

# BRANCHING OUT

FOREST RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA (FRIAA) NEWSLETTER | SEP 2013



## FRIAA's Origins and History

FRIAA was incorporated in 1997 to establish programs and initiatives to enhance Alberta's public forest resources. It is a not-for-profit association with authority and responsibility delegated by the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD). The association is governed by a Board of Directors that reports to its industry members and to the Minister of ESRD. The first program delegated to FRIAA was the Forest Resource Improvement Program. Since then, FRIAA has taken on responsibility for a number of other programs supporting the Ministry's objectives of sustaining Alberta's forests and enhancing forest management for the public good.

## FRIAA Today

Today, FRIAA continues to deliver programs and initiatives that support enhanced forest management. Its track record of efficient program delivery with full public accountability has made it the delivery organization of choice for a variety of programs, including reforestation, stand improvement, mountain pine beetle control, public outreach, applied research, and forest protection activities such as FireSmart. FRIAA currently delivers six separate programs, each with its own specific objectives. In addition, FRIAA's track record demonstrates its ability to develop and implement programs that address shorter-term priorities of various funding agencies, including the province and federal government. A total of \$347 million has been spent, and well over 1,500 individual projects have been completed since FRIAA's inception in 1997.

### Forest Resource Improvement Program

FRIAA's cornerstone program involves collecting Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) dues from industry to fund projects that enhance forest resources or the management of forest resources for the benefit of all Albertans. FRIP projects have become a very effective and common way for the forestry, lands, and wildlife communities to work together towards enhancing forest management systems.

FRIP projects can include a wide variety of activities. The common thread among them is that they directly improve forest resources or enhance the management of forest resources in Alberta and that they go beyond legislated requirements of industry. FRIP activities directly align with the Government of Alberta's goal of sustaining the high quality of Alberta's environment.

Most FRIP projects are delivered by FRIAA members; however, through initiatives undertaken in cooperation with members and

through periodic open calls for proposals, FRIAA has actively engaged a broad range of other stakeholders (e.g., universities, industry associations, and other NGOs) in the delivery of FRIP projects.

Since the inception of FRIAA in 1997, over **\$200 million** has been contributed towards FRIP projects that support key aspects of sustainability and resource enhancement through:

- On-the-ground work to improve forest stands and wildlife habitat
- Integrated resource and land-use planning and inventory work
- Applied research projects
- Public education and awareness
- Enhanced forest protection initiatives





## Community Reforestation Program

Transferred to FRIAA in 2000, the Community Reforestation Program (CRP) involves collecting reforestation levies from small timber operators to fund reforestation activities in relation to the Community Timber Program. FRIAA targets the established regeneration standards published by the province in carrying out reforestation. Service providers are contracted by FRIAA to deliver the activities required to conduct reforestation. These may include FMA holders, groups of Commercial Timber Permit CTP holders, and silvicultural contractors.

Since the implementation of the CRP in 2000, total program spending has been over \$55 million:

- Over 38 million seedlings have been planted.
- Over 50,000 ha of land has been reforested.
- Nearly 30,000 ha of land has met the intended standard on final survey.
- Work is ongoing on the remaining area.

## Wildfire Reclamation Program

The purpose of the Wildfire Reclamation Program (WRP) is to assist in reclaiming and re-establishing forest cover on areas that have been harvested by industry and replanted, but subsequently damaged or destroyed by wildfires. Any cutblock that has been harvested, treated in any way for reforestation, and burnt over is eligible for assistance from the WRP. The WRP is an important part of the Ministry's extensive efforts to sustain

forest growth in relation to wildfire management.

Since 2007, WRP has provided grants on an annual basis. Industry participants must commit to meeting the reforestation standard of the day for the area enrolled in the program. To date, that includes over 21,000 ha of damaged cutblocks and an additional \$39.3 million in grant money that FRIAA is responsible for over the course of this program.

In 1998, wildfires destroyed over 30,000 ha of regenerating cutblocks. A \$35-million grant was provided to assist in re-establishing forest cover, with the following results:

- Over 40 million seedlings were planted.
- 100% of the area has been returned to productive forest.
- Total expenditures exceeded \$37.6 million (additional expenditures were covered by investment income).



## Branching Out

*Branching Out* is the newsletter of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA).

*Branching Out* 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 Mitigation Program

The Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MPBP) provides funding for industry (FRIAA members) to participate in activities relating to the control and mitigation of mountain pine beetle (MPB) infestation. MPB has become possibly the single biggest threat in recent history to the sustainability of Alberta's forests. Funding is provided for a range of eligible activities that

relate to detection, control, and mitigation of this threat.

