

Welcome to the New fRI Website!

It's finally here. fRI's new and much-improved website puts knowledge, tools, and research front and centre, making it easy to access and build on fRI's work and see what programs, staff, and researchers have been up to.

The new family of sites and the system in place to manage content is based on open source code that is supported by the international development community.

"It will be available in perpetuity, and fRI should never have to rebuild their website, only enhance and optimize based on partner needs," says Sean Kinney, Communications and Extension Program lead. "The new system will allow us to address issues and add new functionality quickly and at a lower development cost. For example, we are currently developing a single-sign-on authentication protocol across all fRI websites, web-based tools, and our corporate intranet."

Clearly organized

fRI's research and resources are organized into four areas: Biodiversity, Landscape & Ecosystems, Soil, Water & Air, and Land & Human Use. The four themes and resulting subjects were born from the research portfolio structure in fRI's 2012-2017 business strategy.



"On previous websites, our users had no way to view content by theme or subject area, only by program or association. For users not familiar with fRI, this was a source of frustration.

New projects at fRI often span programs and associations in order to address emerging issues. As a result, resources on the website are shared and often fall under multiple themes and subjects as well as programs and associations," says Kinney.

Hover over the research areas for a snapshot of and direct links to related resources, programs, and projects.

Information at your fingertips

One of fRI's major goals was to demonstrate the sheer volume of work that has been and is being done through the organization. That's now immediately noticeable on the home page, where readers can search over 2,000 records or quickly see the number of resources and projects in each of fRI's four areas of research.

Scroll down to find out about upcoming events and new resources. You'll also find a section of the home page dedicated to tools developed as a result of fRI research—a quick way to access tools for those who use them all the time or for those who want to learn more about them.

Keep scrolling for direct links to active programs, associations, and projects, and to meet fRI staff, board members, researchers, and partners.

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Research growing into practice. Search our 2,033 records...

Biodiversity

Landscape & Ecosystems

Soil, Water & Air

Land & Human Use

Grizzly Bear Program

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Overview

The Foothills Research Institute's Grizzly Bear Program was created in 1999 to provide knowledge and planning tools to land and resource managers to ensure the long

News

WildSmart Grizzly Talk in Canmore

MAR. 19, 2013 | NEWS | GRIZZLY BEAR PROGRAM

Events

Grizzly bears expected out of dens soon

MAR. 11, 2013 | NEWS | GRIZZLY BEAR PROGRAM

Resources

Nature trumps nurture in grizzly bears

FEB. 21, 2013 | NEWS | GRIZZLY BEAR PROGRAM

More News >

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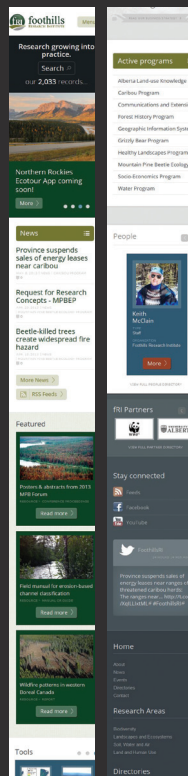
Programs and projects

Each program has its own section of the website. Visitors can learn about the program's past, present, and future; see what's been accomplished so far; find out which partners are involved; and more. Researchers can easily provide project updates or news, helping ensure information is timely.

Each project also has its own section with a wealth of information.

Easy to use from any device

After analyzing how people were accessing the old site and discovering that a significant number were using smartphones and tablets, fRI decided to go with a responsive design that automatically resizes the site to fit your device. The "chunkier" look—blocks of colour and bigger fonts—also makes it easier to read on multiple devices.

