

# BRANCHING OUT

FOREST RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA (FRIAA) NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2014



## President's Message



*Murray Summers*

The 2013/14 season was an excellent time to be involved in the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). The past year has marked a period of excellence for the association in achievements realized and contributions made. Alongside FRIAA's long-standing core programs, the Forest Resource Improvement Program, Community Reforestation Program, Mountain Pine Beetle Program, Wildfire Reclamation Program, and Incidental Conifer Program, FRIAA introduced two new programs to address the current needs of Alberta's forests.

The Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program allocates funding to encourage the adoption of science-based forest management strategies and operational methods to better aid in rehabilitating forests impacted by the mountain pine beetle infestation. Additionally, the FRIAA FireSmart Program was established to enhance the results of the FireSmart Community Grant Program sponsored by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. The programs complement one another by implementing recommendations made by the Flattop Complex Wildfire Review Committee. FRIAA's FireSmart Program facilitates the engagement of communities and community organizations in matters related to the protection of Alberta's forests. Public participants develop a sense of investment in Alberta's forest resources through their involvement with FRIAA and implementation of projects. For another year, FRIAA has continued to provide benefits to Alberta's citizens in a sustainable and focused way.

To fully support the provincial government's core sustainability objectives, FRIAA has continued to evolve since its inception in 1997. The close relationship FRIAA maintains with the government has resulted in more than \$359 million invested in various forestry enrichment initiatives over FRIAA's lifetime. In addition to the funding it administers, FRIAA also works to facilitate the development of forestry networks, providing an effective foundation for the formation and fortification of relationships between FRIAA members, government forestry professionals, the forest industry, academia, and rural and urban communities, alongside all other interested stakeholders.

To conclude fiscal 2013-14, I would like to articulate my appreciation of the commitment and support FRIAA has received from its members, partners, and stakeholders, without which the association's achievements would not have been possible. Our board of directors, as always, was instrumental in FRIAA's success through guiding and managing daily operations. And we owe a final thank you to FRIAA's preceding president, Bruce MacMillan, who continued the organization's legacy of strong leadership and professionalism throughout his term.

Murray Summers, President

### Board of Directors

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## FireSmart Program

The FireSmart Program aims to improve protection of forest communities, resources, and values through operational and planning activities designed to prevent wildfire occurrence and to reduce fire hazard throughout Alberta. On March 18, 2014, FRIAA issued a call for proposals that closed on April 25, 2014. In total, 28 proposals were received, and FRIAA approved the following 12.

- Vegetation Management Proposal (MD of Opportunity No. 17)
- Urban Interface Fuel Management: Curbside Hazardous Fuel Roundup (Athabasca County)
- Harvie Heights Fuel Modification Maintenance (MD District of Bighorn No. 8)
- Public Education (County of Grande Prairie No. 1)
- 2014 Whitecourt FireSmart Project – Zone 1 (Town of Whitecourt)
- MD of Big Lakes Hamlet’s Wildfire Protection Strategy and FireSmart Education (MD of Big Lakes)
- Imperial Mills Fuel Modification Program (Lac La Biche County)
- Peavine Métis Settlement Fuel Reduction Management Proposal (Peavine Métis Settlement)
- Brazeau County Lodgepole FireSmart Proposal (Brazeau County)
- FireSmart Fuel Reduction/Compartmentalization (Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park)
- Horburg FireSmart Plan (Sundre Forest Products)
- Municipal-Land FireSmart Fuels Reduction (Town of Canmore)



### Branching Out

*Branching Out* is the newsletter of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). It is published quarterly to communicate the objectives and activities of the association to members and other interested parties.

The purpose of FRIAA is to enhance the timber and non-timber forest resources of Alberta for the benefit of all Albertans. It encourages improved forest management activities over and above those required by government regulation.

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# Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program

FRIAA's Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program provides funding to FRIAA members to carry out activities that help to maintain or enhance forest resources by rehabilitating forest lands that have been negatively impacted by the mountain pine beetle. The program considers activities such as planting, seeding, stand tending, and other rehabilitation activities that benefit the health of Alberta forests. On February 28, 2014, FRIAA issued a call for proposals that closed April 17, 2014. Of the 7 received, FRIAA approved the following 5.

- 2014-15 Lodgepole Pine Cone Collection for MPB Rehabilitation (Hinton Wood Products)
- Pine Aerial Cone Collection (Tolko High Level)
- Beyond Beetle: Natural and Facilitated Pine Regeneration after MPB Outbreaks in Alberta (University of Alberta; sponsored by Canfor)
- Tactical and Strategic Implications of MPB Rehabilitation Strategies of Alberta Forest Values (Foothills Research Institute; sponsored by Blue Ridge Lumber)
- MPB Forest Rehabilitation - Management Unit G1 (Saddle Hills; sponsored by Weyerhaeuser)



## Mountain Pine Beetle Program

On March 14, 2014, FRIAA issued a call for proposals for projects aimed at controlling or mitigating the impacts of the mountain pine beetle (MPB). The Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MPBP) was established in 2007 to deal with effects of the beetle's infestation spreading throughout Alberta, which has possibly become the single biggest threat in recent history to the sustainability of Alberta's forests. Funding from the province to FRIAA has allowed our members to be an integral part of the critical MPB detection, control, and mitigation efforts. These efforts include detection surveys, single-tree control, aggregation pheromone use, protection of high-value sites, and log yard management. FRIAA's call for proposals closed on April 11, 2014. FRIAA received 19 proposals and approved all 19 projects.

