

# Business Strategy

2012 - 2017

March 2012



**foothills**  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
Research Growing Into Practice



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## Summary

The Foothills Research Institute (fRI) is a non-profit partnership-based organization that is a leader in providing innovative science to support decisions and policy development for land and resource management. Twenty years of progress in innovative knowledge generation and transfer provide the foundation and support for science-informed decision making and policy change and future advancement. The Board of Directors, shareholders, and partners view fRI knowledge and tools as essential for the advancement of sustainable land and resource management in Alberta.

fRI operates through a unique management-research collaboration that provides its partners and broader audiences with timely science-based knowledge, research, and practical applications to help land and resource managers make better decisions in an increasingly busy, complex world. The diverse fRI partnership supports science-based conservation of the land and all the benefits the land provides to society.

### This fifth five-year business strategy has nine goals:

1. Partnerships: Nurture and expand fRI partnerships.
2. Geographic scope: Expand the fRI geographic scope to encompass partner interests as appropriate for each Program.
3. Business portfolio: Review and expand the fRI business portfolio scope and integration based on partner priorities.
4. Science excellence: Ensure research is non-partisan and meets high standards for quality, relevance, and recognition.
5. Knowledge transfer: Facilitate the adoption of fRI knowledge, tools, and technology into land and resource management practice.
6. Partner outreach and support: Contribute to the success of fRI partners.
7. Land and resource management: Contribute to improved land and resource management in Alberta and beyond.
8. Reporting: Report to fRI partners and audiences on achievements and progress.
9. Resources: Expand fRI resources and investment.

This business strategy requires firm commitment and participation from partners and the public to meet fRI goals and objectives. Measures of success for each objective will be defined by indicators and targets in a 2012–2017 implementation plan, which will be updated annually. Progress will be included in the Annual Report and other communications media.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Foothills Research Institute (fRI) is a not-for-profit corporation engaged in developing and transferring knowledge to support sustainable land and resource management. A premier research organization, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2012, it is supported by a diverse and growing partnership. Based in Hinton, Alberta, fRI has continually expanded over the years and now engages in a wide portfolio of programs and projects with broadening scope. This business strategy will guide fRI business practices and provide direction during its fifth five-year business phase, from 2012 to 2017.

## 1.1 Background

fRI originated as the Foothills Model Forest, one of 10 model forests awarded competitive funding by the Government of Canada Green Plan commencing in 1992. Model forests developed partnerships to explore new ways to achieve sustainable forest management. The original concept envisioned that each model forest would eventually become self-sufficient as it was expected that federal funding for the Model Forest Program would diminish in five-year increments and conclude in 2007. The Canadian Model Forest Network has continued in Canada under other funding mechanisms, and the related International Model Forest Network now has 55 model forests in 24 countries.

Reflecting the interests of partners, the Foothills Model Forest became the Foothills Research Institute in 2007. Since then, fRI has broadened its partnership and funding base, expanded its research activities beyond the original core study area, developed international collaborations, intensified efforts on priority research and knowledge transfer identified by partners, and worked with them to demonstrate and evaluate new knowledge to achieve resource goals.

## 1.2 Accomplishments

The fRI Phase IV business strategy (2007–2012) contained many commitments, which are summarized in Appendix 1. Most of the commitments were completed or had substantial progress made. Some will be carried forward, and a few were not completed because of a shift in priorities. Highlights include:

- Foothills Model Forest rebranding to Foothills Research Institute (fRI) in 2007
- 41% growth in partnership and 49% growth in revenue
- The Foothills Energy Partners joining fRI as a shareholder
- fRI partnering with the Vilhelmina Model Forest in Sweden for research on climate change and community vulnerability
- A memorandum of understanding signed with the University of Norway to provide the basis for working on brown (grizzly) bear conservation
- Two new programs established: the Climate Change Program and the Water Program
- Two new associations partnering with fRI: Alberta Forest Growth Organization and Yellowhead Ecosystem Group
- A new website and diverse communications and extension products
- Moving information technology to a cloud computing platform
- Developing a corporate intranet
- fRI securing the privilege of developing and hosting the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network
- fRI knowledge and partner initiatives influencing many land and resource management policies and practices, and these in turn making a difference in land and resource conservation (these achievements are summarized in a value report on the fRI website)

<sup>1</sup><http://www.modelforest.net>.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.imfn.net>.



## 1.3 Trends

This section describes some of the major trends that will influence Alberta and the management of its resources in the years ahead. These trends summarize priorities and opportunities that fRI will respond to and assist partners in addressing their knowledge needs.

### General trends

- The world's economic and intellectual centre of gravity is shifting.
- Demands for energy and other resources are growing—but so is concern about environmental impacts.
- A tidal wave of advances in knowledge is changing how the world does business.
- The world is a highly interconnected global grid.

### Environmental trends

- Pressures on the environment are increasing.
- Demands for better environmental performance are increasing.
- Cumulative effects management is becoming increasingly important.
- Solutions must be based on sound science.
- Solutions must support both environmental protection and economic development.

### Economic trends

- Alberta demographics are shifting, and population growth is driving increased demand for natural resources.
- Natural resources will continue to underpin Alberta's prosperity for the foreseeable future.
- Technology breakthroughs and the growth of the knowledge economy are creating new opportunities.
- Healthy, skilled, and engaged citizens are needed to drive innovation and sustain prosperity.

### Social trends

- Alberta's population is continuing to grow, and most people will live in larger cities.
- Demands for both natural resources and preservation of natural heritage values continue to increase.
- Public support is needed to ensure access to resources ("social licence").
- Alberta wants to earn a global reputation as a responsible energy producer and natural resource steward.
- New partnerships and ways of working together are needed to find better ways to conserve natural resources and secure prosperity.
- Society is demanding transparency in processes and to be actively engaged in resource management decisions.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.vilhelminamodelforest.se/>.

<sup>4</sup>[http://alberta.ca/acn/201105/RPCES\\_ShapingABFuture\\_Report\\_web2.pdf](http://alberta.ca/acn/201105/RPCES_ShapingABFuture_Report_web2.pdf)

## 1.4 Foothills Research Institute

This section identifies significant aspects as fRI enters the fifth five-year business phase.

### Strengths

- Partnerships at all levels are strong, active, and growing.
- The business portfolio continues to expand in both subject and geographic scope.
- Funding has grown overall.
- fRI has had 20 years of success, producing high-quality science-based information that gets used by and adds value to partners.
- fRI is highly regarded provincially, nationally, and internationally as being innovative and responsive in addressing science gaps for support of land and natural resource management.

