

Trails & Tales

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ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

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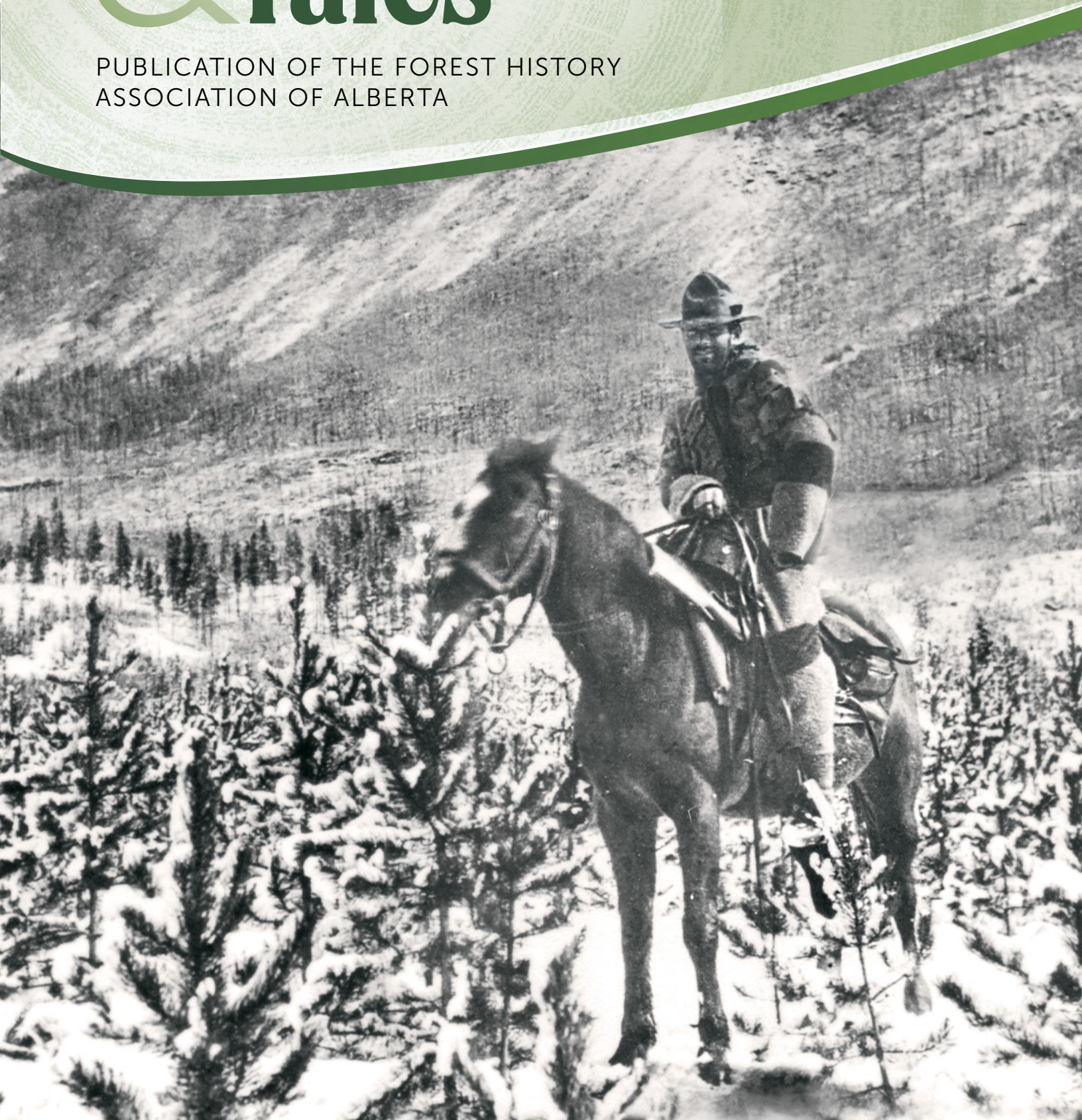
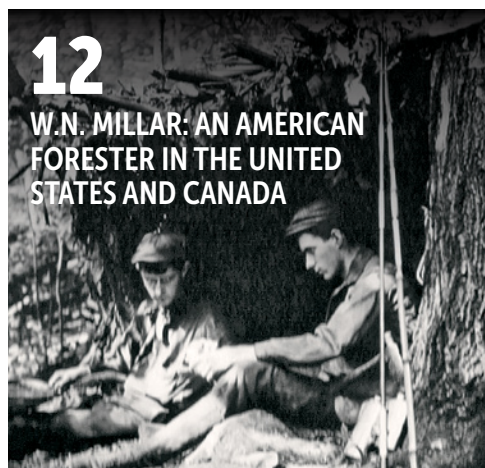


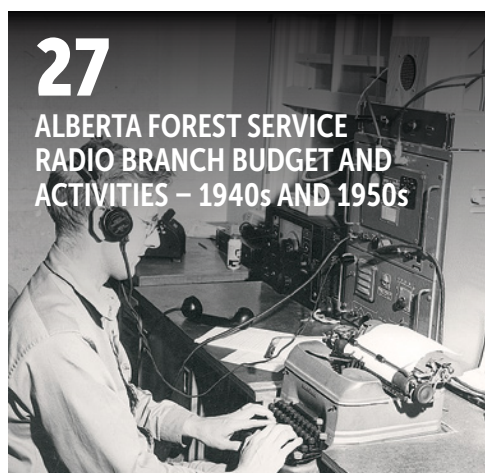


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ON THE COVER:

Inspector Willis Norman Millar in lodgepole pine regeneration, Athabasca Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve east of Jasper National Park; 1912

2024 MEMBERSHIP: 155 (MEMBERSHIPS TRACKED ON A CALENDAR YEAR BASIS)

SUCCESSFUL AGM TURNOUT

On Wednesday March 13, 2024, members of the Forest History Association of Alberta met at the Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre for their 19th annual general meeting. A total of 74 members joined, 63 in person and another 11 online.

Secretary treasurer Bruce Mayer opened the meeting with an overview of the agenda and instructions on how to use the various functions within Zoom. A special thanks was given to Todd Nash for use of the MNP Zoom account. Thanks were provided to the Chateau Louis staff, Ben, who provided the audio visual support, Travis Fairweather and Randy Sneeep for taking photographs, and to Lynn Schimanski and Wendy Yeomans for

managing the reception desk. Door prize donations were provided by the Forest History Association of Alberta, Delta Helicopters, the Peter Murphy estate, the Alberta Forest Products Association, Alberta Wildfire, Tolko and West Fraser. Eric Higgs was introduced as the evenings guest speaker. Directors in attendance were Bruce Mayer, Deanna McCullough, Katie Lamoureux, Todd Nash, Graham Legaarden, and Ken Yackimec. A total of 74 people attended this combination in-person and online annual general meeting.

Katie Lamoureux welcomed the group saying it was an honour for her to be president. She reminisced that it has been three years since Peter Murphy passed away, since her daughter was born, and since COVID

19 left its mark. All of this happened in a short period of time. Although time seems to move fast, it is also slow, and with that it will be unlikely that a forestry graduate in Alberta will see a second rotation harvest. When starting forestry at the University of Alberta, she was interested in Alberta forest history but found very little by way of information on the internet. Katie was sold on the importance of forest history when Peter gave four talks during her forest economics classes. Fast forward a few years, and you can now find information from Alberta on the web. Katie closed by saying that we have a moment to appreciate the forest history legacy that has been left to us, and we should consider how we can continue to prepare legacies for the future.

Drone picture of the attendees at the 19th Forest History Association of Alberta annual general meeting



Issue number 22 of the Trails & Tales newsletter was published in March 2024. Special thanks was given to Judy Fushtey at Broken Arrow Solutions for her creative flair and layout skills in the newsletter, and to Bob Newstead for his support in reviewing and editing draft newsletter content. In 2023, work continued with scanning of slides and photographs from collections of Howard Morigeau, Rudy Wiselka, Paul Wallach (from his son Brian), Peter Murphy (a small sample), Bernie Simpson, Peter Nortcliffe, and historic Alberta Fish and Wildlife photographs. Interviews were conducted with Howard Morigeau, Rudy Wiselka, Dick Seaman, Rene Benard, Dick Dempster, Bob Morton and Tom Grabowski (Silvacom 40th).

There are nine directors within the association, elected on a three-year rotation: three representing government, three representing forest industry, and three representing the public. The directors provide oversight, guidance and focus on the yearly work of the Forest History Association of Alberta. The 2024 Board of Directors is comprised by Ken Yackimec, Bruce Mayer, Graham Legaarden, Todd Nash, Chris Valaire, Richard Briand, Deanna McCullough, Katie Lamoureux, and Craig Rose.

1. L to R: Gary Davis, Ed Dechant, Gerald Carlson, Rick Arthur, and Bruce MacGregor
2. Bruce Mayer working through the agenda
3. Wendy Yeomans, Lynn Schimanski, and Wayne Williams
4. Attendees at the FHAA AGM
5. Stan Kavalinas reading the new Trails & Tales newsletter





1. L to R: Dick Seaman and Gary Davis
2. Deanna McCullough
3. Don Gelinas
4. L to R: Graham Legaarden and Richard Briand
5. Attendees voting on the election of directors



1. L to R: Bob Morton (back), Gordon Saunders, Daryl D'Amico, and Richard Briand
2. L to R: Lowell Lyseng and Fred McDougall
3. L to R: Dan Ferguson, Don Gelinas, Basil Delaney, and Dave Morgan
4. L to R: Bob Newstead and Rick Blackwood
5. L to R: Andy Neigel and Gordon Saunders
6. Eric Higgs, evening presenter



1. Wally Born
2. Dan Ferguson at the dessert tray
3. L to R: Don Pope, Terry Zitnak, and Bruce Mayer
4. L to R: Shane Neigel and Dave Patterson
5. Attendees at the FHAA AGM



1



2



3



4



5

1. Fred Paget
2. L to R: Ed Pichota, Conn Brown, and Kathy Neigel
3. L to R: Daryl Price, Craig Rose, and Lowell Lyseng
4. Katie Lamoureux with her president remarks
5. L to R: Bill Bereska and Wes Nimco



1. L to R: Dave Patterson, Craig Rose (back), and Cliff Smith

2. L to R: Bruce MacGregor and Gordon Saunders

3. Stan Kavalinas

4. L to R: Rick Blackwood and Rory Thompson

5. L to R: Lynn Schimanski and Wendy Yeomans, drawing names for door prizes





2024 FHAA Executive

Katie Lamoureux
President

Ken Yackimec
Vice President

Bruce Mayer
Secretary Treasurer

Todd Nash
Director

Richard Briand
Director

Craig Rose
Director

Chris Valaire
Director

Deanna McCullough
Director

Graham Legaarden
Director



1. Attendees at the FHAA AGM

2. Lowell Lyseng

3. L to R: Rick Arthur, William Black, and Bruce MacGregor

4. L to R: Morgan Kehr, Kathy Neigel, Ken Yackimec, and Rob Thorburn



1. L to R: Richard Briand, Gordon Saunders, and Conn Brown

2. L to R: Ed Dechant (back) and Gary Davis

3. L to R: Lowell Lyseng, Bob Morton, and Don Gelinas

4. Fred Anderson

5. L to R: Bob Young and Cliff Smith



1. L to R: Lowell Lyseng and Fred McDougall
2. Robert Mills
3. Lynn Schimanski drawing names for door prizes

Alberta Wildfire

Stay safe, stay informed

Wildfire season
March 1 – October 31 in Alberta

The Alberta wildfire status app is a great way to stay informed about wildfire information in Alberta.

