

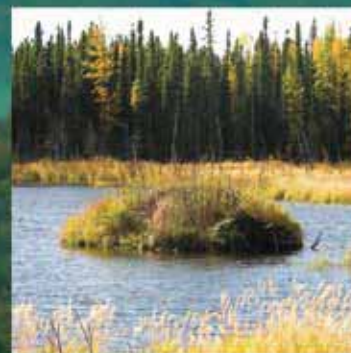
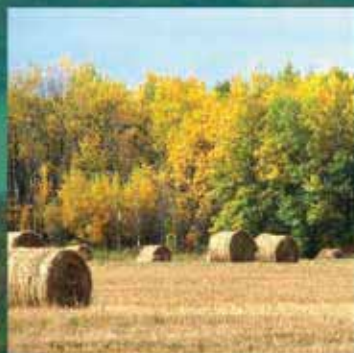
# WEBERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST PROJECT

*"A Pilot project for a Landscape Level  
Private Land Forest Management Plan in the Weberville Area"*



*Phase I Final Report and Template*

*April 1, 2008 - March 31, 2009*



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Thank you to fellow organizing committee members (Hugh Bailey, Martine Piebiak and Cindy Cuthbert) for your active support and dedication. Your commitment to attending meetings, your ability to see the big picture and your perseverance to make it all happen is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Patrick Hiesl for going above and beyond the expectations for conducting the inventories.



Agroforestry tour at the Bar 2A woodlot

*The Weberville Community Forest Project grew from a desire to share a message; that by working together we can discover greater opportunities and realize greater goals than by working alone.*

Thank you to the sponsors for funding and supporting the project. Your contribution to the project, from direct funding to supporting programs and donating trees, helped to make the project a success.

And of course, a big thank-you to the residents of the Weberville Community, especially the participating woodlot owners for opening their doors (and gates) to act as the “guinea pigs” for this pilot project.

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- Lisa Ladd, Communications Coordinator

## SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

### Project Leaders

FPInnovations – Feric Division  
Woodlot Extension Program  
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

### Sponsors

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development  
Boreal Forest Research Centre  
Ducks Unlimited Canada

### Supporters

Woodmere Nursery Ltd.  
Woodlot Association of Alberta  
Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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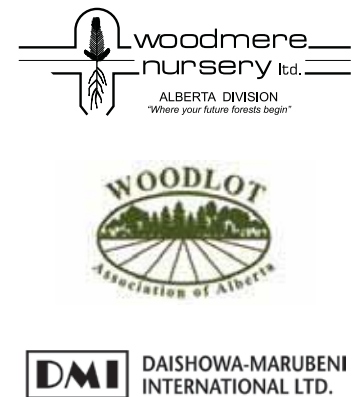
### Project Leaders



### Sponsors



### Supporters



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Background

The purpose of the Weberville Community Forest Project is to design and pilot a process for the creation of a Landscape-level Woodlot Management Plan for the community. This innovative, community-based approach to private forest land management is the first of its kind in Canada. Rather than focusing on individual woodlot owners, the project encompasses the goals of multiple woodlot owners. In doing so, the project offers a “bigger picture” view of landscape-level forest management which offers greater opportunities by virtue of its greater total land area.

This vision had grown from a similar but smaller-scale project for private woodlot management which was undertaken by the Woodlot Extension Program in 2006-2007. Project organizers met with the landowners through one to one meetings to develop woodlot management plans for their individual properties. The problem they encountered was that since individual plans are designed for small-scale operations realizing some of the objectives, such as harvesting, timber marketing, reforestation, and biodiversity considerations

was very difficult. Since these activities depend on larger volumes and areas, many of these individual plans did not shift into the implementation stage. The number of landowners throughout Alberta implementing a woodlot management plan remained extremely low.

The intent of the Weberville Project is to increase the number of landowners realizing the goals identified in their woodlot management plans with the added benefit of a landscape-level woodlot management plan for the community. The overall plan provides a broader view to help individual woodlot owners to better manage their natural resources in a sustainable manner. Together, the community learns to apply the best management practices to support their common economic, social and ecological values.

The Final Report and Template for Phase I, identifies the initial steps taken in the first year to accomplish the goals set for the Weberville Community Forest Project and provides a template for others wishing to design and implement a similar woodlot management plan within their community. Sharing the information

gathered and processes developed through this pilot project is intended to foster good stewardship of private land throughout our province and across Canada.

## Vision

The Weberville Community Forest Project will promote woodlot stewardship and sustainable landscape management of private forest land in Alberta

## Mission

To enhance woodlot management on private land by providing support to landowners, land managers and others who influence land use practices in Alberta

## Goals

The goals of the Weberville Community Forest Project are to:

- Increase the awareness of economic, social and environmental implications of private forestland in Alberta
- Increase landowner participation in sustainable woodlot management and agro-forestry
- Increase integrated community land-use planning that recognizes the values of forest resources



Doug Macaulay hosts a field tour for project area landowners and the general public

## Sponsorship and Support

Sponsorship and support for the Weberville Project was provided by FPIInnovations-Feric Division, Woodlot Extension Program, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Alberta Fish and Game, Boreal Forest Research Centre, Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd., Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Woodlot Association of Alberta and Woodmere Nurseries.

## Organizing Committee

Team leaders, Juri Agapow and Doug Macaulay, of FPIInnovations-Feric Division and Woodlot Extension Program respectively, proposed the project idea in March of 2008. The next step, after securing funding was to form an organizing committee.

Members were recruited as part of the contribution from some of the sponsoring organizations and others were hired under contract specifically for the project.