### Weaknesses

- Partnerships with Aboriginal and environmental non-governmental organization sectors are not as strong as they could be.
- Managing growth is a challenge as existing infrastructure and personnel capacity is near the limit.
- Integration between programs needs to increase.
- The time lag between knowledge creation and knowledge transfer needs to decrease.

### Opportunities

- Develop partnerships with other like-minded organizations in the areas of research and knowledge transfer.
- Expand the business portfolio into new themes and programs as per partner interests.
- Increase opportunities to assist partners with demonstration and evaluation.
- Realize the knowledge transfer potential of the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network.

### Risks

- Not remaining relevant and failing to add value to partners
- Growing too quickly
- Losing significant revenue sources
- Losing focus and effectiveness as an organization



## Definitions

**Value** - something that has relative worth, merit, or importance.

**Criterion** - a category of conditions or processes by which sustainable management may be assessed. Two criteria sets applicable to Canada are the Montreal Process <http://tinyurl.com/MontrealProcess> and the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers <http://tinyurl.com/CCFMCriteria>. Synonyms: principle.

**Goal** - a broad statement of desired results.

**Objective** - a more specific statement of desired results, related to one or more goals.

**Indicator** - a quantitative or qualitative variable that can be measured or described. Synonyms: performance measure, yardstick.

**Strategy** - an approach to achieve a goal, objective, or target.

**Target** - a quantitative (quantity and time) level of achievement in relation to an indicator. Synonyms: measurable outcome, measure of success.

**Theme** - a broad topic used to organize the fRI business portfolio.

**Program** - a more specific area of interest that is the base organizational structure for the fRI business portfolio.

**Project** - an activity with clearly defined scope, timeline, and deliverables.

### Business Strategy Organization

Values, goals, objectives, themes, and programs are in the business strategy (this document). The business strategy is supported by a business strategy implementation plan, program strategies, and program annual work plans.

- Indicators and targets are in the business strategy implementation plan.
- Program-specific indicators and targets are in the program strategies.
- Projects are in the program annual work plans.



## 2.0 VISION AND MISSION

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 the fRI vision and mission.

### Land and Resource Management

**Land** - the Earth and all of the physical (land, water, air, etc.) and biological (biodiversity, ecological cycles, etc.) components that support life. A landscape is an area that humans designate to localize our interest and attention.

**Resource** - an aspect of the land that humans identify and value. Resources get defined for multiple purposes, including extraction (wood, moose, natural gas, etc.), ecological function (carbon storage, water cycle, biodiversity, etc.), and appreciation (recreation, natural heritage, existence value, etc.).

**Management**- what humans do to achieve goals related to land and resources. Names used to denote management usually imply both a goal and what is being managed. Common terms include sustainable development, integrated land(scape) management, land-use, resource management (e.g. forest management, wildlife management, cumulative effects management).

#### 2.1 Vision

fRI is a leader in developing innovative science for land and resource management.

#### 2.2 Mission

fRI develops and disseminates science-based knowledge and tools to a community of diverse and actively engaged partners.

#### 2.3 Tagline

Research growing into practice.



## 2.4 Values

fRI values help us to prosper as an organization, support ties to the land and resources, and respect the privilege and obligations that individuals and organizations have to use and conserve land and resources for present and future generations.

### Partnerships

fRI derives strength, direction, and support from dedicated partnerships at all organizational levels. Partnerships are the foundation of fRI's success.

### Collaboration

fRI links managers and researchers to produce and communicate high-value and current applied research that is needed to improve land and resource management. Continual linkage ensures that fRI remains relevant to partners.

### Innovation

fRI creates leading-edge knowledge, processes, technologies, and ideas that are accepted and used by partners and customers.

### People

fRI depends on the dedicated contributions of individuals. Their engagement and support ensure that fRI remains dynamic, vigorous, and focused.

### Respect

fRI welcomes open participation, discussion, and acceptance of varied opinions. fRI is a safe place to express and discuss innovative science and ideas on land and resource management.

### Trust

fRI is an independent, non-aligned source of high-quality research and knowledge. fRI is a reliable source of unbiased knowledge and a trusted place to hold sensitive data and link partners who otherwise might have difficulty working together.

### Science

fRI affirms its belief that sound science is the basis for good land and resource management. fRI subscribes to and meets the highest standards of peer-reviewed science.

### Leadership

fRI leads the way to better knowledge and tools that partners need. fRI is on the leading edge of today's important issues.

### Communication

fRI knowledge informs policy and practice through communication between knowledge holders and knowledge users. fRI employs cutting-edge methods to ensure knowledge transfers to partners and to support their efforts to translate to policy and practice.

### Non-partisan

fRI develops and transfers knowledge and tools to partners and other interested parties who are responsible for developing policy and practice. fRI passionately advocates for strong science and assesses policy and practice options but does not advocate for adoption of any particular option.

### Success

fRI has two decades of successful outcomes and positive influence on policy and practices and a portfolio continually expanding in subject and geographic scope.

### Value

fRI is a non-profit organization. Partners receive superior return on investment through leverage, synergy, low overhead, collaboration, and program integration. fRI adds value to policy and practice development, implementation, and evaluation.

### Healthy landscapes

fRI recognizes that healthy landscapes provide natural heritage and benefits for human beings who must look after the land and resources to support them in perpetuity.

### Stewardship

fRI embraces and supports stewardship principles and programs for the benefit of current and future generations. fRI accepts this as a shared responsibility that binds people together.



## 3.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

fRI has identified nine goals for the next business cycle. The goals are grounded on the collective accomplishments of the past 20 years and four phases of fRI history. They provide clear direction for the future to ensure that fRI remains a dynamic, robust, and relevant organization.

1. Partnerships: Nurture and expand fRI partnerships.
2. Geographic scope: Expand the fRI geographic scope to encompass partner interests as appropriate for each program.
3. Business portfolio: Review and expand the fRI business portfolio scope and integration based on partner priorities.
4. Science excellence: Ensure research is non-partisan and meets high standards for quality, relevance, and recognition.
5. Knowledge transfer: Facilitate the adoption of fRI knowledge, tools, and technology into land and resource management practice.
6. Partner outreach and support: Contribute to the success of fRI partners.
7. Land and resource management: Contribute to improved land and resource management in Alberta and beyond.
8. Reporting: Report to fRI partners and audiences on achievements and progress.
9. Resources: Expand fRI resources and investment.

