



Branching Out

September 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

The summer has been busy and passed quickly at FRIAA. On June 24, 2018 we held our Annual General Meeting in Edmonton, with guest speaker Heather Sweet, MLA for Edmonton Manning and a presentation on the “Future Direction of Forest Management in Alberta,” by Dr. Ellen MacDonald, Chair of the Renewable Resources Department at the University of Alberta.

FRIAA was very excited to announce two new grant funding opportunities this summer, with a Request for Expression of Interest under the FRIAA FireSmart Program in July, and a Request for Proposals under the Caribou Habitat Recovery Program in August.

In this issue of Branching Out, we are pleased to feature two FRIAA projects located near Fort McMurray. I hope you enjoy our article on Northland Forest Products, a company administering a tree improvement project under FRIP. Timely to the topic of summer wildfires, we offer an insightful story from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo about a

fuel management project they are pursuing under the FRIAA FireSmart program.

I encourage you to stay tuned to our website for funding and program updates. I sincerely hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter — as always, we welcome your feedback and input.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Murray Summers".

Murray Summers
FRIAA President



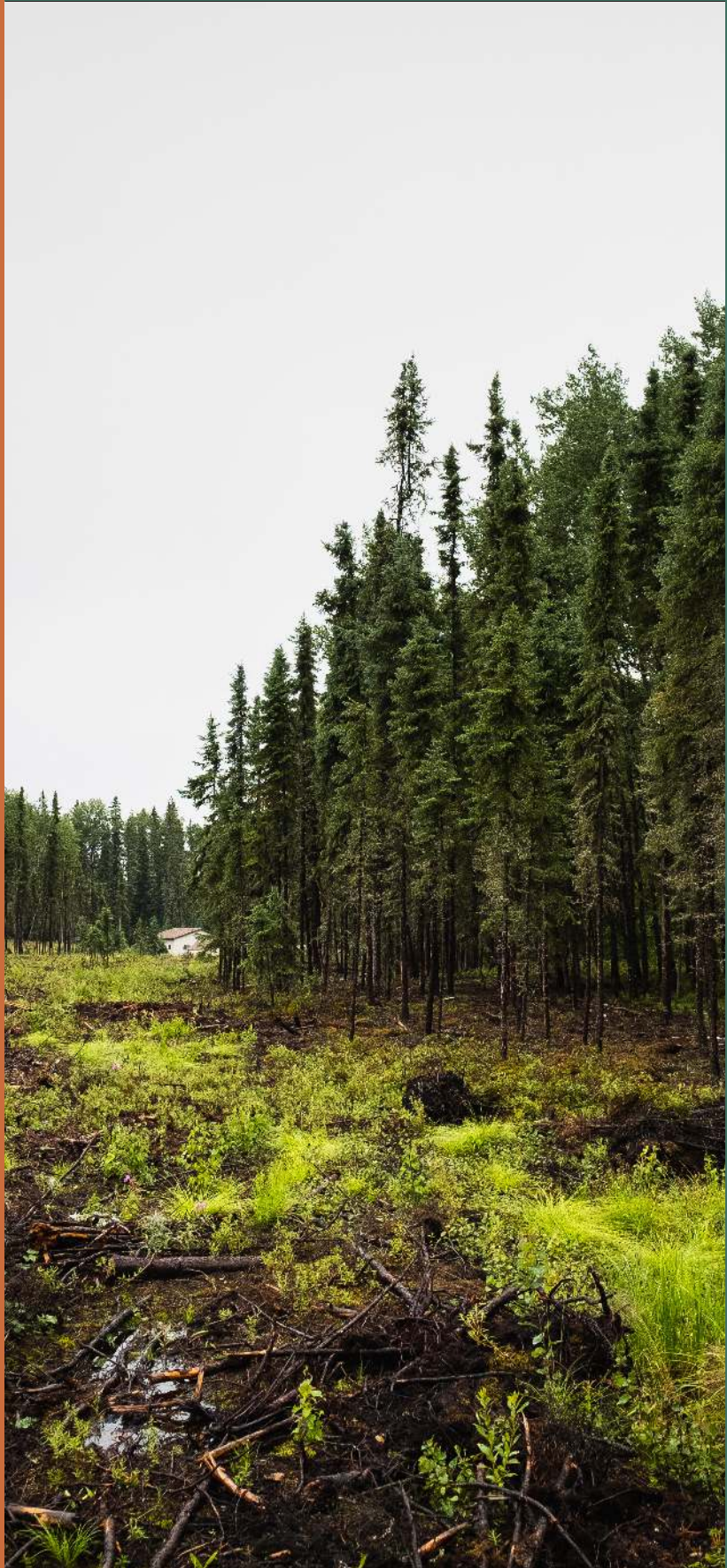
About FRIAA

Our name reflects our purpose – The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). In 1997, FRIAA was created and tasked with collecting and administering industry funds 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, ensuring 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 infestations 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 as well as a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between things like human activity, forest resources, species at risk and wildfires. 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 resources in a sustainable manner.

