



# Branching Out

April 2018 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 Letter

2018 is starting off as a strong year for the forestry industry. We're excited to see the direct impacts of this on our Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) already. FRIAA dues have increased significantly from previous years, reflecting the market turnaround and higher benchmark prices that drive dues rates. With this increased revenue, we're able to provide more funding through FRIP for many different kinds of projects including some innovative public outreach programs that help to sustain and enhance Alberta's forests. FRIAA members are working hard to generate high calibre project ideas and start new projects- continuing to push us forward.

We continue to work with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) and Alberta Environment and Parks to ensure that current programs and new programs are meeting the needs of Albertans in terms of improved forest resources and enhanced forest management. AAF has renewed their commitment to FRIAA by transferring additional funding to the Mountain Pine Beetle Control, Wildfire Reclamation and FRIAA FireSmart Programs.

In this newsletter, we have included a report on work completed to date under the 2007 10-year Grant

Agreement for the Wildfire Reclamation Program (WRP) with AAF. We're proud of these results and the impact that they will have on our forests. We are excited to announce that we have established another 10-year Grant Agreement with AAF for the WRP, demonstrating a renewed commitment to enhanced forest sustainability from both government and industry.

As summer approaches, FireSmart becomes top of mind for many communities within Alberta's wildland-urban interface. The Town of Whitecourt has been an avid participant in the FireSmart program since 2014, and we're excited to feature their story this month. Community decision makers and residents are working together to empower each other to be a truly FireSmart community.

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, 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.

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### DECEMBER 2017 FIRESMART CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST UPDATE

The December 2017 call for Expressions of Interest received 52 submissions from a wide variety of applicants ranging from municipalities and Indigenous communities to not-for-profit organizations. This is encouraging as it again shows an increased desire for fire hazard reduction, awareness, and public engagement throughout the province. Of the 52 Expressions of Interest, 38 submissions have been requested to provide detailed proposals for further consideration.

*These 38 submissions represent approximately \$3.6M in potential funding.*

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## EMPOWERING A COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER AROUND FIRESMART

As wildfires in Alberta continue to impact communities, the Town of Whitecourt addressed the problem head-on with the help of the FRIAA funded FireSmart program. Since 2014, the Town of Whitecourt has received over \$900,000 in FireSmart funding, and they already have submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the next round of funding. In their quest to mitigate the threat of wildfire in their community, the Town of Whitecourt discovered the powerful impact of bringing residents together to face a common goal.

As the Fire Chief in the Town of Whitecourt and Vice Chair of FireSmart Canada, protecting his community from wildfires hits close to home for Brian Wynn.

“The Slave Lake fire showed us the importance of protecting our community proactively before something happens, especially because we live in a wildland-urban interface,” Brian explains. “The first thing we needed to do was get educated on FireSmart – a role we took on ourselves.”

To help educate the Town of Whitecourt, Fire Chief Wynn and his crew created a number of initiatives to ensure the community knew about the project so they could be involved in the decision making process. This included holding an open house and knocking on doors to discuss the measures being taken around the homes that were impacted the most.

“Eventually residents started protecting their own properties against wildfires, which was a huge win,” Fire Chief Wynn explains. “Now if you mention FireSmart anywhere in the community, people know exactly what it is. The big message is that FireSmart starts at home, so we need to get people looking at what they can do to mitigate wildfire on their own properties.”

Starting in 2014, the Town of Whitecourt has participated in a range of FRIAA FireSmart projects including Vegetation and Fuel Management, Public Education, Planning and Inter-Agency Cooperation.

*“Being recognized as a FireSmart community made residents and business owners cognizant of how they can improve fire hazards in their own immediate area”*

*- Maryann Chichak, Mayor of the Town of Whitecourt*

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“Being recognized as a FireSmart community made residents and business owners cognizant of how they can improve fire hazards in their own immediate area,” explains Maryann Chichak. “Overall, FireSmart is a program that has really brought awareness to enhancing safety, and it’s been embraced by both residents and business owners in our community.”

Though wildfire mitigation will be an ongoing project for the Town of Whitecourt, the fact that residents can get peace of mind by knowing how to protect their homes is a huge benefit of the FRIAA funded FireSmart program.

“When you get elected to council, community safety is always top of mind,” Mayor Chichak explains. “We’re always looking for new ways to engage citizens in wildfire protection – Fire Chief Wynn and his crew are great at coming up with ways to involve citizens in their

own fire safety. If you look at FireSmart, their guidelines are tried, tested and true. As a leader, I’d encourage any municipal leader to get involved.”