### 3.1 Partnerships

#### Goal 1: Nurture and expand fRI partnerships.

Partnerships are the foundation and lifeblood of fRI. Through the contributions and actions of partners, issues are identified and analyzed, resources are assembled, and new knowledge is created, transferred, and integrated into land and resource management in Alberta and beyond. The strength of the fRI organization would not be what it is today without partners' commitment, and fRI is honoured to have their contributions in any form. fRI offers and supports flexible and inclusive partnership structures and opportunities that are broadly described by the categories listed below. These are not exclusive, and many partners find a role for themselves in more than one category.

- **Shareholders** – Under Alberta legislation, shareholders are legally responsible for directing the affairs of the non-profit fRI. Shareholders provide stable core funding and in-kind contributions to support the overall operation of fRI.
- **Program and project partners** – These partners provide funding and/or in-kind contributions to directly support fRI programs and/or projects. Many of these partners have land and resource management responsibility and incorporate fRI knowledge and tools into their ongoing activities.
- **Collaboration partners** – These partners collaborate with fRI on programs, projects, or other matters of mutual interest. The collaboration may involve contribution or exchange of funds, and/or in-kind contributions, or may simply be an agreement to work together.
- **Alignment partners** – These partners do not provide direct financial or in-kind support to fRI, but they have specifically expressed their support for and alignment with fRI vision and goals.

<sup>5</sup>Partners are listed in the fRI Annual Report and on the fRI website [www.foothillsRI.ca](http://www.foothillsRI.ca)

- **Associations** – fRI works closely with associations, which are groups of organizations (many of which are also fRI partners in other ways) that have agreed to work together to support and achieve common goals and objectives that are broadly aligned with fRI interests. Associations are independently funded and managed by their members, and their mandate may include respectfully advocating and implementing new land and resource management policy and practice. Their annual work plans are approved by their members and reviewed and endorsed by the fRI Board of Directors. The purpose of the Board review is to ensure oversight of any fRI contributions, financial integrity, and continued alignment with fRI interests.
- **Members** – Members are individuals or organizations that are not otherwise identified as a partner but receive enhanced access to and use of publications, data, and/or tools in exchange for a membership fee or other payment.

Every program is involved with partner engagement, and activity is based on questions and interests of partners, and their willingness to work on and fund projects. Continued success depends on remaining relevant to existing partners and seeking new partners. This includes forming more collaboration partnerships with other research organizations.

Evaluation of partnerships is difficult and has so far been mostly qualitative. Partners do ask what value they get from their contribution compared to other options, such as contracting to other providers or doing the work themselves. fRI can help organizations with their partnership decisions by providing better evaluation information to individual partners and to the greater partnership. This includes partner (or sector) focused information related to the business portfolio.

fRI will also seek opportunities to link and join in with other organizations and initiatives to add value and create synergies and efficiencies.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Goal 1: Nurture and expand fRI partnerships.**

1. Maintain existing partnerships and work to expand the active partnership for all program areas to increase the overall value of fRI to partners.
2. Recruit to the shareholder category to increase core participation and funding.
3. Seek increased participation from Aboriginal and environmental non-governmental organization sectors to broaden representation and better capture the value of input and contributions from all sectors.
4. Establish more collaboration partnerships with like-minded research and knowledge transfer organizations to leverage and synergize fRI interests and initiatives.
5. Support and grow affiliations with associations and other organizations to provide mutual benefits to fRI and associations.
6. Facilitate networking of partners and organizations that are linked to common concerns, issues, and solutions to enhance value for all involved.
7. Develop and implement a partner value process to help partners with their partnership decisions related to fRI, and to report to the overall partnership and prospective partners.
8. Establish a membership structure to offer fee-based access to individuals and organizations that are interested in enhanced fRI services.

## 3.2 Geographic Scope

### **Goal 2: Expand the fRI geographic scope to encompass partner interests as appropriate for each program.**

With expanding programs and partner interest, the geographic scope of fRI has grown beyond the original core study area in the central Alberta Foothills. Nodes of research and application reflecting the interests of partners now occur throughout Alberta. The geographic scope of some fRI programs has crossed provincial and international boundaries. For example, the Grizzly Bear Program has expanded to encompass all Alberta grizzly bear range and has relationships with programs in British Columbia, the United States, and Scandinavia. The current geographic scope of fRI programs and associations is shown in Figure 1.

With the advent of the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network, fRI now has a responsibility to develop a network supporting the development and transfer of land-use knowledge at least at the scale of the Province of Alberta. This network will include non-fRI knowledge, and it offers good potential to help expand the geographic scope of fRI programs.

As fRI grows, the Board wants to extend the geographic and subject scope of fRI programs to serve the needs of our partners in Alberta, and, where there are synergies, in areas outside Alberta. This goal is tempered by the need to not overextend, and to not impinge on other organizations doing similar work in areas of current or future fRI interest. This balance will be achieved by expanding the geographic scope of interest, but not necessarily the geographic extent of fRI's actual research operations. fRI will also seek partnerships with other organizations as a way of extending scope.

For this business cycle, the fRI Board directed that the historical core study area concept be discontinued and that Alberta be the baseline geographic scope of fRI interest. Although not all fRI programs will move to the Alberta scale, all programs are encouraged to engage beyond their current scope if there is partner interest and value. The fRI mandate to work with partners to demonstrate and evaluate fRI knowledge on the land will continue.

One valuable legacy of the core study area concept is the extensive GIS data that fRI assembles and holds on behalf of partners. As the geographic extent of fRI activities grows, GIS services will have to accommodate and increase data storage and the means to process and analyze data.

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **Goal 2: Expand the fRI geographic scope to encompass partner interests as appropriate for each program.**

Evaluate the current geographic scope of each program and develop a plan to meet the strategic direction through internal expansion and/or collaboration/alignment with others.

1. Use Alberta as the starting point for geographic scope planning.
2. Where appropriate, explore reasonable and mutually beneficial opportunities for partnerships that extend geographic scope across Alberta borders.
3. Implement the overall geographic scope expansion plan.



Figure 1. Geographic scope of Foothills Research Institute research and application as of March 31, 2012

### 3.3 Business Portfolio

#### **Goal 3: Review and expand the fRI business portfolio scope and integration based on partner priorities.**

fRI has an effective and unique partner-focused process to identify research priorities, conduct research, and transfer research knowledge. Partners ask management questions that are converted to research questions and projects through the internal fRI processes of dialogue and collaboration between partners and researchers. Working with the program leads, partners are continually involved to ensure that each key issue and strategic question that requires “an answer” is well thought through. From here, they collaborate in the design, implementation, adaptation, and transfer of research knowledge. This ongoing linkage between partners and researchers ensures that research is targeted, timely, and relevant. Partners get answers to their questions, and researchers get a receptive audience for their knowledge. This flexible and responsive process focused on applied research has been very successful.

fRI has been active over the years in a wide variety of research and knowledge transfer programs and projects. The business strategy provides an opportunity to review progress with partners and set strategic directions for the next five years. The business portfolio described below is organized around criteria, themes, and programs identified as within scope for the fRI mandate. fRI operates across a variety of scales, and the business portfolio reflects this diversity.