FRIAA’s mandate has been – and continues to be – to enhance Alberta’s forest resources, for the benefit of Albertans.



FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRIAA FIRESMART PROGRAM – REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (RFEOI)

FRIAA is requesting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for FRIAA FireSmart Program funding.

Submissions will be reviewed by an independent committee and evaluated based on a number of criteria, including how well the project plan and activities support one or more of the seven FireSmart disciplines.

The RFEOI is open to municipalities, Métis Settlements, Alberta First Nations, non-profit societies and organizations or groups mutually agreed to by the Government of Alberta and FRIAA. Approved projects will receive a maximum of \$300,000 over the life of the project and must be completed within two years of the project initiation date indicated in the EOI submission. Project proponents who have not successfully completed at least one FRIAA FireSmart project of a similar discipline (i.e. vegetation management) will be limited to a maximum of \$200,000 for a single project.

The deadline for submissions is September 24. Visit friaa.ab.ca for more information on FRIAA's FireSmart Program.



CARIBOU HABITAT RECOVERY PROGRAM (CHRP)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

CHRP August 2018 RFP for “Implementation of Caribou Habitat Restoration in the Cold Lake Caribou Range.”

The ultimate goal of this RFP is to achieve habitat restoration in the Cold Lake caribou range.

Restoration of legacy features, particularly seismic lines, is a key step in restoring habitat in caribou ranges within Alberta. The Cold Lake caribou range has been highlighted by the Province of Alberta as a priority area for restoration this coming year. The Cold Lake caribou range is located in northeast Alberta and contains an estimated 8,000 km of legacy seismic lines.

The successful proponent of this RFP is required to use the Government of Alberta’s 2017 Draft “Provincial Restoration and Establishment Framework for Legacy Seismic Lines in Alberta” and its guiding principles to develop and implement a treatment plan for an area within the Cold Lake caribou range.

The deadline for proposals is September 24. Visit friaa.ab.ca for more information on FRIAA’s Caribou Habitat Recovery Program.



FUNDING AWARDED

The December 2017 RFP for the “Linear Restoration Alignment and Integration Project” under CHRP was awarded in June to Silvacom Ltd.

The project’s objective is to develop a standardized operational treatment plan template for the planning the restoration of legacy seismic lines, as a part of Alberta’s commitment to caribou habitat recovery and protection.

The project will also coordinate the alignment of nine treatment plans in the Little Smokey and A La Pêche caribou ranges.

WELCOME RICHARD BRIAND

FRIAA is extremely pleased to welcome Richard Briand to our Board of Directors! Richard’s distinguished professional accomplishments certainly make him a fantastic addition to the Board.

Richard Briand became the Chief Forester of West Fraser’s Alberta operations in August of 2018. For two years prior to that, Richard oversaw all forestry operations as the Woodlands Manager of the Hinton and Edson Forest Management Agreement areas, which encompass a combined 1.26 million hectares. As the Hinton and Edson Woodlands Operations Superintendent for three years previous, Richard’s growing responsibilities focused on the safe, environmentally sound and cost-effective delivery of fibre. In building his career at West Fraser, Richard contributed seven years in management planning in Hinton, proceeded by five years in planning at the Slave Lake facility. Richard began his professional forestry career as a Project Manager in Edmonton, working with Silvacom for nearly 10 years. Richard became a Registered Professional Forester in 1994 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Alberta in 1991.



When asked what he’s most looking forward to about being on the FRIAA Board, Richard had this to say:

“I am excited to join the FRIAA board to contribute to the incredible work that current and previous board members have initiated. Through the Forest Resource Improvement Program, the organization has built an impressive track record of supporting projects that enhance and encourage increased understanding of the many values in the forested areas of the province. Additional programs that facilitate mountain pine beetle control, caribou habitat recovery, regeneration of forests after wildfires and community FireSmart initiatives only serve to bolster FRIAA’s great reputation for sustaining Alberta’s forests.”



AFTER #YMMFIRE – FIRESMART IN THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO

More than two years have passed since Alberta's largest and costliest wildfire decimated communities in the northeast of the province. Nicknamed "The Beast" by those who fought to contain it, the wildfire forced nearly 90,000 Albertans from their homes, consumed 590,000 hectares of land and ultimately destroyed 2,400 residences before being tamed.

The Beast reached epic proportions, making headlines around the world, but here at home, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is focusing on methods and practices to mitigate the impact of future wildfires.