Download the app today to get information about:

- wildfire location and size
- fire ban information
- forest area updates
- report wildfires and much more



To report a wildfire in the Forest Protection Area,
call 310-FIRE

Stay informed on wildfires | wildfire.alberta.ca

Alberta

W.N. MILLAR: AN AMERICAN FORESTER IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Submitted by Elizabeth Martin, W.N. Millar's granddaughter

To me my Grandfather Norman was a romantic dichotomy. He was well-spoken; well-educated in an Ivy League school; comfortable in a dark suit and starched collar; and also, at home – and happiest – patrolling on horseback the unexplored Rocky Mountain forests, clothed in a Hudson's Bay blanket coat.

Editors Note: Known as Norman to his family, Millar was known by his first name Willis at work.

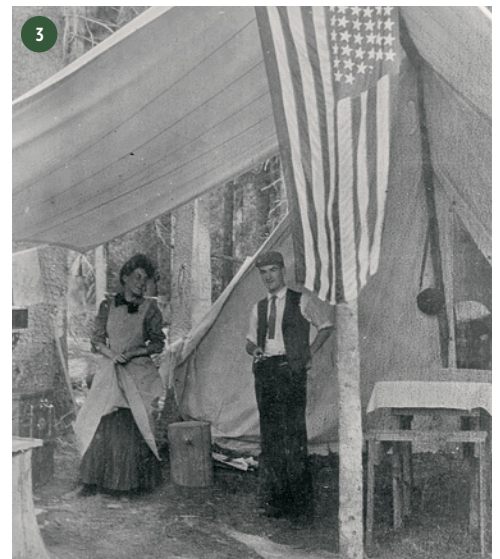
Willis Norman Millar was born in Pittsburgh in 1883, and attended the University of Pennsylvania, getting his master's degree in forestry in 1908 from Yale's Forest School, co-founded by the United States' first Chief of the United States Division of Forestry, Gifford Pinchot. Proud to be one of "G.P.'s Boys", Norm started his career in forestry managing the Kaniksu National Forest – an almost million-acre reserve located in the northern panhandle of Idaho and Washington, part of the newly designated United States Forest Service's (USFS) Northern Rockies Inspection District 1.

In early 1908, Norman, and his new bride Lucy Cook Millar, settled into the headquarters of the Kaniksu National Forest in Newport, Washington and began immediately putting into practice the principles of good forest silviculture instilled in him at Yale. This meant many days working with his rangers cutting trails into the deep forest for fire control; surveying timber species; or mapping the Kaniksu in order to determine what areas were best suited for timber harvesting or agriculture. The valuable white pine, Douglas fir, tamarack and cedar were viewed as a crop to be properly managed so as to maximize its economic value as lumber, plus its ecologic value in protecting important watersheds.

1. Major W.N. Millar, American Expeditionary Force; Brittany, France; 1918 (WNM Photo)

2. Willis Norman Millar and his brother Bruce camping as teenagers; late 1800s (WNM Photo)

3. Willis Norman Millar and his wife Lucy at a camp near the West Branch fire; Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho; August 1908 (WNM Photo)



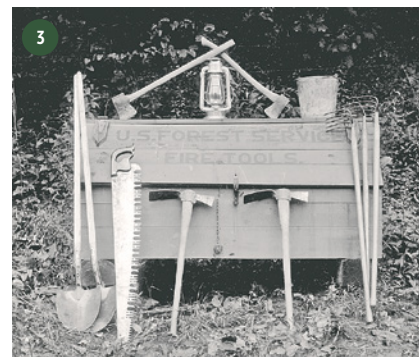
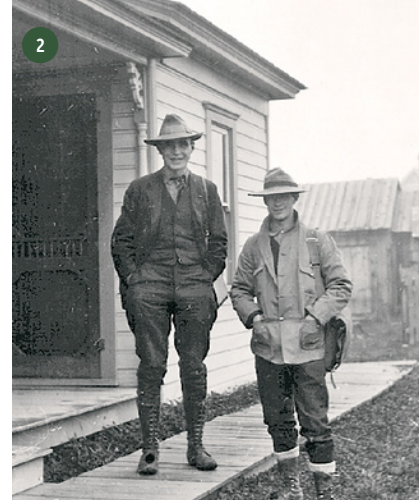
In October 1908, the Millars welcomed Norman's Yale classmate and roommate, Harvey Reginald MacMillan, to their Newport home. At the time "HR" was working in Canada with the Department of the Interior, Dominion Forestry Branch as Assistant Inspector of Forest Reserves. Norm and HR spent several days together exploring the Kaniksu comparing forest management strategies.

Forest fires in the west, both caused by man and nature, were an ever-present threat to the resources of the Kaniksu, particularly in the drought-plagued years of 1908 through 1910. Fire detection and control in such remote areas was a constant concern for Supervisor Millar and it was imperative that ranger stations and fire lookouts be built and manned throughout the region. In 1909, Norman set up the first USFS lookouts using heliographs for fire detection. (Heliographs were signaling devices using light flashes to transmit messages via a Morse-like code.) Telephones proved to be faster and not weather-dependent, therefore becoming the preferred communication mode.

In spite of the urgent work to improve communication systems

for fire detection, the drought-dry forest would prove to be almost too vulnerable for the guardians of the Kaniksu. In June and July of 1910, the whole of District 1 had to contend with more and larger fires, culminating in the gale-force, wind-driven, "Big Burn" on August 20 and 21, 1910. Norman was kept busy during those days hiring extra fire crews and riding from hotspot to hotspot managing the fire containment efforts. When the 1910 fire season ended in late September, an estimated three million acres had been destroyed in Montana and northern Idaho, with 78 lives lost. Efforts were redoubled after the "Big Burn" to further extend fire protection trails and telephone lines, and by the end of 1911, more than a hundred miles of phone lines were strung and fifty miles of new trails cut into the Kaniksu.

The fire season of 1911 also saw the birth of Lucy Elizabeth, Norman and Lucy's first child. Wife Lucy was not content to be just a homemaker but was determined to accompany Norman on his patrols. Their new daughter "Bette" came along as well, riding and camping with her parents in the back woods. After his visit in 1908, Norman must have continued communicating with friend H.R.



1. Class of 1908, Yale Forest School; H.R. MacMillan, middle row, second from the left; W.N. Millar, middle row, sixth from the left; Yale Forest School, New Haven, Connecticut; 1908 (Yale Forest School Photo)

2. L to R: Harvey Reginald MacMillan, Assistant Inspector of Forest Reserves, Dominion Forestry Branch (Canadian Forest Service, in Calgary, Alberta), and W.N. Millar, Acting Forest Supervisor, at headquarters of the Kaniksu National Forest, Newport, Washington; fall of 1908. Both recent Yale forestry graduates, they spent time together inspecting the Forest, to see how the United States national forest system was operating.

3. United States Forest Service fire equipment tool cache; Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho; August 1910 (WNM Photo)

4. Norman Millar holding daughter Bette, with wife Lucy on a Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve inspection trip, Alberta; 1914 (WNM Photo)



1. United States Forest Service fire crew aboard the USFS launch Firefly; Priest Lake, Idaho; July 4, 1910 (WNM Photo)

2. United States Forest Service fire crew on the fireline; Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho; August 21 and 22, 1910 (WNM Photo)

3. Dominion Forestry Branch float at the Winnipeg Exhibition; 1915 (WNM Photo)

4. Ladder used as a basic fire lookout in the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1912 (WNM Photo)

MacMillan, hearing about the forestry opportunities which were opening up in the Dominion Forestry Branch (DFB). Early in 1912, Norm left the Kaniksu and accepted an even more challenging position with the DFB overseeing the forest reserves in Alberta – including the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve (RMFR). In March 1912, Norman, Lucy and Bette immigrated to the RMFR headquarters in Calgary. MacMillan left to become Chief Forester of the British Columbia Forest Service.

The RMFR was divided into the Crowsnest, Bow River, Clearwater, Brazeau and Athabaska Forests. For much of the next two and a half years, from March 1912 until September 1914, Norman spent his time inspecting on horseback Alberta's eastern slopes forest reserves, including the 9.5 million acres of the RMFR, an area ten times the size of the Kaniksu, protected by far fewer rangers per square mile. By his estimation, he covered 5,000 miles by horse inspecting these forest reserves.

The challenges in Canada were great, but so were the opportunities to put into practice, and expand upon, the plans for fire protection Norman had first developed with the USFS. Concentrating mainly on the telephone as a means to alert and supervise fire crews, he laid out a grid system of phone lines, assembled a list of the best equipment to be used and how to install it properly. His 1920 Canadian Department of the Interior publication, *Methods of Communication Adapted to Forest Protection*, outlined these recommendations and established itself as the foremost manual for fire protection in Dominion-held forest lands.

A second publication, *Game Preservation in the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve* (1915) summarized

Norman's seasons' long survey of the habitats of the game herds along the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, and his proposals for the creation of four game preserves within the RMFR. These preserves were to be areas where big horn sheep, mountain goat, elk, moose, deer, and other native species would thrive unthreatened by hunters, allowing the herds to grow and populate neighboring reserve lands. This work would also stand the test of time as the guide for game preservation in Alberta.

The one challenge which seemed to be stubbornly persistent during Norman's employment in the DFB was the government's seeming unwillingness to set aside adequate funding for the training of rangers and supervisors which he felt was crucial for the proper management of the Canadian forests. While both the American and Canadian Forest Services developed along similar timelines, what appeared to be lacking in Ottawa was a demonstration of governmental commitment to forestry. This may have been a deciding factor in Norman's decision in 1914, to accept an assistant professorship at the University of Toronto (UofT) from Bernard Fernow, dean of the seven-year-old forestry school. Perhaps Norman felt, by applying the experience and



knowledge he'd gained in the field, he could inspire young students to play an active role in forestry. Even while teaching he was still involved in consulting work for the DFB, making trips to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. In the provinces, during the summer of 1916, he met with forest supervisors and rangers at several locations to demonstrate the installation and maintenance of telephone lines.

In 1915 and 1916, Lucy and he would welcome their second and third children, Robert Bruce and Dorothy, both born in Toronto.

Norman was a full professor when America declared war against Germany in April 1917. As an American citizen living in Canada, he volunteered for the newly formed American Expeditionary Force's (AEF) 10th Engineers (Forestry) and sailed for France in September. Lucy apparently took their young children to California at that time, to be with her parents and brothers who had moved there from Pennsylvania. Captain Millar was deployed as head of part of 1st Battalion, Company A, to Brittany, near the northwest coast of France. The work of the 10th Engineers was to build and operate sawmills supplying timber for trenchworks, bridges and construction on the front. While in service, it seems he also traveled extensively around France photographing the forests and taking notes about the techniques of the French foresters. While still serving in France, in June 1918, Norman was notified of Lucy's death in California from hemorrhagic myelitis. She was buried there in Inglewood and the Millar's three children returned east to Pittsburgh to be cared for by Norman's brother Bruce.

By September 1918, the newly commissioned Major Millar would



arrive back in the United States, be reunited with his children, and return to his faculty position at the University of Toronto. He hadn't been back at the university long before Dean Fernow made it known that he wanted to retire after a decade and a half in that position. Norman's tenure at the forest school hadn't been long enough for him to be considered as Fernow's replacement, but H.R. MacMillan – Norm's old friend – was in the running. HR subsequently decided instead to go into private business and C.D. Howe, former assistant director of the Biltmore Forest School in North Carolina, was hired as Dean of Forestry at UofT.

