

Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta

CARIBOU HABITAT RECOVERY PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTER-CUTBLOCK CARIBOU HABITAT RESTORATION

REFERENCE:

FRIAA - CHRP FEB 2025 RFP INTER-CUTBLOCK RESTORATION

Issue Date:	February 5, 2025
Information Call:	February 14, 2025
Closing Date/Time:	March 3, 2025 - 14:00 hrs
Submission Portal:	<u>https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/</u>
Inquiry Email:	<u>admin@friaa.ab.ca</u>
Website:	<u>www.friaa.ab.ca</u>
Mailing:	Box 11094 Main Post Office Edmonton, AB T5J 3K4

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (“**FRIAA**”) is inviting the submission of caribou habitat restoration proposals (“**Proposals**”) under the Caribou Habitat Recovery Program (the “**CHRP**”). The following information outlines the intent of this request for proposals (“**RFP**”) and provides instructions to prospective applicants.

2. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- 2.1 FRIAA was established in 1997 to promote and initiate projects that enhance Alberta’s forest resources. In keeping with this primary purpose, FRIAA entered into a Grant Agreement on April 25, 2018 with the Government of Alberta (“**GOA**”) for delivery of the CHRP.
- 2.2 The overall objective of the CHRP is to support efforts to sustaining and improving caribou habitat in a manner that supports healthy and self-sustaining caribou populations. The purpose of the CHRP is to support the Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou Boreal Population, (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) in Canada and the Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population in Canada by providing funds for projects that: (a) assist Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (the “**Department**”) with projects that contribute to the scientific and technical understanding of caribou habitat recovery strategies and activities, (b) provide financial and logistical oversight of funding for planning work required to guide operational work for caribou habitat, or (c) provide logistical oversight of funding for operational landscape work for caribou habitat as supported by the GOA and industry.
- 2.3 In December 2017, the province of Alberta announced its strategy for Woodland Caribou through the release of the *Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan*. This draft plan outlines Alberta’s commitment to restoring legacy disturbance features in relation to provincial and federal goals and objectives.
- 2.4 Alberta has further developed drafts of the “*Provincial Restoration and Establishment Framework for Legacy Seismic Lines in Alberta*” and the “*Visual Guide For Implementing the Restoration and Establishment Framework in Woodland Caribou Habitat in Alberta*” (collectively, the “**Framework**”¹) that outline the Department’s approach and objectives for restoration projects within woodland caribou ranges. The Framework also sets out clear processes and expectations for enabling innovation in program planning, delivery, quality control and monitoring.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

- 3.1 Restoration of legacy features, particularly seismic lines, is a key step in restoring habitat in caribou ranges within Alberta. The Department has indicated the need to conduct legacy seismic line restoration in between planned, or recently harvested, cutblocks to avoid creating isolated seismic line segments. The intent is for this restoration work to occur concurrently with silviculture site preparation and tree planting activities to maximize efficiency and minimize impacts on reforested cutblocks. The **purpose** of habitat restoration is to support caribou population recovery. The **objectives** include

¹ The Framework documents are available on the FRIAA website <https://friaa.ab.ca>

