



BRANCHING OUT

JUNE 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE FOREST RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA (FRIAA)



10 years of success in caring for the forest

The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) celebrates its 10th anniversary this year—and 10 years of outstanding success.

On April 1, 1997, Alberta delegated to FRIAA the responsibility to levy dues on crown timber harvested in the province, and disburse those funds for projects that would improve the forest resource for all values and all Albertans.

Cliff Henderson, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Forestry Division of Sustainable Resource Development, says it was a good decision.

“It created an excellent partnership between government and industry to get this work done,” he says. “It has also been good for the people of Alberta—streamlining government and investing millions of dollars in the sustainability of our forests.”

The government's goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of public forests, Henderson says, and FRIAA has proven a perfect partner in pursuing that goal.

Trevor Wakelin, long-time president of the FRIAA Board, says the fact government has added new programs for FRIAA to administer shows the level of competency and trust that has evolved. “It's been an overwhelming success,” he said. “It is achieving public objectives, and also assuring industry that project approvals and disbursements can be handled quickly, with very low administrative costs.”

FRIAA administers the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP), the Incidental Conifer Program and



Delaney Anderson

\$150 million has been invested in forest resource improvement

the Community Reforestation Program, and manages grants that support the Mountain Pine Beetle Program and the Wildfire Reclamation Program.

Thanks to its management of interest-bearing accounts, FRIAA has been able to disburse more than \$152.5 million on 1,057 projects over the past 10 years, on dues revenues of \$144.2 million.

Dues from timber operators rise and fall with market prices for forest products, and currently generate no revenue for FRIAA. However, the organization has sufficient reserves to continue its FRIP commitments for the foreseeable future.

FRIAA can be reached at (780) 429-5873.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY . . .

Board member's role is to represent the public interest

It has been my pleasure to serve as public member on FRIAA's board of directors for the last nine years - almost as long as FRIAA has been in existence.

One of the strengths of FRIAA has always been enabling legislation and a mandate that requires the various members of our board to be accountable to the stakeholders they represent, whether the general public, the government, large industry or smaller community operators.

A glance through past annual reports will show how that accountability has been achieved and measured each year, in terms of fiscal responsibility, legislative compliance and public outreach.

That last role is especially important to me. In my career with the Canadian Forest Service, it was always a priority for me to ensure research undertaken had some relationship to actual problems being encountered, and then to ensure research results



Dave Kiil

were communicated so that practices on the ground could be improved.

The work of FRIAA's Forest Resource Improvement Program allows me to continue in this role. When issues and projects come up for discussion, I bring a public perspective to the debate. I also have an opportunity to contribute to implementation of educational and sustainable forest management programs through FRIAA's Open Funds initiative.

The crown forests are publicly-owned, and FRIAA was created by the public's representatives in government, so plainly the public's voice is very important to how FRIAA conducts its affairs. It has always been gratifying to find that the diverse interests represented by other members of the board continue to be open and receptive to public opinions expressed through me, and to my own input provided on behalf of a public that cares very deeply, and always craves more information, about its forests. I encourage Albertans to

check out our information resources as well as the many educational projects supported by FRIAA.

New pressures and challenges will mean continued and emerging challenges for FRIAA, and the public should rest assured that its interest in these matters is always front and centre in our discussions and decisions.



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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FRIAA

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MARKING 10 YEARS . . .

Legacy project will take shape at Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton

Directors of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) have allotted \$1.25 million for a forestry exhibit at the Royal Alberta Museum.

The gift is to create a legacy marking FRIAA's 10 years of maintaining and enhancing Alberta's forest resources. The funds, to be disbursed over the next 10 years, will support creation of a forestry segment within the "Wild Alberta" gallery. The gallery contains dioramas and exhibits that bring the context and history of Alberta features to life.

"The details of how exactly it will be done and how it will look will be negotiated between FRIAA and the museum," said Dave Kiil, public representative on FRIAA's board. "But it will be a tremendous legacy project celebrating 10 years of our operations, as well as an opportunity for the museum to add a new exhibit to a facility that already attracts 200,000 visitors a year."

