

# Model forest wins national award

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Foothills Model Forest (FMF) has garnered an award for working well with others.

Late last month, FMF general manager Don Podlubny was in Montreal to accept the first ever Syncrude Award for Excellence in Sustainability Development.

"It is heartening to be the first organization to receive this prestigious national award, in a field that encompasses such a broad spectrum of possible candidates," said Jim LeLacheur, president of FMF.

The award was presented at the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum's annual conference in Montreal April 30.

The group was recognized for its ongoing efforts and partnerships.

However, the grizzly bear research program was singled out as an example of its work.

"The Syncrude Award honours those individuals, communities, organizations or companies whose activities reinforce the value off sustainability," said Gordon Ball, Syncrude's vice-president of bitumen production at Mildred Lake.

"The award is one way in which we can recognize those who are out on the front lines with us, who are making a true difference."

Foothills Model Forest has a long list of partners that it collaborates with on different levels.

These partners include environmental groups and First Nations bands to the federal and provincial government agencies and members of the natural resource-based industries, as well as researchers from various post-secondary institutions.

The local organization is one of the original 10 model forests that were established in 1992.

It remains the second largest of all of Canada's model forests and covers roughly 2.75 million hectares.

Its landbase extends to Jasper National Park, Willmore Wilderness Park and also includes the Hinton Wood Products' forest management area.

It also includes some Crown land and the Hinton Training Centre's Cache Percotte training forest.

Podlubny said that FMF was nominated for the award by one of its many partners.

Elk Valley Coal has worked with the organization for many years and initiated the nomination.

"Elk Valley Coal is one of our partners," he said.

"They've had a representative on our board for many years."

Podlubny said that the award nomination and win were greatly appreciated at Foothills Model Forest.

"It speaks volumes about the quality of our research programs and the researchers who are helping us develop the knowledge and planning tools to improve the practice of sustainable forest management in so many ways," LeLacheur said.

For more information about Foothills Model Forest and its partners visit [www.fmf.ab.ca](http://www.fmf.ab.ca).