### **Project area**

The Weberville project area is located approximately 20 km northwest of the town of Peace River, Alberta. The project area covers approximately 333 square km (130 square miles), 60% of which is private land.

The site was selected for a number of reasons, including its well defined geographical boundaries, significant amount of private land, good cross section of forest stand types and its high social interaction of community members.

### **Extension Activities**

Community meetings were held on four occasions throughout the year. Meetings included facilitated group activities, updates on the Weberville Project and presentations on other topics of importance. Feedback collected on evaluation forms after each meeting was very positive. Newsletters were produced after each of the four community meetings and were distributed throughout the project area.

Other media support included several articles written in local and regional newspapers and a radio interview.

### **Inventory**

Inventory reports were completed on 17 individual woodlots, representing 11 landowners and approximately 3680 acres of land. The inventory provides the landowner with a complete package of detailed information about the environmental features of their land such as water courses, terrain, soils, wildlife features, and stand-type and is accompanied by maps showing the described features. Valuable information such as the identification of ideal tree classes for harvesting or wildlife habitat for preservation assists the landowners when making decisions for the sustainable management of his or her land.

The inventory work was conducted by Patrick Hiesl, a student from the University of Applied Science, Rottenburg Germany. Patrick worked on the project for 5 months before returning to Germany to finish his degree in Forestry. Patrick has been highly commended for his professionalism and attention to detail while conducting the inventory and preparing the reports.

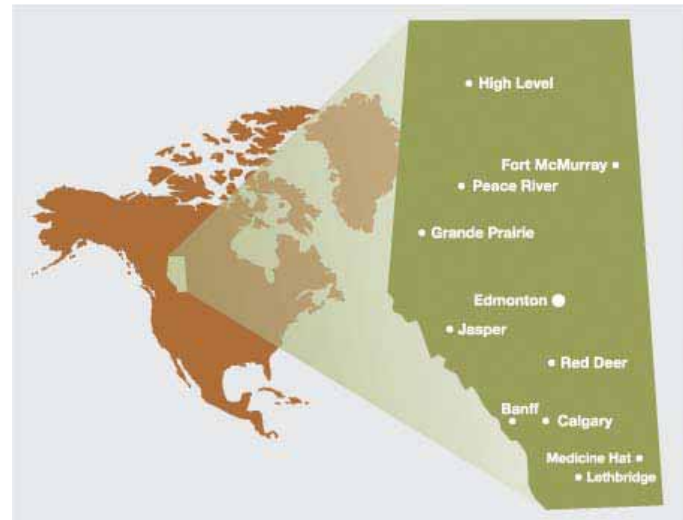
## Outcomes

The project was considered a great success for providing a benefit to the Weberville community in a number of ways:

- Increased awareness of the forest resources, wetland and wildlife features, recreational and business opportunities
- Supplied over 3000 trees to local residents for reforestation and shelterbelt planting with an increased interest in future plantings
- Provided free comprehensive woodlot inventories for participating landowners (approximate value of \$2500/inventory)
- Provided a landscape-level woodlot management plan for the community
- Provided a comprehensive soil study for the project area
- Provided educational opportunities through community meetings, field tours, tree planting demonstrations and introductions to other environmental programs
- Offered a forum for landowners to meet, share ideas and identify common goals for their community (tree planting, harvesting, trail development, wildlife habitat)

## Potential Opportunities

A number of other potential opportunities were identified, several of which may be achieved in Phase II of the project.



The Weberville project is located 20 km northwest of the town of Peace River, Alberta

- Economic:  
Market opportunities such as tree crops, agro-forestry, agro-tourism, cooperative sustainable logging efforts, industry certification, incentives, and grants
- Social  
Better understanding of the community woodlot values with increased communication between folks in the community and surrounding areas.
- Environmental  
Forest Stewardship, wetland and biodiversity conservation, and insect & diseases awareness





### **Phase I Summary**

Overall the project was considered a success with excellent participation from the area residents. The Wrap-Up dinner held on February 26th, 2009 saw over 50% of the Weberville project area residents take part. By participating in the inventories and the community meetings, landowners have developed a better understanding of the social, economic and environmental values of their land.

### **Phase II Plans**

With the success of Phase I, the project is looking forward to pursuing Phase II beginning in April 2009. In this next phase, the Woodlot Extension Program and FPInnovations will be partnering with novaNAIT Boreal Research Institute (formerly known as the Boreal Forest Research Centre) and the Alberta Forest Extension Network (AFEX). The goal will be to work with area residents to form a community board and provide support for the implementation of the woodlot management objectives. Ultimately the goal is to form a Weberville Community Forest Board made up of community members which would have the responsibility for the delivery of the landscape management plan over the long term.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Weberville Community Forest Project is a pilot project for a landscape-level private land forest management plan in the Weberville area. This document serves as a both a final report for Phase 1 and as a template to provide guidance for other communities wishing to conduct a similar project.

### Landscape-level Forest Management Plan

A landscape level forest management plan is a living document. It is a statement of where we are today with regards to sustainable forest management and a vision of where we want to be in the future. It continually changes as developments occur, including the clearing of land for agricultural uses, the harvesting of timber or the planting of trees. The landscape-level forest management plan covers a broad spectrum of multiple landowners across an identified geographical area. It addresses issues of importance to the local area and the individual landowners. It may include a plan for developing recreational trails, or coordinating contractor services to harvest timber, or sharing resources to plant trees in a shelterbelt. Whatever the objective,

*Woodlots are tracts of land of any size and shape that grow trees (either naturally occurring or planted), which support their own plant, animal and insect communities (ecosystem) including shrubs, grasses, wetlands and associated riparian systems.*

the landscape plan acts as a directive for the woodlot landowners and helps them to achieve their goals as individuals and for their community.

