



# Leading a Climate Resilient Health System



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Interior Health

# Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dǎkelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tsilhqot'in Nations, where Interior Health is located.

# Introduction

**Report Authors / University of Alberta Fellows**

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# Agenda

1. The Problem
2. The Vision & Our Mission
3. Our Approach
4. Learnings & Recommendations
5. The Plan



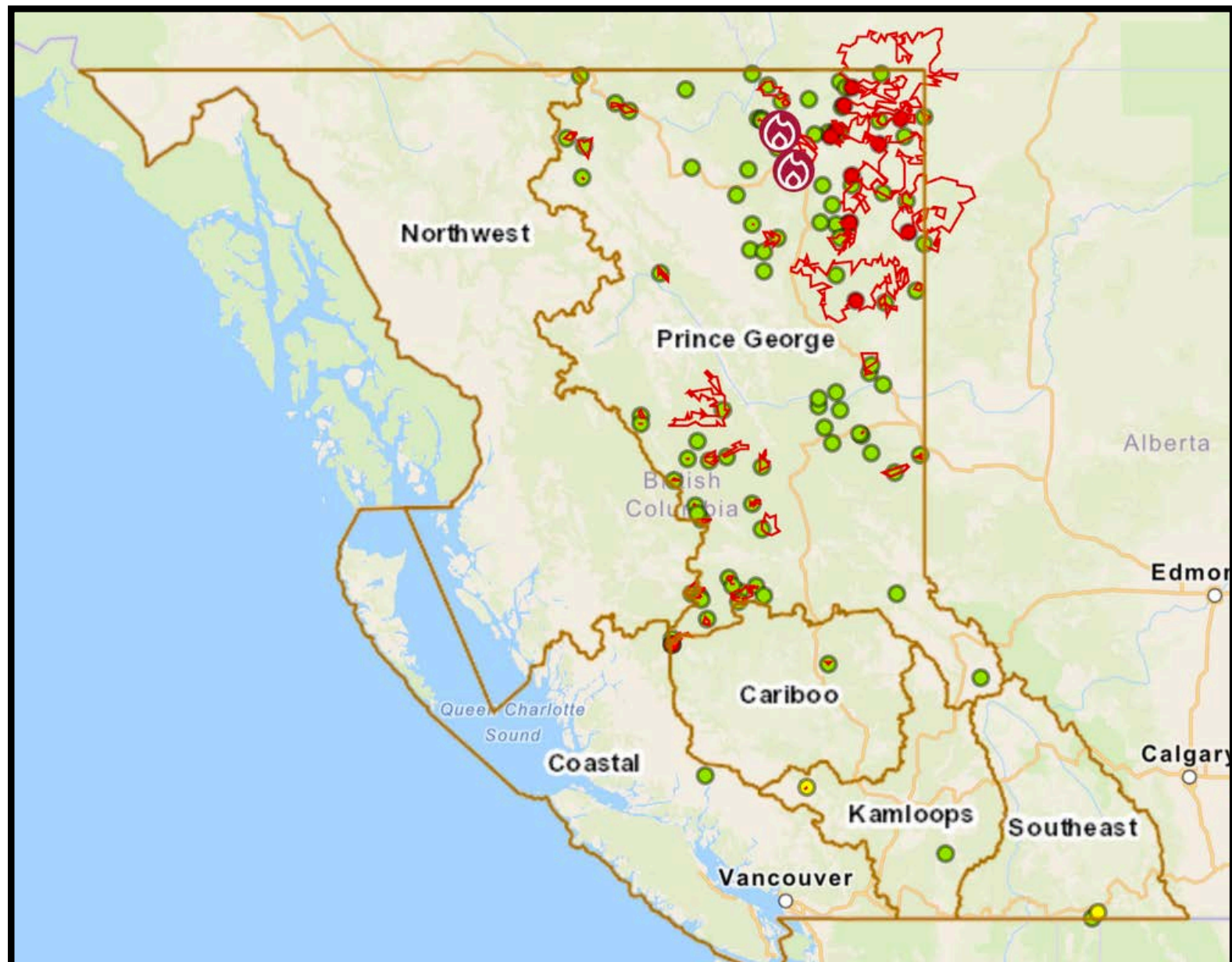
**Fort McMurray fire**  
YouTube: Jason Edmondson



