



Cheakamus Community Forest Carbon Offsets



Introduction / The Cheakamus Community Forest Offset Project was developed by the Cheakamus Community Forest Society in partnership with Brinkman Group and Ecotrust Canada. This Improved Forest Management project is situated on a 33,018 hectare crown forest tenure around **Whistler**, on the traditional territories of the **Squamish Nation** and **Lil'wat Nation**, a landscape enjoyed by millions of locals, British Columbians, and international visitors each year.

*CCF Forest
photo by
Bob Brett*

Offsets Developed in First 5 Years / The project created 65,546 tonnes of carbon offsets. 58,911 tonnes were sold through Brinkman Climate on behalf of the Cheakamus forest; the remainder were held in reserve to ensure that sequestration targets were met. Offsets were from the project's first verification period (2009-2013), issued in Spring 2015, and verified to the BC Emission Offsets Regulation standard under the BC Forest Carbon Offset Protocol.

Improved Forest Management Carbon Offsets

All major carbon standards around the world include tools for creating forest carbon offsets. British Columbia's Emission Offsets Regulation creates a particularly effective pathway for generating offsets through Improved Forest Management (IFM). By improving harvests and resource management, we can keep more carbon sequestered over a longer-term.

Recognizing the desire to manage forests better than “business as usual,” the Cheakamus Community Forest (CCF) partnered with Brinkman Group and Ecotrust Canada to design an offset project in order to fund the implementation of an Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) plan – critical to allowing EBM activities to take place.

Old Growth, Small Blocks, Buffers, and Habitat

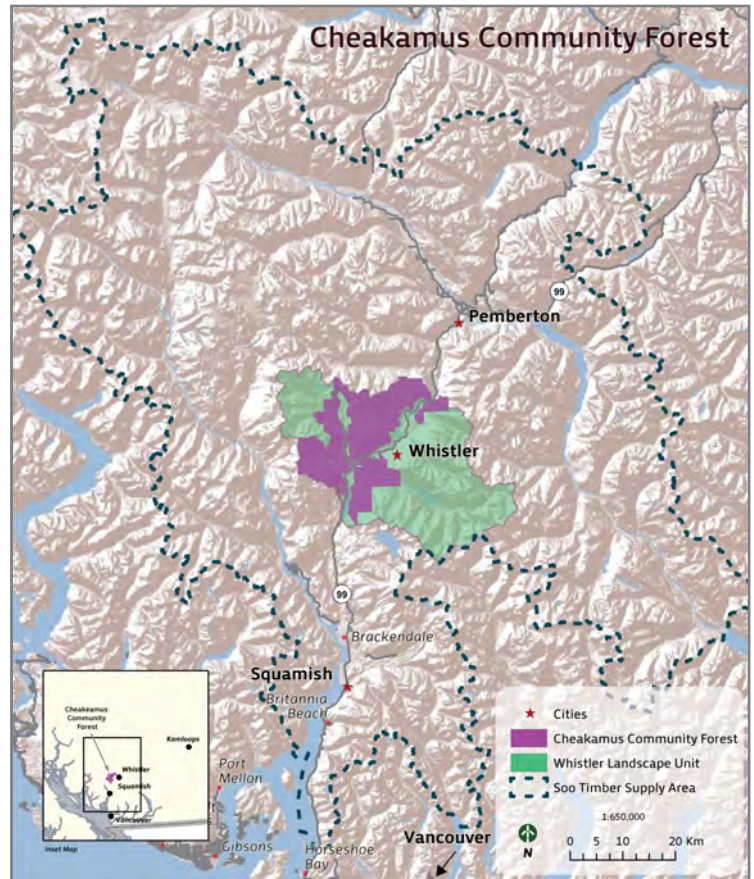
The Project uses the following four IFM approaches through its EBM plan:

- Increased representation of old and mature forests in specific ecosystems within the tenure area over time, maintenance of a full range of stand structures, ages, species, and ecosystems;
- Enhanced logging prescriptions which protect scenic vistas in the magnificent forests around Whistler with smaller cut blocks (1-5 hectares in size) and preserving older structural components of the ecosystem within harvested areas;
- Increased buffers within specified high ecological value areas, such as cultural and riparian areas; and
- Protection of important wildlife habitat.

