



Branching Out

June 2016 Newsletter

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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 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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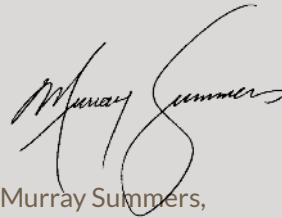
President's Message

After the devastation caused by the Fort McMurray wildfire earlier in May, there is no doubt that wildfires and the mitigation of impacts caused by wildfire is top of mind for Albertans. We are deeply sorry for the tragic loss experienced by so many of our fellow Albertans, and we are also grateful for the bravery and tireless work of our first responders, without whom the damage could have been much worse.

As we head into the long fire season ahead, wildfires will continue to be top-of-mind concerns for Albertans. Many are asking questions about what they can do to reduce the risks associated with wildfire near communities. As this is the domain of FireSmart, we are pleased to announce that 34 projects proposed in response to FRIAA's January Firesmart Expression of Interest were successful in securing

funding. Making sure all Alberta communities are aware of the tools and resources available to them through the Firesmart Program will be a top priority for FRIAA in the days and months ahead.

As we head into our Annual General Meeting later this month, I look forward to the continued dialogue and discussion around how FRIAA can help contribute to efforts to reduce the impacts of wildfire in communities in Alberta.



Murray Summers,
FRIAA President

What is FRIAA?

Our name reflects our purpose – The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta. We are working to improve the forest resource of Alberta. In 1997, FRIAA was created and tasked with collecting and administering industry funds in order to enhance Alberta's forest resources. Historically, stumpage fees were collected by Government as general revenue. FRIAA was created to oversee the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) funds, designed to ensure that a portion of stumpage fees was put to directly enhance the forest resource for the benefit of all Albertans.

Over the years, FRIAA has evolved to offer funding through a variety of programs – each designed to serve a different need, from dealing with Mountain Pine Beetle to helping communities better prepare for wildfires.

FRIAA serves the people of Alberta and is accountable to the Minister responsible for Forestry. Over nearly two decades, FRIAA has helped Alberta continue to develop world-class forest management

practices and a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between things like human activity, the forest resources, species at risk and wildfire. It is, uniquely, an organization able to collaborate with Academia, Government, Municipalities, Industry and the Ministry. It has supported practical and applied research, on-the-ground forest improvement strategies as well as innovative approaches to forest inventory and planning that helps Alberta manage its forest resource in a sustainable manner.

FRIAA's mandate has been, and continues to be, to enhance Alberta's forest resource, for the benefit of Albertans. We look forward to new opportunities to partner with you to do just that.

Program Updates

Our programs are the tools we use to achieve our core purpose. The seven program areas address community reforestation, wildfire reclamation, mountain pine beetle, conifer regrowth, and more recently, FireSmart – each one enhancing Albertans' ability to benefit from forest resources.

In April of this year, FRIAA awarded over \$500,000 to projects aimed at control of Mountain Pine Beetle. In May of this year, FRIAA announced more than

\$4.1 million for 34 FireSmart projects across Alberta. Updates for other FRIAA programs are in the sections that follow.