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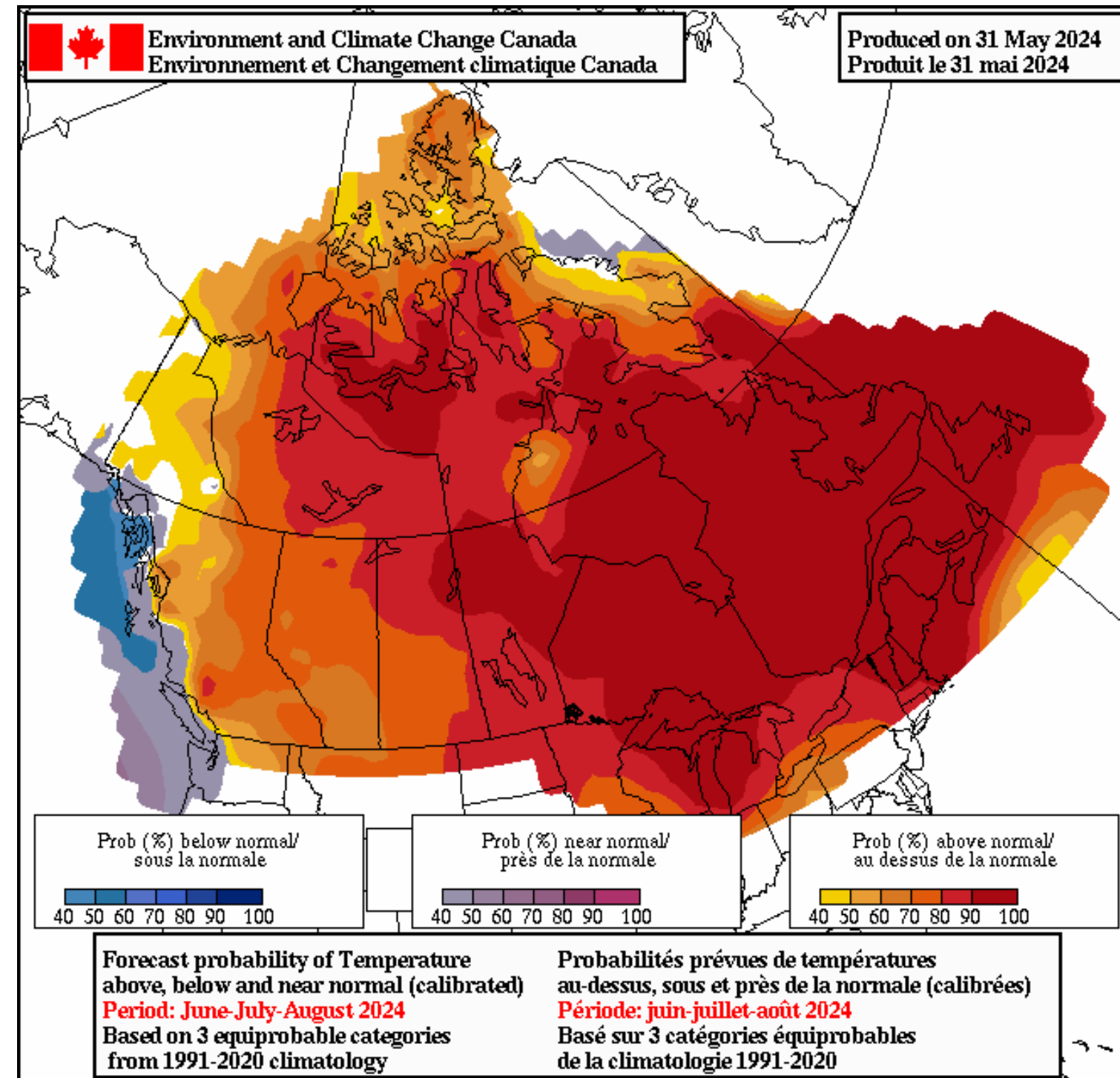
# The Problem

# Current



BC Wildfire Service, 1 June 2024

# This Summer



Environment and Climate Change Canada, 31 May 2024

# Interior Health Authority



## Cariboo

**Historical Weather**  
The Cariboo is known for its varied microclimates and cold winters with moderate snowfall.

**Changing Climate**  
The region now faces warmer and drier summers, while springs and winters have become wetter, increasing flood risks. Additionally, there is a heightened risk of wildfires, more unpredictable weather patterns, and the emergence of new pests.

## Kootenay

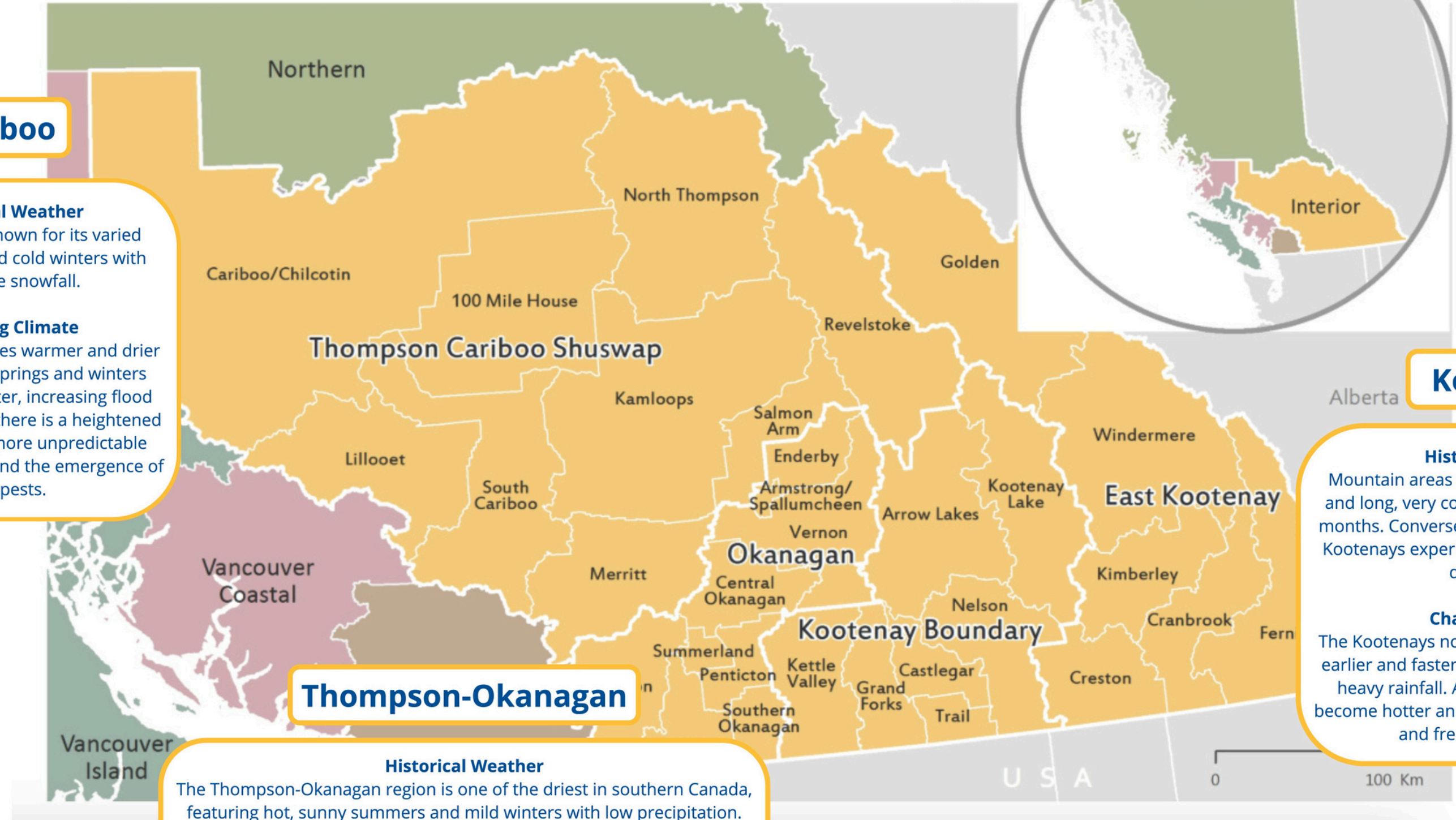
**Historical Weather**  
Mountain areas typically have cool summers and long, very cold winters lasting six to eight months. Conversely, the western and southern Kootenays experience milder winters and hot, dry summers.

