



Opening the Doors to fRI

The knowledge fRI generates is meant to be shared, and one of the ways that's done is through the annual open house and research forum. Held September 30 and October 1 at the University of Alberta's Lister Centre, this year's open house and research forum showcased the goals and accomplishments of the programs and associations and raised thought-provoking questions about land-use issues that impact fRI's partners.



Up close and personal

This year's open house was a casual opportunity to see, at a glance, the goals of each program and association as well as its accomplishments in 2013. Attendees also had the opportunity to learn about tools of the researchers' trade, such as bear collars, and new tools for partners, such as FRIPSY.

FRIPSY, short for Foothills Reforestation Integrated Planning System, is a decision-support tool for silvicultural and yield planning of lodgepole pine regenerated stands after harvest. The predictive mathematical model is based on the results of the Foothills Growth and Yield Association's regenerated lodgepole pine trial.

The annual open house is important to fRI and those it serves. It gives attendees the opportunity to speak directly with researchers and get a first-hand look at the knowledge and tools they are generating.

"It's great just for us—the researchers, fRI staff—to get together here. We don't often have the opportunity to see what others have been doing and have those conversations that spark collaboration or new ideas," explains Fran Hanington, Communications and Extension program assistant.

Interesting displays included a poster introducing the people involved in the Water Program's projects, and the Alberta Land-

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use Knowledge Network's use of Flipboard, a new app that consolidates the wealth of land-use information on the Internet, making it easy to access. At the Forest History Program's table, people were invited to test their tree knowledge through an engaging quiz.

Anyone, from the general public and University of Alberta students to fRI's partners, may attend the annual open house.



World Knowledge Café

For the first time, the research forum wrapped up with a World Knowledge Café, led by the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network's Terri McHugh and Neil MacAlpine.

"In previous years, participants didn't have an opportunity to recap what they heard in an open and candid discussion. The café format provides insights that otherwise would have been missed," says Sean Kinney, Communications and Extension Program lead.

Participants were encouraged to visit one or more tables to talk to the program leads and think about two questions: What do we know now, and what needs to happen next?

"One of the goals was to help people see connections between the fRI programs, areas where research might overlap already or where there are issues of mutual concern," says McHugh. "Sometimes very creative and unique approaches to solving a problem can come from discussions like this, when people can share ideas with others they don't normally get a chance to work with."

Connecting to our history

Dr. Peter Murphy is mapping and documenting the location of the Columbia Trail through Jasper National Park. He presented information about some of the people who took that trail in the early years in *Spirits in the Valley*, *People on La Grande* and *Traverse of the Columbia Trail* during the open house.

The Columbia Trail was the first trans-Canada trail—the way to get from the East to the Pacific for about 40 years. For people like David Thompson, who was the first European to take the trail, George Simpson, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, and John Edward Harriott, whose wife vanished while they were on the trail, the journey wasn't easy.

"It's interesting just how much history is crammed into this one little line on the map. Not only the human history but the forest itself," said Murphy.

Bob Udell, Forest History Program lead, says that the work Murphy and his associate, Tom Peterson, are doing is highly valued by local historians and educators, as well as Parks Canada.

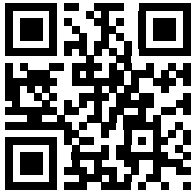
"Their efforts to identify and map the Columbia Express route through the Park has national significance," says Bob. "The Columbia Express is designated as a National Historic Event, yet much of its route through Jasper National Park was unmapped, a problem now solved through Pete and Tom's hard and valued work, and much appreciated by Parks Canada's historians."

Murphy and Peterson are also mapping old logging areas, and locating old logging camps and sawmills up the Whirlpool River.

"That work is also highly valued by the Park's historians and administration as well as other Alberta historians," says Bob.



Getting technical to launch app



The *TransCanada Ecotours® Northern Rockies Highway Guide* iOS app is based on the work done by the Forest History Program, but the Geographic Information Systems Program and Communications and Extension Program have played key roles in taking

that work online. Deb Mucha, GIS program lead, told open house attendees about the app and provided a sneak peek of what to expect when it's launched.

"fRI is the perfect organization to undertake an ecotour of the foothills region because it's a world-class research facility," says Mucha, adding that the app will allow fRI to reach new demographics and a wider audience. "It's a very immersive experience that will keep a wide variety of people engaged."

It's been a challenge to develop the app, in part because it involves an immense amount of development and programming, as well as large datasets. In addition, much of the ecotour route does not have connectivity; therefore, the app has to load base maps that will be readily accessible when users require them (e.g., outside of cellular coverage zones).

The Northern Rockies Tourism Alliance has been very supportive of the project and will play a role in getting the word out, and interest from other tourist organizations is high.



The app will be free and is designed to run on iOS devices, primarily 3G-enabled devices such as iPhones and iPads that also use GPS location services.

"It will evolve with technology, and we'll be adding functionality based on user feedback. Our focus will be on constantly improving the user experience," says Mucha.

Sharing achievements, raising questions

This year's annual research forum, moderated by the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network's Terri McHugh and Neil MacAlpine, gave program and association leads the opportunity to share their goals and achievements, and talk about what remains to be done.

