
- **Funds:** \$40,000 provincial Brownfield Renewal Funding Program grant to City
- **Lead organization:** City of Terrace

Discussion

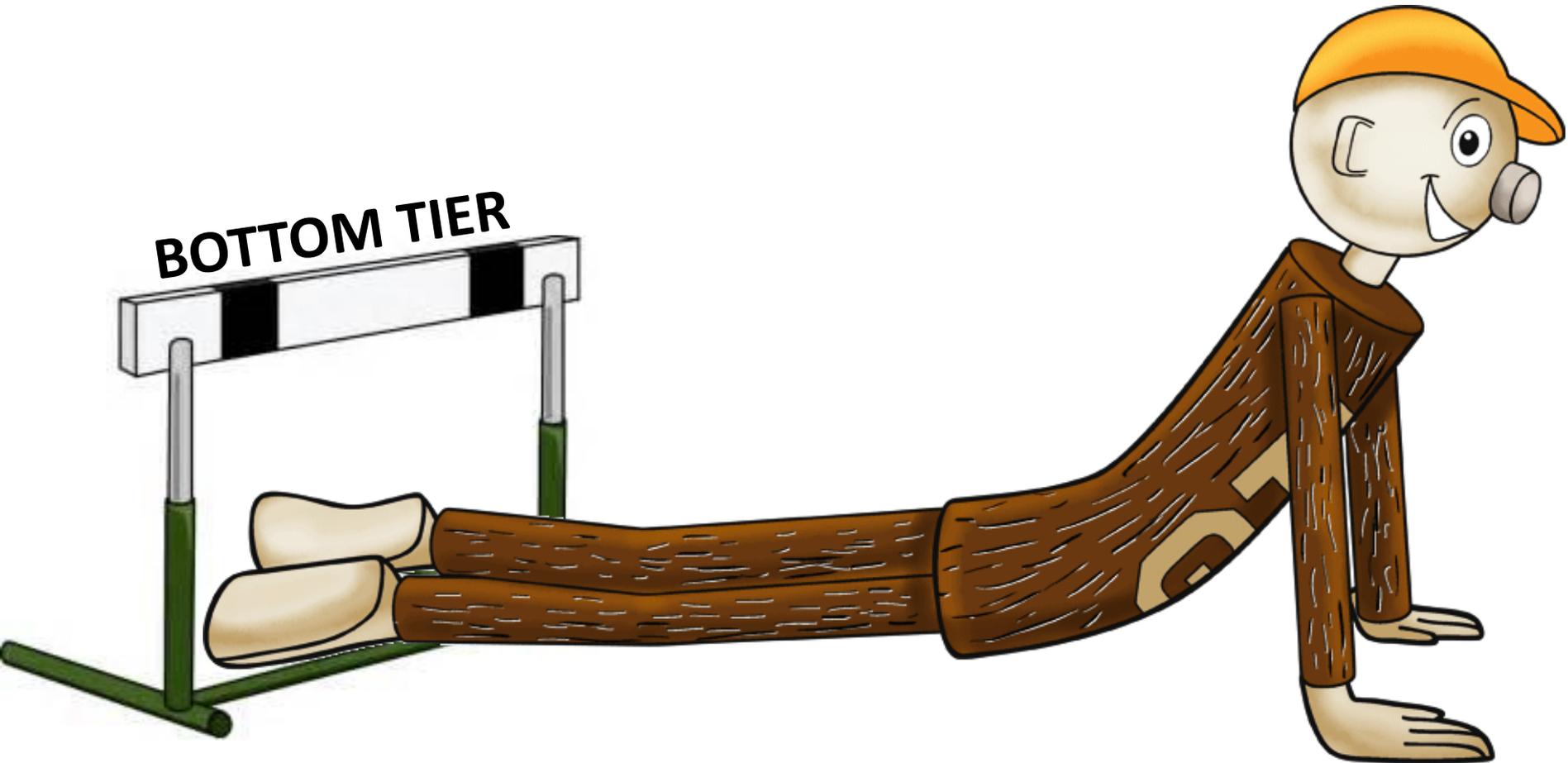
“Brownfields are the first and last impression of our community”