According to Stephen Fudge, Mitigation Supervisor for the RMWB, FRIAA's FireSmart program has been essential in preparing the community for future wildfire impact.

"We had... areas identified and, operationally, it could take a lot longer to get through them all," said Fudge. "Grants like the FireSmart Community Grant and the FRIAA FireSmart Grant enabled us to get contractor support to get ahead of the game and into a maintenance phase rather than just reacting."

The RMWB has an established FireSmart program, with staff dedicated to implementing the seven FireSmart disciplines of planning, fuel management, public education, interagency cooperation and crosstraining, legislation and planning, development and emergency planning.



"FireSmart needs to be a fabric of our community," said Fudge. "This isn't something that we're just creating out of the blue – it's based on science, it's based on research."

That being said, FireSmart is not a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach, and having dedicated staff who understand FireSmart principles allows the community to adapt the science to different situations in their local environment.

processes to give wildland firefighters the best chances when tested by another fire.

"There are still challenges," said Fudge. "There's a lot of maintenance that is going to be coming in the future, ongoing educational programs, and new initiatives as we learn and adapt to living in areas prone to wildfire. There is going to be a budget requirement tied to our FireSmart program, and we'll be looking for opportunities that FRIAA provides to assist with carrying out those objectives."



Take for instance, tree spacing. FireSmart recommends three metres between tree crowns to help reduce the spread of a crown fire, but Fudge and his team found the remaining trees were susceptible to blow down, especially black spruce. Instead they adjusted and treated small groupings of trees as a single unit. They kept four to five tall trees close together to allow them to support each other and limit blow down in strong winds, but separated each grouping by three metres, providing the necessary spacing to reduce the impact of crown fire.

Experience teaches a lot, according to Fudge. The RMWB FireSmart team is constantly researching and re-evaluating their treatment

PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THE COOPERATIVE TREE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - NORTHLAND FOREST PRODUCTS LTD.

When it comes to tree improvement programs, patience is a virtue. Enduringly familiar with this is Northland Forest Products Ltd., who are now seeing the benefits of their tree improvement program after over 20 years of hard work.

Since 1997, Northland has been involved in two different tree improvement programs, spruce and pine. The programs are cooperatives and managed through an association called Forest Genetics Association of Alberta (FGAA) with involvement from other forest industry members and the Alberta government. These programs include sourcing genetically superior trees, collecting their seed and re-growing them in orchards, where superior trees can breed for the purpose of creating increased growth and securing seed supply and better gains.

“The spruce program was important in northeastern Alberta in particular, where oilfields are prominent. Obtaining spruce seed was becoming more difficult because areas were being cleared for industry development, as well as a number of natural disturbances such as insects (budworm) and fire,” explains Garry Ehrentraut, former woodlands manager for Northland and overseer of the 20-year project.

To solve this problem, Northland has partnered with oil companies who pay into the program to get superior seeds, which they then plant on reclaimed sites. The spruce program in particular has seen great success, and after a 15-year growth period,

the superior seeds are ready to be harvested and regenerated. Garry highlights that many of these seeds will also be going toward reforesting the timberlands that were damaged by wildfire.

“We’ll be putting out 1.5 million seedlings, and a large portion of them will be going to wild fire reforestation. This will help mitigate the damage caused by the 2016 fire in particular, and our seed will be used on about 3,500 hectares. We need to reforest, but we also need to gain back some of the lost production because of the wildfire,” Garry explains. “By using genetically superior seed, we’re hoping to see better gains in terms of growth”

The future of the tree improvement program continues to be promising, especially as their jack pine program begins to reach fruition.

“Jack pine trees tend to grow crooked, and our objective was to find superior jack pines to help them grow straighter. We haven’t quite gotten to the point where we can say it’s successful, but once we start getting more pine cones, we can start deciding how that program will proceed,” Garry explains.

Garry attributes the continuing success of these programs to FRIAA, who have been supporting them since the beginning.



“The biggest impact on this program for Northland, is FRIAA. Without FRIAA, we wouldn’t have been able to have this program in place. By being able to provide superior seeds, it benefits more than Northland — it benefits all of northeast Alberta.”



Events and Conferences

**CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY (CIF)/
INSTITUT FORESTIER DU CANADA (IFC)
110TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND
CONFERENCE**

Where: Pomeroy Hotel and Conference
Centre, Grande Prairie
When: September 18-20

**ALBERTA FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
(AFPA) 76TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND
CONFERENCE**

Where: Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, Jasper
When: September 26-28

FIRESMART COMMUNITY SERIES

Where: MacDonald Island Park Conference
Centre, Fort McMurray
When: October 2-4



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