



# **Branching Out**

September 2017 Newsletter

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Murray Summers, President Norm Denney, First Vice-President David Kiil, Second Vice-President David Wall, Treasurer Cliff Henderson, Director David West, Director

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.

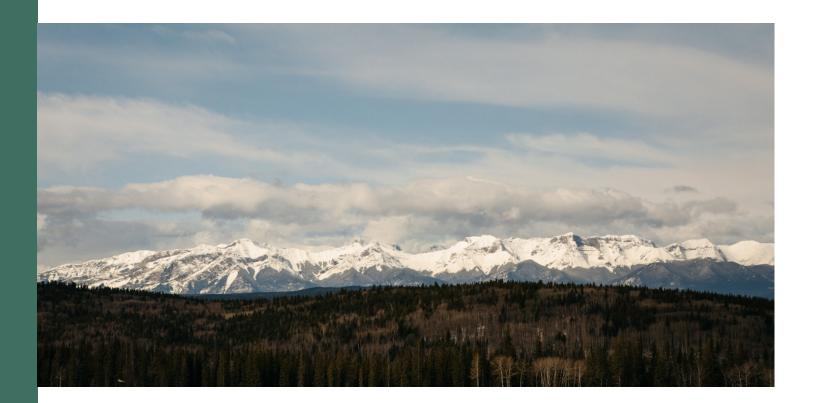
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#### **President's Letter**

With wildfires continuing to make an impact across to achieving our goal of improving our forest resources Canada, the difficulties faced by our neighbours are for all Albertans. a stark reminder of the threat that wildfire poses. FRIAA recognizes this ongoing threat and continues In addition to our work on our core programs, we continue to work with Alberta Environment and Parks to support Alberta's priorities related to FireSmart and Wildfire Reclamation by providing funding for staff on an expanded caribou habitat restoration eligible projects. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) has overall responsibility for FireSmart and Wildfire Reclamation and has recently renewed Once the program is finalized, we will share more its commitment to these highly effective FRIAA information on how it works. programs by transferring funds to support future project activities. We remain committed to supporting As summer closes out and a new season begins, we Alberta's communities as they work towards mitigating look forward to continuing to support and develop the threat of wildfire through both of these programs. programs that address the changing needs of Albertans' forest resources.

We're pleased that the forestry industry is currently experiencing better markets and better prices for forest products. This improvement translates to increased industry contributions to the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) fund, which in turn supports FRIAA's goals of optimizing funding for forest resource improvement projects. This will help sustain and enhance Alberta's forests through a wide range of forestry projects that are especially important



program this year. We are pleased to help the province work towards its objective of restoring caribou habitat.

Thank you!

Murray Summers, FRIAA President

## **About FRIAA**

Our name reflects our purpose - The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). 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, 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, onthe-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.



## MAINTAINING **ALBERTA'S FOREST SUSTAINABILITY**

The Community Reforestation Program (CRP) supports sustainability of forest resources by reforesting cutblocks harvested by smaller timber operators, and this helps to ensure future harvesting opportunities for this sector of the forest industry.

A summary of performance survey data from cutblocks in the CRP was completed this year. The results show that the program is exceeding provincial reforestation growth targets.

Since May 1, 2000, the CRP has undertaken reforestation of 31.510 hectares of cutblocks. To date, 888 cutblocks and 10,477.7 hectares have had the final regulatory check off completed. The final survey outcomes underline the achievements of the CRP's efforts, as the projected growth rate of the regenerated stands is an average of 1.5 times the provincial targets for conifer trees and 2 times the provincial targets for deciduous trees.

The success of this program could not have been achieved without the hard work of service providers and their diligence in planning and executing reforestation activities throughout the province.

## **AGGRESSIVE TREATMENT ON MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE IN HINTON**

Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) continues to be a challenge. FRIAA is actively working with our partners through the Mountain Pine Beetle **Program (MPBP) to control the spread and** impact of MPB. With FRIAA's support, the

MPBP in Hinton has recently found success. Jackson acknowledges that the success of the HWP project could not have happened without Hinton Wood Products, a division of West the support of FRIAA and the MPBP: "[FRIAA] Fraser Mills Ltd. (HWP), participated in the MPB was very easy to work with on this project, and program in an effort to control MPB spread on we also worked closely with the government. Crown forest land that wasn't identified in time The MPBP is positive because it's another to be treated as part of the AAF program. opportunity to be aggressive against the MPB problem."

"In most simple terms, the project was a chance to get infested trees into a treatment plan earlier than they would have been otherwise," explains Hal Jackson, Planning Superintendent and Project Lead. "We were able to treat more trees in an area that would have been left on its own. Without the incremental control efforts from this project. the spread of MPB would have continued more aggressively across the region."

HWP's application for the project was submitted in February 2017, and they started surveying operations in March 2017. While the final report won't be available until the end of September, they're confident in the success of their efforts.

Jackson says that initial estimates predicted around 1.600 trees would need to be treated for MPB, based on the HWP data and public information. Once they investigated further, a total of 9,327 trees were identified for treatment, but not all of them could be reached. To treat the trees in summer months, they must chip and peel them, a process that slows down treatment and ultimately affected how many trees they could treat.