"It's good to see the variety of the programs and associations, and the amount of knowledge we are generating," said fRI general manager,

Bill Tinge. "For me, the demonstration of that knowledge has been really key."

The forum sparked interesting conversations that included multiple program leads and partners, illustrating the complex, multi-faceted nature of the questions fRI strives to answer.

One example: After hearing from Laura Finnegan, lead of the Caribou Program, about research being done into caribou use of regenerated sites, attendees

got into a discussion about prioritizing values. Does caribou planning trump planning for mountain pine beetle when determining how to manage the land? The conclusion is that science must inform the discussion as such topics are explored.

To learn more about the 2013 goals and achievements of fRI's programs and associations, read the annual report at foothillsri.ca.

Updates

MOOC wrapped up

Growing Insights, a MOOC (massive open online course) that explored a variety of topics related to urban agriculture, has wrapped up. Developed and delivered by the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network (LuKN), the four-week MOOC was free, open to anyone with an interest in urban agriculture, and packed with relevant, up-to-date information and insights.

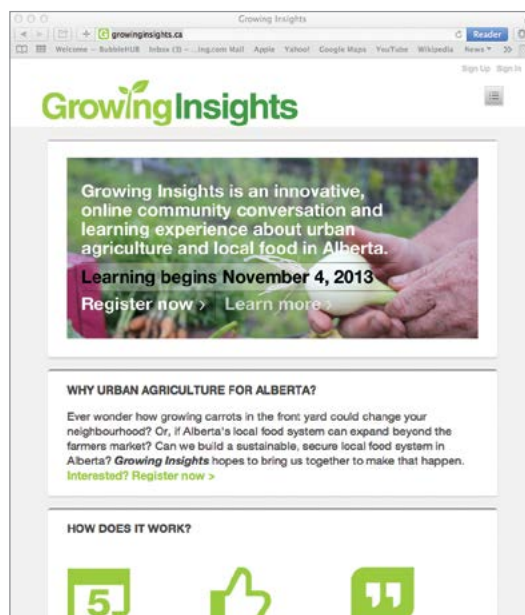
The MOOC attracted over 340 registered participants. It featured in-depth content, including video commentary from experts and access to a virtual library of material. Four topics were covered—economics and sustainability, social dynamics, planning and governance, and technology and innovation.

“We wanted to look at urban agriculture from all those different angles. It was designed to appeal to people interested from a business point of view, those interested in making food choices based on the information they would discover, and community planners trying to incorporate urban agriculture into communities, among others,” says Terri McHugh, program lead.

MOOCs are an innovative way to transfer and build information. Growing Insights was the first to be offered, and was done as a pilot project to test how the format works.

“Once we evaluate how it went, we hope to parlay that into similar MOOCs or use the format for shorter courses, such as professional development courses for associations or corporate training,” says McHugh.

The high-quality resources from each week of Growing Insights can be accessed in the future via the LuKN website (landusekn.ca).



New lead for the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network

As of September 1, 2013, Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network (LuKN) digital librarian Terri McHugh took over as lead of the LuKN program. McHugh replaces Kirby Wright, who remains involved in an advisory capacity but wanted to step back from the day-to-day operation of the network.

With the network since its inception, McHugh, who is currently continuing as digital librarian in addition to her new role, is extremely familiar with the program, its goals, and its activities. She looks forward to improving the program and its offerings.

“My goal is to come up with ways to make the LuKN a highly valued resource,” says McHugh. “I’m interested in exploring opportunities for bringing in additional revenue to become more self-sustaining, and in finding new ways to help groups share information with others.”

Prior to joining fRI, McHugh, who has a BA in history and an MA in human ecology, worked as a curator for a museum collection at the University of Alberta and in human resources in the private sector.

Wright, who led the development of the LuKN, will be involved on a project-by-project basis and will continue to be a resource for new ideas.

News and Events



New faces

fRI welcomes three new staff members, Cemil Gamas, Risa Croken, and Katie Everett.

Cemil Gamas and Risa Croken

Gamas and Croken are taking charge of fRI's Finance department, ensuring that funding is handled to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Gamas took the role of fRI's accountant in June and was recently joined by finance/administration assistant Croken.

A chartered accountant and chartered financial analyst, Gamas has worked for clients in a variety of industries as well as working for the Government of Canada's Ministry of Finance when the GST was introduced.

Croken previously worked at the Hinton and District Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures West Yellowhead—both not-for-profit business organizations governed by boards of directors.

While Gamas's ultimate goal is to ensure that fRI's funding is handled properly, he has other objectives too. "Hopefully I can serve as a sounding board and help the different programs meet their needs," he says.

Croken also has other goals. "More and more people are concerned about the impact of the footprint humans leave on ecosystems, and fRI is one of the leading research institutes searching for the balance. I would like to gain as much of fRI's knowledge as possible and hope to create a small ripple in the world by spreading the knowledge."

Bill Tinge, fRI's general manager, says that Gamas and Croken bring financial credibility and stability to the organization.