- identifying and treating site limiting factors with mechanical site preparation, deactivation and tree planting activities to restore legacy seismic lines.
- 3.2 This RFP is applicable to all caribou ranges in Alberta.
- 3.3 The project term may be up to five years.
- 3.4 Applicants will be organizations that have planning and reforestation responsibilities on Alberta Crown Land or that have the capability to integrate seismic line restoration planning and operations with reclamation and reforestation responsibilities. Applicants must have the ability to coordinate and implement timely access to restore isolated (inter-cutblock) seismic line segments. Aspects of the work to plan, treat and report may be sub-contracted within the approved grant budget. (**Note:** Seismic lines used in harvesting operations that were approved under an Annual Operating Plan (“AOP”) or a Temporary Field Authorization (“TFA”) after January 2022 are not eligible for the funding in the Cold Lake and Bistcho caribou ranges.)
- 3.5 An “**Annual Work Plan**” will be developed by the successful applicant(s) and submitted to FRIAA and the Department for pre-approval annually, at a mutually agreed-to date. The Annual Work Plan is intended to act as a budget and planning/production tracking tool for grant management purposes. Legacy seismic line restoration work is expected to be scheduled by the successful applicant(s) to coincide with the reclamation and silviculture activities approved by the GOA within the forest industry planning processes (most likely in the Applicant’s AOP). During the grant term, the successful applicant(s) will coordinate and conduct field operations as prescribed, for the approved rate, as per their approved Annual Work Plan. The Annual Work Plan will provide a list and GIS file of the proposed seismic line locations and quantity of kilometres, the prescriptions for each line segment and budget rates for the proposed operations, as well as an overhead budget for planning and reporting (refer to Section 4.4 (i)(i)).
- 3.6 Although successful applicant(s) are responsible to acquire the appropriate permitting to conduct the work, i.e. a TFA, they will not acquire silviculture liability for the restored (inter-cutblock legacy seismic lines). Successful applicant(s) must use the Framework and its guiding principles to carry out the proposed habitat restoration projects. Use of, and meeting the Reforestation Standards of Alberta is not required.
- 3.7 The **goal of this RFP** is to identify projects to successful applicant(s) for the restoration of inter-cutblock seismic lines as per the Framework (i.e. using mechanical site preparation, deactivation and tree planting activities).

4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Applicants are advised to pay careful attention to the information provided in this RFP and the Program Outline. Failure to satisfy any term, condition or mandatory requirement of this RFP or the Program Outline may result in the rejection of the Proposal.
- 4.2 Proposals must be clear and concisely describe the components of the proposed project, including each of the Proposal Requirements set out in subsections 4.3 and 4.4 below.
- 4.3 **Application Form**
- (a) Provide contact information for the Authorized Representative (name, title, phone number, email and address) of the:
- (i) applicant organization and the individual(s) authorized to represent the applicant and commit the applicant to the execution of a Project Grant Agreement; and

- (ii) the individual who will manage the project.
- (b) Indicate the caribou ranges to which your application applies.
- (c) Provide an estimated number of km in the caribou range(s) that will become isolated or are otherwise adjacent to planned, or recently harvested, forest harvest cutblocks.
- (d) Provide a total funding request amount, which may become the maximum approved amount.
- (e) It is expected the proposal will provide a \$/km rate for restoration inclusive of planning/reporting, site preparation, deactivation and tree planting.
- (f) Indicate if you participated in the Information Session, detailed in Section 9 of this RFP.
- (g) Briefly describe your understanding of the proposed project.
- (h) Have the authorized representative sign the Project Summary Application form. Signing the Project Summary Application form binds the applicant to the terms and conditions attached thereto.

4.4 Application Template

- (a) Describe the project delivery approach that demonstrates the applicant's understanding of the scope, objectives, priorities and requirements presented in this RFP and demonstrating that the proposed project aligns with the Framework. List the expected caribou ranges that you will conduct operations in.
- (b) Provide details on the components of the project delivery that will rely on sub-contractors.
- (c) Describe any assumptions as to the scope or nature of the work.
- (d) Identify and describe the risks applicable to the proposed project and achievement of the expected outcomes. Describe strategies to mitigate such risks.
- (e) Describe a work plan that identifies major task milestones, timing and duration of these activities as well as critical dependencies.
- (f) Describe the approach for project management and quality control to confirm that:
 - (i) Site preparation treatments have been delivered to a high standard of quality and have been applied in a way that addresses the site limiting factors at densities/intervals that match the approved Annual Work Plan;
 - (ii) Planting treatments have been implemented using a robust chain of custody, planted to a high standard of quality, and applied at a density that matches the approved Annual Work Plan;
 - (iii) Linear deactivation treatments have been applied in a way that blocks human access, predator movement patterns and at densities/intervals that match the approved Annual Work Plan; and,
 - (iv) In accordance with the Framework, the accuracy of all submitted data will need to be verified prior to submission. An approach for quality control of data collection and GIS file creation should be proposed to verify data entries are as per the Framework and the standardized templates provided by FRIAA or the Department during each reporting year.

- (g) Briefly describe the required permits, licences, agreements and regulatory approvals that will be required in order to undertake the project. Successful applicant(s) must obtain all regulatory approvals and/or third-party agreements and maintain the records of these approvals for the prescribed period of time following the completion of the project.