Howe's and Millar's teaching goals were similar, but during the 1920's, it became apparent their methods for achieving these goals were quite disparate. Dean Howe was not one to publicly advocate for policies he thought would benefit the students' education. Nor was he one to speak out when he sensed political or



1. Inspector Willis Norman Millar in lodgepole pine regeneration on a burn in the Athabasca Forest of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve east of Jasper National Park. Millar left the United States Forest Service and moved to Alberta in the fall of 1911 to work with MacMillan in the Canadian Forest Service. He became Chief Inspector of Forest Reserves in 1912 when MacMillan left for British Columbia

2. Emergency telephone box used by the Dominion Forestry Branch, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1912 (WNM Photo)



1. Forest supervisor "Doc" McAbee and Stoney Indian Paul Beaver at a sheep kill location; Clearwater Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1913 (WNM Photo)

2. Lucy Millar playing cards with forest service staff; Kaniksu National Forest, Idaho; August; 1908 (WNM Photo)

3. Lucy Cook Millar with daughter Bette inside the Bighorn Ranger Station, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1914

4. Lucy Cook Millar with daughter Bette; Bighorn Ranger Station, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1914

5. Leather northern Athabaskan shirt owned by Willis Norman Millar; c1914 (J. Martin Photo)

6. Bette Millar coming out of a teepee; Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1914 (WNM Photo)

7. Setting the first telephone pole on the North Trunk telephone line; Bow River Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; Alberta; 1922 (WNM Photo)

8. Forest supervisors and assistants at a meeting on telephone technology; Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan; July 1916 (WNM Photo)

governmental opposition to his plans; whereas Norman was openly vocal about where he stood. Because of this, Howe and Millar often butted heads over their approaches; Norman publicly campaigning for the establishment of a silviculture practice forest for the students which he believed to be a necessity. The “powers that be” resisted this and his other ideas, and his affrontery in advocating so publicly for them. This curtailment of what Norman perceived as his academic freedom would continue for almost ten years.

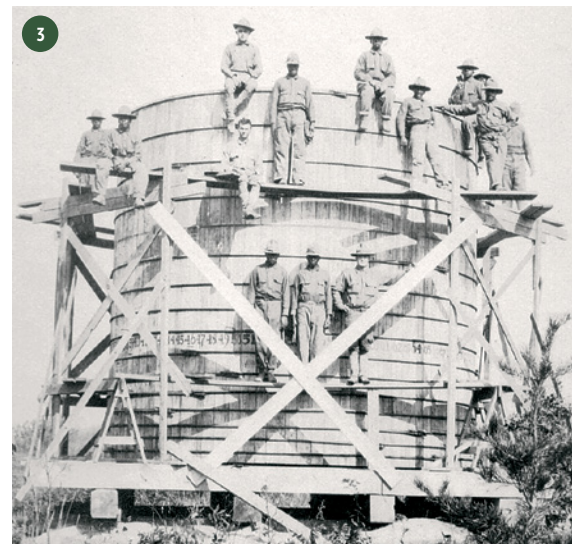
It was during this period that Norman made the acquaintance of Frank Underhill, a fellow professor at the UofT, who would also soon make a reputation for speaking out on sensitive political issues. Underhill became Norman’s brother-in-law in April 1921, when Norman married Frank’s sister, Isa Underhill. The next year Isa and Willis Norman Millar would have a son, Norman.

The departmental friction came to a head in the spring of 1932, when UofT President Robert Falconer had had enough of Millar’s affrontery, and pressured Norman to resign. His resignation took effect at the end of the 1932-33 academic year. Even Howe admitted that the University had lost “...an outstanding authority on forest fire protection methods.”

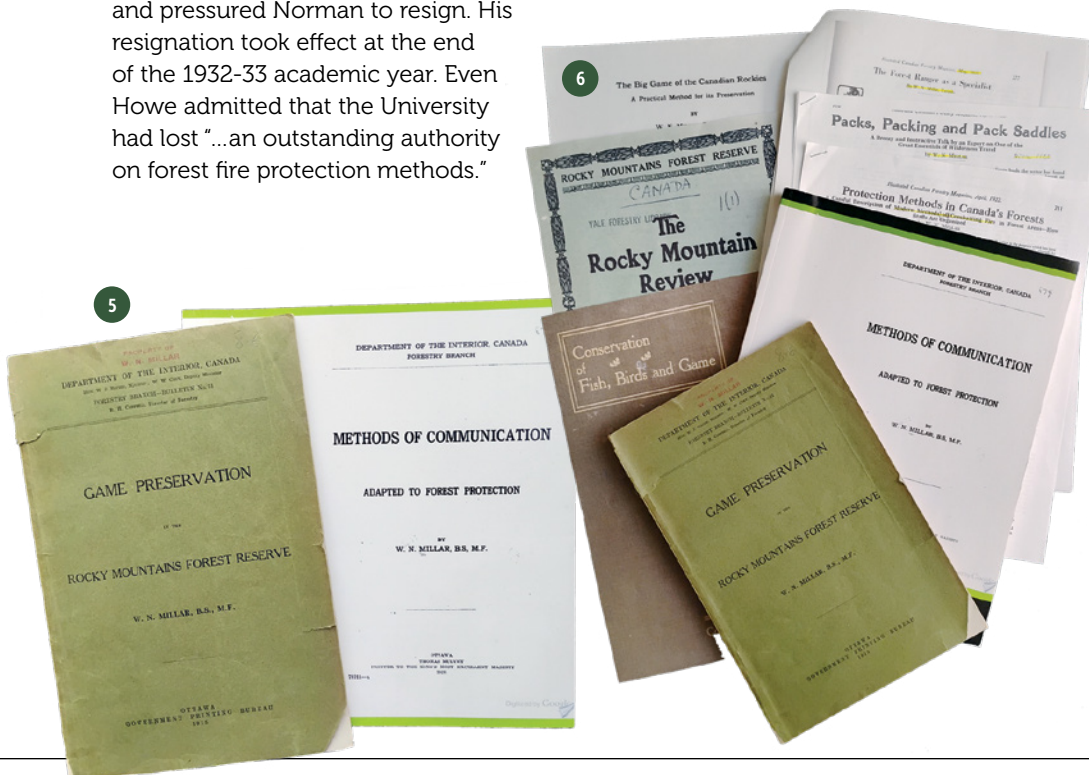
It was difficult for anyone to find employment at this time during the depths of the Depression, which meant Norman had to accept work supervising a Civilian Conservation Corps reforestation project in Martinsville, Indiana. A week after starting there, he was found dead in his bunk from a heart attack. Isa had his body shipped back to Pittsburgh, where Major Millar was buried in the family plot in Allegheny Cemetery, a continent away from his beloved Lucy, remaining forever the outspoken advocate for the preservation of the forests he had loved, traveled, and fought for.



University of Toronto Archives, 2002-3-2MS



1. Communication equipment display at the telephone meeting; Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan; July 1916. Note the semaphore and heliograph in the display. (WNM Photo)
2. Reeling out telephone wire during a field demonstration; Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan; July 1916 (WNM Photo)
3. A wooden water tower built in Brittany by Major Millar's troops, France; 1918 (WNM Photo)
4. W.N. Millar at the University of Toronto (UofT Photo)
5. Two Department of the Interior papers that W.N. Millar wrote. *Game Preservation in the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve*; W.N. Millar; 1915; and *Methods of Communication, Adapted to Forest Protection*; W.N. Millar; 1920
6. A collection of papers written by Willis Norman Millar



VANDERWELL TURNS 80!

One of the last family owned sawmill operations had their 80th anniversary in 2023, a remarkable achievement. In talking about the operation, President and CEO Ken Vanderwell says,

"MY FAMILY AND I ARE PROUD OF THE COMPANY THAT WE, ALONG WITH OUR EMPLOYEES, HAVE BUILT OVER THE YEARS OF WORKING AND BEING PART OF THIS THRIVING PROVINCE. IT ALL STARTS WITH EMPLOYEES, WHICH IS WHY SAFETY LEADS THE LIST OF VANDERWELL'S VALUES".

In 1943, Barney Vanderwell and his partners, brother-in-law Harry Dumouchel, and father-in-law Mike Paul Sr., started a sawmill operation in the Keephills area, south of Wabamun

Lake. The three partners obtained a contract from Swanson Lumber Company to log and saw lumber during that winter. The main purpose of getting into the sawmill industry in the winter months was to raise money to help support the farm. Mike Paul Sr. thought there were easier ways to make a living, and he sold his shares to Barney and Harry. Due to illness, Harry sold his shares to Barney's brother Dick Vanderwell and the two brothers continued to operate the company as partners until 1961.

In 1954, 15-year old Bob Vanderwell started working for the company. The operation had relocated from the Granada-Wildwood area, to Chisholm, south of Slave Lake. They continued logging for Swanson Lumber during the winter months. Bob became a full partner of the company with his father in 1961. Although the company had contracts to produce rough lumber during the winter months, they used their equipment and trucks to haul gravel, dig basements, and other work to make ends meet.

The Vanderwell company operated in an excellent stand of timber south of Slave Lake, however in 1968, a major forest fire not only destroyed the timber, but also the sawmill and logging camp. As a result of the fire, there was too much fire killed timber for Swanson Lumber to utilize, and Vanderwell Contractors were awarded their own licence. They rebuilt the sawmill and camp and were able to sell lumber to brokers at

a much higher price. Bob Vanderwell used to say, *"We were selling lumber for \$90 per thousand board feet, rather than \$32 per thousand."*

With their cash earnings, the company acquired a long-term timber quota from the Alberta government in the S15 forest management unit north of Red Earth Creek. Due to access limitations, Buchanan Lumber allowed Vanderwell to operate their quota volume in S10 near Otter Lake. A sawmill was established at Cadotte Lake with a planer mill at Nampa for a couple of years. In 1971, the sawmill was moved and established 50 kilometres north of Red Earth, with the rough lumber hauled to the new planer mill east of Slave Lake. In 1978, Vanderwell moved their sawmill to the same location as the planer mill at Mitsue. This was a major change as all logging took place north of Red Earth Creek, with tree-length raw logs being loaded and transported over 300 kilometres to Slave Lake for manufacturing. Vanderwell Contractors were one of the first companies to introduce a centralized mill operating year round.

In 1984, Vanderwell Contractors purchased the Canadian Forest Industry's operations in the Chisholm/Slave Lake area. Barney passed away just before the sale was complete. The purchase was an important step forward as Vanderwell began to acquire a long-term wood supply for their facility. Third generation, Ken joined the company about this time as well. Bob continued his quest to add to their wood supply. In 1984, the first dry-kiln was built, with a J-bar sorter added in 1989. The 1990s began a real decade of growth for Vanderwell. A chipper room and bins were added on the heels of a sorter upgrade; a second and third HewSaw was installed; and in 1993

a new planer mill was built. About this time, Bob became concerned with the amount of private land timber going to British Columbia, and, in 1996, the company embarked on an aggressive private land purchase program. Vanderwell Contractors is now the largest holder of private timberlands in Alberta and has begun an active commercial thinning program on those lands.

In 2018, Vanderwell joined Tolko and West Fraser in signing a forest management agreement for the Marten Hills timber tenure. Today all by-products are utilized; wood chips for pulp mills, shavings for livestock bedding, sawdust for wood pellets, and bark to produce power and heat. It's been a pretty good outcome from the humble beginnings of "we gotta do something to support the farm!"