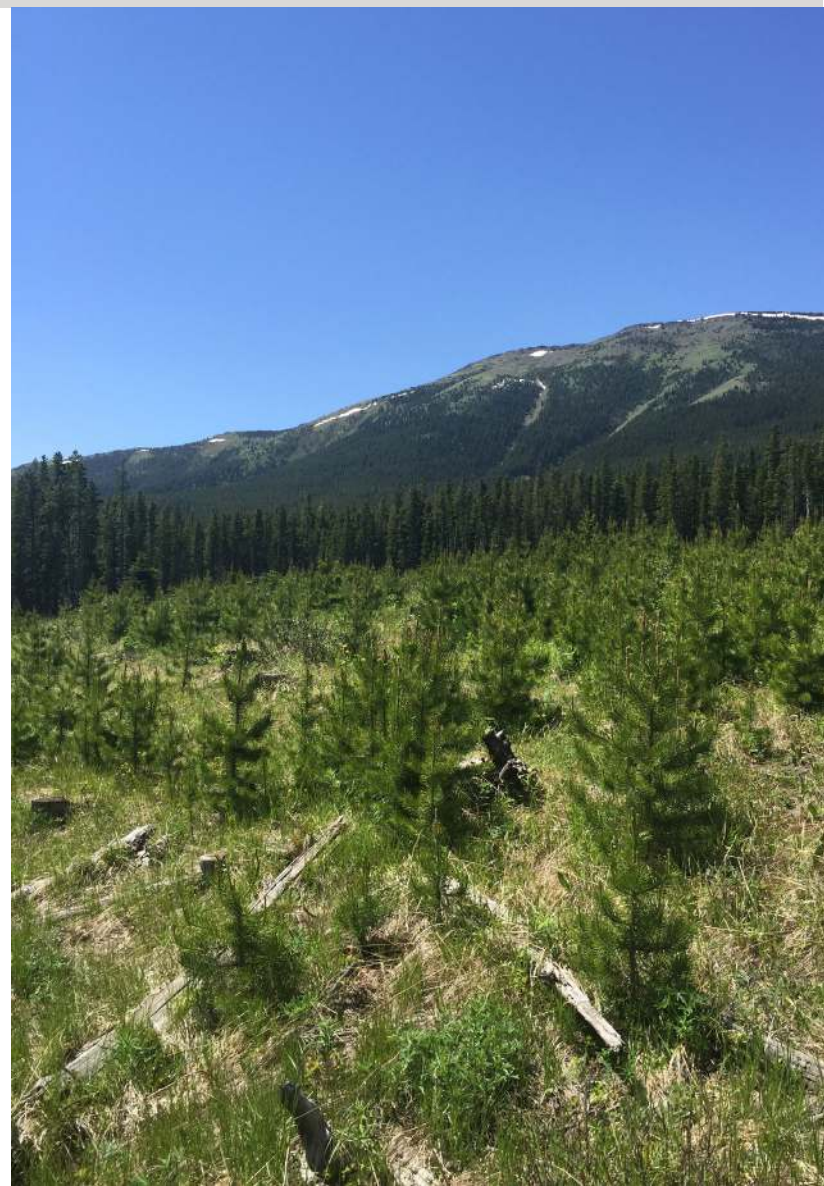
With funding opportunities ahead for FireSmart as well as a variety of FRIAA's programs, we encourage all applicants interested in growing research and practice in a range of forest management activities to apply.

Forest Resources Improvement Program (FRIP)

There are 74 projects underway encompassing a full range of activities from field operation, inventory and planning, to applied research and public education. Over the summer, FRIAA is set to welcome applicants through the FRIP Funds Initiative. In addition, a special call for Call for Proposals for a FRIAA's upcoming legacy project is being released in the coming months. More information about the legacy project can be found at friaa.ab.ca.

Incidental Conifer Program (ICP)

The ICP has been extended until December 31 of this year and work is currently underway to plant 680,000 conifer seedlings in areas that are associated with deciduous cutblocks.



Mountain Pine Beetle Program (MPBP)

Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) continues to have lasting effects on Alberta's forests. In April of this year, FRIAA approved 18 new projects and more than \$500,000 in funding to support projects to control the spread of MPB. Approved projects dealt with log yard management, long distance dispersal monitoring, protection of seed orchards and genetic trials, and containment baiting.

Examples of Approved Projects – April 2016:

Project Name/Company: Log Yard Management Plan (Edson Forest Products Ltd.);

Project Category: Pheromone Baiting/Dispersal – Log Yard Management

Objective: To monitor and contain mountain pine beetle populations at the mill site.

Project Name/Company: Containment Baiting Plan, (Blue Ridge Lumber Ltd.)

Project Category: Pheromone Baiting/Dispersal – Containment Baiting

Objective: To bait 206 hectares of area scheduled for harvest during the 2016/17 harvest season.