- MPB Detection, Control and Prevention on HACOC's 10 Genetic Lodgepole Pine Field Trials (Canadian Forest Products Ltd.)
- MPB Detection, Control and Prevention at the Huallen Seed Orchard (Canadian Forest Products Ltd.)
- 2014 Log Yard Management Plan (Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.)
- 2014 MPB Dispersal Baiting Program (Sundre Forest Products Inc.)
- Log Yard Management for MPB in 2014 (Rocky Mountain Wood Preservers Ltd.)
- 2014 Log Yard Management Program (Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.)
- 2013-14 Central Region MPB Annual Report (Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.)
- 2014 MPB Dispersal Baiting Program (Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.)
- 2014 Log Yard Management Program (Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.)
- ANC Log Yard Management Plan (ANC Timber Ltd.)
- 2014-15 MPB Program: Protection of Genetic Trials, Orchards and Research Plots (Hinton Wood Products Ltd.)
- MPB Abatement and Monitoring in the Breeding Region J Lodgepole Pine Orchard (Manning Diversified Forest Products Ltd.)
- 2014-15 MPB Pine Seed Collection Proposal (Sundre Forest Products Inc.)
- 2014 Log Yard MPB Program (Foothills Forest Products Inc.)
- 2014 Log Yard Management Proposal (Blue Ridge Lumber Inc.)
- 2014 Protection of Genetic Trials and Orchard (Blue Ridge Lumber Inc.)
- MPB 2014 (Edson Forest Products Ltd.)
- 2014 MPB Detection and Control Program (Hinton Wood Products Ltd.)
- An Initiative for MPB Log Yard Management 2014 (Canadian Forest Products Ltd.)



## Mountain Pine Beetle Program – Level 1 Control

In 2007, Alberta's Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) established a two-pronged strategy that outlined immediate and long-term actions to prevent further impairment of provincial forests due to mountain pine beetle (MPB).

Canada has seen several outbreaks of MPB throughout the last century, and British Columbia is now experiencing the largest-known occurrence of the pest in recent history. Alberta's forests face less risk than British Columbia's; however, Alberta forests are more susceptible due to certain precursors. Because of the success of Alberta's wildfire suppression program over the past 80 years, pine forest of prime age for hosting MPB (80 to 120+ years) accounts for approximately 60% of eastern slopes pine forests. There is also an extensive population of MPB in the areas surrounding the mountain

national parks, owing in large part to the warming trend prevalent within the region. Consecutive mild winters have resulted in the growth and migration of MPB populations due to reduced rates of winter mortality. Forest managers are working to establish a balance between pursuing aggressive suppression tactics in the fight against MPB and allowing natural processes to run their course.

A variety of initiatives are outlined in ESRD's action plan. Level 1 treatment encompasses activities designed to treat individual trees, whether through grinding, peeling, burning, or insecticide distribution. Level 2 treatment includes harvesting impacted regions in blocks or patches. Until recently, there was reluctance among industry stakeholders to engage in level 1 control activities due to the associated risk of liability for escaped fires and/or holdover burning. Having worked through these issues, FRIAA members have responded. FRIAA recently approved a funding proposal from Weyerhaeuser Grande Prairie under which the association will provide support for the organization to administer a large level 1 control project. FRIAA's Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MPBP) allows forest companies to access funds in support of eligible activities related to level 1 control and a range of other control and mitigation strategies.

Under the terms of FRIAA's MPBP, Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd. was approved to receive \$4.5 million, followed by another \$590,890 pending receipt of additional assistance from the provincial government. The organization's proposal included plans to control an estimated 43,340 green (current) attack trees in the Smoky Management Area, southwest of Grande Prairie. Intended control methods—conventional fall and burn, mechanical chipping, and machine-assisted control—were to be completed in collaboration with Spectrum Resource Group Inc. and Flintstone Forestry Ltd., two organizations with working knowledge of the area. Risk mitigation associated with wildfire concerns is accomplished through infrared helicopter scans. To date, the project has treated 32,134 trees, 74% of the zone outlined under the proposal, and aerial scanning was approved to begin May 19, 2014.

Also during fiscal 2013–14, ESRD staff and contractors controlled 135,565 trees at approximately 17,500 sites using level 1 control procedures. Roughly 94% of control trees were located in west-central Alberta, with less intensive activities extending toward Rocky Mountain House and the Martin Hills. Efforts continue, and participants met in April of this year to identify challenges and future improvements.

**FRIAA was established in 1997 to promote and initiate projects that enhance Alberta's forest resources for the benefit of all Albertans.**