1. Vanderwell Contractor trucks at their millsite near Chisholm south of Slave Lake; early 1960s

2. New sawmill built after the Vanderwell sawmill burned in the 1968 wildfires. Note the sawing of burnt timber, Chisholm area south of Slave Lake; 1968

3. Bob Vanderwell joined the family sawmill business in 1954, at the age of 15. Here he is at the sawmill at Cadotte Lake; late 1960s

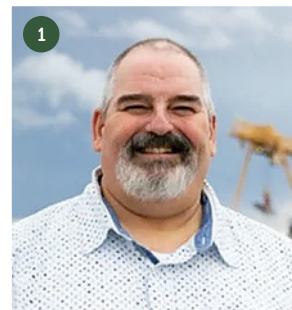
4. Vanderwell chip van crossing the mill scale, Mitsue; 1980s



1. Aerial view of the Vanderwell Contractors sawmill and planer site, Mitsue; 1980s
2. Con Dermott standing beside trees planted on Vanderwell private land plantations, Chisholm area; mid 2010s
3. Signing of the Vanderwell Contractors Slave Lake forest management agreement; Edmonton; July 23, 1997
Seated (L to R): Bob Vanderwell, Minister Ty Lund, MLA Pearl Calahasen, and Cliff Henderson
Standing (L to R): Rick Keller and Con Dermott
4. Bob Vanderwell at the Jean-Luc Deba memorial, Canyon Creek; May 20, 2012
5. L to R: Con Dermott and Ken Vanderwell, Mitsue; November 17, 2010



1. Tour of Vanderwell Contractors private land plantations, Chisholm area; November 17, 2010
L to R: Les Zeller, Con Dermott, Bob Vanderwell, and Kevin Kuhn
2. L to R: Kevin Jewett (Tolko), Oneil Carlier (Minister, Agriculture and Forestry), Danielle Larivee (Minister, Children's Services and MLA for Lesser Slave Lake), Kevin Albrecht (West Fraser), and Ken Vanderwell (Vanderwell Contractors); Marten Hills Forest Management Agreement signing; Slave Lake; December 13, 2018
3. Aerial view of the Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd. millsite east of Slave Lake, Mitsue Industrial Park; 2019
4. Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development Deputy Minister Shannon Marchand presents a plaque to Ken Vanderwell on planting of their 100 millionth tree, Marten Hills area north of Slave Lake; July 6, 2022
5. NGR Reforestation's Kris Zimmer helping Ken Vanderwell plant a tree, Marten Hills area north of Slave Lake; July 6, 2022



1. Ken Vanderwell, President and CEO of Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.; 2024
2. Aerial view of the Vanderwell plant site, Mitsue Industrial Park; May 2024
3. Vanderwell Family Shareholders, Foundation and Rising-Generation members at Vanderwell's 80th anniversary, Mitsue Industrial Park; September 2024

ANC – 100 MILLIONTH SEEDLING PLANTED

Submitted by Ian Daisley

On June 11, 2024, Alberta Newsprint Company/ANC Timber Ltd. celebrated that their 100 millionth seedling will be planted in 2024, and in fact ANC will have planted over 105 million trees by the end of the 2024 planting season. In the small celebration we were joined by managing partner Ron Stern, Member of Legislative Assembly Martin Long, and Alberta Forestry and Parks staff. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the support from ownership who have emphasized that sustainability and progressive silviculture practices are of utmost importance to the company. Key to planting 100 million trees has been the tree planting companies and their planters. Brinkman Reforestation and Folkore Contracting have been with ANC since planting started in 1991. The entire mill participated in the celebration, as the pride of reforestation goes beyond the woodlands group; all mill personnel are proud of the reforestation practices of ANC.

1. L to R: Ian Daisley, Woodlands Manager with the Alberta Newsprint Company, accepting a commemorative plaque from Kevin Sanderson, Acting Forest Area Manager; Whitecourt Forest Area, Alberta Forestry and Parks; Whitecourt; June 17, 2024

2. Alberta Newsprint Company woodlands employees celebrate the planting of their 100 millionth seedling; ANC millsite west of Whitecourt; June 11, 2024
L to R: Zena Martin, Darren Carnell, Wilson Sihilis, Ron Stern, Ian Daisley, James Norman, Megan Babineau, Kevin Wilchak, Lori Brandt, Dylan Hartling, Francis Scaria, and Jason Kennedy



RECORD DIAMETER DOUGLAS FIR

What is commonly believed to have been the largest-diameter Douglas fir in Alberta in recent times was found in the Porcupine Hills. The tree, well-known locally and frequently visited, measured over 176 centimetres in diameter (69.5 inches), with a height of almost 30 metres (98 feet). Its bark was 20 centimetres (7.5 inches) thick, making it virtually fireproof to surface fires which burned through the semi-open forest. Estimated at 381 years of age, the tree sprouted from seed about 1538, the year Sir Humphrey Gilbert landed in Newfoundland and claimed it for Britain. Its early growth took place during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and it stood about 15 centimetres (six inches) high in 1588, the year in which Sir Francis Drake defeated the Spanish Armada.

The tree died in 1964 and was felled on July 9, 1965, so that sections of it could be preserved. Specimens are on display at the Forest Technology School at Hinton and the Alberta Forest Service Depot in Edmonton. Eric S. Huestis had his photograph taken in front of this tree in 1928, shortly after he began his career with the old Dominion Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior. Huestis joined the Alberta Forest Service in 1930 with the transfer of resources to provincial jurisdiction, later becoming director of forestry and deputy minister of Lands and Forests for Alberta.

There are reports of larger Douglas fir in earlier days in the Aura Creek

and Wildcat Hills area and along the Bow River Valley west of Calgary. Those stands were logged by the Eau Claire Lumber Company which drove logs on the Bow River to its sawmill in Calgary. The search for Alberta's largest living Douglas fir continues.

On July 9, 1965, Crowsnest Forest superintendent Alf Longworth captured a historic moment with the falling and bucking of this record diameter Douglas fir tree. The following photos record that event.



1. View of the Porcupine Hills record diameter Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965

2. Color image of the same Porcupine Hills record diameter Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965

Editors Note: The narrative above is from the book *Alberta Trees of Renown, An Honour Roll of Alberta Trees*, published in May 1984.

RECORD DIAMETER DOUGLAS FIR

1. Faller Rudy Yeliga starting his first cut to fall the Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965
2. Faller Rudy Yeliga continuing his first cut to fall the Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965
3. Faller Rudy Yeliga limbing and bucking the fallen Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965
4. L to R: forester Gary Bielert, forester Fred Facco, Mrs. Facco, and Rudy Yeliga standing on the stump of the fallen Douglas fir tree; Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965
5. Forester Gary Bielert aging the fallen Douglas fir tree, Crowsnest Forest; July 9, 1965
6. Section of the Porcupine Hills Douglas fir tree located at the Hinton Training Centre. Peter Murphy had taken the tree section and correlated interesting dates in history with the growth rings on the tree cookie.



TELEPHONE PARTY LINE

CLEARWATER FOREST

Telephone Calls

Directions governing the use of Forest Service telephones:

1. Always listen to ascertain if line is in use before ringing, in order to avoid interrupting a conversation.
2. Do not use telephone during a thunderstorm.
3. Leaving receiver off the hook, when instrument is not in use, exhausts the battery and interferes with the ringing signals.
4. When conversation is finished be careful to replace receiver on the hook.
5. Always throw out switch between instrument and line before leaving your station or cabin.
6. After thunderstorm check carbon blocks in protector and make sure they are clean and are not grounded..

THE SIGNALS TO CALL PARTIES ON THIS LINE ARE:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RING</u>
NORDEGG RANGER STATION	- 1 long 1 short
COLISEUM LOOKOUT TOWER	- 2 long
HOME OIL CAMP	- 1 long
NELSON CABIN	- 1 short 1 long 1 short
MONS CABIN	- 1 short 1 long 2 short
SHUNDA RANGER STATION	- 1 long 2 short
HOLBROOK CABIN	- 3 long
AURORA CABIN	- 3 long 1 short
MEADOWS RANGER STATION	- 2 short 1 long
FORKS CABIN	- 2 long 1 short 1 long
CLEARWATER RANGER STATION	- 1 short 2 long
BASELINE CABIN	- 1 long 2 short 1 long
BASELINE LOOKOUT TOWER	- 1 short 2 long 1 short
SWAN LAKE CABIN	- 2 short 2 long
RED DEER RANGER STATION	- 2 long 1 short
BLUE HILL LOOKOUT TOWER	- 4 long
BOUNDARY CABIN	- 1 long 1 short 1 long
JAMES CABIN	- 2 long 2 short
-----	- 1 short 1 long
-----	- 1 long 1 short 2 long

OVER

Telephone party
line call sheet from
the Clearwater
Forest; 1920s



ALBERTA FOREST SERVICE RADIO BRANCH BUDGET AND ACTIVITIES – 1940s AND 1950s

Willis N. Millar became supervisor of the Dominion Forest Service Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve (RMFR) when moving to Canada in 1912. Having worked for the United States Forest Service during the busy 1910 fire season, Millar was a promoter of early communication from lookouts to rangers and fire crews as a way to alert and respond to fires sooner. In the RMFR, rangers installed and maintained single line ground return lines in the forest for telephone connection as part of their daily duties. His 1920 Department of the Interior publication,

"Methods of Communication Adapted to Forest Protection" outlined recommendations on telephone line use and installation and established itself as the foremost manual for fire protection in Dominion-held forest lands.

During the early 1950s, the Alberta Forest Service began to establish more lookouts and ranger stations, especially in the northern part of the province. This built on the backbone established by the Dominion Forestry Branch. The following statistics are

from an April 23, 1951 memo from Tony Earnshaw, radio superintendent, to Eric Huestis, director of forestry. The statistics provide a good summary of radio telecommunications activity within the forest service during that time.

Norman Quilichini, senior manager of the Warehouse, Facilities and Technical Services Section, Forestry Division, Forestry and Parks provided a summary of radio, cellular and satellite telecommunication resources and activity for 2024.

1943/1944 Fiscal Year	
Radio Equipped Lookouts	10
Headquarter Radio Stations	8
Mobile Radio Stations	14
Portable Radio Stations	50
Radio Traffic (average)	30,000 messages per year
Radio Branch budget	\$25,000 per year
Employees	22 (includes lookout personnel)

1951/1952 Fiscal Year	
Radio Equipped Lookouts	17
Headquarter Radio Stations	8
Mobile Radio Stations	22
Portable Radio Stations	103
Radio Traffic (average)	40,000 messages per year
Radio Branch budget	\$109,000 per year
Employees	33 (includes lookout personnel)
Included in the budget was the following Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board equipment managed by the Radio Branch.	
Radio Equipped Lookouts	10
Terminal Stations	20
Main Terminal	1
Mobile Radio Stations	5

2024/25 Fiscal Year	
Active Lookouts*	100
Headquarter Radio Stations**	10
Mobile Radio Stations	1,300
Portable Radio Stations	5,500
Radio Traffic (average)	680,000 messages per year
Radio Branch budget	\$2.79M per year
Employees	18 full time and 3 seasonal
Radio Equipped Lookouts	100
Terminal Stations	150 repeater sites
Main Terminal	2 Teleports

*Each lookout has one portable and two mobile radios, along with a cellular or satellite telephone with satellite or cellular data communications.

** Fire Centres each have three radio dispatch consoles with access to all 150 FireNet radio sites in the province via satellite.

The Technical Services Program under the Warehouse, Facilities and Technical Services Section operates and maintains a province-wide radio system “FireNet” which consists of 150 VHF radio repeater sites strategically located through the forest protection area of Alberta. Along with the radio repeater sites, Technical Services also operates two satellite teleports controlling 200 satellite data terminals, 400 live image cameras and a host of other technological equipment providing transport of voice, video, data communications for mission critical communications and intelligence gathering.

The following series of photographs tell the story of the advancement in telephone and radio communication.



