



"Our environment is our future"

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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Friday

Oct. 21, 2011

3:30 - 4:30

LECTURE THEATRE

7 - 158

CLASSIFYING AND MAPPING FOREST DISTURBANCE REGIMES

We tend to classify ecosystems, landscapes and regions on the basis of dominant vegetation, assumed to be at equilibrium with the prevailing climate and terrain. But vegetation also reflects its history of disturbance and various attributes of the disturbance regime. Natural ecological disturbances can be characterized by their frequency, annual area affected, seasonality, selectivity and causal agent, many of which may be associated and which change more readily than the distribution of tree species. Several decades of mapped nationwide forest fire data and BC-based fire and insect outbreak histories were used to undertake hierarchical spatially constrained cluster analysis. The resulting maps portray zones of homogenous disturbance regimes, which are discussed in terms of risk analysis and adaptation to climate change.