Note 1: Approval under a Forestry AOP or TFA may be required for this work.

Note 2: The applicant must budget for the costs of purchasing appropriate seed and seedlings. Appropriate seed from the FRIAA CHRP program or the GOA may be available for some ranges/seed zones.

- (h) Stakeholder consultations as may be required are the responsibility of the successful applicant(s), including but not limited to Indigenous Consultation, trappers, industrial and other land users. Describe your stakeholder consultation approach.
- (i) Provide a maximum budget to complete the proposed project, based on the anticipated linear km of inter-cutblock seismic lines requiring mechanical site preparation, tree felling deactivation and tree planting as per a current General Development Plan, spatial harvest sequence, or other long-term plan. Payments will be made on actual linear km of seismic line restoration completed each year within the term outlined in the proposal and Project Grant Agreement, and as per the approved Annual Work Plan. Expense reimbursements are subject to the submission and FRIAA's review of eligible expenditures and supporting documentation up to the maximum approved amount. Expense reporting and documentation is expected annually. Provide a cost breakdown with sufficient details to demonstrate an understanding of the various steps to complete the project.

Generalized administration fees and "percentage markup" will not be accepted. A reasonable, pre-approved (by FRIAA in the Annual Work Plan) estimate of in-house staff hours and hourly rate may be accepted for re-imbursement for item 4.4 (i)(i) below.

GST may be claimed on subcontractors and third-party invoices; however applicant resources are covered by grant funding (no GST is charged).

Your budget rate (\$/km) should be inclusive of hours, rates and third-party expenses, (which are the sum of the expenses for that portion of any proposed work that is not the responsibility of a disposition holder) including the following items:

- (i) Annual work planning, mapping, consultation, permitting/regulatory, reporting, safety, data quality control, project management; and,
- (ii) On-site field work operations and supervision (including);
- A. mechanical site preparation treatments,
 - B. deactivation by tree tipping/stem bending, ditch/berms, etc.,
 - C. reforestation - trees and tree planting.
- (j) Include a description of the in-kind contributions of labour, equipment or other resources by the applicant. Provide a dollar value with your description. Previously completed work, or projects being funded under other FRIAA programs are not considered "in-kind".
- (k) The successful applicant must submit annual Progress Reports to FRIAA as well as a Final Outcomes Report in the provided reporting format. To allow for summer

tree planting, these reports would be expected annually by October 31, and will include a GIS file submission of the work completed in the previous 12 months.

Note 3: There is a GIS data submission template and project progress/financial reporting templates available on FRIAA's website.

- (l) Expense Claims may also be submitted (with supporting documentation such as timecards, subcontractor invoices, disbursement receipts) with the Progress Reports and the Final Report. A minimum of 20% of the total approved grant amount will be paid with the submission of the final deliverables and upon approval of the Final Outcomes Report.
- (m) Successful applicant(s) will be required to schedule and lead a project kick-off meeting with FRIAA and the Department (virtual is acceptable).
- (n) The outcomes and deliverables are listed below.
 - (i) Annual "As-built" detailed maps of the treatment area, identifying mechanical treatment type (i.e. screef, mound, rip), deactivation type (i.e. tree felling, ditch and berm, water bar) was used, by km, and the number of seedlings planted, by species;
 - (ii) Annual shapefiles or geodatabase of the treated segments, including treatment type attributes, specifications for the required metadata and the data management template is included in this RFP package and is described in the Framework;
 - (iii) A brief annual report summarizing the treatment work completed, (including the km of treatment type, total number of trees planted by species); and,
 - (iv) Results of quality control plots and measurements for treatments and planting efforts per the Framework, annually.
- (o) Establishment Monitoring as per Section 7 of the Framework, is NOT included under this RFP.