### Benefits to Landowners

- **The creation of the woodlot inventory**  
In order to manage a resource you need to know what the resource is. The inventory includes a comprehensive report of the forested and non-forested areas, plant communities, soil types, and wildlife habitat and presence.



Woodlots may be naturally occurring or planted

- **The creation of increased social, ecological and environmental awareness**  
Landowners that participate in the project acquire a more detailed understanding of the social and ecological values of their woodlots and are able to connect and communicate with their neighbours on common areas of interest. For example, neighbours that share a riparian area or watercourse may choose to jointly protect the area.
- **The creation of economical awareness and of new markets**  
Combining the volumes of forest products (be it timber and/or non-timber products) will not only allow for a better reach into the market, but also allow for constant delivery and better pricing, which will result in increased revenue for the landowner. New markets such as carbon credits, environmental good & services, and agro-tourism could also be developed.
- **Access to funding opportunities**  
A number of on-going programs are available to woodlot owners including Carbon Credits, Tax Breaks, Afforestation Programs, and Environmental Stewardship Programs
- **Access to management support**  
Ongoing support from the participating project sponsors and supporters helps landowners to make decisions by providing unbiased information, backgrounds, research information and knowledge & technology exchange.

## Getting started

What started as a simple idea between Juri Agapow of FPInnovations and Doug Macaulay of the Woodlot Extension Program soon grew to a much larger vision. They recognized that to adequately address the needs of the woodlot landowners and to achieve their woodlot management goals it would be beneficial to get a number of landowners working together on a broader, landscape-level.

## Selecting a Committee

The first step to getting started was the establishment of a board of interested and like-minded individuals from forest-related organizations (provincial and federal government staff, woodlot programs, research organizations, private consultants, environmental groups, etc.).

The success of the project is dependant on the committee to actively promote the project and recruit interested landowners. The vision of the project is to promote woodlot stewardship and sustainable landscape management practices in whatever form that takes; be it woodlot harvesting, tree planting, wildlife preservation, etc. The organizing committee acts to provide support and facilitate the objectives of the

landowners. Community meetings provide a platform to share these ideas and explore new opportunities.

---

**The Weberville Project Committee consisted of the following individuals:**

|                        |   |                 |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>Doug Macaulay</b>   | Woodlot Extension Program                         | Project Co-Lead |
| <b>Juri Agapow</b>     | FPIInnovations- Feric Division                    | Project Co-Lead |
| <b>Hugh Bailey</b>     | Agriculture Canada-PFRA                           | Process Advisor |
| <b>Lisa Ladd</b>       | Boreal Forest Research Centre                     | Communications  |
| <b>Martine Piebiak</b> | Independent Contractor                            | Facilitator     |
| <b>Cindy Cuthbert</b>  | Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development         | Admin Support   |
| <b>Patrick Hiesl</b>   | University of Applied Science, Rottenburg Germany | Technician      |

---

**Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings were held on nine occasions throughout the year and were essential to the success of the project. The meetings provided a platform for sharing ideas and defining the vision for the project. Agendas followed a standard format to keep the group on track by addressing previous business, providing updates on the inventory work, discussing newsletter ideas and preparing for future events. The diverse areas of expertise of the committee members provided a dynamic and valuable synergy of ideas.



## Selecting a Location

The Weberville area was selected for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Located in close proximity to Town of Peace River, Peace River watershed, and local forest industries
- Significant amount of privately owned diverse forests with a very high ecological, social and economical value and future potential
- Diversity of landowner demographics
- High social interaction between members of the community
- Wealth of historic data sets and existing inventory and industry harvest plans data for private land
- Borders two major rivers and contains an aquifer
- Contains numerous wetlands & wildlife corridors
- Variety of land uses including farming, logging, recreation, hunting, and trapping



An aerial view showing the boundaries of the Weberville Project area (highlighted), which is located approximately 20 km northwest of the town of Peace River

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### Community Meetings

Community meetings were held throughout the year to provide information about the project and to present other topics of potential interest to the community. Landowners had the opportunity to participate in four community meetings and one field tour. Meetings were held at the Weberville Community Hall or at the Bar

2A Ranch (a woodlot and equine facility in the Weberville area, also the home of Juri Agapow). The meetings consisted of introductions, presentations, group activities and a complimentary meal was provided. No fees were charged to residents in the Weberville Project area for participation in the activities.

| Meeting Date       | Agenda Topics   | Attendance |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| April 16, 2008     | Introduction to Weberville Project, Fire Dept. Emergency Farm Plan      | 60         |
| June 16, 2008      | Landscape plan barriers & solutions, project update, tree planting demo | 20         |
| September 30, 2008 | Agroforestry tour to five woodlots and tree planting trials             | 45         |
| October 18, 2008   | Trail development meeting, horse-back trail ride                        | 6          |
| February 26, 2009  | Emergency Farm Plan, Ducks Canada, ASRD, Weberville Project, Bioenergy  | 105        |

### April 16, 2008

The first meeting was held on April 16th, 2008 at the Weberville Community Hall. Notification for the event was conducted by door to door delivery of the advertising flyer and by telephone invitations. The initial distribution list was

created using public information of the area landowners accessed from the Municipal District records.

The community meeting provided the opportunity for interested individuals to enjoy a complimentary dinner and gather information about the project. Over 40

people attended with what appeared to be a sense of genuine curiosity and interest.

A short presentation was delivered by the local fire department on emergency farm plans followed by a formal presentation by Doug Macaulay about the Weberville Project. The second part of the evening involved a group exercise hosted by project facilitator, Martine Piebiak to familiarize the participants with the project area and objectives. Some participants were initially skeptical and questioned the motivation of the group (“Are you from the government?” “Are you from [the local pulp mill]?”). They seemed a little surprised that they stood to gain so much yet were asked to contribute so little.

