

Study examines legacies of rainforest burning in British Columbia

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Analyses of temperate rain forests located on the central coast of British Columbia, Canada suggest that for centuries, humans have intentionally used fire to manage plant-life. The findings are published in the *Journal of Biogeography*.

When researchers reconstructed 700 years of temporal and spatial aspects of fire activity, they recorded 16 fires from 1376-1893. No fire [activity](#) was detected after 1893, coinciding with the relocation of [indigenous groups](#) from the study area.

"Old growth temperate rain forests are often considered pristine and untouched landscapes, but new science is confirming what First Nations have known since time immemorial—that these forests were carefully managed with fire to increase the abundance of specific plants" said Kira Hoffman, lead author of the study.

"These were slow-moving ground fires that left the majority of trees alive and kept the forest open and clear of brush, not the large, uncontrolled wild fires that we've become accustomed to today."

More information: Kira M. Hoffman et al, Ecological legacies of anthropogenic burning in a British Columbia coastal temperate rain forest, *Journal of Biogeography* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/jbi.13096](https://doi.org/10.1111/jbi.13096)

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