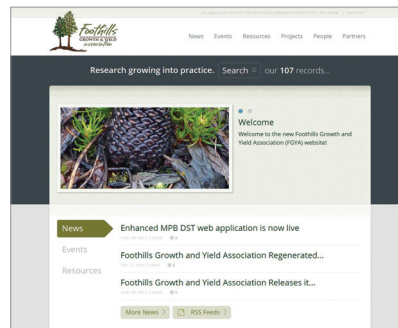


Fully integrated

fRI's associations each have separate microsites with a similar feel. This sets them apart and gives them their own platforms to communicate their research while linking them to fRI.

Because the associations and fRI share a lot of content, all six sites run off the same content management system. The Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network also runs off this system because it shares a lot of content with fRI and the associations.

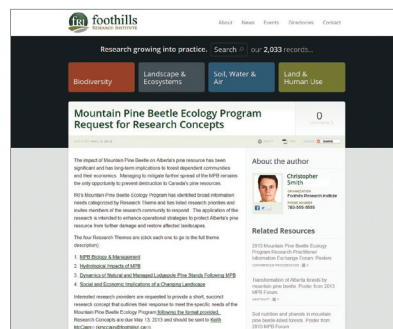
"It's very integrated, which allows for cross-fertilization of content.



In the long run, this will decrease maintenance costs and the amount of work required to share content," says Robert Andruchow, co-owner and designer, Big Pixel Creative.

Andruchow adds that fRI's website was the most

complicated project his team has ever taken on because of the amount of information, the need to categorize the information, and the number of groups involved.



Getting to know you

"fRI wasn't doing a good enough job of communicating to other organizations that can promote its research. We wanted the site to tell people who the researchers are so that the media, other researchers,

or students would know who to talk to. That connection between the research and the people doing the research is critical," says Andruchow.

Articles in fRI's massive online library now may include a photo and biography of the author, as well as contact information, in the right-hand column. The website has a people directory with photos and other information, and each program's section includes photos of the primary people involved in the program on the main page.

Where we work

Each program can geographically tag uploaded resources like photos so that the map on the main page of each program's site automatically shows the geographical range of the program.

Updates



Mountain pine beetle research practitioner information exchange forum

In response to industry's requests for more face time with researchers to discuss issues and potential solutions, the Mountain Pine Beetle Ecology Program (MPBEP) hosted a forum on April 24–25 in Edmonton. The format was specifically designed to allow for meaningful dialogue between researchers and practitioners.

The first day provided an overview of past research related to the mountain pine beetle as well as reports on the challenges as viewed by the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Three mountain pine beetle regional planning groups spoke about the challenges that industry faces. Keith McClain, lead of the MPBEP, then discussed how the program is structured to address those challenges and presented the research priorities for the next five years.

A world café was held on the second day. Attendees chose from six topics, each being discussed at a separate table. After a presentation by an expert on the topic, participants engaged in open discussion about issues related to the topic.

"Industry was able to ask questions of people who have expertise and talk about strategies for changing what they do to achieve their specific goals," says McClain.

To see how the MPBEP is helping to meet the challenge, visit foothillsri.ca/news/mountain-pine-beetle-ecology-program-issues-request-research-concepts.

Riparian workshop

On February 6, fRI's Water Program hosted an informative workshop on riparian processes, tools, and adaptive management strategies. The event, funded by the Government of Alberta, was an opportunity to highlight research that fRI and other organizations have been doing, show what's being done in areas like Montana and B.C., and ensure that attendees have strong, science-based information for making decisions.

"Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development has a committee reviewing riparian policies for forest management, so hopefully information provided through the workshop will help them do that as effectively as possible," says Axel Anderson, lead of the Water Program.

In the coming year, the Water Program will build on last year's work developing a cumulative effects watershed assessment procedure for the Eastern Slopes of the Old Man Watershed to support the implementation of that procedure. There will be a transition in focus from the Eastern Slopes region to the Foothills region, with study areas south of Grande Prairie and Dawson

Creek and two projects starting, one on culverts and fish communities and one on groundwater / surface water dynamics. The Water Program will also be part of a larger research project being led by the University of Alberta.