Mayor Chichak also acknowledges the help of FRIAA and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry as being instrumental to their success with the FireSmart program.

“This project couldn’t have been done without our friends at Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. And from day one, FRIAA has been excellent at providing us with support. We have a continuous relationship, and a very positive one.”



## A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO WILDFIRE RECLAMATION

Since 2006, the Wildfire Reclamation Program (WRP) has supported activities to reclaim and reforest previously reforested harvested areas that were damaged or destroyed by wildfires. Work carried out under this program has been an extraordinary example of how FRIAA allocated funds directly towards resource improvement and long-term sustainability.

Recently, the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Department renewed the commitment to wildfire reclamation by entering into a new 10-year Grant Agreement with FRIAA. This Agreement will assist in ensuring the harvested areas damaged or destroyed by wildfires will be reforested in order to improve and enhance forest resources for the benefit of Albertans.

### WRP BY THE NUMBERS:



*As of the end of March 2018, \$69,646,588 in grant funding has been received through this program.*



*To date, over 38.5 million seedlings have been planted under the program (with several million more seedlings scheduled for planting this summer).*



*As of the end of March 2018, funding has been provided through 58 approved projects to reforest 35,788 hectares.*



## MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE PROGRAM APRIL CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Mountain Pine Beetle Program had an open Call for Proposals, released on April 4, 2018. No cap has been set on potential funding, but it will be restricted to available funds. Types of eligible projects include:

- Long distance dispersal monitoring
- Containment baiting
- Log yard management
- Aerial surveys
- Ground surveys
- Single tree control
- Site protection
- Seed collection

*The deadline for submissions was April 25, 2018.*

**WRP BY THE NUMBERS CONTINUED:**

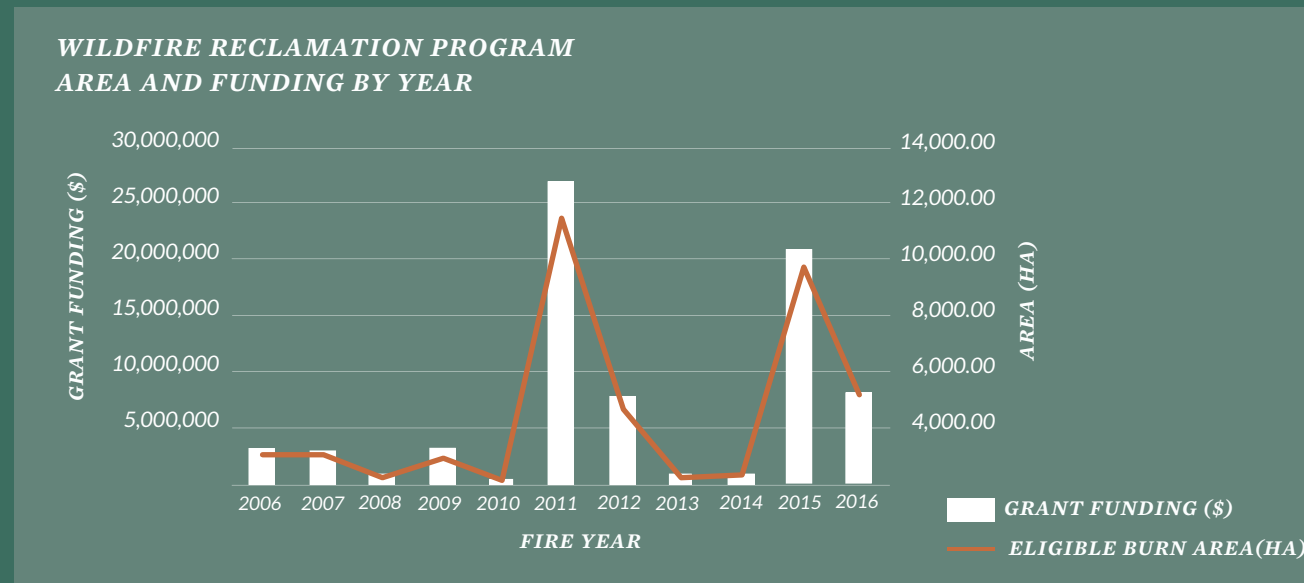


Figure 1 – illustrates the funding granted annually (the funding granted fluctuates based on the number of hectares of previously reforested harvested areas that have been damaged or destroyed by wildfire)