Depending on the interests of partners, fRI may not be active in all areas of the portfolio at any one time. Investments in priority themes and programs will be made to advance the acquisition of new knowledge and to support technology transfer and informed decision making. Activities undertaken within each area will include relationship building, research, knowledge transfer, process development, demonstration, monitoring, and reporting.

As fRI moves through the fifth business cycle, the fRI business portfolio (Table 1) will be evaluated and adjusted as issues and partner demands arise. The business portfolio areas must be integrated to achieve broad land and resource management goals and objectives. As programs and projects develop, they must demonstrate their integration and linkages across the fRI business portfolio.

**Table 1. fRI Business Portfolio and Status as of March 31, 2012**

**Criterion 1: Biological Diversity**

Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	Status of Program
Grizzly Bear Program	Current program
Scandinavian Brown Bear Project	Existing collaboration
Woodland Caribou Program	In development
Pileated Woodpecker Program	Completed/inactive program
Harlequin Duck Program	Completed/inactive program
Habitat Suitability Index Program	Completed/inactive program

**Aquatic Biodiversity Theme**

Fish and Watershed Program	Program terminated in 2011; some projects merged into the Water Program
Native Fish Program	Future interest; native fish: Arctic grayling, Athabasca rainbow trout, and bull trout
Riparian Ecosystems Program	Future interest

**Criterion 2: Ecosystem Condition and Productivity**

**Landscape Dynamics Theme**

Healthy Landscapes Program	Current program
Mountain Pine Beetle Ecology Program	Current program
Lost Creek Fire Research Program	Completed/inactive program
Chisholm/Dogrib Fires Research Program	Completed/inactive program
EMEND	Existing collaboration
Foothills Growth and Yield Association	Existing association
Alberta Forest Growth Organization	Existing association

**Ecosystem Condition Theme**

Local Level Indicators Program	Completed/inactive program
Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Program	Completed program

**Criterion 3: Soil and Water**

Soil Theme - No soil-focused program or projects at present, though soil considerations are part of a number of programs and projects; future development would depend on partner interest

**Water Theme**

Water Program	Current program initiated in 2010
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**Criterion 4: Role in Global Ecological Cycles**

Climate Change Effects Program	Main focus is on the potential impacts of changes, not on climate change itself
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## Criterion 5: Economic and Social Benefits

Social Science Program	Current program
Forest History Program	Current program

## Criterion 6: Society's Responsibility (Legal, Policy, and Institutional Framework)

### Land-use Theme

Shared Footprints Program	In development; includes access management and reclamation
Foothills Landscape Management Forum	Existing association
Foothills Stream Crossing Partnership	Existing association
Yellowhead Ecosystem Group	Existing association

### Human Use Theme

Aboriginal Involvement Program	Inactive program; Board would like to be involved in interest-based Aboriginal topics
Recreation/Tourism Program	Future interest

### Knowledge Theme

GIS Program	Current program
Communications and Extension Program	Current program
Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network Program	Current program initiated in 2011
Interdisciplinary Science Collaboration Program	Future development

## OBJECTIVES

Goal 3: Review and expand the fRI business portfolio scope and integration based on partner priorities.

1. Through discussions with fRI partners, continually review the business portfolio to identify investment priorities, including new opportunities and timely revision/retirement of existing components.
2. Improve integration between program and project areas to capture synergies and address large-scale land and resource management needs, such as cumulative effects.
3. Develop annually updated five-year business strategies for each program to justify investments and guide the annual work plan process.
4. Expand annual work plans to provide the following information needed to measure progress:
  - Level of success at meeting stated deliverables from the previous year
  - Integration with other program areas
  - Communications and extension targets
  - Program success indicators and performance
5. Reorganize internet content to reflect the new fRI business portfolio.



### 3.4 Science Excellence

#### **Goal 4: Ensure research is non-partisan and meets high standards for quality, relevance, and recognition.**

fRI is recognized within the scientific community and among its partners as a source of high quality and leading-edge research. It has produced numerous peer-reviewed publications that contribute to the body of science knowledge and are cited by the scientific community and referenced by managers. fRI also promotes a bias-balanced, non-partisan approach that assures partners that fRI knowledge is independent and trusted.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

**Goal 4: Ensure research is non-partisan and meets high standards for scientific quality, relevance, and recognition.**

1. Develop a publishing policy to ensure high and non-partisan science standards.
2. Conduct third party (arm's-length) scientific reviews of research programs once every five years or at times dictated by progress of the program.
3. Evaluate and report on the relevance and uptake of fRI research.

### 3.5 Knowledge Transfer

#### **Goal 5: Facilitate the adoption of fRI knowledge, tools, and technology into land and resource management practice.**

fRI success is measured in part through use of fRI knowledge by partners and others. Effectively transferred knowledge has a better chance of being put to use. Over the years, the effort devoted to knowledge transfer has increased as the fRI knowledge portfolio has grown. Establishment of the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network in the spring of 2011 provided a major knowledge transfer investment to be supported by fRI.

The Communications and Extension Program (CEP) will integrate with the Land-use Knowledge Network to leverage transfer of fRI knowledge through Land-use Knowledge Network activities as well as the existing fRI CEP. fRI partners will benefit from the increased audience and integration opportunities of the Land-use Knowledge Network.

fRI does not have a direct or legislative role in land and resource management. fRI products and outcomes inform decisions for responsible resource development and support land and resource management policy. The fRI knowledge transfer goal is to provide science-based and useful information to partners and other interested parties in order to assist them with their own initiatives and objectives. By collaboratively supporting partners through structured communications and extension activities, fRI expects to assist with their success and improvements to land and resource management in Alberta and beyond. These processes and outcomes will broaden the fRI sphere of influence.

The following are major components of fRI knowledge transfer initiatives:

- **fRI website** – The most cost-effective communications and extension tool available to partners. The move to an open-source content management system will allow fRI to develop new tools and provide additional functionality quickly and at a reduced cost. The website is the delivery and feedback mechanism for many of the items below.
- **Publications** – Include peer-reviewed publications, reports, Quick Notes, Integration Notes, Partner Perspectives, Annual Report, Footnotes newsletter, program and project summary pages, progress reports, presentations, technical reports, posters, manuals and guidebooks, books, and photo/video galleries.
- **Events** – Include the open house and annual general meeting, conferences, multi-site (virtual) and single-site workshops, information sessions, Short Courses, fRI-days Brown Bag Lunch Speaker Series, presentations, webinars, tours, and displays.