At the end of the meeting, each participant was provided with an evaluation form to fill out. (See Appendix). While a number of participants signed up to have an inventory conducted of their woodlot, most participants simply wanted to learn more about the project in general.

The evaluations were collected from 36 individuals, 19 of which indicated that they were interested in attending future meetings and 13 indicated they would like to have an inventory conducted of their land. The evaluation form also gave the



Participants were asked to post a sticky-note indicating their woodlot location on the project area map

landowners an opportunity to show which topics they would like to see covered at future meetings. Some popular areas of interest were:

- How to increase the value of my property
- How to increase recreational opportunities
- How to maintain water quality and quantity
- Information on reforestation, afforestation, land preparation and where to get trees
- Information on wildlife habitat management and species at risk

### June 16, 2008

The second community meeting was held on June 16th, 2008 at the Bar 2A Ranch located centrally in the Weberville Project area. The 20 participants were

treated to a barbecue supper and settled into a very informative and interactive meeting. Martine Piebiak facilitated the discussion based on 4 main topics; developing trails, planting trees, harvesting

wood, and encouraging beneficial wildlife. The participants worked together to first identify the barriers and then determine the solutions for achieving these goals.

| Goal                                 | Barriers   | Solutions  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Develop trails</b>                | <b>Fences and property to cross</b><br><b>Need to brush the road allowance</b><br><b>Need general multi-use trails</b>                 | <b>Have a community work party to clear trails</b><br><b>Approach Public Lands to gain access</b><br><b>Connect the trail system to the river</b>                              |
| <b>Plant more trees</b>              | <b>Site preparation requirements</b><br><b>Requires manpower</b><br><br><b>Chemical and non-chemical maintenance</b>                   | <b>Arrange a work party</b><br><b>Ask Junior Forest Wardens to help plant trees</b><br><b>Learn what options are available</b>   |
| <b>Harvest wood</b>                  | <b>Need reasonable prices and management</b><br><b>What do pulp and lumber mills want?</b><br><b>Price is too low for one provider</b> | <b>Hire logging contractors together</b><br><b>Define logging needs, plan for next winter</b><br><b>Pool resources together</b>  |
| <b>Encourage beneficial wildlife</b> | <b>Outfitters trespassing</b><br><b>Information about wildlife diversity and corridors</b><br><b>Hunting licenses</b>                  | <b>Get information about landowner's rights</b><br><b>Get information on species and inventories from ASRD Fish &amp; Wildlife</b><br><b>Get information on farm-sold tags</b> |

Following the meeting, group toured the woodlot and participated in a tree planting demonstration by Juri Agapow. Learning the proper tree planting techniques was a requirement for anyone wishing to receive free trees for planting on their land.

The 3000 white spruce and lodgepole pine trees were donated by Woodmere Nurseries in Fairview.



Tree planting at Bar 2A Ranch with Juri Agapow





Potential trail routes are drawn out on a map at the trail development meeting October 18, 2008

### October 18, 2008

The third meeting was primarily a focus group meeting to discuss trail development. Unfortunately the cold weather and other activities happening in the area seemed to discourage people from attending. The organizing committee still took the time to draft a potential trail route on the aerial map and scouted out the area on horse-back. It was decided to put the development of a recreational trail on hold until further interest is expressed by the landowners.

Ultimately, the project is only successful if it fulfills the objectives of the landowners involved. The intent is to have a management plan that would eventually be led by the landowners themselves so the motivation to pursue a particular project goal must come from within the community.

### February 26th, 2009

A fourth meeting was initially planned for December 3rd, 2008 but had to be postponed due to an announcement by a power company to build a nuclear power facility in the area. The prospective facility would be located directly in the middle of the project area and was in the forefront of the minds of the entire community. In the interest in allowing the community time to deal with the announcement, the meeting was postponed to a later date.

The meeting was finally held on February 26th, and was advertised as a “Wrap-Up Dinner” since the project was nearing its completion of phase I. The event was very well attended with over 100 individuals participating. While most were from within the project area others were from outlying communities, Municipal District boards, environmental groups, businesses and other interest members of the general public.

The event had a full agenda beginning with a roast beef dinner and was followed by presentations on topics which were applicable beyond the project area and served to meet the objective of increasing the awareness of environmental programs and issues in the province.

**A summary of the presentations is listed below.**

### **Community Updates, Annelise Batty**

Presented on behalf of the Weberville Fire Department, Annelise provided a brief overview of the initiative from the Weberville Fire Department to encourage landowners to have an emergency response plan for their home and property. The Fire Department made available for sale its emergency farm plan packages which contains a detailed emergency plan encased in a short PVC pipe with reflective tape and removable caps. The pipe can be mounted on a power pole near the entrance to the farm yard for easy access.

### **Ducks Unlimited – Natural Advantage Program, Stacy Wabick**

This free program encourages landowners to build a comprehensive plan for their habitat resources. Through the process, landowners will gain a greater understanding of biodiversity on their land and understand how to integrate it into a successful woodlot management plan.



**Over 100 people attended the Weberville Project Phase I Wrap-Up Dinner on February 26th, 2009**

### **How to Access Your Community Forest, Derrek Bakker**

Derrek delivered the presentation on behalf of the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to inform the local Weberville area residents about their community woodlot. This designated area is available to area residents for the purposes of harvesting wood for firewood or timber, harvesting Christmas trees or transplanting trees to their own properties. Some activities are regulated through permits which must be obtained from the local ASRD office.