1. Rolling up single line ground return telephone line on to frame, Bow River Forest; 1916
2. Roll of single line ground return telephone line on a purpose built pack frame, Bow River Forest; 1916
3. Demonstration of a temporary telephone installation, Bow River Forest; 1916
4. Unknown Dominion Forest Service telephone operator; 1920s

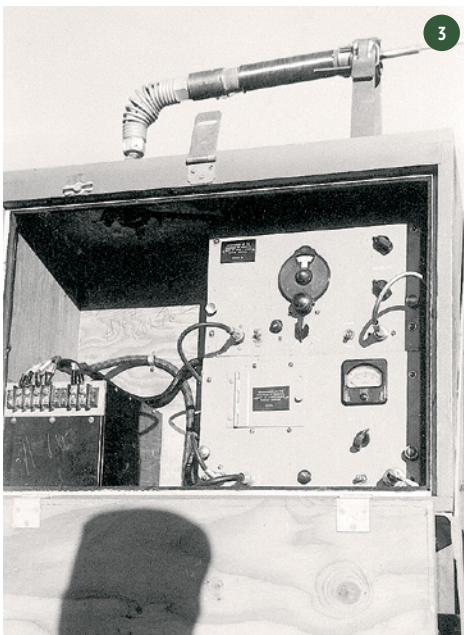




1



2



3



4



5



6



7

1. Dominion Forest Service communications equipment; 1920s

2. Alberta Forest Service radio operator Don Hutchins at Whitecourt; late 1940s

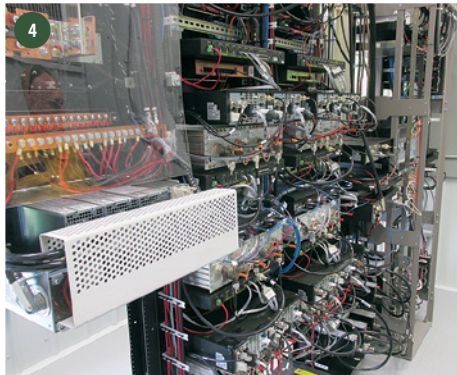
3. View of battery and portable radio, truck mounted box; 1949

4. Tony Earnshaw with portable radio; Crowsnest Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1949

5. Portable radio mounted on the side of a radio technician's Willys Jeep pick-up truck; 1949

6. Portable Humble FM radio used at lookouts and on the fireline; 1960s

7. Marconi CP24 radio with hand microphone, 1970s. This radio would have been mounted in forestry vehicles and lookouts for ongoing communication contact.



1. Radio and communication equipment display at the 100th anniversary celebration of Forestry, Lands & Wildlife (75th of the Alberta Forest Service), Edmonton; September 8, 2005
L to R: Mike Peebles and Gerald Carlson

2. Combination lookout and radio communications tower. The lookout observer cupola is located half way up the tower, while the top part of the tower is reserved for antennae's, and other radio and satellite communication equipment. Marten Mountain, Slave Lake Forest Area; June 14, 2018

3. Equipment to operate the FireNet and Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System, Slave Lake Forest Area; June 14, 2018

4. Back-side of that same equipment – each wire has a place, Slave Lake Forest Area; June 14, 2018

5. Installation of a solar and battery powered communications repeater station on Mount Hector, Banff National Park; August 23, 2018

6. Display of early 1950s radio equipment, to today's satellite based radio sets, Forestry and Parks; October 2024

7. Display of radio and communication equipment from the 1970s onward, Forestry and Parks; October 2024

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



FEBRUARY 7–8, 2026

AFS OLDTIMERS
HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Athabasca Multiplex



FEBRUARY 7–8, 2026

E.S. HUESTIS
CURLING BONSPIEL

Athabasca Multiplex



March 12, 2025 7PM

20TH ANNUAL FOREST HISTORY
ASSOCIATION AGM

Chateau Louis Hotel and Conference Centre
11727 Kingsway NW, Edmonton, AB



Canadian Institute of Forestry
Institut forestier du Canada



**SOCIETY OF
AMERICAN
FORESTERS**

October 5–8, 2026

CIF AND SAF CONFERENCE

*Leading from where we are
for a brighter future*

Calgary, Alberta TELUS Convention Centre

RANGER JACOB HAASE RECOGNIZED

On September 8, 2024, the late forest ranger Jacob (Jack) Haase's name was recognized as a fallen peace officer at both the Canadian Police and Peace Officer National memorial and the Alberta Pillar of Strength memorial.

Employed by the Alberta Forest Service through the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board, assistant forest ranger Jacob Haase drowned on July 5, 1951, while operating the forestry ferry on the North Saskatchewan River. At the time, Mr. Haase was stationed near Saunders, Alberta, at the Shunda Ranger Station, in the Clearwater Forest Reserve. The Alberta Forest Service was a division under the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests.

Ranger Haase began working seasonally for the Alberta Forest Service on May 1, 1945 following his release from military service. Mr. Haase was employed as a lookout man and telephone operator in the summer months, and on the forestry construction crew during the winter. Mr. Haase was appointed as an assistant forest ranger on June 15, 1951, although had worked in the role since April 1951.

The Rocky Mountain House newspaper, The Mountaineer, article from July 12, 1951 outlined the following event, "Jack Haase, 36, assistant forest ranger at the Shunda Ranger Station, Saunders, was drowned last Thursday when he jumped from the forestry ferry which had broken loose from its cable. The accident occurred when he was taking the ferry to the south side of the river

to ferry Wilfred Gervais, outfitter and guide of Saunders and his party back from a fishing trip. High water caused the cable to snap, and the ferry drifted downstream. Those on the shore shouted to Haase to stay on and he nodded his head in acknowledgement.

But after drifting for a mile, the ferry came to some rapids and Haase jumped. He was unable to swim in the swift, cold water. The ferry struck a gravel bar just east of Saunders, less than two miles from where it broke."



1. A cairn established at the Saunders Creek Provincial Recreation Area in honour of forest ranger Jacob (Jack) Haase

2. Honour guard of police and peace officers at the Alberta Pillar of Strength memorial; September 8, 2024

3. Members of various police and peace officer organizations at the Alberta Pillar of Strength ceremony on September 8, 2024. The Canadian Police and Peace Officer memorial event was held on the same day in Ottawa.

4. Bertie Beaver at the Pillar of Strength memorial, Alberta Legislature grounds; September 8, 2024

C-FAFK GETS A FACELIFT!

After the successful introduction of helicopters into forestry work in the late 1950s, the Alberta Forest Service purchased its second Bell 47J-2 super charged piston-powered three-passenger helicopter in 1960. Registered as CF-AFK, this helicopter was upgraded to a Bell 47JA-2 helicopter with a more powerful turbocharged Lycoming engine in 1967. CF-AFK was sold by the Alberta Forest Service (AFS) in 1979 to make way for the new Bell 206B helicopters. Changes to the call-sign registration system by Transport Canada around 1974 resulted in CF-AFK being changed to C-FAFK.

Bob Petite, retired forest officer and helicopter enthusiast, followed up on C-FAFK's legacy post AFS. He found that, "C-FAFK when retired was originally sold to an Alberta helicopter operator. It then went to a couple of B.C. helicopter operators, with possibly a short time in the United States. The Reynolds Alberta Museum obtained the helicopter about two years ago and stored it in the museum in Wetaskiwin. It is now on display in the colors of the last operator that used it in B.C. Gerry Kearny, from Delta Helitech Ltd., says he purchased the Bell 47J C-FAFK from an operator in Los Angeles and spent five years restoring, before selling it to another operator in B.C."

1. Bob Petite standing beside the restored Alberta Forest Service Bell 47J C-FAFK helicopter at the Reynolds Alberta Museum, Wetaskiwin; April 4, 2024

2. Restored Alberta Forest Service Bell 47J C-FAFK at the Reynolds Alberta Museum, Wetaskiwin; April 4, 2024

3. Helicopter CF-AFK hauling plywood to the new Cline lookout, Rocky Clearwater Forest; 1960

4. Forest management director Reg Loomis outside CF-AFK while the helicopter is refueled; 1960s

5. Helicopter CF-AFK on the helipad at the new Cline lookout, Rocky Clearwater Forest; 1960

6. Helicopter CF-AFK with its new paint color scheme prior to being sold in 1979. Note Bertie Beaver on the tail



THE EASTERN ROCKIES FOREST CONSERVATION BOARD AND ITS WORK

Originally published by E.S. Fellows, Chief Forester, ERFCB; February 15, 1951



The Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board was established by Acts of Parliament and of the Legislature of the Province of Alberta as a joint federal-provincial undertaking. The Chairman and one member of the Board are appointed by the federal government and the third member by the provincial government.

The Board was set up late in 1947, but it did not begin to function officially until April 1, 1948. The duties of the Board as laid down by legislation are, in brief, to manage the vegetal cover on some 8,600 square miles of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains so as to regulate and

improve the flow in those streams which form the headwaters of the great Saskatchewan River, the artery of Canada's largest agricultural region. The concern over streamflow arises from two principal considerations. First, that there will be an ever increasing demand for water for irrigation, power, and industrial and domestic use and, second, that most, if not all, of the great glaciers of the Rockies are receding at a comparatively rapid rate and in the foreseeable future may cease to contribute any significant quantity of water to the streams.

To carry out its programme, the Board has available from the federal government the sum of \$6.3 million to be expended on major improvements in the area during the first six years of a twenty-five year program. To carry on the regular protection and administration of the area the Board is provided with \$300,000 a year which is contributed jointly by the federal and provincial government's in proportions dependent largely upon the revenue

1. Kananaskis District entrance sign, Bow River Forest; 1950s. Mount Kidd is in the background viewed through the entrance sign

2. Map of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959



derived by the Province from surface rights in the area.

The Board is essentially a policy-making body. To assist it in this function it has its own staff, which are divided into three units, namely, a secretariat, a forestry division, and an engineering division. The permanent staff is small because of the nature of the Board's duties. The execution of the Board's policy rests with personnel of the Alberta Forest Service under the immediate direction of the senior superintendent of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve. The whole area is divided into seventeen ranger districts which are grouped into three Forests, each under a superintendent and an administrative staff.

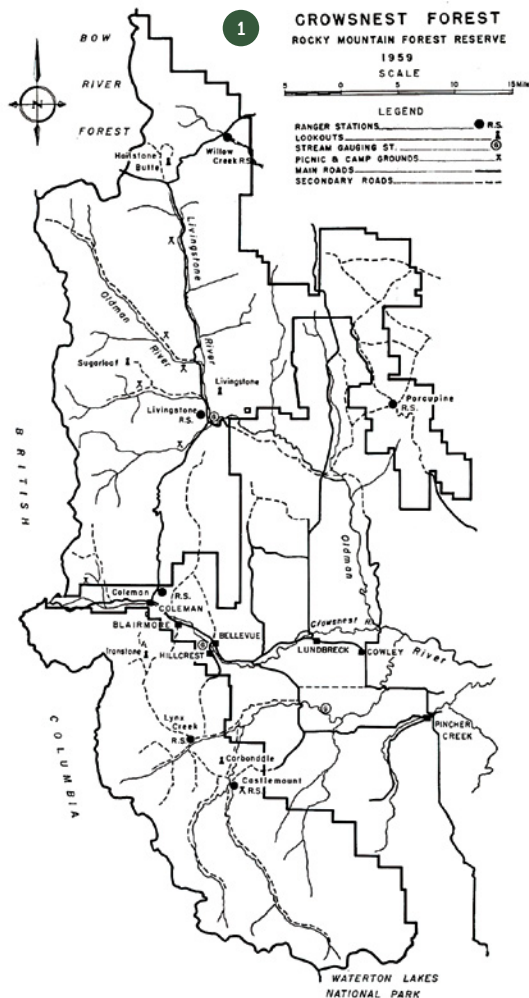
The Board is presently engaged in formulating policies for the management of the area and in planning the physical improvements necessary to achieve its objectives. The greatest potential threat to good management is fire. For that reason, most emphasis is being placed on fire-protection facilities. Hundreds of miles of roads of several categories have been built or are planned, radio communication

is being improved, fire-detection facilities are to be increased and improved, supplies of fire-fighting equipment have been greatly enlarged, and greater amounts of mechanical transport have been provided.

