



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2009

FireSmart projects to support economic renewal and protect Alberta communities

EDMONTON, ALBERTA – Fourteen projects will receive funding through the Fire Hazard Reduction and Forest Health Program (FireSmart) to provide an immediate economic stimulus for Alberta forestry communities and reduce their susceptibility to wildfire.

The announcement was made today by the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, and the Honourable Ted Morton, Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, together with Trevor Wakelin, President of the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta.

“Our Government, through Canada’s Economic Action Plan, is proud to support Alberta forestry communities and workers during these challenging economic times,” said Minister of State Yelich. “The projects announced today under the FireSmart initiative will lead to new employment opportunities while enhancing the health and safety of Alberta’s forests.”

Minister Morton said the projects will help to sustain and protect forest communities. “The work is an important part of our strategy to strengthen Alberta by growing healthier forests. Local economies will benefit from enhanced employment, and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire will create safer conditions for residents.”

More than \$5 million in funding will be directed towards the 14 projects, which are expected to create seasonal employment equivalent to 50 full-time positions in Alberta communities affected by the decrease in global demand for forest products. In addition, the projects will also help sustain more than 24 businesses and treat an estimated 1,693 hectares of forests that are currently exposed to wildfire hazard and other threats.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to work with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development on this key program,” said FRIAA president Trevor Wakelin. “The new work carried out under the program serves the Province’s commitment to forest sustainability and supports Western Economic Diversification Canada’s commitment to creating employment opportunities in communities throughout Alberta.”

The projects will involve forest management activities such as disposing of dead wood debris and modifying stands of timber that have a high risk of catching fire. Benefits include reducing the threat of fire for communities in forested areas while protecting the value of existing timber resources.

Western Economic Diversification Canada, through the Community Adjustment Fund, and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development have each made an equal investment of \$15 million towards enabling the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) to implement the FireSmart initiative.

The projects announced today were selected from applications submitted under the first call for proposals, which was issued June 30, 2009. The deadline for submitting applications under the second call for proposals will be during mid to late October 2009. For more information on participating in subsequent calls for proposals under the Fire Hazard Reduction and Forest Health Program, visit www.friaa.ab.ca.

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**FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION AND FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM
(FIRESMART)**

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	Project Lead	FireSmart Investment
Bragg Creek Community FireSmart Project	Rocky View County	\$200,000
Containment Line Clearing Project	Tallcree First Nation	\$435,000
Fireguard / Vegetation Modification	County of Thorhild No. 7	\$180,331
Fire Hazard Reduction Project	Castle Mountain Resort Inc.	\$277,463
Fire Hazard Reduction Project	Chipewyan Dene First Nation #470	\$220,000
Fire Hazard Reduction Proposal	Loon River Cree First Nation	\$949,340
Forest Vegetation Management Plan / Fire Hazard Reduction	Town of Whitecourt	\$542,161
Marten Beach Subdivision Phase 2	Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124	\$97,500
Mountain Pine Beetle Green to Red Ratio Surveys	Weyerhaeuser Company Limited	\$47,200
Nordegg Water Infrastructure Protection	Clearwater County	\$220,159
Pre-Commercial Thinning of Young Pine Plantation	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.	\$262,500
Wildfire Protection Fire Smart Project – Phase 3	Municipality of Jasper	\$990,000
Wildfire Protection Projects – Lower Bow Valley	Parks Canada, Banff National Park	\$277,000
Willmore Park Fire Hazard Reduction	Sundance Forest Industries Ltd.	\$392,795
TOTAL		\$5,091,449