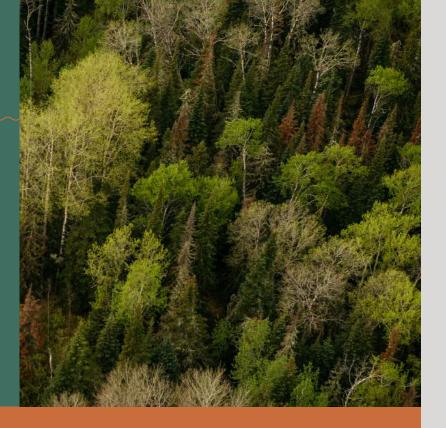
In recent years, the population of MPB in Jasper has increased, making aggressive treatment strategies more important in areas like Hinton. The impact of the FRIAA project was positive,

as HWP was able to treat 7,932 trees infested with MPB reducing the rate of spread in their community and adjacent Crown lands. Overall, \$1.435 million was spent on their efforts.



## FRIP Update

In July 2017, FRIAA published a call for Expressions of Interest under the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) with a target-funding amount of \$1.5 million. The call received 17 responses, and the total amount of funding requested by these projects is \$2,583,918. The proposals include education and public awareness, research and planning projects. The panel will meet in late September to discuss and decide which projects should be shortlisted.



#### FRIAA FIRESMART FUNDING AND EOI

The FireSmart call for Expressions of Interest from December 2016 resulted in approval of 12 new projects. Of these projects, seven are vegetation management projects, three are planning projects, and two are in public education. In total, \$1.13 million in Grant Funds have been committed to funding these projects to help reduce the growing impact of wildfires in communities.

#### **Examples of approved projects - December 2016:**

**Project Category**: Tree Species Conversion Project Name/Company: Goldeye FireSmart Project **Objective:** To alter the species composition of stands adjacent to the community that were harvested to create openings in continuous conifer fuel types. These treatment activities will promote the growth of less hazardous aspen in the regenerating stands versus the pure conifer fuel types that preceded the initial intervention.

**Project Category:** Wildfire Mitigation Strategy **Project Name/Company:** Thorhild County **Objective:** To develop a Wildfire Mitigation Strategy for the entire area of Thorhild County and the communities within.

#### **Project Category:** FireSmart Education **Project Name/Company:** Alexander First Nation **Objective:** To educate the public, school aged children, and community members of the role of FireSmart in the community. This includes encouraging community members and property owners to adopt the general principles of FireSmart to mitigate wildfire threats on private property and special values.

For a complete list of approved projects, please see our Resources page at: http://friaa.ab.ca/friaa-resources/

Meanwhile, FRIAA is already working on the next funding opportunity under this program. The July 2017 call for FireSmart Expressions of Interest accepted new project submissions until September 27, 2017. We are currently evaluating which of these EOIs will be shortlisted for further consideration.

## **NEW FRIAA WEBSITE**

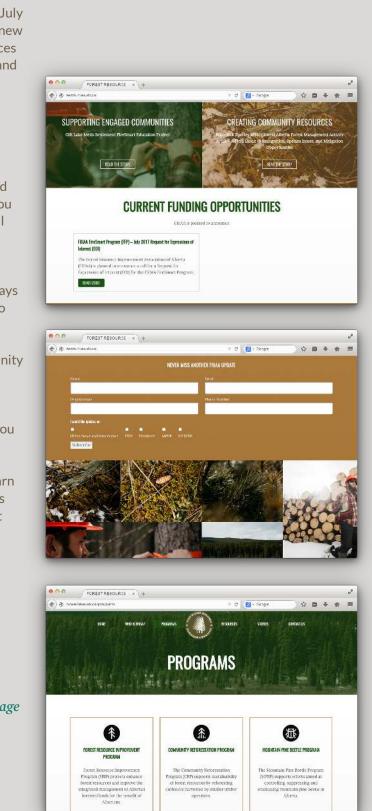
We launched our newly redeveloped website this July - still found at **friaa.ab.ca**. The primary aim of the new website is to better serve the needs of our audiences by creating an interface that is easier to navigate and displays content more intuitively.

#### Website highlights:

- *Current funding opportunities* these can be found on the Home page. Once you've selected a funding opportunity you are interested in, you will be taken to a standalone page where you'll find the required documents and submission information.
- FRIAA stories the new Stories page shows ways that FRIAA funding has been used and helps to share the successes of our different projects.
- *Newsletter sign-up* you now have the opportunity to sign up for different program updates on our Home page. This new system allows you to identify the topics you would like more information on, helping ensure that we send you the information most important to you.
- Program information and database you can learn about our different programs on our Programs page. And, if you're looking for specific project information about past projects, try our Past Project Summaries Database located at the bottom of the Programs page.

We're excited about our new site, and we will be continuing to improve it as we strive to best serve your needs.

To continue to receive our periodic newsletter, remember to sign up at the bottom of the Home page on the FRIAA website at: friaa.ab.ca.



**Please return undeliverable copies to:** FRIAA Box 11094, Main Post Office Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3K4

For more copies of this issue or to be added to the mailing list, please contact FRIAA at: Phone: (780) 429-5873

Final: (780) 429-4026 Email: admin@friaa.ab.ca Web: friaa.ab.ca