### **Weberville Community Forest Project Update, Juri Agapow**

Juri Agapow presented a comprehensive report on the Weberville Project with details on its humble beginnings through

to its successful completion of Phase I. The audience was engaged during the presentation and a number of people approached Juri to express their interest in having an inventory conducted of their land and offered to become involved in future project activities.

### Small-scale Bioenergy Opportunities, Harry Welling

Harry is a renowned Alberta-based bio-energy specialist, focusing on new biomass technologies for community and small-scale operations.

In true Harry-Welling style, Harry began with lively singing and guitar-playing before entering into his presentation on how landowners can use readily available woody biomass to heat their homes and businesses.

### Displays:

#### Prairie Shelterbelt Program - Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration

Through the shelterbelt program, landowners of 5 or more acres are eligible for tree and shrub seedling for establishing shelterbelts. Applications for trees are accepted from June 1 to March 15 each year.

### Woodlot Association of Alberta

Pieter Vanderschoot of the WAA provided displays about the association and also donated beautiful wooden-carvings he had made as door prizes for the attendees.

### Woodlot Extension Program

Doug Macaulay provided a display of various wood types and a selection of pamphlets on forest-related insects and diseases.

### Newsletters

Four newsletters were distributed in the months of May, July, and November, 2008 and in February, 2009. Each of the newsletters contained reports from previous events, advertised for upcoming



events and shared articles on other topics of interest (e.g. how to protect your trees from deer, tips on developing a recreational trail system, and how to access the PFRA shelterbelt tree program). (See Appendix)

### Field Tours

An agroforestry field tour was held on September 30th, 2008. The tour was conducted as part of the Woodlot Extension Program and included visits to the Wineglass Ranch, the North Peace Applied Research Association growth trials, Daishowa-Marubeni International Growth trials, the Murdoch Lake Agroforestry project and a presentation at the Bar 2A Ranch to discuss the Weberville Community Forest Project.

By attending field tours woodlot owners learn about and experience a variety of woodlot management issues first hand.

### Media and Presentations

The Weberville Community Forest Project was promoted at a number of forest extension events and through print and radio media.

Doug and Juri attended a number of meetings with a variety of organizations across the province and have received



Agroforestry Tour participants learn about the Weberville Community Forest Project

positive responses to the concept of the Weberville Community Forest Project. A number of media outlets have also featured the story including articles in the Woodlot Association of Alberta newsletter, Boreal Forest Research Centre newsletter, Peace River Record Gazette, Farming for Tomorrow magazine and in the Peace Country Sun newspaper out of Grande Prairie.

Juri Agapow was interviewed by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's "Call of the Land" radio program in February 2009.

Regular media through both radio and newsprint is important in order to promote the project message beyond the project area and give recognition to the sponsors and supporters. It also provides validation for the project and encourages greater participation by woodlot owners.

## WOODLOT INVENTORY

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### **Inventory description**

The inventory is a comprehensive package with extensive detailed information and several diagrammatic maps. The inventory includes a written description of environmental features such as water courses, terrain, soils, wildlife features, and stand-type and is accompanied by maps showing the described features.

### **Inventory personnel**

The inventory work was conducted during the period of August 15th, 2008 to January 28th, 2009. The work was completed by Patrick Hiesl from the University of Applied Sciences, Rottenburg, Germany. Patrick is in his 3rd year of Forest Science and performed this work as part of his thesis and as part of his role as a Forestry Intern with FPIInnovations-Feric Division. In addition to Patrick, two other German students, Patrick Pflug and Matthias Moosman assisted with the project for a total of 7 weeks combined.

### **Inventory area**

Seventeen woodlot inventories were conducted; each one consisting of one to

two quarters. In total, 26 quarters from 11 landowners was inventoried, totaling approximately 3680 acres of privately owned land. Each quarter section of land took an average of 4 days to inventory. This included the collection and analysis of the data, and the production and writing of the reports. The estimated value of having an inventory conducted is \$2,500 per quarter section. Translated to these 17 quarters, the total value of the inventories for this project is roughly \$42,500. These inventories were provided at no cost to the landowners.

### **Conducting the inventory**

Once the landowner has agreed to have an inventory conducted of his/her property and has signed a consent form (see Appendix), the process of collecting information begins. Initially, air photos of the area are obtained from the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. From these photos, a map is drafted of the area indicating forest and property boundaries, watercourses, slopes, open areas, roads, trails and buildings.

The air-photo is then scanned into

the computer and information is digitally drawn onto the photo, resulting in a digital version of the draft map. Once the draft digital map is completed, the map information is verified on foot, called “ground-truthing”. Other detailed information is also collected at this time, such as the number and size of trees, soil types, local flora and fauna, and other environmental features. The information is compiled to produce the inventory document which includes a final map showing the environmental features and a written description and summary of the information gathered.

### **Inventory Report**

The average inventory report has approximately 5 pages of maps and is accompanied by 20 pages of highly detailed information. There is virtually no aspect of the forest that is not accessed, measured and recorded.

### **The report includes:**

#### **Stand Description**

The stand description provides information on the area, height, density, composition, health, maturity, productivity, economic and ecological value of the timber.



Patrick measures tree diameter in an aspen stand

#### **Detailed Stand Data**

The detailed stand data provides further information about the stands including volume per stand and species, diameter ranges, merchantable and un-merchantable timber.

#### **Environmental Features**

Other environmental features are also included such as understory vegetation, watercourses, wildlife features (e.g. nests, dens, saltlicks), or notable species of plants or animals.

