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# BRANCHING OUT

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APRIL 2021

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# WORKING TOGETHER TO MANAGE OUR VITAL FOREST RESOURCES

*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. It is, uniquely, an organization that collaborates with academia, government, municipalities, industry, and the Government of Alberta ministry responsible for forestry. It has supported practical and applied research, on-the-ground forest improvement strategies, and innovative approaches to forest inventory and planning that helps Alberta manage its forest resource sustainably. Editorial material in this newsletter may be reproduced and disseminated with the following credit: "Courtesy of Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta."*

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# Vice-President's Message

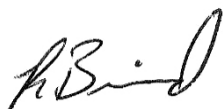
With spring renewal and fresh optimism, FRIAA is looking forward to another busy year across all of our programs. The FRIAA FireSmart program, Mountain Pine Beetle Control Program, and Caribou Habitat Recovery Program have all recently received new funding to support the upcoming year's projects. Information about recently approved projects is included in this newsletter.

Last fall, FRIAA initiated the new Community Fireguard Construction Program, which has seen about a dozen communities clear lands to reduce the threat of incoming wildfire. Ongoing project work and cleanup will occur over the summer and fall to improve the protection of at-risk communities.

Over the winter and early spring, FRIAA executed the new Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program to provide support for activities that arose out of complying with the additional health and safety workplace requirements of the past year. We have included more about the program in this edition.

Our feature projects in *Branching Out* include two from the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP). Read on to understand how the University of Alberta has gained bench-strength in the area of growth and yield, and how the Alberta Forest Products Association has worked to enhance an appreciation of Alberta's forest resources among all Albertans through their ongoing education and awareness campaign. We are also pleased to share the highlights of a recent FRIAA FireSmart project implemented by the O'Chiese First Nation.

Sadly, we share about the passing of Ty Lund, a key individual in creating the FRIAA program. Through his legacy, the forests and people of Alberta share a brighter future. FRIAA will hold a virtual AGM on June 24th this year, and details will be communicated with members in due course. As always, we look forward to hearing your feedback and welcome your input.



**Richard Briand**  
First Vice-President, FRIAA



CALGARY HERALD

## **FRIAA Commemorates Ty Lund**

Tyrone Orville Lund (March 31, 1938 – February 28, 2021) was first elected as a member of the Alberta legislature (MLA) in 1989, completing his final term in 2012. He held an impressive six terms representing the Rocky Mountain House constituency. Among the many positions he filled throughout his service career, the most significant for the inception of FRIAA was during his time as Minister of Environmental Protection. Ty was appointed to this role in 1994 and then reappointed in 1997. During these challenging times, a need arose for streamlining and restructuring the department and its programs.

Ty's vision and commitment to sustainable forest management in Alberta led to creation of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA). As a delegated administrative organization, FRIAA was to be managed by a board of directors representing government, industry, and the public. FRIAA was (and is) ultimately accountable to the Minister. At its conception, FRIAA was to administer the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) to enhance forest management activities and increase the understanding of forest resources in Alberta. Based on the initial successful implementation of its governance model and the administration of FRIP, FRIAA has been delivering programs to enhance Alberta's forest resource for nearly 25 years. Ty will be missed, but his legacy lives strong.





# Featured Projects





# Building Expertise in Alberta (FRIP)

Understanding inventory and growth and yield are critical to the successful long-term management of Alberta's forests. But there's been a shortage of growth and yield expertise in Canada, and growth and yield training is on the decline. To help rebuild capacity in this vital area of knowledge, industry and academia have come together to create an endowed chair in forest growth and yield in the department of Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta.

"We looked for a strong research record and a commitment to fulfilling the vision of the chair, to do applied forest growth and yield research in close collaboration with industry and government partners. The goal is to address the most pressing gaps and issues related to being able to model and predict to better understand the growth of forests in Alberta," says Dr. Ellen Macdonald, department chair.

After an international search and interviews by a panel that included government and industry representation, Dr. Robert Froese at Michigan Tech University was offered the job. For Froese, it's an opportunity to come home to the west while getting to contribute his unique expertise to help Alberta's tight-knit forest community.

"My specialty is forest growth and yield, forest biometrics, and forest inventory—and it's

pretty rare in that it melds good field forestry with statistics and data and modelling," he explains. "But in Canada, it's absolutely critical to ensuring we have sustainable forests and sustainable forestry production."