- **Web-based tools** – Include Ecotour iPhone application, GeoConnections fRImap, NEPTUNE, OnFire, Mountain Pine Beetle Decision Support Tool, and research compendiums.
- **News and situation scanning** – Includes RSS feeds, podcasts, “In the News...” (web article filtering), eNotes monthly electronic newsletter, and social media [e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube].
- **Corporate intranet** – Includes single log-on access for partners; project collaboration space; centralized document, contact, and photo libraries; best practice wikis; pre- and post- knowledge-transfer event discussion forums; and real-time work planning, including detailed progress reporting.

## OBJECTIVES

Goal 5: Facilitate the adoption of fRI knowledge, tools, and technology into land and resource management practice.

1. Seek and invest in opportunities to define, broaden, and expand audiences for fRI knowledge.
2. Develop and implement a science-policy interface process.
3. Evaluate and refine multiple information and knowledge products and delivery mechanisms to meet the varied needs of partners and external audiences.
4. Maintain and enhance internet-based information delivery and discussion forums to provide timely and relevant knowledge transfer.
5. Establish knowledge-transfer partnerships to enhance content and delivery of knowledge developed by fRI and like-minded organizations.
6. Leverage the Land-use Knowledge Network as the external extension arm for fRI to improve awareness of science-based research findings and knowledge. Transferring fRI knowledge and tools through the LuKN will provide a larger audience, grow the fRI network, and help identify opportunities for integration with potential new partners and organizations.
7. Hold an annual fRI event to identify knowledge-transfer needs and priorities for the coming year. The results of this event will form the basis for knowledge-transfer portions of annual work plans.

## 3.6 Partner Outreach and Support

### Goal 6: Contribute to the success of fRI partners.

As an organization founded on partnership and closely connected to partners, fRI success is measured in part by how well fRI reaches out to and supports partners with new knowledge and tools and how the contributions fRI makes help to support their success. Partner outreach has followed three main paths.

**Program-specific outreach** – Outreach primarily to program partners (but usually extended to all partners and external audiences) about knowledge and tools developed by one of the fRI programs (e.g., grizzly bear GIS tools)

**Partner-specific outreach** – Outreach on request or solicitation to one or more partners (e.g., a targeted seminar for partner staff on a subject of their choice)

**General outreach** – Outreach to all fRI partners and external audiences (e.g., program updates provided at the annual general meeting)

In addition to outreach, fRI supports partners who wish to adopt new approaches that are developed using fRI products and assist with design and evaluation of demonstrations of new approaches. Partner support at the interface between science and policy has mostly been in response to partner requests.

Evaluation of how fRI contributions support partner success has been largely informal. The “Partner Perspectives” series features testimonials from partners about how they have benefited from being a partner. Programs also canvass partners for documentation of how fRI contributions have been adopted into policy and practice.

### OBJECTIVES

#### Goal 6: Contribute to the success of fRI partners.

1. **Partner outreach and support** – Develop and annually update a five-year strategic plan for partner outreach and support and implement the plan as part of the annual work plan process. Extract and summarize the annual outreach and support plans from programs and report on progress as part of the fRI annual report.
2. **Innovation awareness** – Through partnerships, fRI will identify and encourage awareness of innovation opportunities, particularly integrated innovation, to support land and resource management.
3. **Innovation support** – Provide support to partners who are working toward acceptance and use of fRI knowledge and tools to improve and add value to new legislation, policies, and practices.
4. **Innovation catalogue** – fRI will work with partners to identify, document, and report on innovations that are based in part on fRI contributions and have been demonstrated or implemented as a new standard policy or practice.
5. **Demonstration projects** – Assist fRI partners with design, evaluation, and reporting on demonstration projects that capitalize on knowledge and tools developed by fRI and others to improve responsible land and resource development and accompanying policy and practice.
6. **Information support** – Assist fRI partners and associations with their monitoring and adaptive management initiatives.

## 3.7 Land and Resource Management

### **Goal 7: Contribute to improved land and resource management in Alberta and beyond.**

The fRI vision and mission statements speak to the need to generate and use knowledge to improve land and resource management. Ultimately the success of fRI is best gauged by measuring and documenting positive changes to the land and resources, and to the ways people interact with them, that were influenced by fRI products and activities, either directly or indirectly.

The fRI research design model connects managers with researchers and includes a continual pathway to transfer and apply new knowledge. It has served fRI and partners well for 20 years. fRI has not formally tracked changes on the ground, and it would be difficult to identify all of the influenced outcomes. Going forward, fRI will document the knowledge produced by fRI and the corresponding changes on the ground that can be largely or partially attributed to the activities of fRI.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

##### **Goal 7: Contribute to improved land and resource management in Alberta and beyond.**

1. Develop the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network to create a virtual network of practitioners and interested parties to develop, share, and improve knowledge in support of the Alberta Land-use Framework.
2. Monitor and document policy and practices changes that were influenced by fRI knowledge and tools.
3. Monitor and document changes in land and resource conditions that were influenced by fRI knowledge and tools.

## 3.8 Reporting

### **Goal 8: Report to fRI partners and audiences on achievements and progress.**

In addition to science reports and other communication materials produced by programs, fRI has a robust system of reporting on achievements and activities to partners and wider audiences. This system includes the Annual Report and various forms of media outreach centred on the website. The new Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network provides an opportunity to extend the reporting reach of fRI to all of Alberta and beyond.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

##### **Goal 8: Report to fRI partners and audiences on achievements and progress.**

1. Publish the Annual Report and other reporting media on a regular basis.
2. Leverage the Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network to expand the scope of the fRI business portfolio to reach a wider audience through reporting on fRI and partner achievements.