**Changing Climate**  
The Kootenays now face spring flooding due to earlier and faster snowpack melt coupled with heavy rainfall. Additionally, summers have become hotter and drier, increasing the severity and frequency of wildfires.

## Thompson-Okanagan

**Historical Weather**  
The Thompson-Okanagan region is one of the driest in southern Canada, featuring hot, sunny summers and mild winters with low precipitation.

**Changing Climate**  
The area now experiences warmer winters with reduced snowfall, more extreme droughts, and spreading pests. Additionally, wildfires have become more frequent and intense, accompanied by increasingly severe rain and snowfall events.



This figure was adapted using the Interior Health Authority Profile Map (Interior Health 2021) with climate change and health information from the BC CDC overlaid to illustrate regional climate change impacts (BC Centre for Disease Control 2024).

# The Problem

- Relentless climate event burden
- Leadership resilience risk
- Exacerbated by trends in retirement and onboarding new leaders
- Must sustain and retain leadership in the face of climate change
- Leadership is needed to steward IH's Climate Change Sustainability Roadmap



CBC News - Historic Flooding in BC



Photo Credit: NeilLockhart - Getty Image



BC CTV News Kelowna - Photo Credit: Danielle Smith

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest, likely a coniferous woodland, viewed from a high angle. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter, creating a monochromatic, serene atmosphere. The forest extends to the horizon, with a faint mountain range visible in the distance under a clear sky.

**2**

# **Vision & Mission**

# Vision

Thriving, resilient leaders that can lead the organization through the impacts of climate change.

## Flexibility and Openness to Learning

Fostering an openness to learning is paramount  
Includes supporting a growth mindset

## Inspiring, Influential Leadership

Solution-focused, Embrace innovation, creativity  
"Your locus of influence surpasses your locus of control"

## Supportive, Empowering, Empathetic

'Care about people always'  
Distributive Leadership, delegate authority  
Tend to their own wellness

## Strong Communication & Collaboration

Clear, transparent communication  
Especially important during times of crisis

# Mission

A Leadership Development Strategy for Resilience in the Context of Climate Change

- **Empower leaders with skills, knowledge, and resources to thrive despite climate change.**
- **Identify pathways to support individual and organizational leadership resilience.**
- **Contribute to system-level change that fosters leader and organizational resilience.**



Photo credit: Joel & Jasmin Førestbird - Unsplash

**3**

# **Our Approach**

# Our Approach

## Literature



Scholarly and grey literature search and review

## Interviews



20 key informant interviews with health leaders

## Analysis



Thematic analysis mapped to LEADS framework

## Synthesis



Distilled insights and key recommendations

# Leadership Imperatives During the Recovery Stage of a Crisis

- 1 People Focus
- 2 Environmental Scan
- 3 Learning and Preparation
- 4 Envisioning
- 5 Crisis Communication
- 6 Recalibrating, Optimizing, and Organizing
- 7 Partnerships and Connection



Geerts, J. M., Kinnair, D., Taheri, P., Abraham, A., Ahn, J., Atun, R., Barberia, L., Best, N. J., Dandona, R., Dhahri, A. A., Emilsson, L., Free, J. R., Gardam, M., Geerts, W. H., Ihekweazu, C., Johnson, S., Kooijman, A., Lafontaine, A. T., Leshem, E., ... Bilodeau, M. (2021). Guidance for Health Care Leaders During the Recovery Stage of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Consensus Statement. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(7), e2120295–e2120295