-Participant quote from CIRC Community engagement activity, 2017

Preliminary thoughts on 'just remediation'

- ACKNOWLEDGE UNEVEN GEOGRAPHIES OF “DEVELOPMENT” AND BROWNFIELDS**
- CALL OUT PROCEDURAL INJUSTICES THAT ENCOURAGE UNJUST LANDSCAPES**
- RECOGNIZE HINTERLAND MARGINALITY (POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY) AND COMPENSATE ACCORDINGLY**
- BUILD REGIONAL RESOURCE CAPTURE INTO NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**
 - Demand greater oversight on projects nearing completion
 - Increase project bonds and earmark remediation components

Starting by JUST...escaping the tier



THANK YOU

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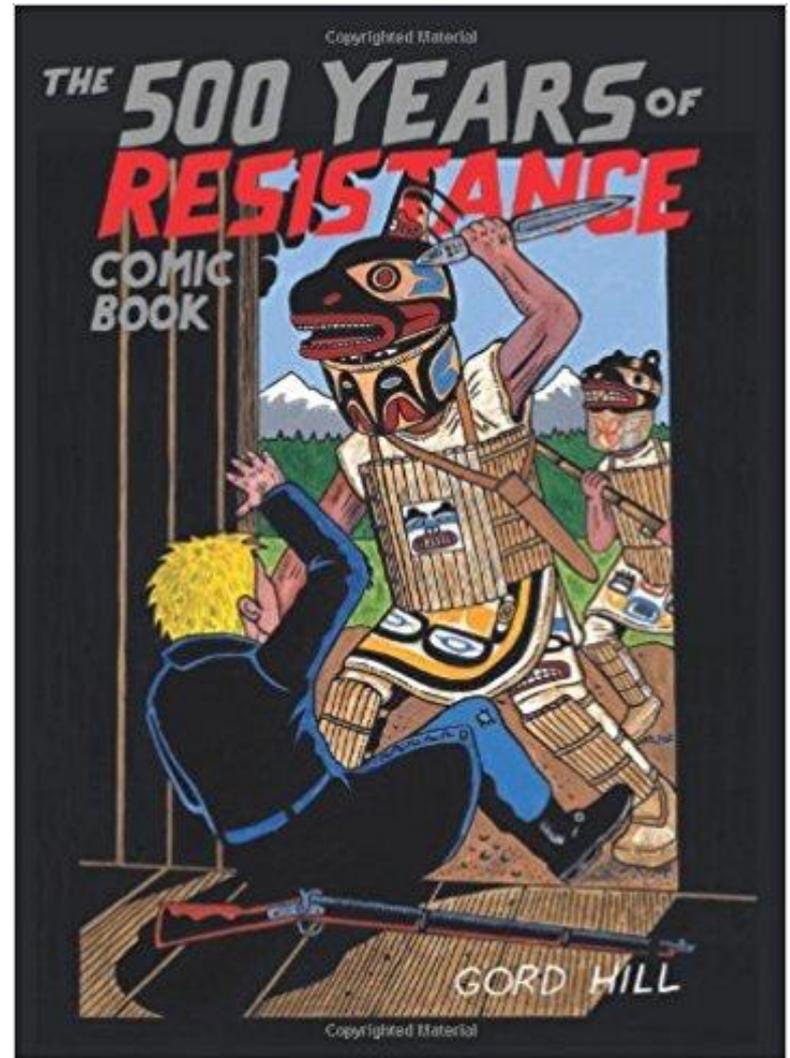
CIRC

The Cumulative Impacts
Research Consortium

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Heartland/hinterland FLIPPED

- Rise in power and legal recognition of Indigenous peoples and organizations
- Cultural and service hubs exist in the north
- Northern BC is the **EXTRACTIVE HEARTLAND** of the BC economy
- Hinterland harder to ignore?



Sustainable (rural) development

- **Impacts:**
 - existing & prospective
- **Diversification**
- **Reimagining**
 - Beyond extraction
 - Tourism & recreation
- **Place sensitivity:**
 - Links between extraction, industry, & identity
- **Just sustainability**
 - Towards 'Just remediation'?