Grizzly Bear Program partnership meeting

On April 16, the Grizzly Bear Program gave partners of a major project designed to support recovery of grizzly bears in Alberta a comprehensive overview of what's been done in year one. The meeting included three presentations highlighting the research and results being funded by Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions and a number of other partners.

Dr. Nicolas Koops spoke about the work of the remote sensing team, which is providing updates on landscape conditions and information about bear habitats in the province. Then Scott Neilson talked about the food and energy availability in the Yellowhead Bear Management Area and produced the first science-based estimates of the number of bears the landscape can support.

The partners heard that Drs. Marc Cattet and David Janz at the University of Saskatchewan's Veterinary College have successfully extracted reproductive hormones from grizzly bear hair, which has never been done before. That result allows for upcoming monthly testing of hair from captive grizzly bears that will

give researchers a better understanding of reproductive hormones.

"My sense was that the research team felt that we achieved the stated deliverables for the first year and had support for our ongoing work," says Gordon Stenhouse, Program Lead, Grizzly Bear Program.

From the Knowledge Network

The Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network (LuKN) continues to spread the word about topics related to land management in new and innovative ways, including developing a MOOC (pronounced mook). A MOOC, or massive open online course, is the latest thing in online education and allows for large-scale participation in learning events.

Called Growing Insights, the MOOC will feature a series of experts discussing topics related to urban agriculture. Participants can engage in discussions with one another and with the experts, sharing knowledge and getting to know one another.

"One of the interesting things about this format is that people who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to connect, such as someone engaging in urban agriculture as a producer and someone in government as a planner, will be able to share perspectives," says Terri McHugh, content coordinator, LuKN.

The MOOC is scheduled to begin in early fall. It is free and open to everyone. To register, visit landusekn.ca.

The LuKN team has also been attending conferences across the province, videotaping keynote speakers, and making the videos available on the LuKN website and their YouTube channel. Videos on the channel have been viewed over 8,200 times so far in 2013.



Goals for the future

Find out fRI's goals for 2012–2017 and how they will be achieved by reading the Business Strategy that includes a portfolio of areas fRI is interested in and is organized under criteria, themes, and programs to help guide decision making. It will be followed by an implementation plan.

Visit www.foothillsri.ca/content/business-strategy-2012-2017 to learn more.



New general manager

fRI welcomed Bill Tinge to the position of general manager in November 2012. A long-time Hinton resident, Tinge has worked on various project teams and is very familiar with the organization. He is on secondment from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, where he has been the Forestry Program Manager for the Foothills Area since 2008.

Tinge's goal in his new role is to continue to sustain and grow fRI and promote its good work in informing sustainable land and resource management with sound science. "Ultimately, I would like to increase our shareholder base and ensure fRI's continued success for years to come," he says. "Seeing the products and knowledge of fRI utilized by its partners is also very important to me, so I'll work hard to enable that uptake."

Tinge earned a diploma in forestry technology in 1979 at NAIT. As a registered professional forest technologist in Alberta, he has been involved in the full spectrum of forestry work experiences, from forest protection and land management to forest management.

"Bill is an effective leader, and I look forward to working with him to realize the goals of our new business strategy and build on our already strong foundation," says Dr. Rick Bonar, president of fRI and chief biologist, Hinton Wood Products, Woodlands, a division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

News and Events



Joining the team



The new Caribou Program has a new lead in Laura Finnegan. Finnegan has extensive research experience in Canada and abroad, has participated in numerous conferences and other events, and has authored a number of

peer-reviewed publications, giving her a strong skill set for leading this new research program.

Prior to joining fRI, Finnegan conducted post-doctoral research at Trent University, assessing genetic connectivity among caribou herds and ecotypes in Ontario. During this time, she also prepared the report Designatable Units for Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) in Canada for the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

As program lead, Finnegan has been meeting with stakeholders to discuss their needs and priorities. She'll be selecting projects designed to address those needs in the near future.

