

Aboriginal Involvement Program



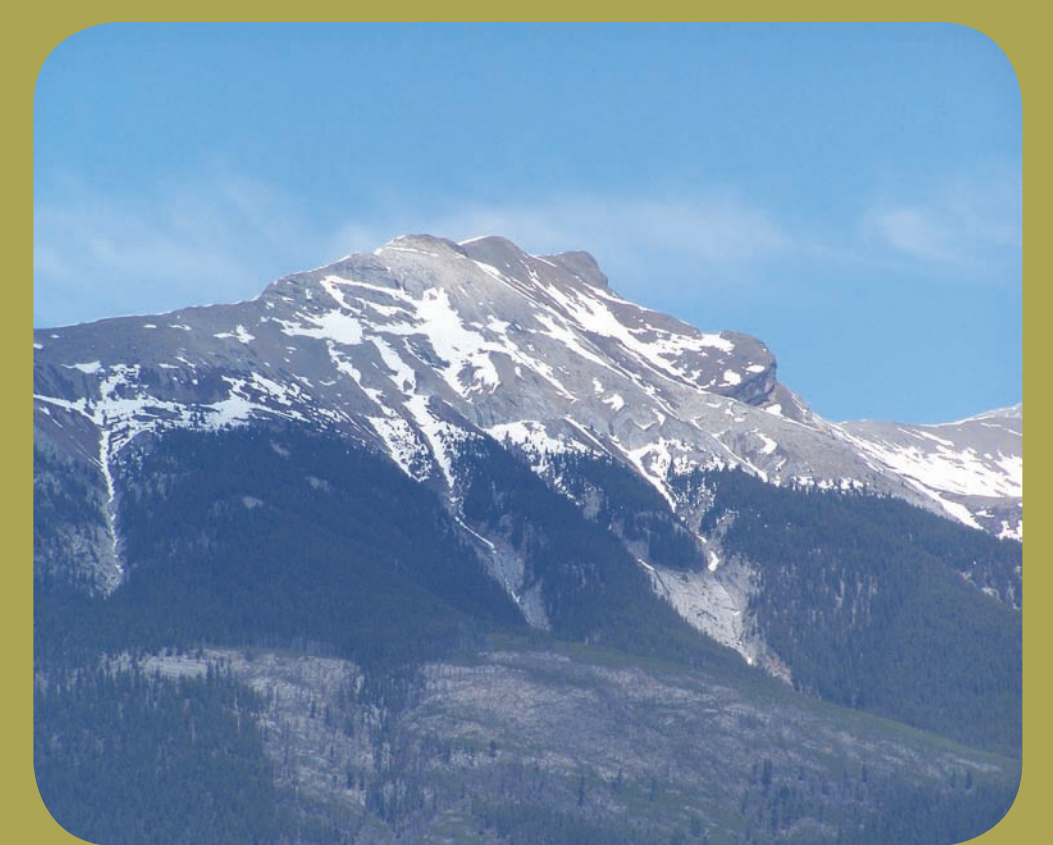
This program is a unique Aboriginal community driven initiative designed to help Aboriginal communities preserve their culture.

The Aboriginal Involvement Program continues to demonstrate excellence in its three sub-program areas, the Multi-community Traditional Cultural Study, Referral Process, and Supporting Aboriginal – Industry site visits. Specifically, the study has documented and is storing 2400 quality control checked cultural sites from five communities (Foothills Ojibway Society, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada, Sunchild First Nation, Bighorn First Nation, Nakcowinewak Nation) in one central, protected database. In leveraging these sites through the Foothills Research Institute's propriety Referral Process, 91 cultural sites have been protected from potential disturbance, through eight pilot referral runs by 4 companies (Shell Canada Limited, Suncor Energy Inc., West Fraser Mills Ltd., and Coal Valley Resources Ltd.).

On top of all this applied research, numerous community technicians, elders, and leaders continue to be supported in all phases of their research training and aspirations. Flowing from this, Industry and government partners remain stalwart supporters and contributors to the program's overall success. In the next few years, expanded research applications for Aboriginal data and knowledge in sustainable resource management and development will be pursued with vigour. This is possible due to the hard work, support, and overall exceptional research capabilities of the Foothills Research Institute and its partners.

Referral Process

The Aboriginal Involvement Program Referral Process identifies and resolves potential conflicts surrounding proposed developments within Foothills Research Institute boundaries. It will direct industry to the Aboriginal communities with ties to the land before it develops the land. The referral process will be as follows: Aboriginal communities will identify culturally significant land locations. These land locations will be entered into a computer database. Industry will enter its proposed developments into a GIS mapping program as well. Now, culturally important locations within the proposed development site can be flagged. When a culturally important location arises, the referral process will point industry to the Aboriginal communities having ties to the land—and discussion between the two parties can begin. That said, the referral process will not identify precise locations of culturally significant sites; that information is owned solely by the Aboriginal communities with ties to those sites. And Foothills Research Institute will not act as mediator in the referral process.



Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a mapping project that links the Traditional Culture Study and the Aboriginal Community/ Industry Referral Process. It entails development of a GIS database. The database will be managed by Foothills Research Institute and will belong to Aboriginal communities within the Foothills Research Institute land base. It is not made available to industry.

Foothills Research Institute is a leader in developing innovative science and knowledge for integrated resource management on the forest landscape through diverse and actively engaged partnerships.

The Foothills Research Partnership Ltd. landbase is located in west-central Alberta, and is based in the resource community of Hinton, some three hours west of Edmonton. It covers roughly 2.75 million hectare (27,500 square kilometres), and embodies Jasper National Park of Canada, the Willmore Wilderness Park, and the Forest Management Area of Hinton Wood Products, a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd. It also includes some provincial "crown forest management units" and the Hinton Training Centre's Cache Percotte Training Forest. Within its boundaries are three forest areas—boreal, montane, and sub-alpine—and many forest uses including timber, petroleum, and coal extraction, tourism, and recreation.

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