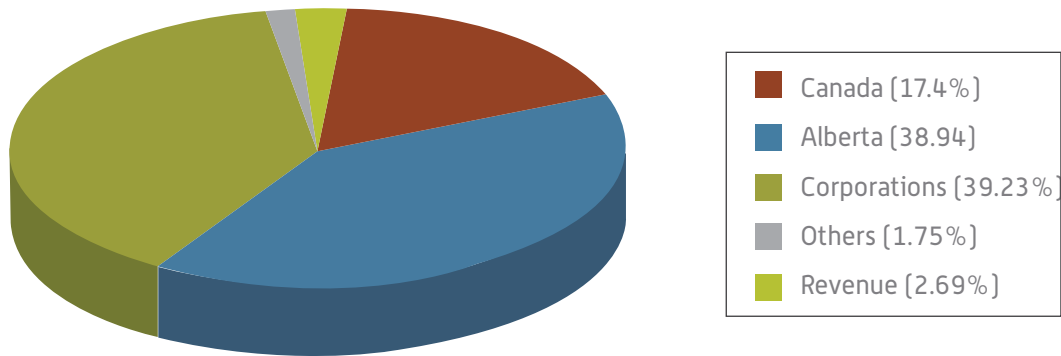
### 3.9 Resources

#### Goal 9: Expand fRI resources and investment.

##### Financial Resources

A key source of Foothills Model Forest funding for many years was the Canadian Model Forest Program, initiated by the Canadian Forest Service in 1992. The Model Forest Program provided annual funding for 15 years, ending in 2007, accounting for about 18.4% of total fRI revenue of almost \$58 million over 19 years. Recognizing that the federal funding was never intended to be enduring, the Board sought and secured additional funding from partners to establish stable and ongoing support for fRI. Major revenue streams over 20 years (Figure 2) were about equally split between the Alberta Government (38.9%) and corporations (39.2%).

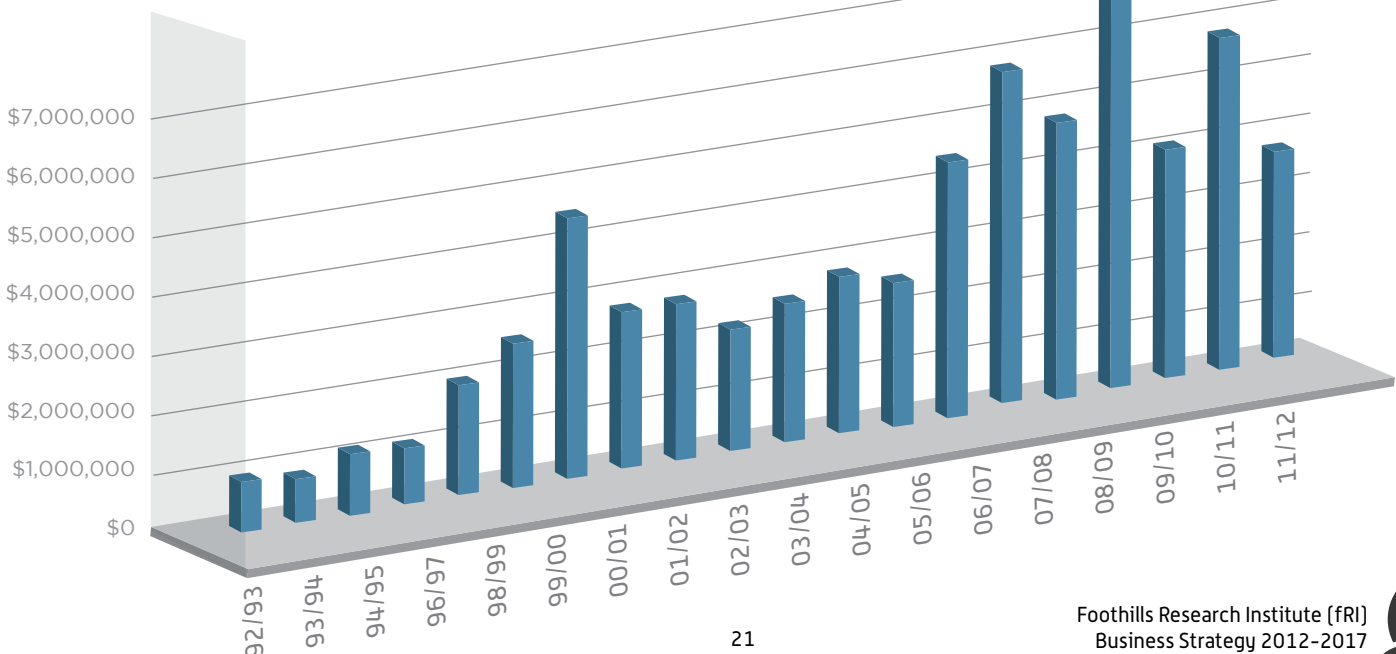
**Figure 2. Foothills Research Institute Revenue by Source 1992-2012**



fRI faces the continuing challenge of maintaining funding from existing partners and attracting new partners to support fRI activities. Multi-year funding commitments are particularly important for business continuity and planning.

fRI tracks in-kind and other contributions but hasn't developed a "total value" financial statement. In-kind contributions of particular note include Alberta Sustainable Resource Development full-time secondments to the positions of general manager, Grizzly Bear Program lead, and Water Program lead. West Fraser Mills provides part-time secondments to the positions of president and treasurer. All partners who participate on the Board, Work Plan Review Committee, Science Review Panel, and program activity teams donate their contributions. Other contributions include the very significant leverage provided by partners that does not flow through fRI accounts.

**Figure 3. Foothills Research Institute Annual Revenue 1992-2012**



## Human Resources

fRI activities require dedicated people to make everything work. fRI takes pride in attracting and supporting highly qualified and effective people. The partnership organization and approach position fRI for success, but fRI people achieve it. fRI will ensure that human resources remain a high priority.

## OBJECTIVES

Goal 9: Expand fRI resources and investment.

### Financial Resources

1. Through existing and new partnerships, affirm and seek new sources of continuing direct revenue and in-kind and indirect contributions.
2. Develop more multi-year funding commitments to ensure stable core funding and business continuity.
3. Increase leverage for partner funding by accessing more external funding sources.
4. Generate more revenue from fRI products and activities.
5. Track and report the "total value" of fRI partnership contributions.
6. Through the Finance Committee, continually investigate opportunities to increase revenue streams and efficiencies within the fRI financial system.

### Human Resources

7. Provide a preferred place to work by working with staff to:
  - a. Create a vibrant work atmosphere that promotes innovation and excellence.
  - b. Provide opportunities for personal, academic, and technical staff development.
  - c. Develop and annually update staff career plans, which will form part of an fRI Succession Plan.
  - d. Recognize individual and group contributions.
  - e. Provide a safe, comfortable, and desirable workplace.
  - f. Provide the resources needed to work efficiently and effectively.
7. Support education and training of "highly qualified persons" (staff, associates, students, etc.) who will contribute to fRI and partner success.
8. Leverage the Land-use Knowledge Network to create networks and contact lists of experts, managers, etc. for various aspects of land and resource use.