All of this with the goal of achieving an appropriate balance between timber harvesting, tourism, cultural values, recreation, wildlife, and biodiversity.

Validation and Verification

The project was registered under the British Columbia Forest Carbon Offset Protocol (FCOP). The forest carbon emission reductions were achieved by reducing baseline harvest by 50% while remaining a source of sustainable livelihoods in the region. Without the successful sale of offsets, the CCF would not have been able to afford the halving of revenue and more expensive EBM logging practices – leading to the forest tenure reverting back to the Province or going back to business as usual practices.



Importance

The Cheakamus Community Forest Society is a forest tenure partnership between the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Squamish Nation, and Lil'wat Nation.

Community Forest Agreements are long-term area-based tenures designed to encourage community involvement in the management of local forests for the benefit of the community. More and more communities are considering alternative ways to manage their adjacent forest resources to maximize economic, social, and environmental benefits to their region. The CCF is both the first carbon offset project completed on a British Columbia Forest tenure and a Community Forest tenure in Canada.



CCF Forest / Photo credit: Bob Brett



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Whistler Going Carbon Neutral

The Resort Municipality of Whistler offset its annual carbon footprint by purchasing carbon credits from the Cheakamus Community Forest project. The Brinkman Group and Ecotrust Canada also bought voluntary offsets from the project. The companies' carbon footprints were measured through **Climate Smart**, a social enterprise which helps businesses measure and reduce their environmental impacts while cutting costs.

"The carbon project plays an important role in maintaining and enhancing the recreation and tourism values in the area."

- Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden of Whistler

"A lot of work has gone into this initiative. The sale of carbon offsets is a creative way for our community forest to generate income and place a value on our sustainable forestry practices, which have resulted in a reduced harvest level with considerably more emphasis on tourism, cultural values, recreational interests, wildlife, and biodiversity."

- Jeff Fisher, Chair, Cheakamus Community Forest Society

How it works

The Project reduced GHG emissions by approximately 10,000 tonnes CO₂e/year through avoided and modified forestry practices laid out under the CCF Ecosystem-Based Management Plan. Actions went beyond regulatory requirements and adjacent land management practices, and could not be sustained without offset revenue. The additional funding paid for improved forest monitoring, conserving areas, smaller cut blocks, improved recreational opportunities, and implementing fire and climate mitigation strategies. Project design was further guided by the principles of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), an independent, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.

"This work supports the vision of the Squamish Nation to continue to maintain our resources and cultural practices for our little ones' future little ones."

- Chief Ian Campbell, Squamish Nation

"This additional tool allows the Lil'wat Nation a way to balance protecting culturally important areas and serves our people today and for future generations."

- Chief Dean Nelson, Lil'wat Nation



Photo credit: Bob Brett



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For more information:

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“The CCF core climate action idea is ‘Improved Forest Management.’ Carbon credits inject new funds and enable more sustainable forest management.”

Dirk Brinkman, CEO, Brinkman Group



Ecotrust Canada is a non-profit charity whose mission is to *design economic alternatives that benefit people in the places they call home*. We create proof-in-concept projects that demonstrate viable alternatives to traditional forest management that restore and improve, rather than degrade, long-term conditions for ecosystems and adjacent communities. We build value chains to fund this alternative management, supporting forests and communities alike.

We believe creative alternatives reduce the risks associated with cyclical log markets, while diversification of revenue streams allow forest tenures to generate more value and better adapt to climate change. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification helps to verify that good management continues to happen on the ground and provides a transparent social licence to operate. Carbon offsetting is just one example of complementary strategies that can get communities thinking creatively about how forests can be more than just timber.



Brinkman Climate develops carbon offset projects and delivers technical expertise to Carbon Market in BC and around the world. The team has deep carbon market experience, having submitted the world's first forest carbon offset methodology to the Kyoto Clean Development Mechanism, written the world's first ISO 14064-2 Reforestation Methodology, developed renewable energy & energy efficiency offset projects for Pacific Carbon Trust and helped BC's Climate Action Secretariat bring the Forest Carbon Offset Protocol into international (VCS) compliance. Brinkman Climate is a division of Brinkman Group, Canada's biggest and oldest reforestation company - active in environmental restoration, international forestry and full-service First Nations forest management.