Current growth models have their limitations, and ongoing work is needed to further develop and validate them, especially in light of innovations in silvicultural practices, tree improvement, and possible changes in species composition and growing conditions in future stands due to, for example, climate change. Additionally, students need to learn about growth and yield to sustainably manage the province's forests upon graduation.

Due to the retirement of several professors, forestry companies had been expressing concern to the University of Alberta about the lack of expertise in growth and yield in Canada. The university turned to FRIAA and its industry members through the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) as well as other organizations for support for the endowed chair.

"We're very grateful for the support from the donors through FRIAA," says Macdonald. "I'm confident that Robert's going to do fabulous work that will be really important to the forest industry and the sustainability of the forests in Alberta going forward."

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# Sharing the Value of Forest Management (FRIP)

Sustainable forest management benefits all Albertans. Healthy forests provide animal habitat, purify our water, and act as a massive carbon sink. Threats to our forests, such as fire and pests, mean that active management is essential. If we don't manage the forest, we face risks to our environment and economy.

Unfortunately, the role of forest management can be misunderstood and, as with anything, myths can abound. To help prevent such misunderstandings, the Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) works to increase public awareness of the forestry industry and to foster a greater understanding of the economic, environmental, and social values of our forests.

Although the AFPA was doing a lot of outreach, it wasn't reaching urban Albertans or getting its message out in a big way. Until now. The non-profit is in its last year of a three-year multimedia campaign designed to reach greater numbers of Albertans and educate them about our forests. Through digital and social media, traditional media and public relations, and outreach and stakeholder consultation, the AFPA's \$2.1-million campaign is helping greater numbers of people understand the importance of the forestry industry.

"When we started the campaign, 59% of Albertans were generally supportive of the forestry industry but 40% of those didn't know a lot about it," says Brock Mulligan, vice president, Communications and Government Affairs, AFPA. "We've gone to 65% of Albertans being generally supportive, with more of them understanding our industry."

Part of the campaign is a [virtual forest tour](#), narrated by actor Nathan Fillion and hosted on the AFPA website. The tour received print and TV media coverage throughout the province.

"That's really resonated with people," says Mulligan. "Especially with COVID and people being trapped inside or in the city. It gives them a chance to get out in the forest, and Nathan makes it a lot of fun."

The AFPA is grateful for the support they've had from industry and from FRIAA's Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP). The campaign will continue throughout 2021, encouraging everyone to "Love Alberta's Forests."







# Protecting Homes and Lives (FireSmart)

■ When your community is located within a forested area, the risk of a wildfire getting out of control and destroying homes and buildings—and impacting lives—is high. If the vegetation in an area gets too thick, firefighters can't enter safely to try to stave off the danger. That's what was happening in a 30-hectare area on the O'Chiese First Nation, located about 50 km northwest of Rocky Mountain House.

"We were getting too much overgrowth and a lot of blow-down and deadfall," explains Shane Poorman, fire chief and operations supervisor for the Nation. "Additionally, the vegetation was becoming so thick the sun wasn't penetrating, so our blueberries and our medicines were not getting the sunlight that we needed. But it was mostly being fire-smart because, with the amount of thick bush we had, there was no chance for us getting in to fight a wildfire."

O'Chiese First Nation applied for \$200,000 in FireSmart funding to conduct a vegetation and fuel management project in an area within the southeast portion of the reserve, where there are multiple homes. All dead and dying trees

were mulched as were some live trees, such as those that were leaning too close to the ground.

The project was approved in December 2020 and completed in January 2021, proving to be an impressive few weeks! Klassen Blade Contracting Ltd. provided the equipment and expertise and employed six First Nation community members to supplement its workforce.

"There were big trees that had been blown over and Klassen had the proper machines that were very agile and can maneuver between tight squeezes. I've watched them work and have seen what the machines were capable of doing," says Poorman. "We've been approached by our neighbours as to why our Nation is looking so pristine. It's all about who you pick as the contractor and what type of machines you have."

Feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive and leadership is encouraging Poorman to continue the work in other areas of the Nation. With a fuel break around the community, firefighters have a chance to stop a wildfire, protecting homes and lives.