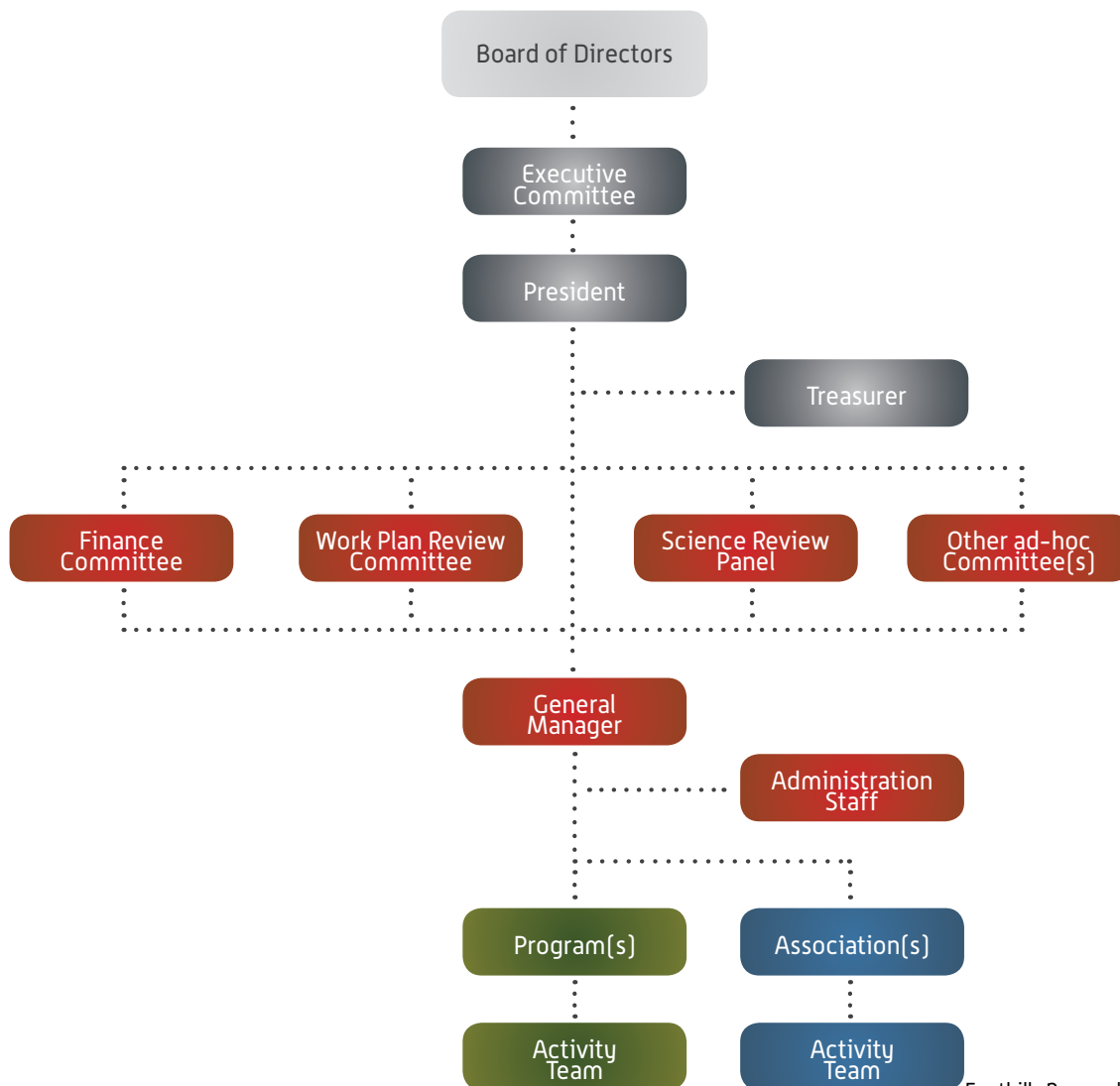
## 4.0 ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

fRI activities require an effective organization and a significant amount of organizational and operational support and coordination. As a non-profit organization that wants to dedicate a very high proportion of resources to core business, fRI must be efficient and have low overhead costs. Administration expense for fiscal year 2010–2011 was 3.6% of total expenses.

### fRI adheres to the following operating principles:

1. Fiscal responsibility and accountability.
2. Application of business principles to manage fRI activities and programs.
3. Partnerships that have broad representation and are participatory, solid, and mutually beneficial.
4. An actively involved Board of Directors structured to reflect the fRI shareholder and partnership dynamic.
5. Maintaining awareness of issues and opportunities within the scope of partner and fRI interests.
6. Continual learning, innovation, and empowerment as necessary elements to ensure fRI leadership and success.
7. Strong collaboration between the research and management communities.
8. Embracing knowledge management principles, including succession management planning.

fRI organizational structure is illustrated in Figure 4.





## 4.1 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors (Table 2) represents the shareholders and other partners and oversees fRI activities. The Board will periodically review its membership to ensure that fRI strategic directions and governance remain aligned with partner interests and needs. As part of this process, the Board will define the Board participation process and determine meaningful and effective roles for partner participation at the Board level.

The Board includes individuals from agencies with land and resource management authority, or those who work in areas that have direct impact on these. This structure will continue to ensure that the work carried out by fRI has direct relevance to those who manage land and resources and are likely to apply knowledge and tools as they become available. For this reason, the Board will continue to set overall fRI priorities, considering input from partners, internal resources and processes (e.g., activity teams), and other sources. The Board operates by consensus and meets quarterly or as required. The Board approves and maintains committees to report and provide recommendations to the Board and may from time to time strike additional committees as required.

Table 2. Composition of the fRI Board of Directors and allocated members by partner organization as of March 31, 2012

Organization	Number of Members
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	4
Jasper National Park of Canada*	2
West Fraser Mills Ltd.*	3
Foothills Energy Partners*, †	3
Forestry Canada	1
University of Alberta	1
Alberta Tourism Parks and Recreation	1
West Yellowhead Municipalities	1
Teck Resources Ltd.	1
Aboriginal communities	3
Total Board Membership	20
* fRI shareholder.	
† ConocoPhillips Canada Ltd., Encana Corp., Suncor Energy Inc., and Talisman Energy Inc.	

<sup>6</sup>Responsibilities of Board of Directors members are outlined in the publication "Duties and Responsibilities of Directors of Non-profit Corporations" by Steven Krieger, BA LLB, 1989. fRI Board members receive no compensation.



