

# Foothills Stream Crossing Program



## Enhancing fish habitat by improving stream crossings.

The Foothills Stream Crossing Program (FSCP) is an independent, industry driven program focused primarily on improving the management of stream crossings on the West Fraser Mills Ltd. (WFM) Forest Management Area (FMA). The Foothills Research Institute (FRI), the coordinating agency for the program, has established a close working relationship with the FSCP since its inception in 2004.

For 2005 and 2006, the FSCP focused on the initial inspection protocols to evaluate public safety, sedimentation and fish passage concerns. During the summers of 2006 and 2008, a total of 427 crossings were inspected; completing inspections for all FSCP member crossings located in the WFM forest management area (FMA). Many local and regional issues linked to sedimentation, public safety and fish movement barriers have been documented.



Multi stakeholder remediation plans are the culmination of stream crossing inspections and a watershed prioritization system aimed towards maximizing ecological benefits. This collaborative approach facilitates interagency and intercompany cooperation and enables companies to set aside the normal confidentiality which surrounds their liabilities on the landscape. The first FSCP remediation plans for the Pine Creek and Nosehill Creek watersheds were completed February, 2009. These plans were sent to Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) as a commitment on behalf of the FSCP members to repair faulty crossings. They also inform the regulators as to what companies are participating. Remediation plans for four additional watersheds in the WFM FMA will be completed by April 2010.

## Stream Crossing Manual

Environmental stewardship and safety are key considerations in stream crossing design, construction and maintenance.

Each stream crossing has an owner who is responsible for the initial design and construction, as well as monitoring, maintaining and de-activating the crossing as part of its stewardship commitments. This process requires a formal and timely inspection process that is based on agreed to protocols. This will help to ensure crossings are functioning effectively.



In 2006 Foothills Stream Crossing Program created a Stream Crossing Manual. This manual is the first comprehensive treatment of inspections for the procedures in use today. The crossing inspection protocol is designed for situations where a permanent road crosses a defined channel. The inspection includes the crossing structure and the road and ditches on both approaches to the crossing. It is hoped all crossing owners will adopt these protocols within their respective stewardship programs.



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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