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## Conifer Forest Health Genomics

**Integrated GE<sup>3</sup>LS Research**      Conserving Our Forests – A Citizens' Debate

**GE<sup>3</sup>LS Project Leaders**      Paul Wood and Gary Bull,  
University of British Columbia

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### Summary

Climate change is expected to usher in an era of hard times for the forests of BC. Many forest trees and their associated ecosystems will not be able to cope with a changing climate and the resulting onslaught of insect pest epidemics. What will these changes look like, and will BC citizens accept such massive environmental change? To some extent, genomics techniques could help mitigate these changes, not by creating genetically modified trees, but instead by selecting naturally-occurring trees that already have built-in tolerance and resistance.

Drs. Paul Wood and Gary Bull at UBC will engage stakeholders and the public in discussions and debate about these issues. First, they will conduct interviews and focus groups to understand issues of concern to the BC public. They will also ask diverse stakeholders to engage in a consensus-building process in which the stakeholders themselves, once they arrive at consensus, will offer recommendations to the Canadian federal and BC provincial governments about what directions, if any, governments should take in response to climate change, including the possible use of genomic selection techniques.

The project team will assist stakeholders by building various future forest scenarios that will represent a broad range of possible futures for the forests of BC. By envisioning possible futures, better choices are possible.

[http://www.genomebc.ca/ethics/research/activities/conifer\\_forest.htm](http://www.genomebc.ca/ethics/research/activities/conifer_forest.htm)