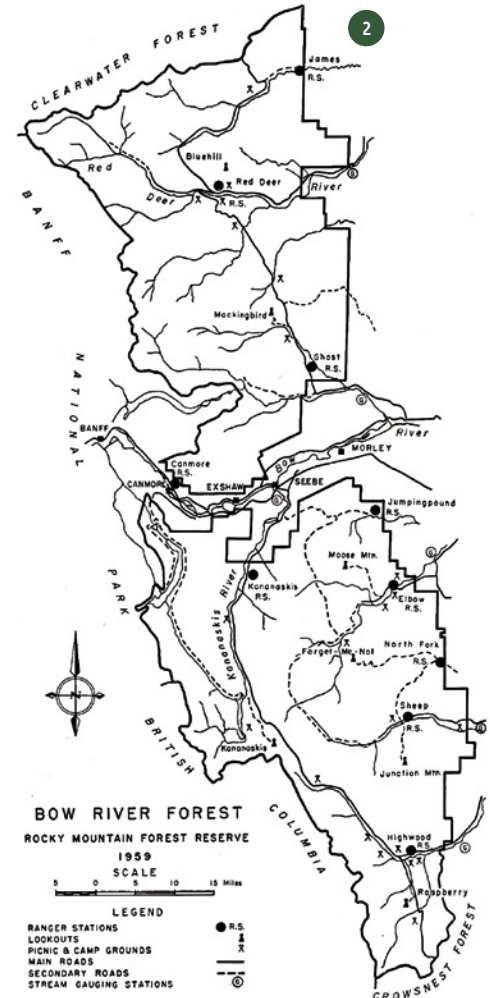
Commercial activities on the Forest Reserve include logging, the grazing of domestic animals, mining, and exploration for oil. It is clear that the public interest would not be served if these activities were unduly restricted and such restriction might conceivably even impair the flow of streams in some cases. However, extensive damage to watershed values can result from any of these land uses unless they are properly managed. In the case of mining and oil exploration, the aim of the Board is

to see that no more damage is done to the vegetal cover than is absolutely necessary for effective work and that, when operations are finished, the area affected is restored as far as humanly possible to good watershed condition.

Grazing and logging lend themselves more readily to management because both deal essentially with the cover and not directly with the soil and subsoil. In watershed management which has its objective optimum run-off, as distinct from flood control, the ideal vegetal cover is the one which itself consumes the least possible amount of water, keeps surface evaporation at a minimum, intercepts as little precipitation as possible but yet creates conditions favourable to the



1. Map of the Crowsnest Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959

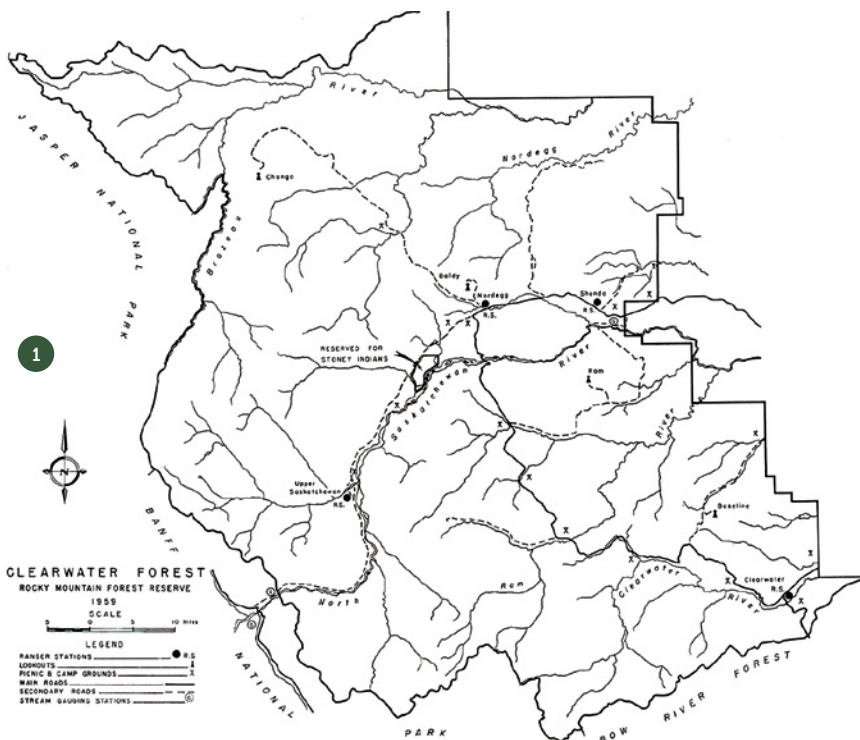


2. Map of the Bow River Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959

complete percolation of rainfall and snow-melt into the soil. This ideal is impossible to attain, but certain forms of management aim in that direction. The grazing of animals, for example can reduce both transpiration and interception losses, but if not handled properly may lead to the exposure of the soil, the destruction of the humus layer, and the compaction of soil, all of which will engender bad watershed conditions. Management plans, therefore, call for good distribution of cattle in such numbers as will not bring about a degeneration of the range. Similarly, the objective in forest operations, besides promoting safety from fire and the general health of the forest, is to maintain stands at the optimum density and in the right condition to promote adequate protection from erosion and the best yield of clear water to the streams. Generally speaking, the ideal is a fairly open, young stand of species not using large quantities of water. Such stands intercept relatively little snow and rain, offer shade and shelter from drying winds, and keep the soil porous and covered with a satisfactory humus layer.

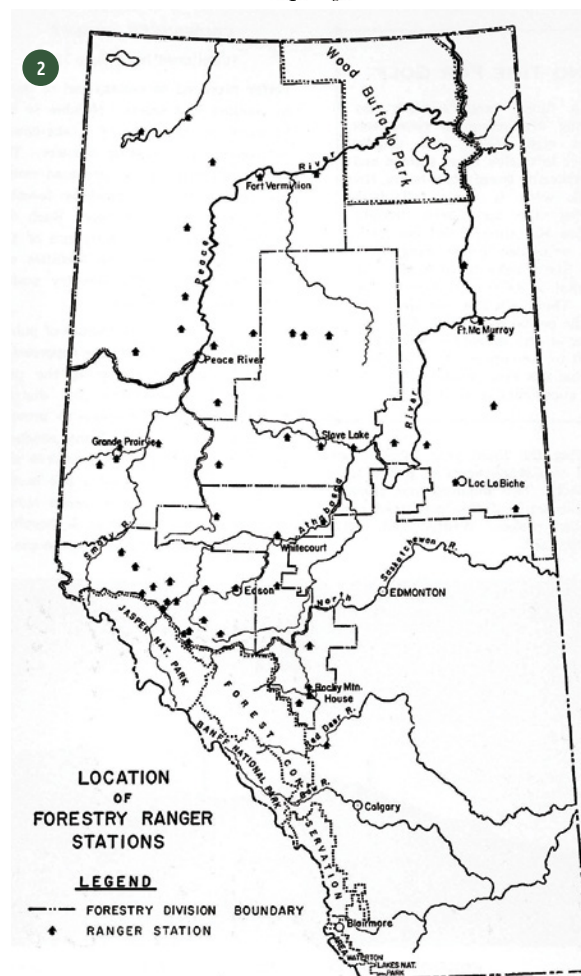
Since grazing animals roam over the entire range every season, all grasslands are susceptible to continuous management and are, therefore, of great importance. As for the forests, they can feasibly be treated by logging only at intervals. The aim then is to preserve good watershed conditions during and immediately after the operation and by proper cutting methods to encourage, for a few years at least, the type of timber stand which will yield the most to the streams at the season when it is most needed.

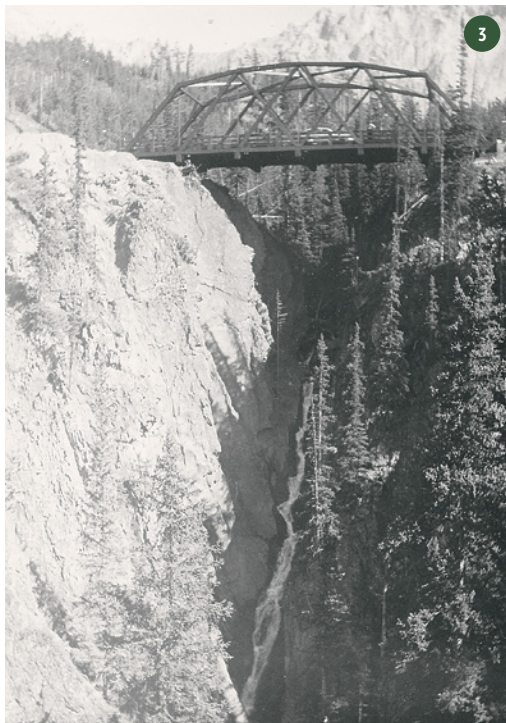
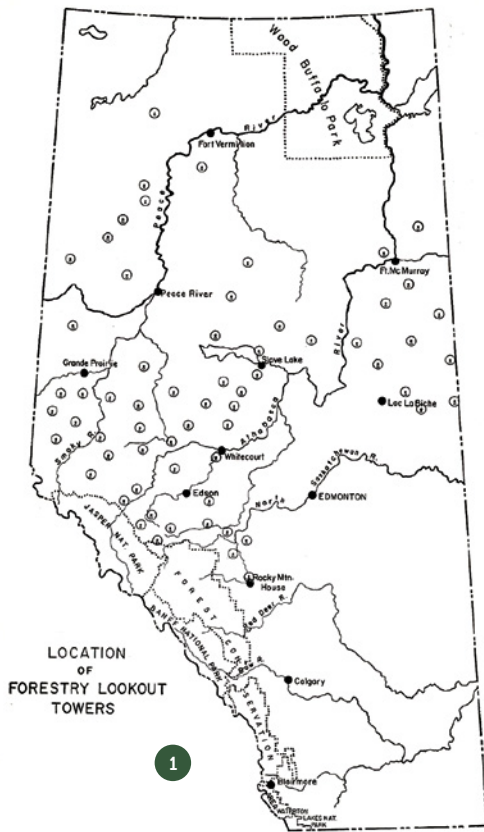
Probably the greatest problem facing the world today is that of feeding its fast increasing population. Any project which aims at maintaining or improving the productive capacity of the world's food producing areas is, therefore, of tremendous importance. Such is the objective of management on the eastern slopes of the Rockies.