#### **Eco-sites**

The report includes a complete evaluation of the plant communities along with site codes and descriptions



Soil samples are taken at each 5 hectare plot throughout the woodlot inventory

### Soil Analysis

Soil pits are dug at in each 5 hectare transect. The soil qualities including texture, nutrient regime, organic horizon depth, pH-values, drainage, and moisture classes were recorded.

### Maps

There are several detailed, true-scale geo-referenced maps of stands, soils and eco-sites along with aerial photographs.

## SOIL STUDY INVENTORY

One comprehensive soil study inventory was conducted on two sites within Weberville project area. This study was a side project that Patrick Hiesl completed as part of his thesis. The soil study is different than the soil pits that were dug as part of the landowner's inventory. It involves digging a much larger pit (1 m x 1m x 1m) as compared to the much smaller pits in the inventories. The information collected includes soil texture, moisture regime, competitive plants, soil horizons and the pH value.

# WILDLIFE INVENTORY

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## Wildlife Inventory

There is an abundance of wildlife in the Weberville area as would be found in most rural areas. Anecdotal sightings of birds by Doug Macaulay while driving through the area on February 1st, 2009 included three Great Grey Owls, Snow Buntings and Common Redpolls. In addition, one cougar was identified in a farmyard located on Highway 986 (the south boundary of the Weberville project area) on February 10th, 2009.

## Individual Woodlot Plans

The following data was collected from the landowners during the development of their individual woodlot plans. The information is anecdotal and cannot be verified but is representative of the vast range of species thought to inhabit the Weberville area.

- **Wildlife**

Elk, moose, lynx, black bear, beaver, snowshoe hare, mule deer, whitetail deer, foxes, red squirrel, wolf, mink, woodchuck, coyote, marten, weasel, porcupine, otter, fisher, cougar, and muskrat.

- **Amphibians**

Garter snakes, toads, wood frogs

- **Birds**

Bald eagle, black-billed magpie, black-capped chickadee, blue heron, blue jay, boreal chickadee, black & white warbler, Canadian jay, common raven, Canadian goose, crow, common redpoll, downy woodpecker, evening grosbeak, purple finches, ruby-throated hummingbird, golden eagle, great grey owl, grey jay, horned owl, junco, long-eared owl, morning dove, northern hawk owl, northern flicker, northern oriole, pine grosbeak, pileated woodpecker, roughed grouse, red-breasted grosbeak, red-breasted nuthatch, robin, red-tailed hawk, spruce grouse, sandhill cranes, sparrows, snowy owl, sharp-tailed grouse, three-toed woodpecker, western tanager, white-breasted nuthatch, white-winged crossbill, yellow-bellied sap sucker, yellow warbler.

## Trap-Line data

Trap line data was provided by the Alberta Fish & Game Association on trap-lining activity within the Weberville area. While not a comprehensive total for the whole area, the data is indicative of the species types and proportions in relation to one another within the project area boundaries. The following numbers are the total species collected from two trap-lines over a 3 year period from 2006-2008:





A photo of the rare Barred Owl taken in the project area. The Barred Owl is currently listed as a *sensitive* species based on its requirement of large, continuous blocks of mature forest habitat (ASRD 2001).

Beaver (84), Coyote (9), Fisher (2), Fox (1), Lynx (1), Marten (14), Muskrat (14), Otter (2), Red Squirrel (795), Weasel (37), Wolverine (1)

### **Nocturnal Owl Monitoring Program**

This purpose of this program is collect information to help determine the status of the species and to act as an early warning signal if populations are declining. Counts are conducted by volunteers and take place during the months of March, April and May. There are ten observation sites along the Weberville survey route, several of which have shown the presence of the Barred Owl and the Northern Saw-Whet owl.

# EVALUATIONS

## Exit Surveys

Exit surveys were conducted after each community meeting to gauge whether the project was on track. Participants were questioned if and how they'd like to become involved and given the opportunity to share their thoughts on the project. A "temperature check" allowed participants to rate their opinions on how they viewed the project. It was rewarding to see that the average ratings improved with each community meeting.

| "Temperature Check" Survey Questions                            | Scores out of 5 points (5 being the highest) |              |               |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|
|   | Apr.16, 2008                                 | Jun.16, 2008 | Feb. 26, 2009 |
| I found today's session to be useful                            | 4.00   | 4.60         | 4.51          |
| My understanding of the project has improved                    | 3.95   | 4.40         | 4.40          |
| I feel I have had the opportunity to be included in the project | 4.00   | 4.60         | 4.70          |
| I know where to get additional information                      | 3.95   | 4.30         | 4.41          |
| I know what the project will deliver                            | 3.20   | 4.00         | 4.28          |
| <b>Average Score</b>  | <b>3.82</b>                                  | <b>4.38</b>  | <b>4.46</b>   |

The top four areas of interest by landowners as collected in surveys are the following:

1. Planting more trees, including shelterbelts, plantations for fibre production and carbon credits, aesthetics, and to maintain the landscape
2. Sustainably harvest trees (from personal fire-wood supply to small scale commercial logging in order to increase farm income)
3. Enhance wildlife (create, provide and protect habitat for game and non-game species)
4. Development of trails (for recreational use or potentially an agro-tourism basis)



Participants at the community meetings are regularly surveyed for their input

## Interviews with Landowners

Once the inventories were completed, Doug and Juri conducted interviews and completed a landowner evaluation form (see Appendix) in person with each of the participating landowners. The interviews with the landowners were completed prior to the wrap-up meeting held on February 26th in order that a report on the success of the project could be completed. The following is a summary of some of the comments from the evaluations.