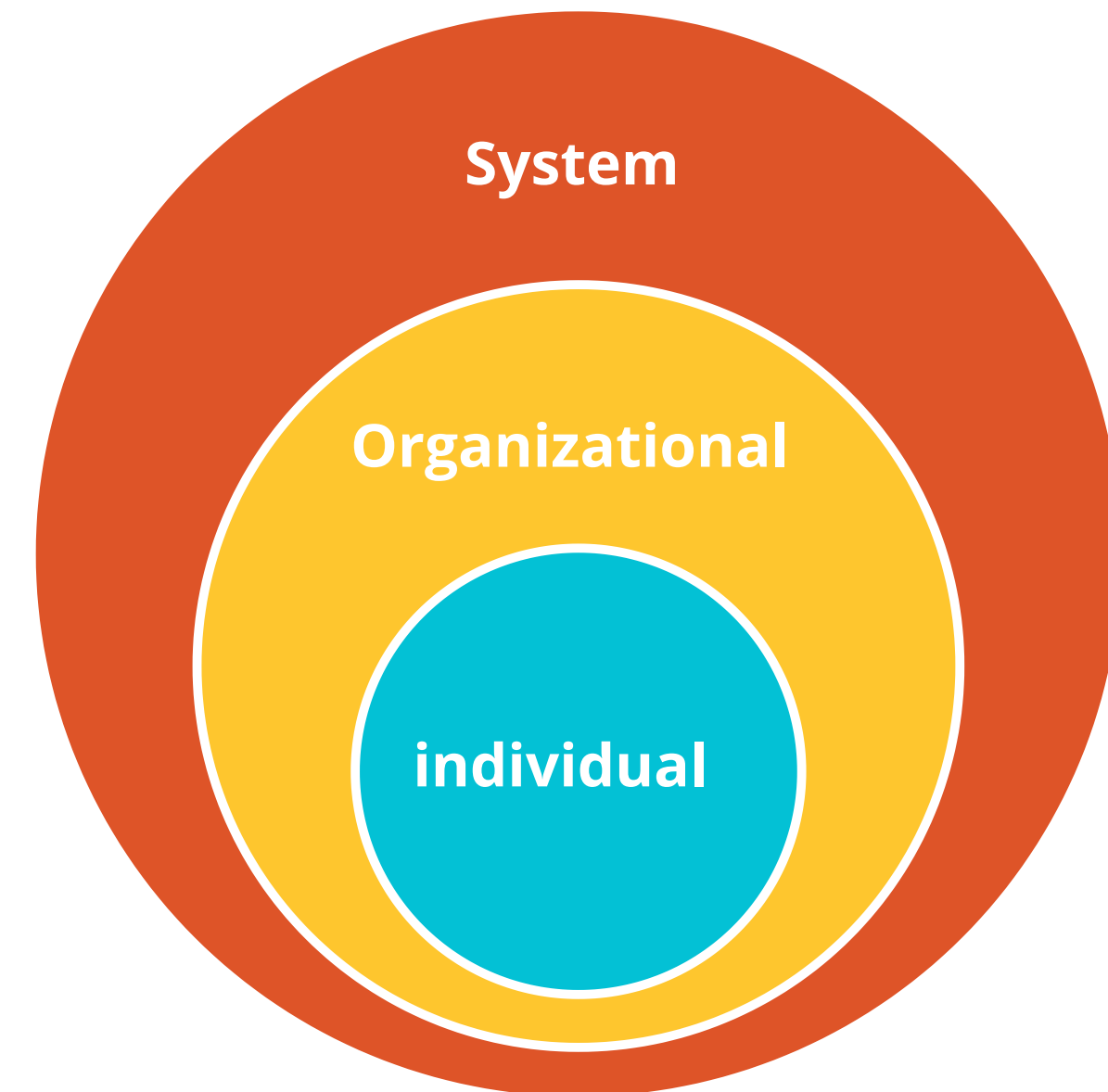
The background of the slide is an aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest. The trees are dark green and densely packed, covering rolling hills and valleys. A semi-transparent blue gradient is overlaid on the entire image, creating a calm and professional atmosphere. The text is centered and rendered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

**4**

**Learnings &  
Recommendations**

# Our Learnings

- Characteristics of resilience
- Individual leader attributes and strategies
- Mentorship is paramount
- Develop a learning organization
- System level strategies and connections





***“It boils down to caring about people. You can’t fake that. A leader can take a course for some skills, but no one follows a fake leader.”***

***“Relationality - it’s through relationships - trusted relationships... whether it’s individuals or part of their networks - leverage up existing trusted partnerships.”***

***“Put your money where your mouth is...measure the allocation and time off for development (back up words with actions and words with resources).”***

***“Resilience is built up like a muscle - you need to work it as an individual - get outside your comfort zone - table top exercises, strategic planning exercises...”***

Interview Participant Quotes



# Our Recommendations

1

## People Focus

### Cultivating leadership that cares

- Leadership connection (EO)
- Recognize contributions (LS)
- Recovery time (LS)
- Provide supports (EO)

2

## Environmental Scan

### Understanding our terrain

- Climate change literacy (EO)
- Measure objectives (AR)

3

## Learning and Preparation

### Ready today, ready tomorrow

- Mentorship (EO)
- Protected training time (EO)
- Realistic simulations (EO)

4

## Envisioning

### Leading with vision

- Integrate with retention strategy (ST)
- Build a just and trusting culture (DC)



CCHL - The LEADS Framework

### LEADS Legend

- Lead Self (LS)
- Engage Others (EO)
- Achieve Results (AR)
- Develop Coalitions (DC)
- Systems Transformation (ST)

