



BRANCHING OUT

MARCH, 2007

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



Solid foundations for community forestry

Alberta's future forests are off to a good start with FRIAA's Community Reforestation Program.

The program ensures that areas harvested under the province's Community Timber Program, aimed at providing timber to local loggers, small sawmills and community groups, are properly reforested.

This work helps to ensure fibre for small timber permit operators and future revenue for those working and living in Alberta's communities.

Since FRIAA assumed responsibility for this reforestation work from the provincial government in May 2000, the Community Reforestation Program has planted over 30 million seedlings on approximately 19,000 hectares of crown land.

"The Community Reforestation Program is a good model for delivering reforestation within a program that includes sites scattered throughout the province, from Crowsnest Pass to La Crete," said Todd Nash, FRIAA Manager. "It's a small program, but very focused and effective."

Nash credits the program's success to reforestation contractors and an ongoing commitment by FRIAA to apply the best science and expertise available in each area reforested.

Reforestation success is closely linked to current and future harvesting opportunities. Therefore, the Community Reforestation Program is connected to government administration of timber dispositions.

"We continue to work with government to overcome two administrative challenges—ensuring that proper



Planting today ensures opportunity tomorrow

Angie Krebs

revenues are collected, and that cutblocks are properly identified and tracked," said Nash.

Operators in the Community Timber Program pay a levy that is expressed as a fee per cubic metre based on reported log volume.

Some of the service providers are Forest Management Agreement holders such as Canfor or Tolko, while others are silviculture contracting companies or small quota holders with close ties to the Community Timber Program.

More details are available at www.friaa.ab.ca. FRIAA can be reached at (780) 429-5873.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . .

FRIAA well equipped to support government objectives

There's a timely coincidence, I think, in the fact that FRIAA has adopted a new three-year business plan just as Albertans welcome a new Premier, a new Cabinet and a new Minister of Sustainable Resource Development.

Our business plan for 2007-2010 continues FRIAA's long-standing commitment to some strategic principles that align completely with the government priorities set out by Premier Ed Stelmach.

We are looking forward to introducing FRIAA to Minister Ted Morton, and assuring him that ours is an organization that can be counted on for demonstrated and trusted support in some areas that are important to the government and the people of Alberta. For instance:

- The accountability of agencies entrusted with public funds;
- The maintenance and enhancement of Alberta's forested environment;
- Improved ways for diverse users to share the landscape;



Trevor Wakelin, President

- Enhancements in outdoor contributions to Albertans' quality of life;
- Strengthening of rural development and sustainability.

The makeup of FRIAA's Board, with representation from industry, government and the public, helps make FRIAA a model of transparency in management and decision-making. In terms of accountability, our strict reporting requirements of project partners, our minimal

administration costs and our frequent ability to offer "Open Funds" for additional projects add up to great value for money.

Our new business plan reaffirms these principles. It also commits us again to operational, planning, research and educational projects that will improve the forest resource for all Albertans - for the full range of economic, environmental and social values. As the forest sector's databank and experience grows, in step with provincial population growth, FRIAA will be well placed to help

ensure Alberta's forests are well managed now and into the future. The government can focus on the matters of regulation and policy that are important to Albertans, with confidence that FRIAA's Board and membership are continuing a credible, accountable tradition of ensuring the vitality and diversity of Alberta's forest resources.



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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FRIP UPDATE . . .

Forest improvement projects will continue, despite slump in market conditions

Forest companies continue to tap into FRIAA's Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) for projects that go beyond their required forest management responsibilities.

"Proposals for funding reflect a variety of approaches for enhancing forest resources and the sustainable management of Alberta's public forests," said Carson McDonald, a FRIAA team leader involved in the review of FRIP proposals

Since September 1997, the program has spent \$138,454,162 on 1,131 projects. Projects fall into four categories: operational field work (27.5 per cent of total projects), inventory and planning (30 per cent), applied research (33 per cent) and other (9.5 per cent).

Operational projects include thinning or cleaning stands to reduce unwanted vegetative competition, while inventory and planning projects focus on providing and updating forest resource information.

Applied research projects support scientific research into new or improved management tools and processes. The "other" category includes projects associated with public

awareness, recreation or the provision of forest resource information to elementary schools across the province.

