



Parabodes  
Bill Rugg,  
Weidwood of Canada Limited

760 Switzer Drive  
Hinton, Alberta T7V 1V7

# InForm

The Newsletter for Foothills Forest Partners

February 1994

Issue 8

Foothills Forest is one of 10 Model Forest sites approved for establishment under the *Partners in Sustainable Development of Forests* program. This newsletter is being produced to provide information to interested partners and groups regarding the progress of activities being carried on within Foothills Forest.

## Foothills 'Twinned' with Chihuahua Model Forest

Bob Udell, Dennis Quintilio and Cliff Mathies travelled to Chihuahua this month with Bob Newstead of the Canadian Forest Service to negotiate the details of an agreement with the Chihuahua Model Forest. At the request of External Affairs, the agreement has Foothills Forest providing administrative and technical advice for the establishment of one of the Mexican sites. During their stay, the agreement and budget were drafted and a Coordinator was contracted to handle the details associated with initiating the project.

## Request for Pileated Woodpecker Information

by Rick Bonar

Volunteers are needed to help with a three-year study of pileated woodpecker habitat ecology under the Foothills Forest program based in Hinton. One of our main interests is information on pileated woodpecker nests from any place in the boreal forests of Alberta, northern B.C., and Saskatchewan.

In an effort to recruit and encourage volunteer help, we are sponsoring a March 1 to May 31 treasure hunt to locate nests within 50 km of Hinton, except in Jasper National Park. We will provide a search package with maps and instructions to any volunteers that want to search for nests and we can even supply copies of air photos who are serious about looking. We are offering a reward of \$200 for any new active nest located within the treasure hunt area, as confirmed by us. If you are looking for something different to do on a spring weekend, and the chance to earn a reward, come to Hinton and look for PIWO nests! Access is generally good and much of the snow in the Athabasca River valley is usually melted by March. If the 1994 treasure hunt is successful, it will be repeated in 1995.

## Foothills Forest Open House April 19th and 20th, 1994

Our first annual open house will be held at the Forest Technology School in Hinton on April 19th and 20th from 0900 to 1630 each day. Researchers working in Foothills Forest will have posters on display to outline their activities and their plans for continuing research. The intent of the open house is to ensure that resource managers from universities, environmental groups and industries are aware of the research taking place within Foothills Forest so that duplication is avoided. It will also be an opportunity to obtain comments from other professionals regarding individual projects and to discuss collaborative work. During the evening of April 19th, the public will also be invited to attend.

Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to be in Hinton for this exciting event. Contact Pat Golec at (403) 865-8330 for additional information.

The treasure hunt is intended to find nests where we can capture birds for the telemetry program, but we are also hoping to find and measure as many nests as possible throughout Alberta in the next two years. We cannot offer a cash reward for this, but we will give to the first 100 people who report a confirmed nest a limited edition print from an original watercolour painting by wildlife artist Norma Bonar. We are asking for information from any person who knows of a nest from previous years (and can relocate it!) and any nest located in 1994 or 1995.

A free package that tells what to look for and information about the treasure hunt can be obtained by contacting Rick Bonar or Marianne Gibbard at (403)865-8193 (call collect during business hours). Our mailing address is Foothills Forest, Box 6330, Hinton, T7V 1X6 or fax (403)865-8164. In the Edmonton area, contact Kim Allan at the Alberta Bird Rescue Association, Phone (403) 922-6103. Besides nest information, Kim is also interested in any PIWO sightings or other information from Strathcona County.

## **IRM Workshop at Western Newfoundland Model Forest**

*from Model Forest News, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1994*

Corner Brook... From December 14 to 16, 1993, the Banff Centre for Management delivered a workshop on Integrated Resource Management (IRM) for the Western Newfoundland Model Forest (WNMF). This was the second major workshop held by the WNMF using the Banff Centre; the first, on conflict resolution, took place in March 1993. The objective of the IRM workshop was "to develop a common understanding among the participants of what Integrated Resource Management will mean for the WNMF, and how the participants can most effectively work together to develop an IRM plan."

Besides representatives from the seven partners, a number of forest resource managers and users were asked to participate in the workshop and the model forest process. Throughout the initial stages of the development of the Model Forest Program in Western Newfoundland, it was felt that certain key stakeholders were missing (i.e., representatives of fisheries, water resources, mines, protected areas, etc.). The presence of these new groups at the workshop was a significant step forward for the WNMF in its efforts to reach its goal of IRM.