# Our Recommendations (Continued)

5

## Crisis Communication

### Clear channels

- Support feedback mechanism (AR)
- Tailored communication (EO)

6

## Recalibrating, Optimizing, and Organizing

### Towards a resilient organization

- Policies and procedures (ST)
- Governance and structures (ST)
- Hiring processes (ST)

7

## Partnerships and Connections

### Networks for learning and sharing

- Educational institutions (DC)
- Inter-sectoral and local organizations (DC)
- Governments and health authorities (AR)
- Indigenous community collaboration (EO)



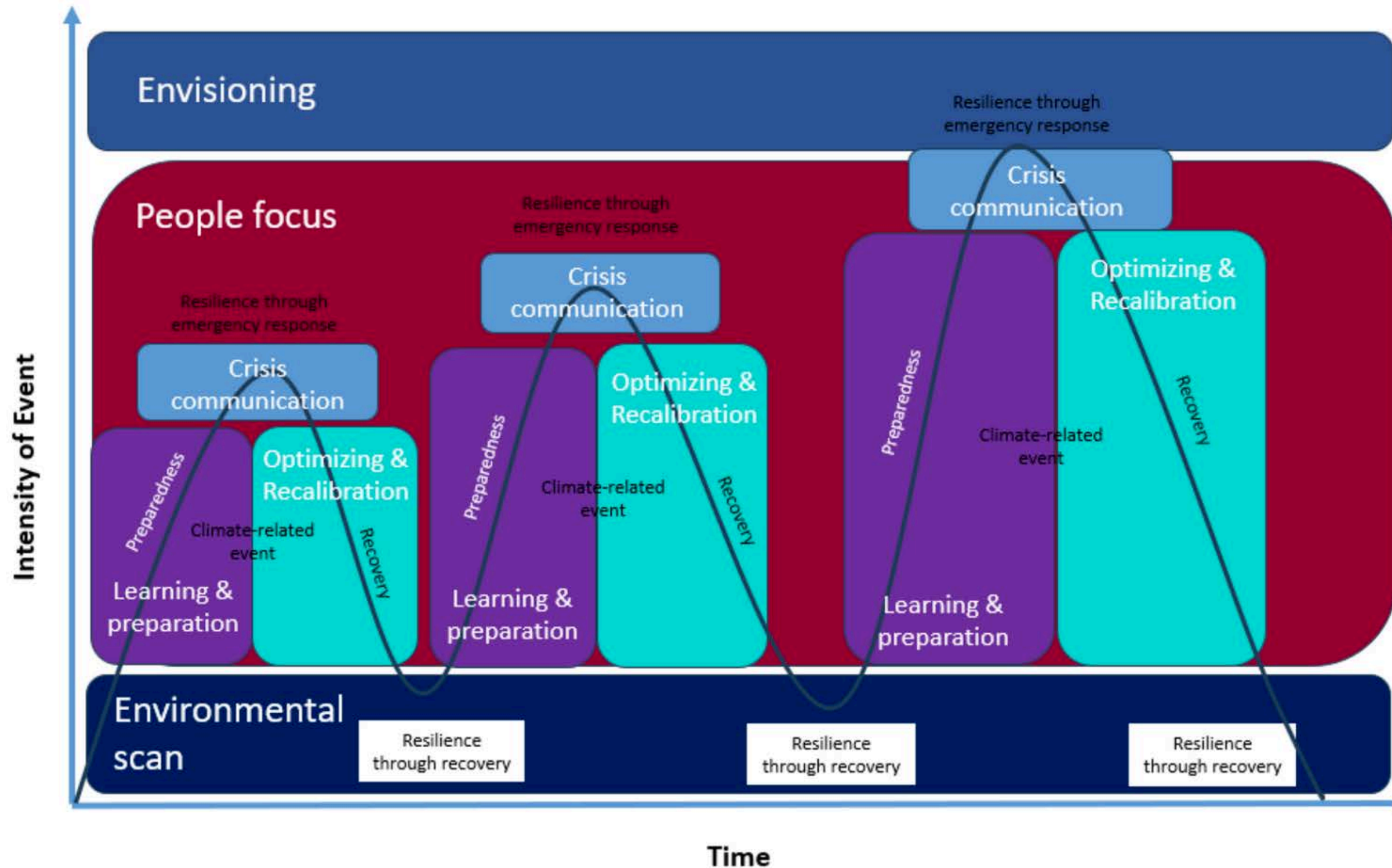
Rachel Claire - Pexels

### LEADS Legend

- Lead Self (LS)
- Engage Others (EO)
- Achieve Results (AR)
- Develop Coalitions (DC)
- Systems Transformation (ST)

# Adding a temporal perspective

## Implementing Leadership Imperatives in Relation to Climate Change Events



An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest, likely a coniferous woodland, viewed from a high angle. The trees are tightly packed, creating a textured, greenish-blue surface. In the background, a range of low mountains or hills is visible under a clear, pale blue sky. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter, which makes the colors appear more muted and monochromatic. The text '5' and 'The Plan' is centered over the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