"We're a not-for-profit company, and the efficient running of our finances is critical for our operation. The partners have a great interest in ensuring our funding is properly administered," says Tinge.

Katie Everett

Everett is fRI's new cataloguer, responsible for phase two of fRI's library development. Her role involves going through an enormous number of photographs,

videos, and slides, renaming and adding metadata to them, and organizing them into a database. This will ensure that these resources are easily accessible.

"The biggest challenge about my job is taking this wealth of information, this large collection of photographs, and organizing them in a way that is useful to everyone," says Everett.

With a degree in English Honours and a post-degree diploma in Law Clerk Studies, Everett previously worked at the *Hinton Parklander* newspaper, where she designed and sold ads. She's pleased to be working at fRI, which she considers a well-respected organization with a relaxed yet productive atmosphere and dedicated people.

"Katie brings a creative intelligence to this project that will help make the media library really work. Although fRI has some fantastic photos from the past 20 years, it has been very difficult for people to find and use the best of them. With Katie here to make sense of it all, we will have quick, logical access to the media library, and I think everyone at fRI will benefit from that," says Terri McHugh.

Goodbye to a valued team member

fRI said goodbye to finance/administrative assistant Jennifer Hancock, who is currently pursuing a lifelong dream to enter nursing.

With the organization for about two years, Hancock proved to be a committed team member willing to do whatever was required to ensure things ran smoothly. She started as an executive assistant, providing support for the Board and general manager. Later, she moved into Finance, assisting with tasks such as payroll, data entry, and accounts receivable. When fRI's accountant resigned, Hancock took over until a replacement could be found.

"Jennifer was enthusiastic and keen, and always put in the extra effort to ensure our objectives were accomplished," says Tinge. "She took over our accountant's duties even though it was outside her comfort zone, and that was very much appreciated."

Socio-Economics Program workshop

A workshop to review the past work of fRI's Socio-Economics Program, recently relaunched after a hiatus, is planned for January 30, 2014, at the University of Alberta's Lister Centre. Resource decision makers, domain scientists, and practitioners are invited to take part in a review of the program's past work, its impact, and its relevance today.

"The plan is to develop a platform to move ahead and address the current issues partners have, such as conflicting objectives, how to maintain trust and ensure the public has confidence in resource management, and how to communicate—regionally, provincially, nationally, and internationally," says Keith McClain, program lead.

McClain says that questions that emerged about the social and economic impacts of the mountain pine beetle spurred the idea of

collaborating with the Socio-Economics Program, and the mountain pine beetle will be one of the program's focuses. Other suggested focus areas include trust among stakeholders, including the public and communities; communicating with the public; and engaging First Nations.

"Sustainable resource management is primarily embodied in ecological, economic, and social attributes. Understanding how local and regional economies will be affected by decision making will bear heavily on the decisions made. Social impacts may be more subtle to determine, but are nonetheless important to understand," says McClain, explaining the benefits of the program.

An activity team will guide the program in selecting areas of focus and corresponding activities.

Mountain Pine Beetle Ecology Program workshop

Does every site need to be regenerated? And if not, how do we decide? Forest practitioners, decision makers, community leaders, scientists, and others will be exploring those questions and hearing about the research being done on the landscape at a workshop at the University of Alberta's Lister Centre on April 23 and 24, 2014.

The workshop is in the planning stages, but the agenda will likely include presentations of concluding research, an overview of new research initiatives, and presentations and discussions about landscape rehabilitation.

"The traditional methodology of regeneration may not be appropriate given the unique nature of the landscape; careful and creative thought will have to be applied if we're to be successful," says Keith McClain, program lead.

An annual event, the workshop gets results into practitioners' hands to support land management decisions in a mountain pine beetle environment.

Registration begins in March.

Reading material
Visit foothillsri.ca to read this and other publications.

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About fRI

The Foothills Research Institute (fRI) is a unique community of partners joined by a common concern for the welfare of the land, its resources, and the people who value and use them. fRI connects managers and researchers to effectively collaborate in achieving fRI's vision, which is to support and contribute to sustainable land and resource management.

Over the years, fRI has grown, expanding in scope, broadening and increasing partnerships and funding, and expanding in activity and interest beyond forest lands. Our programs and partners determine where we do research. We now collaborate with colleagues regionally, provincially, nationally, and internationally through new agreements and understandings.

Remembering Dennis Hawksworth

Dennis Hawksworth, a former fRI Board member and a great supporter of forestry and forest management, passed away on August 30, 2013.

"Dennis was a strong supporter of fRI, especially during the early years, when his leadership helped to build the founding partnerships. His focus and passion to get things done will be remembered," says Rick Bonar, president, fRI.

Hawksworth's career brought him to Hinton in 1988, where he was project manager in charge of building a new sawmill for Weldwood. In 1997, he became vice-president of Hinton Forest and Wood Products. He retired from Weldwood/West Fraser in 2005, joining the Government of Alberta as director of forest products. In 2012, he retired from that position.

Hawksworth made many contributions to forestry and forest management and served on a number of provincial and national industry and government committees. He was a valued member of fRI's Board from 1996 until 2004.