The workshop was conducted by Dr. Gordon Baskerville (University of British Columbia), Dr. Peter Duinker (Lakehead University), and Tom Moore (Petawawa National Forestry Institute). The first session provided a philosophical overview of IRM and the concepts and principles involved to help develop a common understanding among the participants. Other topics covered throughout the three days included Forest Values (what to manage for), Setting Objectives, and Linking Forest Dynamics with Objectives and Actions (modelling). The final session outlined a process for developing an IRM Plan; participants then designed a Table of Contents for the Plan. The participant left the workshop with the task of adapting the Plan to the needs of their respective agencies or organizations. The participants are planning to meet early in 1994 to discuss the process and to develop a draft IRM Plan by the end of the current fiscal year.

## **Activity Updates**

### **Biologist - Melissa Todd**

#### **Elk Study**

*Integrating elk and timber management in a boreal mixedwood ecosystem.*

After shutting down for the hunting season, elk trapping resumed in mid-December. To date, several white-tailed deer have taken the bait, but the elk are eluding us. The study area is currently under intensive survey for elk activity, and several hot spots have been identified. Clover traps are being moved to these areas. The five radiocollared animals continue to be relocated on a daily basis. Four of the five cows (two collared on the Athabasca Ranch last winter and two collared on the study area in the summer) continue to winter with the Ranch herd, to the west of the study area compartments. The remaining yearling cow moves between the Ranch and the study area with some regularity.

John Church, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Animal Science, University of Alberta, has joined the project. John has assumed responsibility for telemetry, and is working with the project's contract biologist, Robert Stewart, on the trapping effort. Proving invaluable to the project is a vehicle donation from NOVA corporation (a white 4x4 crew cab dubbed the 'polar pig' by staff and students) and an Alpine twin-track snowmobile on loan from the Fish and Wildlife Division.

Two other Uof A students continue to work on the calibration of the head up/head down activity sensors in our radiocollars. Four collars have been placed on captive elk. Sandra Kathnelson and Paul Jones hope to establish a relationship between different elk activities and the radio pulse transmitted from the collars. This will allow field researchers to determine, with some degree of accuracy, the activity of radiocollared elk without having to directly observe the animals. Paul worked as an Alberta Fish & Wildlife STEP student on loan to the elk project last summer and hopes to take on research into pre-harvest elk habitat distribution and activity in the study area as an M.Sc. project.

### **Pileated Woodpecker Study**

*Pileated woodpecker ecology in the boreal foothills.*

The "PIWO" study is gearing up for a busy field season. The birds begin territorial calling and nesting activity in late February and early March. Plans are underway for an extensive nest and bird search, followed by trapping for placement of radiotags, starting the first week of March. A field crew has been organized and a program is underway to offer rewards to the public for nest location. Posters and promotional materials are being developed to advertise this activity. A limited edition PIWO print has been created by local artist Norma Bonar, and will be used to both publicize and raise money for the research. Last year's data on tagged birds and nest and roost site characterization is under analysis.

### **Caribou Study**

*Woodland caribou distribution and habitat selection in disturbed (cut over) and undisturbed winter range.*

Radiocollared caribou continue to be relocated on the control and experimental areas of their winter range on a weekly basis. Monitoring is a joint effort between staff of the Fish & Wildlife Division, Foothills Forest, the Land and Forest Services Division and Weyerhaeuser. Two of the collared caribou have failed to show up on the winter range, the other 18 have been located. Aerial telemetry relocation efforts are currently limited by the amount of available daylight for flying. Hopefully, all animals will be relocated once day length increases.

Darren Sepaniuk, an M.Sc. candidate in the Department of Animal Science, University of Alberta, has joined the project. Darren has established a field camp in the experimental study area, courtesy of International Collin Energy Inc., at their regional gas plant, and in the control area, courtesy of the Land and Forest Services Division. Coordinates for caribou locations obtained from aerial telemetry are faxed to Darren; he then locates these sites on the ground using a hand-held GPS receiver provided by Fish & Wildlife.

Darren has begun back-tracking caribou from telemetry sites to provide day-to-day habitat-specific activity patterns. He is adapting well to the rigours of field work in a remote, and somewhat hostile, environment (though I'm sure Grande Cache residents would dispute such a description!) A predator component has been proposed for the project and is still under investigation.