**5**

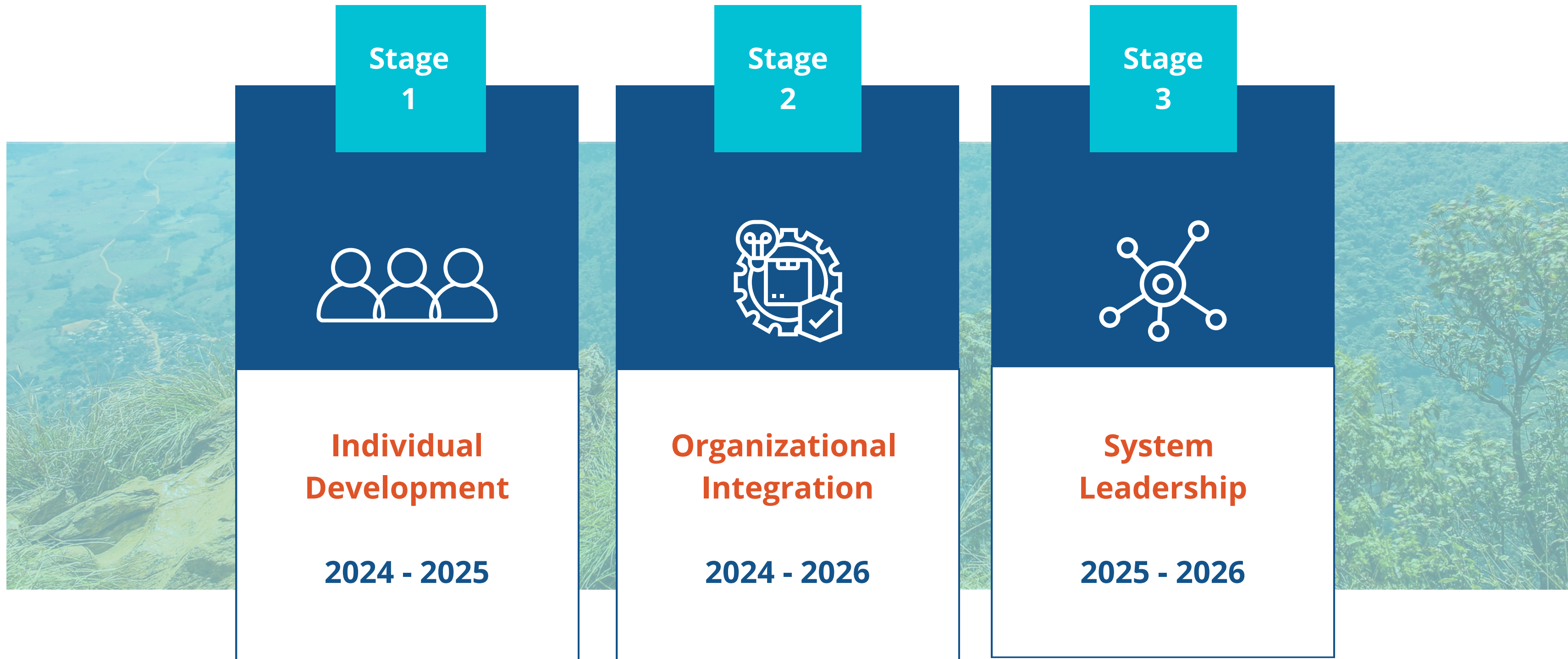
# **The Plan**

# Planning Principles

- Interior Health expertise
- Feasible, usable, scalable
- A sustainable journey
- Build on strengths



Photo Credit: Kolby Milton - Unsplash



# The Plan

## Stage 1



# Leadership Development

Integrate resilience building into existing strategies and channels

- **3 core activities begin in stage 1 and continue through stages 2 and 3**
  - **Engage leaders and integrate learnings into existing programming**
  - **Leadership development program review and assessment**
  - **Pilot, develop, enhance new program**