### 4.1.1 Shareholders Committee

The Shareholders Committee consists of Board members representing fRI shareholders. The shareholders are legally responsible for ensuring that fRI operates within the requirements of relevant legislation. Shareholders form the core of the fRI partnership and identify and solicit new partner involvement to raise contributions and add value to fRI. Most fRI affairs are normally directed by the Board, and the Shareholders Committee is available on an as-needed basis (e.g., if the Board is unable to reach a consensus).

### 4.1.2 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of at least one Board representative from each shareholder and other Board members as determined by the Board. The committee oversees ongoing fRI business and facilitates the objectives and directions of the Board. It includes the Board chair, the president, the treasurer, and the general manager. The treasurer and the general manager are the only non-voting members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee reports to the Board and relays its decisions, actions, and recommendations for Board approval or revision at Board meetings.

### 4.1.3 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee consists of appointed Board members who work with the general manager, treasurer, accountant, and independent fRI auditor to ensure financial accountability.

### 4.2 Work Plan Review Committee

The Work Plan Review Committee (WPC) consists of program leads along with sponsor and partner representatives. Membership will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The WPC is accountable to the Board through the general manager, who is entrusted to deliver annual work plans to the Board for approval.

The Work Plan Review Committee will:

- Review draft work plans to ensure that they are aligned with fRI goals and objectives and provide their recommendations to program or association leads and to the Board
- Identify opportunities for integrating program and project initiatives and communications and outreach opportunities
- Identify opportunities to inform and support land and resource management policy

### 4.3 Science Review Panel

The Science Review Panel provides advice to fRI on emerging trends and issues, science advances, and opportunities for improvement of all science aspects of the fRI organization, including periodic program reviews. The purpose of the panel is to ensure that fRI continues to provide the highest standard of peer-reviewed research and other knowledge to partners and external audiences. The Science Review Panel consists of external science professionals and other individuals appointed by the Board.

### 4.4 Activity Teams

All multi-year fRI program initiatives will be managed with assistance from activity teams. Activity teams consist of the program lead (appointed by the Board), partner representatives, scientists, and others. The teams design and implement the detailed initiatives necessary to meet fRI strategic goals and objectives. Activity teams will be developed around each of the major theme or program initiative areas approved by this strategy and subsequent related plans, policies, and strategies. Board members appointed as liaisons will attend activity team meetings to ensure that directions specified by the Board and the rationale behind them are clearly understood, and to provide direct two-way communication between activity teams and the Board. The Board will develop terms of reference for activity teams to ensure they balance representation of science, technical, and manager expertise and interests and form functioning management-research collaborations. These terms of reference will assist in program development and delivery and ensure both scientific rigour and management relevance. Activity team membership will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommended for Board approval.



## 5.0 OUTCOMES

fRI recognizes that to be successful, this business strategy must have well-defined and measurable outcomes. The goals and objectives outlined in this strategy form the basis of a five-year implementation plan, which will be developed after the business strategy is approved. The implementation plan will be in place on April 1, 2012, and it will be updated annually. It will consist of expected outcomes (objectives, indicators and targets) that include both the objectives developed for the overall business strategy and those developed by programs. There will be one or more indicators (ways to measure) and targets for each objective.

### **Example (hypothetical):**

**Objective:** Increase leverage for partner funding by accessing more external funding sources

**Indicator:** Annual total revenue from external funding sources

**Target:** Increase annual total revenue from external funding sources by an average of 5% per year for five years (25% from baseline over five years)



# Appendix 1:

## Summary of Commitments and Outcomes from Phase IV, 2007–2012.

Commitment	Outcome
Recruit more shareholders	The Foothills Energy Partners joined fRI as a shareholder.
Maintain and build the partnership, especially Aboriginal and environmental non-governmental organization (ENGO) sectors	The fRI partnership grew 41% from 100 to 141. Average annual revenue grew 49% from Phase III (\$3,499,102) to Phase IV (\$5,230,392; first 4 years). Aboriginal partnership remained stable while ENGO participation remained to be engaged.
Develop a working relationship with an international model forest	fRI partnered with the Vilhelmina Model Forest in Sweden.
Link to the Alberta Water for Life Program	fRI initiated a Water Program with links to Water for Life.
Develop program investment priorities.	Completed. fRI completed and then deactivated the Aboriginal Involvement Program and initiated a Water Program and a Climate Change Program. fRI invested in existing programs and grew the overall program portfolio and level of investment.
Initiate discussions about developing an innovation forest	This proposal from Alberta Forest Research Institute ended when AFRI became Alberta Innovates.
Develop a strategy for increasing networking with universities	fRI has current projects and relationships with 14 universities.
Review the organization name, logo, and tagline	Foothills Model Forest became fRI, the logo was changed, and a new tagline was developed.
Update the communications and extension strategy	Completed
Establish and work with a network of like-minded organizations and companies (a “network of nodes”)	fRI partnered with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two new associations: AFGO and YEG</li> <li>• EMEND</li> <li>• Scandinavian Brown Bear Research Project</li> <li>• Vilhelmina Model Forest</li> <li>• FORREX</li> <li>• WOLF</li> </ul>
Move to a web-based data management platform	fRI moved to a cloud computing environment, which includes a web-based data management system.
Expand annual work plan content to assist with evaluation of programs and projects	A new annual work plan format was designed and implemented through SharePoint.

<sup>7</sup>ConocoPhillips, Encana, Suncor Energy, and Talisman Energy.



Broaden the sphere of communications and extension influence	A new website was developed. fRI became the home of the new Alberta Knowledge Network.
Develop audience-specific messages	Completed.
Develop an array of information and knowledge delivery mechanisms	Completed. New mechanisms include RSS, Facebook, YouTube, fRI days, Twitter, etc.
Maintain and enhance Internet-based information delivery and discussion forums	A new website was developed. fRI became the home of the new Alberta Land-use Knowledge Network.
Ensure that geographic information systems, finance, and administration support remain strong and supportive of the entire operation	Completed.
Evaluate new technology services to improve support and delivery	fRI moved to a cloud computing environment.
Develop a succession plan	Not completed. Vacancies and organization changes were addressed as they arose.
Develop a staff development and relations policy	Completed.
Formulate a list of expected outcomes	Partially completed. Expected outcomes were developed for programs and projects but not for fRI as a whole.
Review the articles of association	Completed.
Review PIT membership and terms of reference	Completed.
Apply to the Forest Communities Program	Unsuccessful. However, fRI was able to grow partnerships and resources at higher levels than would have been provided by the FCP.



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1176 Switzer Dr, Box 6330 | Hinton, AB, T7V 1X6  
| 780-865-8393 | [www.foothillsri.ca](http://www.foothillsri.ca)