### **Mammal Inventory**

The winter of 1994 represents a preliminary sampling effort to examine the effectiveness of snow tracking as a technique for determining the distribution and habitat use of mammal species. Foothills Forest wildlife technician, Marianne Gibbard, has the snow-tracking surveys well underway. Sampling sites are randomly located along roads with all-weather access; the survey effort is proportionately distributed among the four forest regions present in Foothills Forest. At each sampling location, transects totalling 6 kilometres in length are surveyed for tracks according to a predetermined survey protocol. A field team of 2 people snowshoe each location (3kms/person) within 24 to 72 hours of a fresh snowfall. This winter has been

quite accommodating in the snow department, however a few more fresh snowfalls are required to complete our effort, so PRAY FOR SNOW!

Foothills Forest, Weldwood and Fish & Wildlife staff are called upon to snowshoe the transects when the snow flies. To date, transects have produced tracks of lynx, marten, fisher, moose and coyote, just to name a few. Transect locations will be revisited this spring to describe, in detail, the habitat types within which tracks occurred.

### **Spatial Wildlife Habitat Supply Analysis and HSI Model Testing**

Beck Consulting, in conjunction with the Foothills Forest Biologist, have refined the majority of the HSI models, which are currently being input in GIS format for spatial habitat supply analysis (HSA). The Forestry Corp has been retained to develop a sample landbase on which Beck Consulting will test run the HSA. Yield curves for the HSI model variables have been developed under a separate project for use in the HSA. Efforts are currently underway to organize brief ungulate and owl modelling workshops, to complete the refinement of HSI models, and publish all models in draft form.

### **Habitat Yield Curves**

Consultant, Wayne Bessie, has produced a set of "rigged" yield curves for HSI model variables required in habitat supply analysis. Best-guess relationships have been established between stand types, ages and heights and the habitat variables required by the models. Wayne is now locating and combing existing databases to locate information to support or improve the yield curve relationships. For variables for which no data currently exist, Wayne is drafting up preliminary sampling protocols for future data collection.

### **Watershed Assessment Model Development**

A Watershed Workshop to develop a detailed workplan for the development of a watershed assessment model for use in the DSS was held on January 10-12, 1994. Jim O'Neil, Fisheries Biologist and Principal of R,L & L Environmental Consulting Ltd. and Dr. Richard Rothwell, Forest Hydrologist and Professor of Forest Science at the University of Alberta, were contracted to facilitate the workshop and will produce their draft report shortly.

Participants from Fish & Wildlife, Alberta Environment, Trout Unlimited Canada, Weldwood and Foothills Forest contributed to an interesting and productive strategic planning endeavour. Efforts are now underway to determine the extent of need and current activity in the area of watershed/forest planning within industry and government throughout the province. This information will be combined with the workshop report to prepare recommendations for presentation to the Foothills Forest Board of Directors in March.

### **Wildlife Research Priority Ranking**

Integrated Resource Management Working Group Coordinators, Rick Bonar and Kirby Smith, and the Foothills Forest Biologist are currently developing a detailed decision-making approach to allow for the ranking of wildlife research projects and funding allocations for the next three years. Priority projects will be identified which contribute towards the testing of HSI models and the development of the wildlife habitat supply analysis. Projects will commence in 1994/95.

### **Other IRM activities of interest:**

- joint presentation to Mr. Bob Andrews, Director of Wildlife, Fish & Wildlife Services Division
- lectures to students in the Departments of Animal Science and Zoology, University of Alberta
- organizational meetings with prospective university graduate students and supervisors
- development of a GIS user policy for staff and students
- GPS workshop in Jasper National Park and involvement in GPS working group
- funding and grant applications
- accepted a generous donation from the Hinton Fish & Game Association
- developing a position of the WWF Carnivore Conservation Strategy
- development of wildlife observation cards for distribution to all those working and playing in Foothills Forest

## **Seconded Forester - Rick Blackwood**

### **Ecologically Significant Areas Study**

The Foothills Forest ecological reserves/protected areas study is now underway with scheduled completion in mid to late March. The final product coming from this study will be a listing of potential sites, maps and an accompanying report that identify areas which meet the draft objectives of Alberta's Special Places 2000 program. We are still waiting for word from the Canadian Forest Service on our funding submission to the Ecological Reserves Component of the Green Plan for work to be carried out in 1994/95.

### **Business Plan Development**

The Foothills Forest Business Plan is now in its final draft stage and is awaiting approval from the Board of Directors at their upcoming March 15th meeting. Copies will be available on request once final approval has been granted by the Board. Please contact Rick Blackwood at (403) 865-8332 to receive a copy.