The program is key to providing opportunities for the industry to participate in MPB control and to maintaining a coordinated government and industry response. MPBP activities are a critical aspect of slowing and eliminating the MPB infestation in Alberta's forests.

Since its inception in 2007, the MPBP has been granted \$22.7 million and provided over \$21.5 million in funding for activities such as:

- Detecting beetles through ground and aerial surveys
- Removing infested trees
- Preventing spread of beetle from log yards
- Pheromone baiting
- Protecting seed orchards and genetic trials

## Incidental Conifer Replacement Program

Aspen stands that were harvested in certain management units had scattered coniferous trees. The Incidental Conifer Replacement Program (ICP) collected specific reforestation levies from these

stands and reinvests the money in projects that enhance the growth of coniferous trees on Alberta's public land.

The ICP was established in March 2005, when the Minister transferred \$2.8 million to FRIAA along with the mandate to complete the program activities initiated by the Crown. Activities have included:

- Enhancing understory inventory for better protection/avoidance of conifer patches during harvest operations
- Planting over 1.3 million seedlings in burned areas or regenerated deciduous stands

## Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program

FRIAA's newest program, the Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program (MPBFRP) provides funding to industry (FRIAA members) to carry out activities that help to maintain or enhance forest resources by

rehabilitating forest lands that have been negatively impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle. The program contemplates activities such as planting, seeding, stand tending, information gathering, and other rehabilitation activities.



## Going Forward

FRIAA has a proven track record for effective delivery of programs that relate to its mandate of enhancing forest resources in Alberta. It has demonstrated an ability to understand the objectives of specific initiatives that fall within this overall mandate and establish and deliver programs that meet those objectives. Integrity, transparency, and accountability are watchwords that continue to guide the association.

Today, FRIAA is more diversified than ever, and this diversity helps sustain it through the ebbs and flows of particular programs that it administers. But FRIAA is not complacent in looking to the future. It is concerned with improving funding for FRIP, its keystone program, and continues to look for new opportunities to achieve its mandate—both through FRIP funding mechanisms and through delivery of new programs.



## Protector of Forests

### Norm Denney joins FRIAA to continue his lifelong mission of ensuring sustainable forest management

Growing up in rural Alberta, it's difficult to avoid falling in love with mountains, forests, and rivers that make up your backyard. That was the case with Norm Denney, one of FRIAA's newest directors, who, like many in forestry, has always wanted to protect the land.

Denney grew up in High River and spent much of his time hunting and fishing in Kananaskis country as well as in central and northern B.C. "I knew people in forestry, including my brother, and had done some work in forestry, so it seemed like a good fit," says Denney, who enrolled in the forestry program at the University of Montana, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1970.

While he was still in school, Denney spent his summers working for a

forest consultant in Alberta, getting experience in a wide range of activities, including cruising timber and doing regeneration surveys. Committed to working in private industry, he quickly got a job after graduation with Swanson Lumber Company, which would become Canfor while Denney was still with the company. In his 12 years there, he gained experience in milling and forestry in both northern Alberta and B.C. before moving on to a new—completely unique—experience.

"Oriented strand board was just being developed, and I became part of the company pioneering it in Canada—Pelican Spruce Mills. It was new, utilizing poplar and aspen when most of the lumber mills were spruce and pine. It was new technology and a new adventure," remembers Denney.

Pelican Spruce Mills was later acquired by Weyerhaeuser. Denney spent the rest of his career with Weyerhaeuser, managing the timberlands in southern Alberta, then across Alberta, and finally across Canada. Managing the operations from planning to harvest to reforestation was, he says, the highlight of his career.

"Part of that was working with government, providing input into forest policy in Alberta and helping to improve forest management here. I'm pleased to say that the cooperation between industry and government has always been very strong in Alberta, and as a result, our forest management is superior to many parts of North America," says Denney.

Denney, who retired in 2009, is looking forward to working with the Board as well as with the various companies involved with FRIAA. Now living back in High River on his ranch, he plans to focus on improving forest management practices in the south part of the province.

"There is solid forest management in southern Alberta, but there is always a need to support making improvements. I think FRIAA manager Todd Nash and his group are doing a super job, and I'm looking forward to helping to ensure sound forest management is carried on a sustainable basis," says Denney, who also volunteers with the Rotary Club and the local municipal centre.

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