

First Nations Carbon

A BCAFN DISCUSSION PAPER

BC Assembly of First Nations
February 2022



Michelle Connolly

Project Manager, Ecotrust Canada

April 19, 2022





Michelle Connolly

Project Manager, Ecotrust Canada

April 19, 2022

Lheidli T'enneh territory





Carbon and the land

Carbon rights

Carbon offsets

Challenges and opportunities





Carbon and the land

- Connects us to Mother Earth because it's in our bodies
- Four major reservoirs: atmosphere, oceans, land, Earth's crust
- Indigenous peoples maintained Earth's carbon balance for millennia





Carbon and the land

- Burning fossil fuels and damage to nature altered Earth's ability to absorb and store carbon.
- Half of the emissions produced by the economy go into nature.
- This is why protecting nature is critical to protecting the climate.





What is a carbon offset?

- One carbon offset credit represents a reduction of one metric tonne of carbon dioxide that has been reduced already
- They are a financial tool





Origin of carbon offsets

- We share one atmosphere
- It doesn't matter where emissions originate
- Market can control accumulation of emissions into the atmosphere
- Offset credits are a tool to connect emissions reductions supply and demand





Carbon rights

- Participation in the carbon market requires that the entity providing the offset has the legal right to it.
- First Nations rights to the carbon stored on their lands is for the most part not recognized by BC and Canada.





Carbon rights

BC currently allocates the right to benefit from the sale of carbon offset credits on “crown land” to a First Nation through an Atmospheric Benefit Sharing Agreement (ABSA).





Carbon rights

The Cheakamus Community Forest and the Great Bear Initiative are the only completed First Nations-led carbon offset projects in BC.

They have ABSAs.





Carbon rights

From *Nature-Based Solutions: Indigenous-led Conservation and Carbon Storage in Canada* (2020):

1. Claiming ownership to carbon as a resource that was not ceded to the crown specifically.
2. Asserting territorial jurisdiction over forests and areas that can be managed and conserved in a way that is compatible with recognizing the existence of carbon rights that underlie carbon offsets.
3. Arguing for Aboriginal and treaty rights to the conservation and environmental management practices that would result in the ability to own and sell carbon offsets.





Carbon offsets

“Quality” of a carbon offset credit refers to the confidence one can have that the offset fulfils some basic things.



A quality offset must be:

Real – actually reduce a tonne of CO2

Quantifiable – you can measure the benefit

Additional – wouldn't have happened without the market

Permanent – reduction must endure for a period

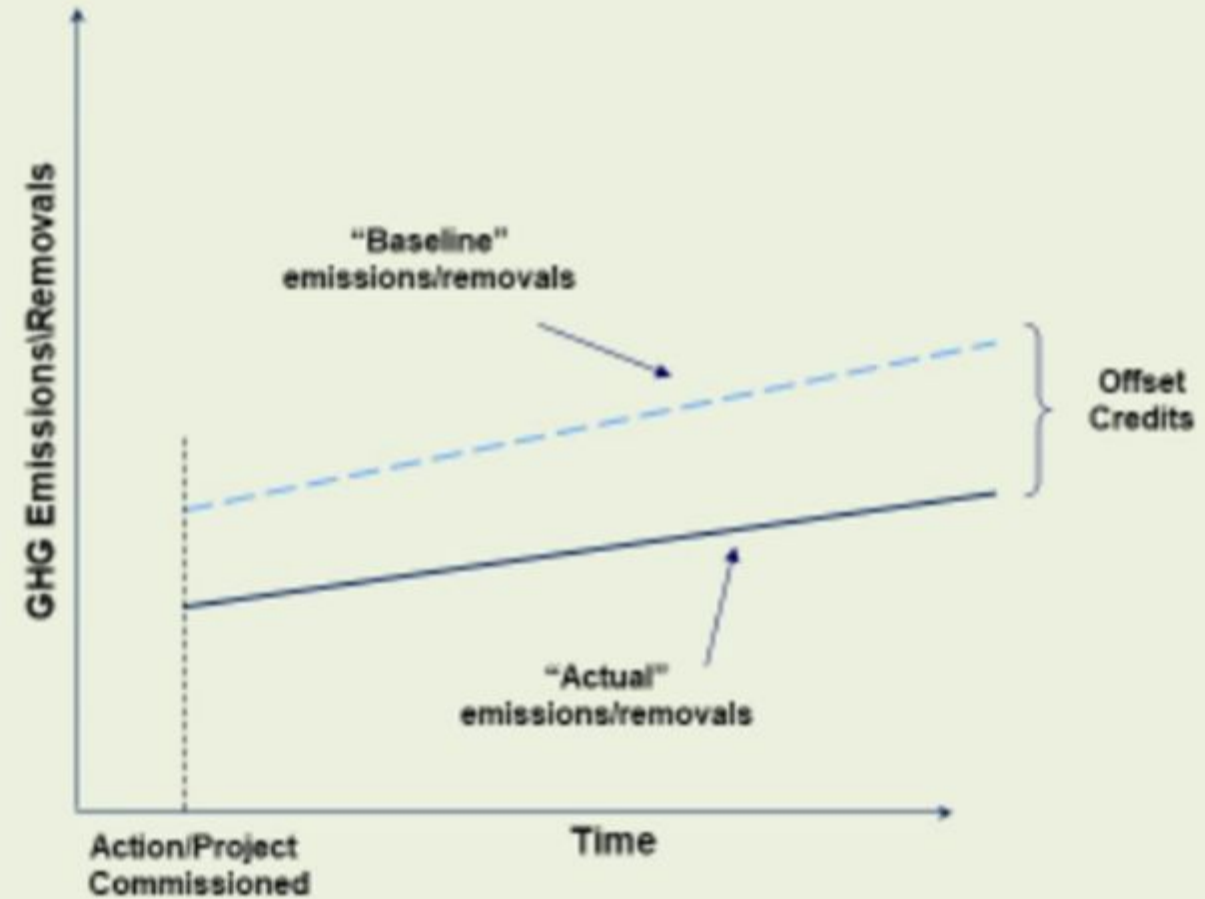
Verified – reported data are accurate



Baseline



Project





Anatomy of a carbon offset

Project Plan to describe all details of project.

Validation checks if the Project Plan meets the requirements of a protocol.

Implementation of the project in line w/ Project Plan.

Verification ensures implementation as described in Project Plan.

Issuance & Registration creates a serialized unit

Sale of the credits





Challenges + Opportunities

- Defining land tenure and carbon rights
- Atmospheric Benefit Sharing Agreements
- Shared territories
- Perception of risk



An aerial photograph of a vast, snow-covered forest landscape. The trees are densely packed in some areas and more sparse in others, creating a textured, white expanse. The lighting is soft, suggesting a winter day.

Challenges + Opportunities

- Enable self-determination
- Economic diversification and employment
- Alignment with First Nations-led conservation
- Can support land restoration





British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations



We are in partnership to develop digital tools to support First Nations in answering these questions:

Is a forest carbon project feasible in our territory?

How do we develop a forest carbon project on our territory?

Patricia Rojas and Denby McDonnell will be speaking about this later.

First Nations Carbon

A BCAFN DISCUSSION PAPER

BC Assembly of First Nations
February 2022



Michelle Connolly

Project Manager, Ecotrust Canada

April 19, 2022