Project Name/Company: Detection, Control and Prevention at the Huallen Seed Orchard (Canadian Forest Products Ltd.)

Project Category: Seed Orchard/ Genetic Trial(s) Protection

Objective: To protect 2 lodgepole pine orchards.

Mountain Pine Beetle Rehabilitation Program (MPBFRP)

In May of this year, the program was updated to clarify the priority ranking of damaged stands eligible for treatment. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry completed inventory of damaged stands in 415 Townships in the holding zones. Staff are now using a new decision support tool to rank that damaged stands for treatment in order of priority.

Community Reforestation Program (CRP)

Since the beginning of the Reforestation Program in 2000, FRIAA is proud to have successfully reforested 42,129 ha of forest land through the CRP, promoting long term sustainability of Alberta's forests. To date, there is work underway on 18,240 ha that are at various stages of the reforestation process. The 2015/16 harvest area added 1,164 ha to the program – a modest increase in harvest size compared to the average for the three previous years.

Wildfire Reclamation Program (WRP)

In the previous months, Albertans have become increasingly aware of the threat wildfires pose to the long-term sustainability of Alberta's forests. In 2015, wildfires burned over 9800 ha of previously reforested cutblocks. This year, government provided a \$19.8 million grant to cover the costs of reclaiming this area. Over the course of the program, 53 projects have been approved to reforest more than 32,000 ha of previously reforested cutblocks damaged or destroyed by the effects of wildfire.

FireSmart (FFP)

FRIAA's FireSmart Review Committee met in May of this year, awarding funding to all 34 completed project proposals, for a total amount of \$4.1 million. Proposals for FireSmart project funding were received by FRIAA in response to a Call for Expression of Interest that FRIAA published in January of this year. Three quarters of the funded projects were for vegetation management proposals, and included a range of applicants from municipalities, Metis settlements and First Nations. Since February 2014, FRIAA has awarded \$15.2 million to organizations seeking resources to undertake FireSmart projects.

Examples of Approved Projects – May 2016:

Project Name/Location: Zama City Vegetation Management (Zama City-MacKenzie County)

Term: July 2016 – March 2018

FireSmart Discipline: Vegetation/Fuel Modification

Objective: To reduce wildfire risk by completing 18.3 ha of vegetation management within the hamlet of Zama City

Project Name/Location: Greater Bragg Creek Area Interface Wildfire Exercise (Rocky View County)

Term: June 2016 – December 2016

FireSmart Discipline: Inter-Agency Cooperation and Cross-training

Objective: To complete a wildfire field exercise that includes activation of a joint coordination center, mobile command post, reception center for mock evacuees, training of Rocky View County Fire Services and mutual aid partners (Redwood Meadows and Town of Cochrane) and education of residents with respect to information in the 2016 Wildfire Preparedness Guide.

Project Name/Location: Whitefish Lake Residential Fuel Management (Whitefish Lake First Nation)

Term: June 2016 – November 2016

FireSmart Discipline: Vegetation/Fuel Modification

Objective: To complete vegetation management treatments in FireSmart Zones 1 and 2 for a minimum of 128 structures, or approximately 30 ha of area treated, within Whitefish Lake First Nation.

Funding Opportunities

FRIAA is pleased to announce a call for a Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the following programs:

- **Mountain Pine Beetle Forest Rehabilitation Program (MPBFRP):** The deadline to submit an EOI is 4 p.m., July 26, 2016.
- **FRIP Fund Initiative:** The deadline to submit an EOI is 4 p.m., September 16, 2016.
- **FRIAA FireSmart:** The deadline to submit an EOI is 4 p.m., September 28, 2016.
- **FRIP Fund Initiative – Legacy Project:** The deadline to submit an EOI is 4 p.m., October 31, 2016.

More information about any of these funding opportunities can be found at www.friaa.ab.ca.