5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

- 5.1 Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the Proposal Adjudication Criteria and the requirements set out in this RFP, the completion of the application form and template, the Program Outline as well as available funding.
- 5.2 Only those Proposals that will result in funds being expended directly on a specific project deliverable and undertaken by the applicant will be considered. Grant funding on an approved project is limited to the amount of funding available for this RFP and the amount of funding specified for the deliverables as set out in a fully executed Project Grant Agreement.
- 5.3 FRIAA reserves the right to consider without notice additional criteria in the evaluation of Proposals.
- 5.4 FRIAA will in its sole discretion determine which Proposals will be accepted and approved for funding under the CHRP.
- 5.5 FRIAA is not obligated to accept or approve any Proposal for funding or give reasons for the selection or rejection of any Proposal or to allocate funds under the CHRP in respect of any Proposal. All decisions made by FRIAA in respect of any or all Proposals, project selections and funding allocations are final and binding upon the applicant.
- 5.6 By submitting a Proposal and signed application, the applicant accepts and agrees to be bound by all of the terms and conditions set out in this RFP, the Program Outline and the

applicant is the organization, company or individual that will be responsible for all aspects of the project and that the applicant will enter into a Project Grant Agreement with FRIAA.

- 5.7 FRIAA will determine how much funding may be available for projects and will be making allocations based on the available funding level as determined by FRIAA.
- 5.8 All matters of administration and accountability for a project shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.

6. PROPOSAL ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Proposals submitted to FRIAA shall be ranked on the basis of the following criteria and the Proposal Requirements set out in section 4.
- 6.2 Proposals must contemplate the carrying out of one or more Eligible Activities as defined in this RFP and the CHRP Program Outline. Any activities related to the following items are not eligible for funding:
 - (a) facility construction, improvement or operations;
 - (b) product research and development;
 - (c) road construction, repair and maintenance; and
 - (d) the purchase of any capital assets.
- 6.3 The expenses set out in the Proposal must be reasonable in all the circumstances and must not exceed the fair market value of the goods and services being provided.
- 6.4 The applicant must be able to complete the proposed project economically and efficiently, and in considering this criteria, FRIAA may take into account the following:
 - (a) The applicant's proximity to the location of the proposed project;
 - (b) The applicant's experience in performing such projects;
 - (c) Whether the applicant has, in the past, successfully completed projects funded by FRIAA.
- 6.5 The Proposal must not be contrary to the provisions of relevant regulation or legislation or the objects of FRIAA, or FRIAA's bylaws, including but not limited to the following:
 - (a) any work that, in the opinion of FRIAA, a responsibility of a disposition holder or constitutes a subsidy to the forest industry, energy industry or other industry; and
 - (b) must not, in the opinion of FRIAA, have a significant adverse impact on other forest resources or the environment as a whole.
- 6.6 The applicant must be able to complete the proposed project economically and efficiently and in considering this criterion, FRIAA may take into account the applicant's experience in performing such projects, the availability of resources to the applicant, and if applicable, whether the applicant has in the past complied with the *Forest Resources Improvement Regulation* and other requirements and obligations as determined by FRIAA including making prompt payment of all required timber dues and FRIAA dues and fees.
- 6.7 Proposals that leverage of FRIAA funds with funds from other sources to complete the proposed project or associated with the proposed project will be favoured.

7. CARIBOU HABITAT RECOVERY PROGRAM OUTLINE

- 7.1 The [full text](http://www.friaa.ab.ca) of the Program Outline for the CHRP is available on FRIAA's website (www.friaa.ab.ca).