### 1. What do you know about the Weberville Community Forest Project?

- Interested in trails, hunting, wetlands, and trees
- Forest inventories and planting trees
- Value of regenerating forests and keeping forests healthy
- Sharing common trails through my land
- Better woodlot management
- Shelterbelts
- Understanding woodlots and their management
- Timber values
- Wetland evaluations
- Carbon credits
- Logging co-ops
- Woodlot owners working together
- Sustaining a forest community

### 2. Have you been able to participate in any of the community meetings?

- May 16 – 11 attended
- June 16 – 6 attended
- October 18 – none attended

### 3. At the community meetings the follow four topics were of interest to local landowners. Please rank the four areas in order of importance to you and your land.

- The areas of interest in ranked order:
- Plant more trees (trees crops, afforestation, shelterbelts)
- Encourage wildlife (habitat development/protection/water)
- Harvest wood (firewood, timber)
- Develop trails (increase recreational opportunities)

4. **Will you do anything different on your land as a result of what you have learned through your participation in this project?**

- Plant trees for shelterbelt, hold moisture and protect crops
- Develop trails
- Preserve habitat for wildlife
- Plant hybrid poplars
- Make land more recreational
- Carbon credit
- Understand natural areas more
- Validates the usefulness of my woodlot
- Appreciate the aesthetic value
- Nursery tree business
- Utilize wood for fuel
- Reforest marginal land

5. **Is there anything about your inventory or the inventory process that surprised you?**

- The detail of the inventory is awesome!
- High quality and detailed inventory and mapping
- Nice to know the future of the wood supply
- Impressed with the effort that Patrick made
- If opening up land, understand the areas to do so

6. **What forestry, agriculture or land related topics are you still interested in learning about?**

- Wildlife
- More use out of woodlots
- Soil ph
- Carbon Credit market
- Tree succession
- Wild edibles and other plants
- Using pulp by-products
- Wildlife species
- Growth rates of tree species
- Growing hybrid poplar and other tree crops
- Utilize waste lands – crops or trees
- Selective harvesting
- FireSmart Program

## PHASE I WORK PLAN

| Phase I Work Plan                             | Estimated Timeline |         |                      |
|---|--------------------|---------|----------------------|
|   | Start              | End     | Completion Date      |
| Project Development, Planning & Design        | Jan 08             | Feb 08  | March 08             |
| Pursue Project Funding & Support              | Jan 08             | Feb 08  | March 08             |
| Meeting with Potential Partners               | Feb 08             | Mar 08  | March 08             |
| Landowner Information and Feedback Session    | Apr 08             | Apr 08  | April 08             |
| Analysis of Feedback from Information Session | Apr 08             | May 08  | May 08               |
| Seminar Reporting to Landowners on Progress   | Jun 08             | Jun 08  | June 08              |
| Mapping, Analysis and Collection of Area Data | Feb 08             | Apr 08  | August 08            |
| Forest Inventory                              | Aug 08             | Oct 08  | January 09           |
| One on One Visits with Landowners             | Apr 08             | Sep 08  | February 09          |
| Public Report on Project Progress             | Nov 08             | Nov 08  | February 09          |
| Woodlot Management Plans                      | May 08             | Oct 08  | March 09             |
| DU Habitat Planning                           | May 08             | Oct 08  | March 09             |
| Final Report & Development of Template        | Dec 08             | Mar 09  | March 09             |
| Environmental Farm Plan Workshops             | Fall 08            | Fall 08 | None – program ended |

## OUTCOMES

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An indicator of the success of the Weberville Project can be measured by the resulting benefits to the community. The following list of benefits indicates a very successful first year for the project.

- Increased awareness of the forest resources, wetland and wildlife features, recreational and business opportunities
- Supplied over 3000 trees to local residents for reforestation and shelterbelt planting and increased interest in future plantings
- Over 2000 additional trees were ordered through the Prairie Shelterbelt Program in 2008-09 by project area residents
- Provided free comprehensive woodlot inventories for participating landowners (approximate value of \$2500/inventory ) as a part of an "Approved Management Plan"
- Created 14 individual woodlot work plans and one comprehensive community plan.
- Provided educational opportunities through community meetings, field tours, tree planting demonstrations and introductions to other environmental programs
- Offered a forum for landowners to meet, share ideas and identify common goals for their community



## PHASE II

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Following the successful introduction of the landscape-level forest management concept, the organizing committee saw a natural progression and interest to continue the project into Phase II. The second year will run from April 1st, 2009 to March 31st, 2010.

### **A number of priorities were indicated for Phase II:**

1. **Weberville Community Forest Board**  
The formation of the board is intended to eventually replace the existing Organizing Committee. This board will consist of multiple local landowners and include former Organizing Committee for initial support and advice. It is the goal that - at some point - the Community Forest will be run as a self-governed Society, Association or Co-operative.
2. **Further expansion of the private land inventory**  
The Weberville Project will be hiring a Summer Student / Field Technician again to do further inventory work. The student will be in working on the inventories from August 2009 to February 2010. There will be a drive to recruit more landowners to participate in the inventory/management plan process.

3. **Inventory the ASRD Public Woodlot in the Weberville area**

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development has a dedicated 10,000 hectare woodlot in and along the Whitemud River valley in the Weberville area for the benefit of the local community. Weberville area residents are permitted access to this forest for the purposes of harvesting firewood, Christmas trees and local timber permits. The Weberville Project plans to conduct an inventory of this property and include the resource in its Community Forest Management Plan.

4. **Identify and Implement Community Driven Projects**

Throughout Phase I, residents were asked to identify their goals and interests for their woodlots and the community as a whole. Based on these identified goals, the Weberville Project intends to follow through with steps to implement these endeavors such as tree planting, trail development or small-scale harvesting.