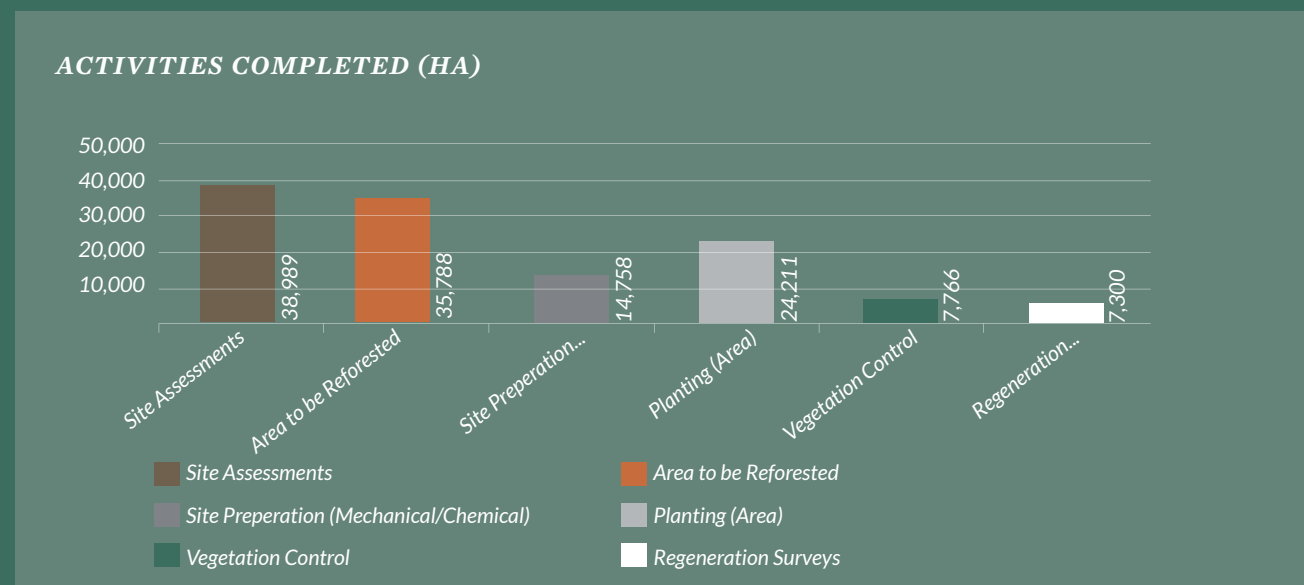


Figure 2 – illustrates the area treated by type of activity

**ENCOURAGING INCREASE IN FRIP FUNDING**

We're pleased to see that the forestry industry is currently experiencing better markets and prices for forest products. The FRIAA dues rates are based on the current market prices of forest products and are showing significant increases. All FRIAA dues are dedicated to the program and all funds are being committed to worthwhile projects that enhance the forest resources of Alberta.

This improvement translates into increased dues for the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP), which in turn supports FRIAA's goals of optimizing funding for forest resource improvement projects. FRIP projects involve activities that are over and above mandated requirements of forest tenure holders, and these projects can push further in supporting sustainable forests and supporting Alberta's ecosystems, economies and communities. FRIP projects have become a common and effective way for government, industry, researchers, small businesses, and communities to work together to enhance Alberta's forests.

Some of the ongoing public outreach projects that are benefitting from the market turnaround include:

- 1. Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory Support**  
The Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory (LSLBO) was established as a long-term migration monitoring station. The LSLBO is involved in several projects such as long-term population trends, northern saw-whet and boreal owl population monitoring, and other collaborative research projects designed to enhance knowledge of bird migration patterns and population dynamics. Additionally, they deliver educational programming for a variety of school and interest groups on the monitoring and conservation programs at the LSLBO.
- 2. Northwest Grizzly Bear Management Area 1 Mini Documentary**  
The mini documentary is a communications initiative on the successes of collaboration in

the Northwest Grizzly Bear Program. The video will focus on work done in BMA 1 and showcase the cooperation, partnership and stewardship necessary to effectively address and deliver on grizzly bear conservation and management.

**3. Greater Hines Creek Area Campsite Enhancement Program (2017-2021)**

This project is to assist in maintenance and enhancement of nine recreational areas in the greater Hines Creek area. The aim is to enhance the recreational experience on established campsites in the area.





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