"I've always been interested in wildlife ecology and management, and through my post-doctoral work at Trent I got involved in large-scale caribou projects that have led me here," says Finnegan. "I want the Caribou Program to produce sound scientific research that can be used to inform management decisions for our project partners and at the same time support provincial caribou work under the federal recovery strategy."



In the Geographic Information Systems (GISP) Program, GIS technician Kevin Myles replaces Darren Wiens, who departed in March to pursue an opportunity in Prince George.

Currently enrolled in SAIT's Bachelor of Applied Technology Geographic Information Systems program, Myles has a bachelor of applied conservation enforcement and a diploma in recreation, fish, and wildlife. His employment has been a mix of environmental, enforcement, and government work, and he has spent the last two seasons as a crew leader / watershed technician for the Foothills Stream Crossing Partnership.

'Tis the season

Summer is a busy time for fRI's programs. This year, the Grizzly Bear Program is hiring six people as seasonal staff. Four will visit bear locations on pipelines and conduct vegetation assessments to help determine how, when, and why bears use pipelines. They will also collect scat as a pilot project to determine the best scat sampling method for DNA analysis and population trend assessments, and they'll help with a FRIAA study to look at how bears use edges of cutblocks.

The other two people will be based in the Nordegg area, where a new project with Weyerhaeuser – Drayton Valley will examine grizzly bear response to new forest harvesting designs and operations in core grizzly bear habitat.

"We plan to compare pre- and post-harvest grizzly bear habitat use and minimum population size in the study area using DNA hair-snap techniques. The hair-snap data will provide a population estimate, hair cortisol stress levels, relative habitat use, and reproduction and survival information," says Karen Graham, a biologist with the program.

The Foothills Stream Crossing Partnership has hired two people for the summer. Nigel Tilson and Dana Hazeldine, who are completing bachelor's degrees, will be inspecting crossings in the Hinton and Swan Hills regions as well as conducting electrofishing and habitat surveys.



Renewed program

Since fRI's inception, researchers in the Socio-Economics Program have undertaken projects to help stakeholders understand aspects of the social acceptability of sustainable forest management decisions. After three years of little activity, the program is being renewed under the leadership of Keith McClain.

McClain has been talking with stakeholders about their issues and is developing a work plan to begin addressing those issues through research.

"One topic we will explore is trust, which is paramount when resource managers attempt to gain acceptance of operational plans that may affect public values such as aesthetics, recreational trails, etc. There are many examples where planners fail in their attempts to gain public acceptance, such as implementing FireSmart plans, and generally, it comes down to a trust factor. So we'll explore issues around trust in resource management—how to know if you have it, how to build it, and indicators of losing it. And importantly, how can managers regain it, once it is lost, and what does that take?" explains McClain.

The program will also look at how social media affects decision making, and how stakeholders can effectively use new forms of media that spread messages at lightning speed.

Same event, new name

fRI's annual general meeting, now called the annual research forum, will be held September 30 and October 1 at the University of Alberta Lister Centre. The name has been changed to more accurately reflect the nature of the event.

"We've been inviting the public and our partners to spend two days seeing what's happening in our programs and hearing from our researchers in a forum setting at the same time that we hold the AGM. The AGM is an internal event that will still take place after the research forum, but the research forum is the highlight," explains Fran Hanington, assistant, Communications and Extension Program.

Reading material

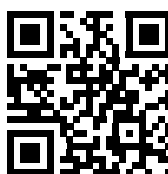
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About fRI

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.



Download the App

The *TransCanada Ecotours® Northern Rockies Highway Guide* IOS Smartphone app will be available in June at ecotour.foothillsri.ca, and it will include new information you won't find in the book. Highway pullouts, visitor centres,

trailheads, picnic sites, and more show up on the map so you can take advantage of everything the area has to offer.

By summer, the IOS Smartphone app will also include a guidebook listing hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other services in the area. Alberta Northern Rockies Tourism Alliance is supplying that information and will manage the guidebook.