Kiil believes the exhibit will reflect and fit well with FRIAA's mandate of enhancing the

forest resource for all Albertans and of educating and communicating with the public about the importance of a diverse, productive forest ecosystem.

"One of the best aspects for us is that the museum has some very active educational programs, with 50,000 grade 4 and 6 students attending last year. This will help inform young people about our forests, both through school visits and, ultimately, through the Alberta SuperNet that reaches right across the province," Kiil said.

The \$1.25 million in legacy funds will



Alberta life takes centre stage at the Royal Alberta Museum

not have an impact on funds available for FRIAA's ongoing programs.

For more information, call the FRIAA office at (780) 429-5873.

FRIAA-supported organization wins national recognition for partnership building

Foothills Model Forest, headquartered in Hinton and a frequent partner with FRIAA in forest resource improvement projects, has won a national sustainability award.

Manager Don Podlubny travelled to Montreal in late April to accept the first-ever Syncrude Award for Excellence in Sustainable Development. The award was presented at the annual conference and exhibition of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum. The institute represents 12,000 professionals in the minerals, metals and energy industries.

With all the competing pressures on today's landscape, especially in Alberta, it was a good forum for such industries



Don Podlubny

to hear about sustainability, and the role forest managers and researchers can play, said Podlubny.

"The award recognized the unique and successful way we have created broad partnerships," he said. "It's those partnerships and collaborative relationships that will lead us towards sustainability."

The institute cited the Grizzly Bear Research Program, in which FRIAA has participated, as one example of a broad and successful partnership. The model forest has many other projects that bring public,

aboriginal, industry and government partners together to generate the science required to tackle complex and urgent problems.

The model forest was nominated by Elk Valley Coal, which operates the Cheviot Mine near Hinton. "Elk Valley has seen

the benefits over the years of diverse partnerships working together towards environmental integrity on the landscape," said Podlubny. "I think this recognition says a lot about our programs, and the partners who support us."

FRIAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held
Thursday, June 21
at 5:30 p.m.
Old Timer's Cabin
Edmonton

PROJECT UPDATE . . .

Protecting calves at birth helps boost caribou survival rate

The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) has supported woodland caribou research since its inception 10 years ago.

FRIAA, eight forest companies and the Foothills Model Forest have invested almost \$5.5 million during the last 10 years on projects designed to improve understanding and management of caribou, their habitat and the human activities that affect their range.

Over the past decade, 36 projects have been funded. One focuses on discovering how caribou and mountain pine beetle management strategies can mesh together and how future timber harvest plans might be integrated with both streams of activity. Other research looks at the effectiveness of special road patrols and signage to warn drivers, roadside reflectors to reduce collisions with ungulates and a taste-aversion agent that reduces the appeal of road salt to

animals. FRIAA funding also supports the Caribou Landscape Management Association (CLMA).

The association includes all the forest companies and the major oil and gas producers operating in the A La Peche and Little Smoky caribou ranges, as well as the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada. The association was formed to minimize the impact of industrial activity and development on the caribou and its habitat within the ranges.

The endangered Little Smoky herd has been in decline mostly due to predation from wolves. In particular, newborns are easily preyed upon by increasing numbers of predators in the area. To bring about an immediate increase in calf survival rates,



Caribou Landscape Management Association

Caribou feed in a secure pen

the association joined Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Husky Energy and BP Canada in developing the Little Smoky Caribou Calf Project, based on the highly successful Chisana Caribou project in the Yukon that increased survival rates from 12.5 per cent to 75 per cent.

The Little Smoky Caribou Calf Project involved capturing and protecting 10 pregnant females and eventually their offspring in an enclosure secure from predators. The caribou mothers and calves were kept in the protected area until the calves were strong enough to avoid the predators on their own.

“Results for the enclosed animals are promising,” says Wayne Thorp, CLMA’s director. “The unprotected calves also experienced an increase in survival after their release. We believe this is probably due to the fact that the government conducted a wolf control program at the same time.”

For more information, contact FRIAA at (780) 429-5873.



Caribou Landscape Management Association

Some direct intervention led to a promising increase in calf survival rates