5. **Increase Community Input in the project.**

As with any great idea, it is only be successful when backed with significant support. The Weberville Project will act as a facilitator for these community driven projects but ultimately the onus is on the community members themselves to provide the support and desire to see

it through. The project will continue to canvass the community for its input and encourage greater participation from the community members.

Through the extension activities of Phase I, the Weberville Community has become more aware of the current economic, social and ecological values of their woodlots. By recognizing these values, landowners become encouraged to explore other land-use opportunities.

A number of potential landscape-level forest management opportunities will be explored in Phase II.

- Economic: Market Opportunities such as tree crops, agro-forestry, agro-tourism, cooperative sustainable logging efforts, industry certification, incentives, grants
- Social: Better understanding of the community woodlot values. Increased communication between landowners in the community and surrounding areas
- Environmental: Forest Stewardship, wetland and biodiversity conservation, and insect & diseases awareness.

## PHASE II WORK PLAN

| Phase II Work Plan (2009-10)              | Estimated Timeline |         |
|---|--------------------|---------|
|   | Start              | End     |
| Phase II Work Plan Draft                  | Feb 09             | Mar 09  |
| Pursue Project Funding & Support          | Mar 09             | May 09  |
| Meeting with Potential Partners           | Mar 09             | June 09 |
| Next Landowner Meeting and Board Election | Apr 09             | June 09 |
| Finalize Work Plan and Initiate Projects  | Apr 09             | July 09 |
| Project Work and Implementation           | May 09             | Oct 09  |
| Landowner Meeting and Update              | Aug 09             | -       |
| Public Woodlot Inventory                  | Aug 09             | Jan 10  |
| Private Land Woodlot Inventory            | Aug 09             | Jan 10  |
| Report on Project Progress to Community   | Nov 09             | -       |
| Annual Report, Meeting & Re-evaluation    | Mar 10             | -       |



## SUMMARY

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Through the perseverance of the committee members, the support of the sponsors and the involvement of the Weberville community, Phase I of the project is considered a great success. The Weberville Project achieved its vision and mission to promote and provide support for woodlot stewardship and sustainable landscape management of private forest land in Alberta. It also realized its goals for the increased awareness and appreciation of forest land and its many benefits.

The Weberville Project committee members are eagerly looking forward to continuing the project into Phase II. While initially intended as a one-year project, it has grown due to the interest expressed by the landowners themselves. The activities during the first year of the project served to pique the interest of the community. The committee has seen a welcomed increase in the number of community members coming forward to ask how they can become involved.

With the combination of having funding in place, an eager organizing committee and a willing community of woodlot owners, Phase II promises to be an even greater success.



## FINANCIALS

### PHASE I BUDGET AND ACTUALS (2008-09)

| Activity  | Budget \$     | Actual \$     |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Woodlot Extension Program                           | 20,000        | 21,600        |
| Support staff (student for 6 months, expenses only) | 6,000         | 8,750         |
| Travel  | 4,000         | 4,000         |
| Advertising   | 2,000         | 1,500         |
| Management Planning/Instruction                     | 3,000         | 3,000         |
| Hall Rentals  | 400           | 400           |
| Best Management Practices – Literature              | 1,000         | 0             |
| Recruitment   | 2,000         | 250           |
| Final Report and Template                           | 10,000        | 10,500        |
| <b>Total Cost</b>                                   | <b>50,000</b> | <b>50,000</b> |

### PHASE I IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (2008-09)

| Source                                   | Contribution  | Equivalent \$ |
|--|---|---------------|
| FPInnovations-Feric                      | staff time (including expenses) and professional support (plan and process development) | 30,000        |
| Woodlot Extension Program                | manpower, planning and coordination   | 5,000         |
| PFRA – Agriculture and Agri-food Canada  | manpower, planning and coordination advice, office space, access to information/maps    | 15,000        |
| Boreal Forest Research Centre            | Advisor and administrative support  | 6,000         |
| Alberta Sustainable Resource Development | project funding, mapping  | 5,000         |
| Ducks Unlimited                          | manpower, habitat planning  | 1,000         |
| Agriculture and Rural Development        | project coordination  | 2,000         |
| Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.     | Use of mapping and GIS software   | 1,000         |

## RESOURCES

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**“A Guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas”.** British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, 2002. ISBN 0-7726-5313-5

**“A Guide to Conducting traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study”.**

T.Garvin, S. Nelson, El Ellehoj, and B. Redmond. Canadian Forest Service, Northern Forestry Centre, 2001. ISBN 0-662-29769-5

**“Woodland Owners’ Perceptions and Attitudes toward Sustainable Forest Management: Central Nova Scotia”.**

L. Sanderson, R. Colburne, and K. Beesley. Nova Forest Alliance, Nova Scotia Model Forest Project, 2000.

## APPENDIX

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The following documents are available in digital format on a CD, which is either included as an attachment to this document or is available by contacting the project coordinators.

### Newsletters

- Newsletter #1, May 2008
- Newsletter #2, July 2008
- Newsletter #3, November 2008
- Newsletter #4, February 2009

### News articles

- Peace Country Sun, March 2009
- Peace Country Sun, May 2009
- Record Gazette, November 2008

### Survey forms

- Community Meeting Survey form, April 16th, 2008
- Community Meeting Survey form, February 26th, 2009
- Landowner Evaluation (Post-inventory Interview) form

### Woodlot Inventory

- Inventory Consent Form
- Woodlot Inventory Final Report (Hiesl)
- Woodlot Inventory Sample (Agapow)
- Site Mapping Report (Hiesl)
- Woodlot Inventory Template - instructions
- Woodlot Inventory Template - forms

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