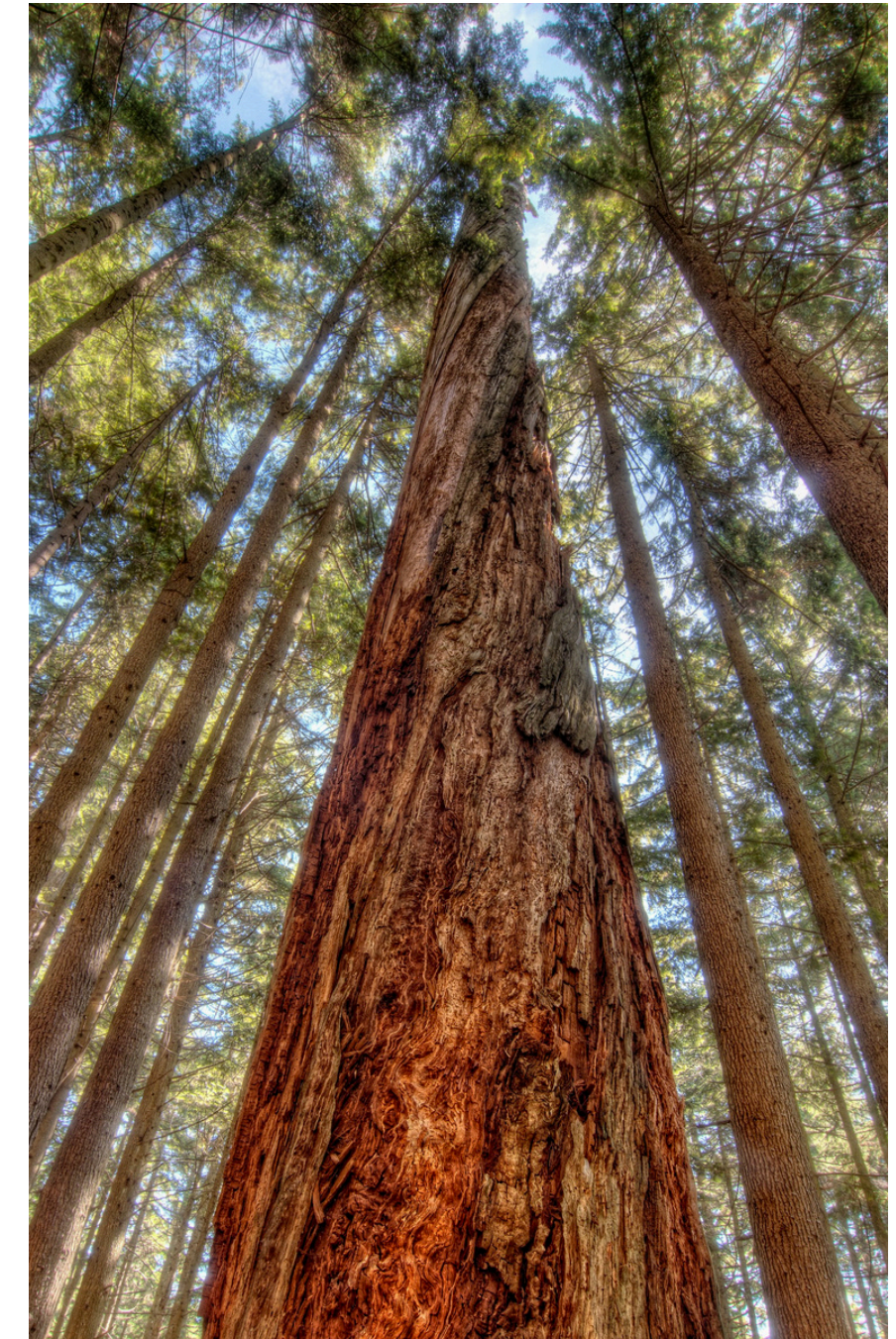


Photo Credit: James Wheeler - Unsplash

## Stage 1



# Leadership Development

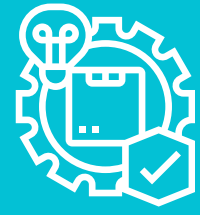
Refresh Leadership Development Strategies

- **Establish measurable goals and objectives**
- **Align with values and strategic plan**
- **Engage at Linking Leaders Fall 2024**
- **Pre-Assessment & RISE Pilot**
- **Lunch and learn series**
- **Tabletop exercises**
- **Resilience mentorship and communications**
- **Program review (Wise Practices)**
- **Theory of change to inform new and enhanced programming**
- **Evaluation**



Photo Credit: Brooke Cagle - Unsplash

## Stage 2



# Organizational Integration

Embed promising organizational practices for leadership resilience and climate change readiness.

- **Stage 1 evaluation informs stage 2**
- **Governance and policy**
- **Planetary health table**
- **Physician leader programs**



Photo Credit: Dan Nelson - Unsplash

## Stage 3



# System-level Leadership

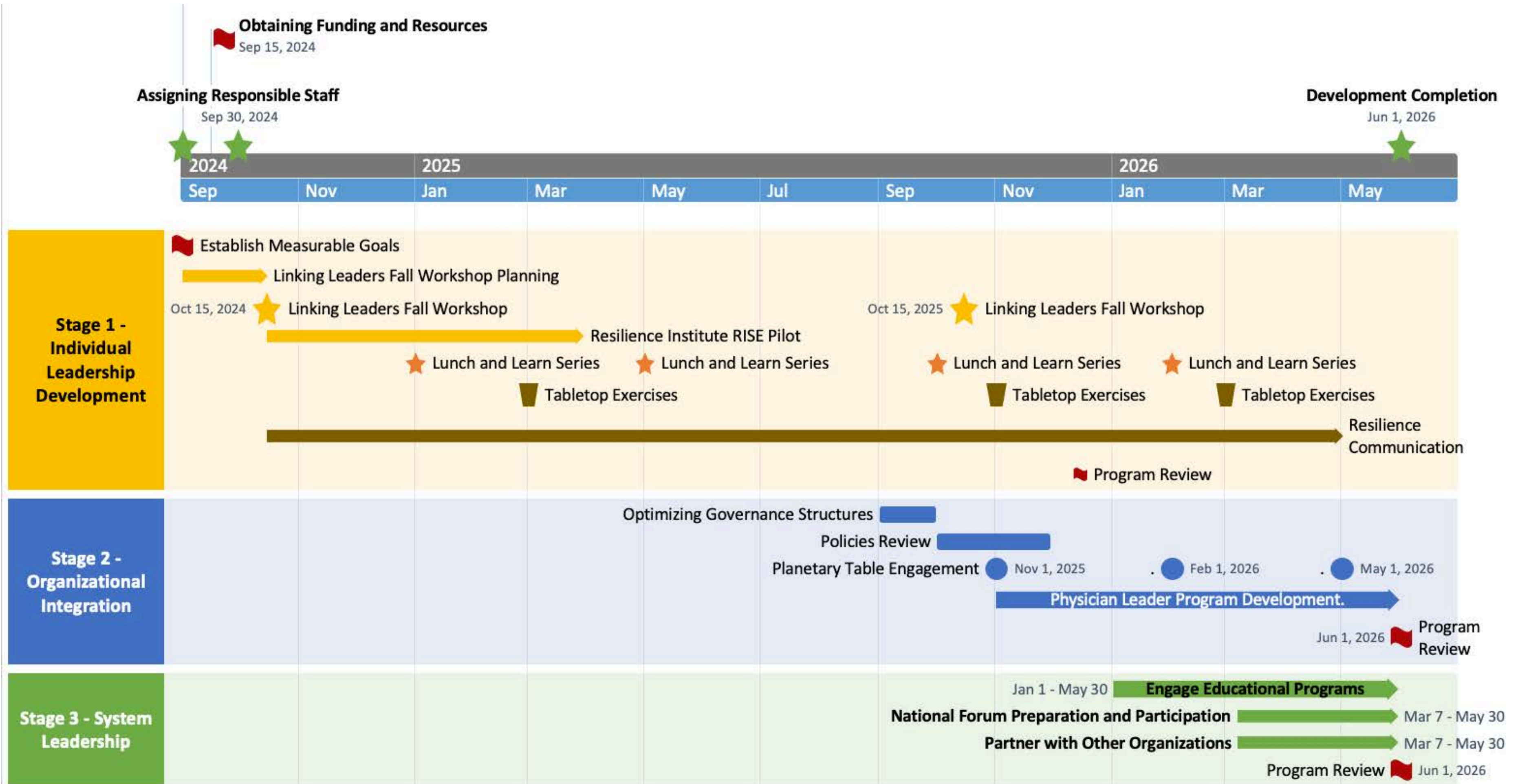
Become a system leader, establishing and leading a national community of practice in climate resilient leadership.