8. LEGAL NOTICE

- 8.1 By submitting a Proposal, you confirm that you have read, understand and accept the information contained in this RFP and, that each of you, the applicant and all individuals and entities that collaborate or are otherwise involved in the preparation of the RFP or the delivery of the proposed project ("**Project Partners**") agree as follows:
- (a) FRIAA may at any time withdraw, suspend, cancel, terminate, amend or alter all or any portion of this RFP, including but not limited to the Proposal Requirements and the Proposal Adjudication Criteria.
 - (b) FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject any or all Proposals for any reason. FRIAA is not required to accept any Proposals nor is it required to accept any Proposal for funding.
 - (c) FRIAA's evaluation of the Proposals may be based on, but is not in any way limited to, the criteria set out in this RFP. FRIAA may consider any criteria determined by FRIAA to be relevant to FRIAA's mandate, regardless of whether such additional criteria have been disclosed to the applicant.
 - (d) No conduct, act or omission of FRIAA, or its directors, officers, consultants, project advisors, members, agents, servants and their respective successors and assigns (collectively the "**FRIAA Parties**") other than a written notice to the applicant signed by an authorized person for FRIAA, will constitute an acceptance of a Proposal.
 - (e) Proposals that do not comply with the requirements described in this RFP may be rejected in whole or in part or not considered. FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject a non-compliant Proposal.
 - (f) This RFP is an invitation for Proposals only. It is not an offer and the submission of a Proposal does not create a contract or agreement of any kind between FRIAA and the applicant.
 - (g) Acceptance of a Proposal does not create a binding contract between FRIAA and the applicant. FRIAA shall not be obligated in any manner whatsoever to any applicant until a written agreement between FRIAA and the applicant ("**Project Grant Agreement**") has been duly executed relating to an approved Proposal.
 - (h) As between the parties, the Proposal and all documents and materials you submit to FRIAA in connection with the Proposal and this RFP and all intellectual property in and to the foregoing are the exclusive property of FRIAA immediately upon delivery to FRIAA. Intellectual property developed during the course of the project will be addressed through the Project Grant Agreement.
 - (i) Subject to subparagraph 8.1(j) below, you, the applicant and any Project Partners will keep this RFP confidential and will not use, reproduce or distribute it, any portion of it, or any data, information, drawings, or specifications included in or provided with it except as necessary to prepare a Proposal to FRIAA in response to it or to apply for additional third party funding for the project.
 - (j) You, the applicant and any Project Partners will keep confidential all source data, information, drawings, or specifications provided by the Department whether in electronic format (*e.g.* Shapefile) or otherwise except as necessary to prepare a Proposal to FRIAA in response to this RFP or in the event of a successful application the deliverables specified in the RFP requirements.
 - (k) You, the applicant and any Project Partners will not make a claim against FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties for any reason whatsoever relating to this RFP. You are

undertaking the expenditures required to prepare and submit a Proposal entirely at your own risk, and you waive any right and release FRIAA and the FRIAA Parties from any demands, liability, claim or recovery for costs, expenses, or damages incurred whatsoever and howsoever arising out of or relating to this RFP or any Proposal prepared in response to it, whether such right or claim arises in contract, negligence or otherwise.

- (l) FRIAA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied during this RFP process by FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties.
- (m) Neither FRIAA nor any of the FRIAA Parties will have any liability whatsoever to you, the applicant, or any Project Partners, or any of them, in connection with this RFP or any Proposal prepared in response to it.
- (n) Upon acceptance of a Proposal by FRIAA, the applicant will be required to enter into a Project Grant Agreement with FRIAA, on substantially the same terms and conditions contained in the Project Grant Agreement provided with this RFP or available upon request.

9. INFORMATION SESSION

- 9.1 FRIAA will hold an Information Session to address questions that may arise with respect to this RFP on February 14, 2025. Contact details, the time of, and how to participate in the Information Session are posted on FRIAA's website. Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to participate. Applicants are encouraged to request clarifications and submit any questions in writing regarding this RFP, by 4:00 p.m. on February 13, to admin@friaa.ab.ca.
- 9.2 Follow-up questions arising from the information session and submitted in writing will be accepted until 4:00 pm local Edmonton time on February 24, 2025. Answers will be posted to the FRIAA website within 24 hours after receipt and will not be accepted at any time thereafter.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

- 10.1 Proposals may be submitted on FRIAA's website portal at: <https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/>.
- 10.2 Only documents formatted in PDF or Microsoft Word will be accepted.
- 10.3 Proposal submissions must include a completed "Application Form" and a completed "Application Template" in the format provided.
- 10.4 Proposals sent directly to any FRIAA or Government of Alberta representatives will not be accepted. Inquires can be directed to admin@friaa.ab.ca.

11. DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS

- 11.1 Only those **Proposals received prior to 2:00 p.m., local time as observed in the City of Edmonton, on March 3, 2025** will be accepted for evaluation. Proposals received any time thereafter will not be accepted for evaluation.
- 11.2 FRIAA is also not responsible for Proposals that are not received as the result of technological issues, attachment size or any other logistical barrier which may impede electronic submission.

12. NEXT STEPS

12.1 Project kick-off is anticipated to take place in April 2025.