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# New Program: Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures

The province has established guidelines and requirements for workplaces to manage COVID-19-related health and safety risks. The new **Forest Sector COVID Safety Measures Program** will reimburse expenses incurred by the forestry sector in Alberta in 2020/21, subject to available funding. The program does not subsidize or relieve the forestry sector of their responsibilities for sustained yield forest management including reforestation and other forest management activities; rather, it addresses activities that are above and beyond required forest management functions that arose directly out of complying with the

additional COVID-related health and safety workplace requirements.

The program is funded by the Government of Canada (Minister of Natural Resources) and administered by FRIAA on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Program applications were due on March 15, 2021. FRIAA received 32 applications for a total funding request of \$3,791,960. Applicant eligibility and application review is ongoing, with an expectation to complete by April 30, 2021.







# Approved Projects



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## Caribou Habitat Recovery Program (CHRP)

In October 2020, FRIAA published a request for expression of interest (RFEOI) and subsequent request for proposal (RFP) for the Caribou Habitat Recovery Program (CHRP) (**operational planning**) for Caribou Habitat Restoration in the **Red Earth** caribou range.

- FRIAA received 7 expressions of interest.
- All 3 planning compartments—Birch Mountains West, Central, and East—were awarded to **Golder Associates Ltd.**

In October 2020, FRIAA published an RFEOI and subsequent RFP for the CHRP (operational planning) for Caribou Habitat Restoration in the **Redrock-Prairie Creek** and **Narraway** caribou ranges.

- FRIAA received 7 expressions of interest.
- The Narraway South planning compartment was awarded to **Golder Associates Ltd.**
- The Redrock North and Redrock South planning compartments were awarded to **Forcorp Solutions Inc.**

In December 2020, FRIAA published an RFEOI and subsequent RFP for the CHRP (**implementation**) for Caribou Habitat Restoration in the **Little Smoky** caribou range.

- FRIAA received 8 expressions of interest.
- The project was awarded to **Eric Auger & Sons Contracting Ltd.**

## FireSmart

In January 2021, FRIAA FireSmart announced an RFEOI. We received **36 applications** for a total request of **\$2,680,296**. Final funding will be determined by the review committee in June, after a detailed RFP process.

Applications related to the following disciplines:

- 12 for planning;
- 6 for public education;
- 2 for inter-agency co-operation; and
- 16 for vegetation management.



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# Mountain Pine Beetle Control Program (MPBP)

## 2021 MPB Ground Survey and Level 1 Control on O'Chiese First Nation Reserve

**Proponent:** Sundre Forest Products Inc.

**Term:** February 1 to March 19, 2021

**Category:** Ground surveys / Level 1 control

**Objective:** To identify and control MPB-attacked trees on the O'Chiese First Nation Reserve, which is within the leading edge zone identified by the department.

## HWP MPB Ground Survey and Level 1 Control

**Proponent:** Hinton Wood Products

**Term:** February 1 to June 30, 2021

**Category:** Ground surveys / Level 1 control

**Objective:** To identify and control MPB-attacked trees within the Edson Forest Area, an area of high priority for Alberta within the leading edge zone, as outlined by the department.







In February 2021, FRIAA published another RFP under MPBP and awarded the following projects in April 2021. For a detailed project award list, go to [our Mountain Pine Beetle Program page](#).

- **2020/2021 Central & Foothills Area Mountain Pine Beetle Annual Report**  
Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.

- **Log Yard Management Plan**  
Blue Ridge Lumber Inc.  
Foothills Forest Products Inc.  
Hinton Wood Products, a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd. (at the Edson Log Yard)  
Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.  
Weyerhaeuser Company Limited

- **Protection of Genetic Trials and Orchard**

- Blue Ridge Lumber Inc.
- Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (at the HASOC's Ten Genetic Lodgepole Pine Field Trials)
- Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (at the Huallen Seed Orchard Company Ltd. Facility)
- Hinton Wood Products – a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

- **MPB Dispersal Baiting Program**  
Sundre Forest Products Ltd.





FRIAA  
BOX 11094, MAIN POST OFFICE  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA  
T5J 3K4

**TO BE ADDED TO THE EMAIL LIST,  
PLEASE CONTACT FRIAA AT:**

PHONE: 780-429-5873  
FAX: 780-429-4026  
EMAIL: [admin@friaa.ab.ca](mailto:admin@friaa.ab.ca)  
WEB: [friaa.ab.ca](http://friaa.ab.ca)