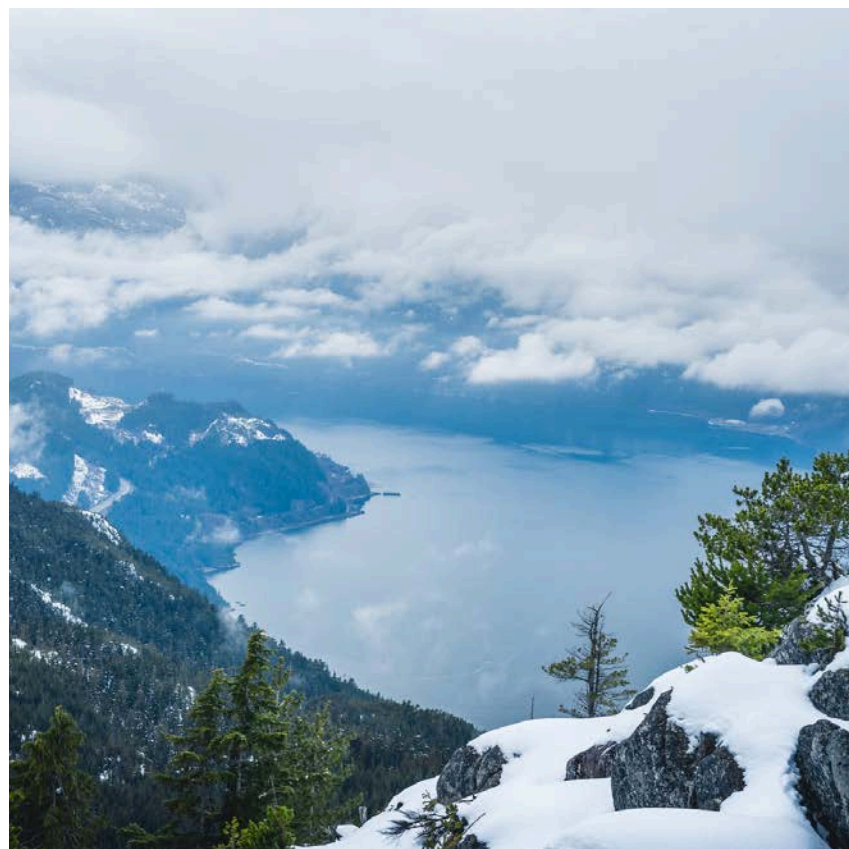


Photo Source: BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategies  
- Climate preparedness and adaptation

- **Stage 2 assessment informs stage 3**
- **Organizational Partnerships**
- **Engage Training Institutions**
- **Community Engagement**
- **National Forum**

# Timeline





# Implementation & Accountability

01

**Interior Health  
Executive Team**

*Sponsorship & Governance*

02

**Corporate  
Services**

*Accountable*

03

**Human  
Resources &  
Professional  
Practice**

*Responsible*

04

**Chief Medical  
Officer of Health**

*Responsible*



## Resourcing

- Strategic resource planning & scoping
- Organizational Development Support
- Consulting Support

# With Gratitude

## University of Alberta ALP Mentors and Advisors

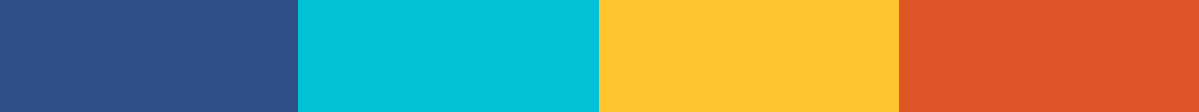
- Aslam Bhatti, ALP Mentor
- Tania Stafinski, Academic Advisor
- Sharon Bishop, Canadian College of Health Leaders LEADS Coach

## Interior Health Project Sponsors

- Sylvia Weir, CFO and VP, Corporate Services, Interior Health
- Lorne Sisley, Executive Director, Corporate Services, Interior Health



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**Thank You**