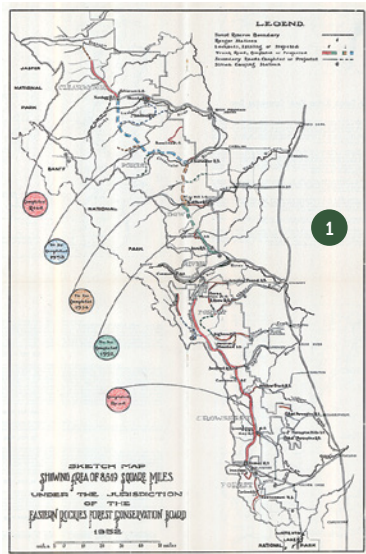
1. Map of the Clearwater Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959

2. Alberta Forest Service ranger stations outside of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959





1. Alberta Forest Service lookouts and towers outside the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1959
2. Bridge and sign at the Wilkinson Summit on the forestry trunk road; 1950s
3. A bridge over a crevasse on a portion of the forestry trunk road in the Bow Crow Forest; 1950s
4. A portion of the forestry trunk road in the Bow Crow Forest; 1950s
5. A portion of the forestry trunk road in the Bow Crow Forest; 1950s
6. Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board and Alberta Forest Service staff on a forestry tour; Thompson Creek, Upper Saskatchewan District; c1965
L to R: Herb Hall, Minister Henry Ruste, Dr. Jack Harrison (possibly), Charlie Drain (possibly), Wally Hanson, Bob Steele, Ted Keats, A.T. Baker, and Eric Huestis



1. Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board map of the forestry trunk road; 1952

2. A portion of the forestry trunk road in the Bow Crow Forest; 1950s

3. Constructed by the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board, this entrance gate, and others like them, identified to travellers which district or forest reserve they were travelling through; 1940s

4. The Carbondale lookout was built during the fire control facility expansion under the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board; 1957

5. The Livingstone lookout was built during the fire control facility expansion under the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board; 1964



1. The Ghost ranger station office northwest of Cochrane on the forestry trunk road; 1970s



2. Alberta Forest Service helicopter Bell 47J CF-AFK on the forestry trunk road near bridge construction, Bow Crow Forest; mid 1960s



3. Forestry trunk road near Willow Creek, Bow Crow Forest; mid 1960s

TREE OF LIFE AWARDED TO DAVID MCNABB

In a special ceremony on April 2, 2024, Dave McNabb was awarded the Canadian Institute of Forestry Tree of Life Award, which recognizes *"individuals who have made superior, dedicated or particularly effective contributions to sustainable forest resource management, forest renewal or sustained yield integrated management of the forest and its intrinsic resources."*

1. Bev Wilson, Dave McNabb, and Mark Kube

2. Back Row (L to R): Ron Hall, Mark Kube, Bev Wilson, Barry White, Lorne West
Front Row (L to R): Irene and David McNabb



CAMPING AND TRAVEL PERMIT

In the eastern slopes, the Dominion Forestry Branch, and its successor the Alberta Forest Service, issued camping and travel permits to people for access to public lands. Attached are examples of those camping and travel permits.

FOREST SERVICE
(Revised 1026-5-60-5-36)

2

FREE PERMIT

CLASS OF RIGHT GRANTED. *Camping*

FOREST RESERVE. *Crownsash*

MR. *H. Grant & party*

P.O. ADDRESS. *Bellevue Alta.*
IS HERBY AUTHORIZED

TO. *Camp on the
Caribou Lake River
S.E. 1/4 S12. R3. W5-4*

LAND. *Cyberdale River Dist.*

EFFECTIVE. *July 26, 1968* EXPIRES *July 27, 1968*

DIRECTOR OF FOREST SERVICE

ISSUED. *July 26, 1968* 102-5

TITLE. *47R*

STUD.



FOREST SERVICE FORM 295
(Revised 10-22-50-5-25-52)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FOREST SERVICE

3

FREE PERMIT

CLASS OF RIGHT GRANTED. *Camping*

FOREST RESERVE. *Crowsnest*

MR. *Jim Eddy & party of 2*

P.O. ADDRESS. *Burns, Alta*

TO. *Camp and Fish*

DATE. *Dec 12, 1956. R.H.W 5th M.*

LAND. *Cardinal River*

EFFECTIVE. *June 14 30* EXPIRES. *Jun 15 30*


NAME OF APPLICANT. *Joe Howard as tr.*

NAME OF FIELD OFFICER

ISSUED. *June 14 30*

STUD

4



Form A

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND FORESTS
ALBERTA FOREST SERVICE

FORM 0002
(REVISED 1982)

FREE

TRAVEL PERMIT

N^o 49104 B

Issued under authority of The Forests Act, 1961, and The Forest Reserves Act, and regulations thereunder.

NAME _____ (Print Name)

ADDRESS _____

_____ Date _____

Vehicle License No. _____ Persons in vehicle _____
(Class, Prev. or Sinc) (Number)

Purpose of travel _____ Destination _____


Expected duration of visit is _____ days. If staying for more than three days this permit must be endorsed by a forest officer.

Expiry Date _____, 19____ Forest Officer _____

1. Entrance gate to the Livingstone District, Crowsnest Forest; 1950s
2. Camping permit issued to G. Grant from Hillcrest, Alberta to camp on the Carbondale River in the Crowsnest Forest Reserve. The permit was issued by ranger R.J. Prigge on July 26, 1928
3. Camping permit issued to Joe Eddy from Burmis, Alberta to camp and fish in the Crowsnest Forest Reserve. The permit was issued by ranger Joe Kovack on June 14, 1930
4. Copy of a free travel permit from 1962. This permit was required by the Alberta Forest Service to enter and access the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve.

TIMBER PERMIT

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND MINES
FOREST SERVICE

 **TIMBER PERMIT**

1926 5466

Duplicate for Forest Ranger
Grouse Creek Ranger

ABERDEEN

PROVINCIAL FOREST OFFICE

C-961

Mr. E. G. McDonald, of J. G. Sec. Tp. Rgn. W. of Meridian
Post Office address COLLEMAN, ALA.
is hereby authorized to carry from (Location) S. 20 E. 22-7-4-20th N.
the following quantity of timber and NO MORE:

5 Cords dry pine fuelwood - Free

The receipt of _____ CO per dollar (\$ 1.00)
including office fee of \$1.00 in consideration of this permit, is hereby acknowledged.

THIS PERMIT EXPIRES APRIL 30th, 1937, and is subject to the regulations governing Forest Service timber permits, and to special conditions hereunder or endorsed on the back hereof.

Forest Ranger to supervise cutting
Address COLLEMAN, ALA.

1. A sworn return of the timber taken from the Provincial Forest permit must be made on the back of this permit before the Forest Ranger or other person duly qualified to administer an outfit. Before this return is made the cutting of timber must be suspended.

2. The cutting of timber must be controlled to the quantity and location specified above.

3. The cutting operations must be conducted in a manner satisfactory to the Forest Officer.

4. All uncut timber in the tract cut must be utilized.

5. (D) MARKED OR OTHERWISE DESIGNATED TIMBERS ONLY MAY BE CUT. STUMPING TO BE FORBIDDEN OR IMPROVED UP TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE FOREST OFFICER.

6. (E) No provision of these Regulations for Forewood Permits may be waived.

7. No refunds will be granted for amounts less than \$1.00 and then only if written application is received within three (3) months from date of expiration of this permit.

Permit issued under exp. no. 25 (24)

Issued At Gadsden, Ala. on June 1926, 1937

E. P. Alexander
Director of Forestry

NOTE:—If you are doubtful, or wish further information, ASK THE FOREST RANGER.

P. R. 48

OVER

Copy of a timber permit authorizing E. Gudmundson of Coleman, Alberta, to harvest five cords of dry pine firewood from Section 32, Township 7, Range 4, W5M; Crowsnest-Bow River Forest; January 16, 1937. This permit was issued by Alberta Forest Service supervisor J.P. Alexander, with the work to be supervised and inspected by forest ranger J.H. Boulton.

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF ALBANY
NEW YORK

Date Filed: _____
Per File No. _____

To: *Mr. Thomas Baughman
at New York City*

Re: *Mr. Thomas Baughman
at New York City*

Date: *Mon 12 April 1948*

Please find attached your Bureau letter of Apr. 10, 1946 re reason Bureau permit # 2965-B.

For your kind attention

W.R.P.

Alberta Forest Service forest rangers handled fish and wildlife duties in the 1940s and 1950s. This is a beaver permit authorization granted to Thomas Bouchier from Fort McKay, by forest ranger Jack B. Roy from Fort McMurray; April 12, 1948

ROCK LAKE LOOKOUT

1

Submitted by Larry Young, Rocky Mountain Wilderness Association

The Rock Lake lookout is located in Wilmore Wilderness Park, north west of the equestrian staging site which is adjacent to the Wild Hay River. Rock Lake lookout was commissioned in 1962/63 and was removed from service in 1977. Jasper National Park and the Alberta Forest Service operated this lookout jointly, but by 1975 and 1976 it was only manned in high hazard times. The lookout is a basic rectangular cabin with a Cupola on top and the cabin is still standing, but the generator shed, and gen-set were removed.

By coincidence, the towerman at the lookout from 1966 to 1970 was Andrew Brown, whose daughter Rosemay Krupa is a neighbor of Dennis and Leanne Quintilio, and she

shared his diary with them. Andrew kept detailed notes and observations illustrating the life of a lookout man in an isolated wilderness setting. Fire season was from April to October in Alberta, and lookouts were generally manned from May until September. Andrew's diary documents the opening of the lookout in May and closing the lookout in October each year. His daily routine was to take weather observations and send the information to headquarters by radio first thing in the morning and then begin scanning the forest area for fire "smokes". Many chores were carried out when time allowed and washing clothes, packing water, cooking meals and maintaining the power plant were always on the "to do" list. Throughout the summer, the diary describes regular sitings of goats, mountain sheep, and bears, and also mentions the many riders and pack horses that passed by on the trails below the lookout. He also makes note of the wind and lightning storms that were not fun events on top of a high mountain.

Andrews family occasionally travelled to

Rock Lake for a visit, and if the road up to the lookout was not drivable because of rain, Andrew would walk down to the Rock Lake ranger station to meet the family. Most times they could ford the Wildhay River and climb the steep hills using chains on the truck, then spend the day at the lookout.

Wildfires were common events each summer, but in August 1967 an outfitter stove started a fire at Mile 53, directly north of the lookout, and the diary describes the activity of fire crews, helicopters and airtankers fighting the fire. The lookout area was smoky for most of August that year, and Andrew was busy coordinating messages and keeping track of fire fighting resources. Trail riders and outfitters that camp at Mile 53 now appreciate the supply of standing dead firewood trees as a result of the fire.

1. Rock Lake lookout in the 1970s – note helicopter landing area marked by white rocks

2. Edson Forest superintendent Bill Fairless with unknown pilot, at the Rock Lake lookout; 1970s



GREY NUNS WHITE SPRUCE PARK TOUR

On August 24, 2024, six Forest History Association of Alberta directors took part in a walking tour of the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park in the City of St. Albert. Erin Pickard, operations supervisor Parks and Open Spaces, and retired Blue Ridge Lumber silviculture forester Daryl D'Amico were the gracious hosts for the tour.

The Grey Nuns White Spruce Park (GNWSP) is an ecologically and historically significant area, and the contributions to cultivating a healthy, vibrant community has been honoured by naming this park after the Grey Nuns. The Grey Nuns White Spruce Park is one of the few first-growth white spruce forests of any significance within an urban municipality in North America and is the largest of the few natural remnants of the forest that covered the St. Albert area before settlement. The forest has survived fire, insects, disease, and logging for over 170 years.

On August 15, 2008, Mayor Nolan Crouse, Councillor Len Bracko, Dr. Peter Murphy, and forester Daryl D'Amico toured the area and had initial discussions on how best to protect the forest which was in the early stage of being developed by a developer. In September 2011, the St. Albert city council officially declared the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park a municipal historic resource. Following the establishment of an advisory committee, the city manager approved a management plan for the forest in May 2014. The three main objectives of the plan are to manage for the forest, manage for the people, and manage for education and awareness.