Companies use dues they've contributed to the program based on timber harvested under a Forest Management Agreement, Timber Quota or a Timber Permit. Proposals are submitted, reviewed and accepted on an ongoing basis.

Due to low commodity prices, FRIAA has not collected any FRIP dues since last spring nor does it expect any industry contributions for the next three years.

McDonald said the program will continue to function for a considerable time since there is sufficient money available in interest-bearing investments. A number of the larger companies have made sizeable FRIP contri-



Angie Krebs

Inventory and planning projects support forest diversity

butions over the years, meaning applicants can continue to access funds in the near to medium term.

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

Veteran forester is also adept at stick-handling boardroom issues

Murray Summers, chief forester for West Fraser's Alberta operations and treasurer for FRIAA, knows his way around the woods and the boardroom.

Involved with FRIAA since its inception, Summers has served as both a director and treasurer. The long-standing board member says his main responsibility is for the investment and management of FRIAA funds.

Summers grew up in Ontario and graduated from Lakehead College with a Forest Technology diploma. He went on to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of New Brunswick.

Soon afterwards, Summers took a job



Murray Summers

with Northern Ontario Spruce Falls Power and Paper. Ten years later, in 1974, he made the move west to help set up the woodlands operations for Simpson Timber Company in Whitecourt, now Blue Ridge Lumber, a division of West Fraser Mills.

As chief forester, Summers coordinates West Fraser's input to the Alberta government.

Summers finds himself in Edmonton once or twice a week for government and association meetings.

He says that he is looking forward to discussions with the Alberta government about how FRIAA can assist the Minister of Alberta

Sustainable Resource Development achieve objectives in program areas such as Integrated Land Management, reforestation of burned-over areas and mountain pine beetle management strategies.

In addition to his role as FRIAA's treasurer, Summers sits on the boards of the Alberta Forest Products Association, Alberta Forestry Research Institute and Foothills Model Forest.

When he's not on the road, Summers serves as an instructor for Hockey Alberta in coach development programs. He's been involved in minor hockey since his arrival in Alberta, but remains a loyal Montreal Canadiens fan.

Murray Summers can be reached at (780) 648-6325 or murray.summers@westfraser.com.

PROJECT UPDATE . . .

Alberta leads the way in comprehensive grizzly studies

For the first time in Canada steps are being taken to produce province-wide maps and models of grizzly bear range.

FRIAA, a long-time supporter of grizzly bear research, awarded \$400,000 in the 2006–2007 Open Funds Initiative to Foothills Model Forest for the development of these new tools, with an emphasis on the impacts of mountain pine beetle and related harvesting strategies.

This research is crucial because the grizzly bear in Alberta is categorized as a species that “may be at risk” and the province has a provincial recovery plan for this species under review.

Gord Stenhouse with Foothills Model Forest is one of the leading grizzly bear researchers in the province.

He says the current project of completing maps and resource selection function models for the grizzly’s entire range builds on ongoing and past work such as remote

sensing maps of habitat and movement patterns.

Over the next two years, Stenhouse and his research team will focus on the area north of Grande Prairie. Range mapping has already been completed along the eastern slopes of the Rockies south to the Montana border.

The emphasis on mountain pine beetle stems from the province’s pine strategy, in which infested pine stands are placed at the top of the harvesting list.

“We need to know more about how this change in forest management will affect grizzly bears,” says Stenhouse. “Creating new, younger forests can be a good thing for grizzlies in terms of food sources, but an increase in new access roads to allow harvesting activities could be a challenge



Foothills Model Forest

Maps show bears’ travel patterns

because of increased human presence.”

Over the past five years, seven forest companies have funded grizzly bear research for a total of 10 projects and \$745,151 through FRIAA’s Forest Resource Improvement Program. FRIAA’s Open Funds Initiative has been the greatest contributor with an approved project for each of the five years totalling \$1,230,000 in all.

“The forest industry in Alberta has been the biggest financial supporter of grizzly bear research,” says Stenhouse. “I believe that level of support continues because our program delivers practical tools and results that land and resource managers can use to make decisions related to sustainable forest management.”

Gord Stenhouse can be reached at (780) 865-8388 or gordon.stenhouse@gov.ab.ca.



Foothills Model Forest

Grizzly research program is strongly supported by industry partners