### **Foothills Forest 1994/95 Work Plan**

The 1994/95 Annual Work Plan has been completed and forwarded to the Canadian Forest Service for review and approval. The plan includes detailed information on our 5 year budget and individual work plans for all of the activities that are being carried out in Foothills Forest.

## **Technology Transfer Officer - Pat Golec**

### **Communications Plan Update**

In order to ensure consistency with the Business Plan and the 1994/95 Annual Work Plan, the Communications Plan has been revised. The changes reflect the desire of the participants in the business plan workshop to focus our communications efforts on local audiences and Foothills Forest partners. Copies will be available, following the March 15th Board meeting, by contacting Pat Golec at (403) 865-8330.

### **Development of an Ecotourism Product for Foothills Forest**

The bird checklist compiled by Maggie Ellen has been edited and proof-read and will be published as soon as the artwork for the cover is complete. Many thanks to all those who helped to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the pamphlet.

Work is currently underway on vertebrate and wildflower checklists and on a brochure of Foothills Forest trails. These are expected to be available later this spring.

### **Newsletters**

An article about the use of technology in integrated resource management was prepared by Foothills Forest Staff for the Alberta Forest Products Association newsletter and appeared in the January 1994 issue.

Another article, written by Maggie Ellen, was published in the last issue of Environment Network News.

## **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- March 8 - 12 Foothills Forest Display for the World Cup Biathlon, set up in Parks West Mall, Hinton.
- March 15th Board of Directors Meeting 10:30 at the Forest Technology School.
- April 19th Foothills Forest Partners Workshop - details will be sent to partners.
- April 19 & 20 Foothills Forest Open House from 0900 to 1630 at the Forest Technology School.

# Thank You

As we conclude our first year of operation, we would like to express our thanks to the many individuals and organizations who have supported the establishment and implementation of Foothills Forest. We look forward to continuing cooperation and collaboration during the coming years.

## Implementing Agency

*Canadian Forest Service*

## Foothills Forest Sponsors

*Alberta Environmental Protection  
Forest Technology School  
Weldwood of Canada Limited (Hinton Division)*

## Foothills Forest Partners

*Alberta Economic Development & Tourism  
Alberta Research Council, Forestry Department  
Alberta Trappers Association  
Alberta Newsprint Company  
Alberta Forest Products Association  
Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association  
Alberta Forest Technologists Association  
Alberta Forestry Association  
Alberta Solicitor General Department, Grande Cache Correctional Centre  
Canadian Institute of Forestry, Rocky Mountain Section  
Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council  
Canadian Wildlife Service, Habitat Conservation Section  
Canadian International Development Agency, Forestry Sector  
Canadian Forest Service, Petawawa National Forestry Institute  
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society  
Canadian Nature Federation  
Canadian Wildlife Federation  
Cardinal River Coals Ltd.  
City of Edmonton  
Crestwood Hotel  
Employment and Immigration Canada, Canada Employment Centre  
Energy Resources Conservation Board  
ESRI Canada Limited  
Evergreen Tourist Association  
Finning Tractor  
Finning Caterpillar Ltd.  
Fisheries and Oceans, Freshwater Institute  
Forest Engineering Research Institute, Western Division  
Forestry Oil & Gas Review Quarterly  
Fox Creek Development Association Ltd.  
Harry Collinge High School  
Hinton & District Chamber of Commerce  
Industry Science and Technology Canada, Aboriginal Business Development Prgms  
International Woodworkers of America Local 1-207  
Jasper School District 3063  
Jasper National Park  
Metis Nation of Alberta, Framework Action Committee  
Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94  
Norcen Energy Resources Limited  
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology  
Northwood Pulp and Timber Limited  
Petro-Canada Inc.  
Pan-Canadian Petroleum Limited  
Petro Canada  
Petroleum Industry Training Service  
Proctor and Gamble Cellulose Ltd.  
Quadco Equipment Inc.  
Ron's Outdoor Source for Sports  
Sentar Consultants Ltd.  
The Forestry Corp  
The University of Alberta, Department of Forest Science  
The Wildlife Society, Alberta Chapter  
The Alberta Fish and Game Association  
Timbco Ltd.  
Town of Grande Cache  
Town of Edson  
Town of Hinton  
Trout Unlimited Canada  
West Yellowhead Community Futures Association  
Wildlife Biology Branch  
Wildlife Habitat Canada  
William A. Switzer Provincial Park  
World Wildlife Fund Canada  
Yellowhead School Division #12  
Yellowhead Highway Association*