FireSmart Profile

Community of Red Earth Creek

With the devastating fire season Alberta has seen this year, the FireSmart program has become top of mind for Albertans: those who live in or near forested areas, and many workers who use remote camps and work in remote areas.

During the 2011 fire season, the community of Red Earth Creek within the Municipal District (MD) of Opportunity was completely evacuated, experiencing similar impacts on a smaller scale than Fort McMurray. In 2012, the MD got to work on its Wildfire Mitigation Strategy.

The MD took on this work with purpose and contracted Mistik Environmental. “FRIAA funding is very special to us,” said Deborah Juch, Manager of Legislative Services for the MD, noting that this FRIAA FireSmart funding allows them to access the technical oversight needed to really get the work done for the community.

Beginning in 2014, a Tri-Hamlet Vegetation Management project was initiated in the MD. The mitigation strategy identified that the black spruce stands to the south of the community posed a significant risk and challenges for suppression as well as ignition potential. A portion of this project was to reduce hazard in two of the black spruce stands to the south of the community. A mulcher was also used to break up the stand to create breaks in fuel continuity.

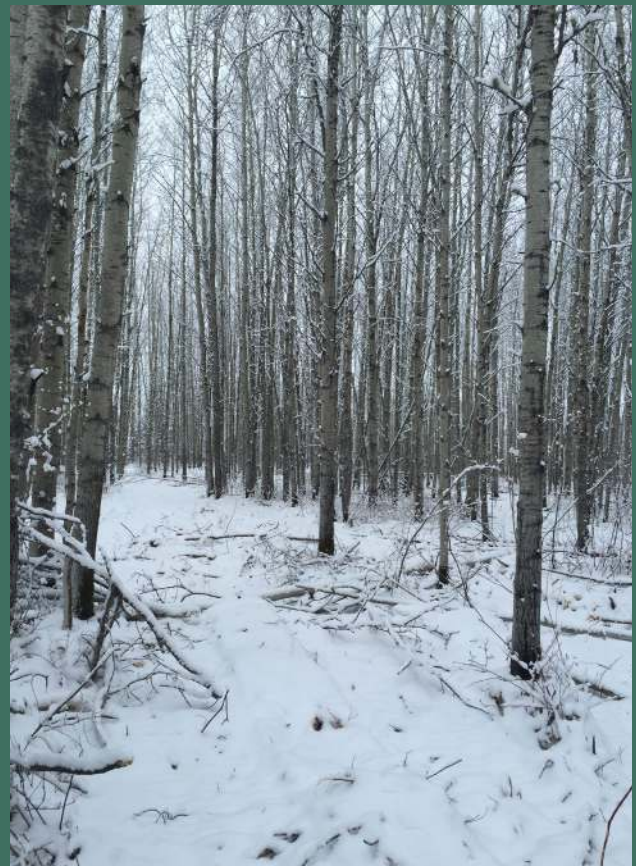
A key part of the MD’s strategic plan was its partnership with Wabasca and Sandy Lake on FireSmart Education. This project included a FireSmart Open House and BBQ educating residents about the FireSmart program as well as the activities and projects underway in their communities. Local agriculture, Forestry and FRIAA staff participated in the events. Juch noticed a buy-in from MD council and staff on the FireSmart program from the beginning. As a new prevention practice for many community members, this advocacy was crucial for council, staff and local residents.

Juch continues to see the positive impact of FireSmart Education in Red Earth Creek. “When we put something out on social media – whether it’s about a fire ban or not driving ATVs – they listen and take it seriously.”

An additional Vegetation Management project was undertaken in 2015 in Red Earth Creek, supported by FRIAA funding. With its work complete, this project area is currently in the final reporting stage.

The MD of Opportunity’s Wildfire Mitigation and Plan is up for review and renewal this year. This project was approved through the FireSmart’s last round of funding. The MD of Opportunity is set to begin work on this plan in the coming months.

All projects have been run through the MD of Opportunity and contracted out through Mistik Environmental Services.



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