Between 2014 and 2018 research plots were established and over 23,000 white spruce seedlings were planted. The seedlings were grown in a nursery from seeds collected within the historic white spruce forest and then extracted and stored at the Alberta Tree Improvement and Seed Centre. Some sites were prepared for planting by mounding.

In 2017 and 2018, the forest was struck with extreme winds resulting in significant blowdown of the large white spruce trees. For visitor safety, hazard trees were removed, and more intensive maintenance took place to improve understory regrowth and reduce wildfire risk. To minimize impact on the forest, horses were used to remove many of the fallen trees.

In 2015, the GNWSP management plan took home the Parks Excellence award from the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association; and in 2023, the City of St. Albert received the 2023 Environmental Leadership and Sustainability Award for its development of the GNWSP from the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. Located within the park are over four kilometres of trails utilizing pre-existing disturbed areas, boardwalks, viewpoints, two outdoor classrooms, a picnic shelter, and nature play. Ongoing management includes pruning and removal of deadfall, planting of new trees, planting trials to test best practices for reforestation, control measures for invasive species, and access control for sensitive areas needing protection.





1. Seedling browse protectors; Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024
2. The tall white spruce, nick named "The General" was aged at 170 years old; August 24, 2024
3. Seedling browse protector; Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024
4. Grey Nuns White Spruce Park interpretive sign
5. L to R: Chris Valaire and Erin Pickard at one of the silviculture research plots; Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024
6. L to R: Graham Legaarden, Craig Rose, Chris Valaire, and Daryl D'Amico; St. Albert Rotary Park shelter; August 24, 2024
7. View of the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park on the north side of the Sturgeon River; August 24, 2024



1. L to R: Daryl D'Amico and Erin Pickard at the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park interpretive sign; August 24, 2024
2. L to R: Erin Pickard, Deanna McCullough, Katie Lamoureux with young forester Ernest, and Daryl D'Amico looking at white spruce regeneration; Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024
3. L to R: Erin Pickard, Katie Lamoureux and son Ernest, Deanna McCullough, and Graham Legaarden; St. Albert Rotary Park shelter; August 24, 2024
4. L to R: Craig Rose, Graham Legaarden, Chris Valaire, Deanna McCullough, Katie and Ernest Lamoureux, Daryl D'Amico, and Erin Pickard on one of the observation boardwalks; Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024
5. White spruce regeneration along one of the walking and biking trails in the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park; August 24, 2024



In Alberta we have a great heritage in our forests and streams. If our forests are blackened and ruined by fire instead of forest industries supplying the building material we require and providing a living directly and indirectly for thousands of people, instead of our shady playgrounds, big game, fur bearing animals and our pleasant streams, what are we going to have? A ruined industry, roaring torrents in the spring and dry water courses in the

summer, soil erosion and all the other ills that occur in any country where the balance of nature is upset by the destruction of a great part of the forest.

Your local ranger contends that a lot of good citizens live in his district. He takes this opportunity to thank you for the co-operation you gave him last year and he is sure the more you realize the situation, the more he can count on your co-operation and assistance.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT
LANDS AND MINES

FOREST SERVICE

BRITISH COLUMBIA, YUKON TERRITORY AND THE DISTRICT OF
MACKENZIE JOIN WITH ALBERTA IN ASKING YOU TO PRESERVE
THE FOREST WEALTH OF THE NORTH WEST.

Alberta Forest Service wildfire prevention message *Don't Sabotage our Valuable Forests*, published in the Northern Echo, Vol. 1, No. 9; Edmonton; April 1946.

THE CANADIAN FOREST SERVICE TURNS 125! AN ALBERTA VIEW

The *Act for the Sale and better Management of Timber upon Public Lands*, was early British legislation dealing with forested lands in what is now Canada. This 1849 legislation incorporated principles from the previous 1826 legislation, primarily that forest lands remain public and under Crown control. This principle holds true in Alberta and much of Canada today.

The government of Canada passed the *Dominion Lands Act* in 1872 to encourage settlement. The Act was applied to the province of Manitoba and to the North West Territories, and upon the creation of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905 from the North West Territories, the Act continued to apply. The Act gave a claimant 160 acres for free with a \$10 administrative fee, under condition that the claimant cultivated at least 40 acres of the land and built a permanent dwelling within three years. The *Dominion Lands Act* also identified lands which were excluded from sale or settlement, a process for allocation of timber berths and permits, it identified obligations to prevent ignition and spread of wildfires, enabled the creation of Forest Reserves for the protection of timber, water, and fire prevention and control. It also defined the role of a Crown Timber Agent.

These new settlement opportunities brought the need for timber as fuel wood, posts and rails, and buildings.

Timber was needed as well for industrial development from railroad bridge timbers and ties, to mine ties and props. The federal Department of the Interior was created in 1873, with the Calgary and Edmonton Timber Agencies set-up in 1884. These offices were established to enable timber sales, survey of Crown lands, and establish timber berths. Two of the first timber berths set-up in 1884, were Timber Berth 80 and 179 in the Crowsnest Pass. Other berths were set-up in the eastern slopes and as far north as Grande Prairie.

The Canadian Forest Service has had a couple of names over the years, but its roots started in 1899 with the creation of the Dominion Forestry Branch, Department of the Interior. In 1899, Sir Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior for Canada, appointed Elihu Stewart as Chief Inspector of timber and forestry, essentially the first chief forester for Canada. The agency was established to look after preservation of timber on Dominion lands and to carry out policies to encourage tree culture. Stewart saw his mandate as one of "conservation and propagation", conserving by preventing fires and controlling timber cutting, and propagation by encouraging settlers to plant trees. To these tasks Stewart employed and trained seasonal fire rangers, enlarged Forest Reserves, developed the tree-planting program for the prairies, and set up experimental plantations. Two of the first forest rangers appointed

in Alberta were ranger D.G. McPhail, who reported to C.L. Gouin, head of the Calgary Timber Agency; and ranger John A.C. Cameron, who reported to Thomas Anderson, head of the agency at Edmonton.

Alberta was created in 1905, however, control and management of its forest resources remained with the federal government, under the mandate of the Dominion Forestry Branch (DFB). This remained in place until the transfer of resources in 1930. Prior to the creation of the DFB, the federal government had started to set aside five areas in Alberta as possible forest reserves. These were Cooking Lake, Foothills, Kootenay Forest Park, Louise Lake Park, and Sand Park. In those early years, the forested areas were vast, and government resources were limited, and as such Stewart



decided to focus his efforts on a system of Forest Reserves covering the most important areas. Dominion Forest Reserves in Alberta in 1915 consisted of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve (RMFR) (Crowsnest Forest, Bow River Forest, Clearwater Forest, Brazeau Forest, and Athabasca Forest), the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve, the Cypress Hills Forest Reserve, and the Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve.

R.H. Campbell became director of forestry when Elihu Stewart left the position in 1906. Due to the size of the Forest Reserves, Campbell directed each Forest Reserve would be divided into ranger districts in an effort for rangers to better manage and inspect the forests. In 1913, there were 59 rangers for nearly 15 million acres. The rest of the forested area of Alberta was protected by a supervisor of fire ranging in Calgary who hired seasonal fire rangers. In 1930, there were about 50 fire rangers to patrol nearly 100 million acres in the fire ranging districts. One focus of forest rangers was the prevention of wildfires and the monitoring of logging operations. Another was monitoring slash burning in the forest, as well as brush burning in the settlement areas. Rangers encouraged prairie residents to establish and maintain fuel breaks around buildings and haystacks. The fire prevention campaign focused on education.

Ernest Finlayson was appointed director of forestry in 1924. During his tenure, forest protection made great strides, also involving the RCAF in aircraft applications. By the end of his term, the DFB was involved in the fields of forest economics, silviculture research, fire protection research, and the expanding field of forest products through labs at both Ottawa and Vancouver. Forest surveys were also

initiated, and the first development of working plans marked the beginning of planning for sustained yield forestry in Canada. From 1925 on, he was caught up in the proposals to transfer the natural resources to the western provinces.

Alberta Dominion employees of note included Ernest Finlayson, who worked during the summers of 1910 and 1911 on surveys to establish the boundaries of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve. Finlayson was appointed by Campbell as inspector of fire ranging in 1912, and did a major job reorganizing the fire ranging services in the North West Territories, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. In 1914, he became district inspector of Forest Reserves in Alberta, then the most important of the DFB administrative units. In 1924, Finlayson was appointed as the director of forestry for the Dominion Forestry Branch.

Willis N. Millar moved to Alberta from the U.S. Forest Service in 1911 to work as inspector of forest reserves with an office in Calgary. He was a Yale forestry graduate in the same class as H.R. MacMillan, who also worked for the DFB from 1906 to 1912. With the DFB, MacMillan completed the forest conditions survey of the Crow's Nest Forest in 1909. Millar travelled extensively in Alberta to organize and extend the boundaries of the Forest Reserves. One of his major contributions was a comprehensive survey and report on wildlife in the Rocky Mountains. Millar left in 1914 to teach at the University of Toronto.

T.F. (Ted) Blefgen joined the DFB as an assistant ranger at Lynx Creek in the Crowsnest Forest on May 1, 1911. He was born and raised in Spokane, Washington, and worked for the McLaren Lumber Company as a clerk and then timekeeper at a

logging camp north of the Oldman River. He became acquainted with forest ranger George Ritchie at the time, who, impressed with his riding skills and knowledge of the bush and lumber industry, offered him a job. On June 1, 1917, Blefgen was promoted to ranger in charge, later forest supervisor of the Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve. On July 1, 1927, Blefgen was promoted to supervisor of fire ranging, based in Calgary. He continued in that role for the DFB until the transfer of resources on October 1, 1930, when he was appointed the first director of forestry of the new Alberta Forest Service. Blefgen retired early in 1948 as a result of illness.

James A. Hutchison joined the DFB in the spring of 1912 and took a position in the northern section of the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve. In 1913, he was promoted to assistant ranger in the Athabasca Forest Reserve along the Big Smoky River, and in 1913, he became assistant supervisor in the Brazeau Forest Reserve. At the time he took his military leave for WWI, he had worked his way up to acting deputy superintendent of the Brazeau and Athabasca Forest Reserves, under superintendent Stan H. Clark. On July 7, 1919, he returned to the DFB in Alberta from the military. Between 1919 and 1930, Hutchison was forest supervisor for the Bow River Forest Reserve. In 1930, he worked as assistant director for Ted Blefgen and was assigned the responsibility of game commissioner and forest protection head for the entire province. Roles included planning and installation of a northern Alberta radio network, administration of the new *Prairie and Forest Fires Act*, and administration of the National Forestry and Youth Forestry Training programs. Hutchison rejoined the RCAF when WWII was declared in 1939, returning to the Alberta Forest

Service in May 1946. In May 1947, he was appointed superintendent of Banff National Park and retired on August 15, 1957 as the director of the National Parks Branch.

A native Albertan, Eric Huestis studied forestry at the University of British Columbia. He started in 1923 with the DFB on the Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve as a summer student, transferring later to the Alberta Forest Service (AFS) with the 1930 Transfer of Resources. During his career, Huestis worked in most of the Forest Reserves including the Clearwater and Cypress Hills. He became assistant superintendent of the Crowsnest Forest and superintendent of the Brazeau-Athabasca Forest before moving to Edmonton as assistant director of forestry in 1940. When the Game Branch was transferred to the department of Lands and Mines in 1941, Huestis received the additional responsibilities of fish and game commissioner. His knowledgeable background along with his determination and firm resolve set the stage for major developments within the AFS in future years. Huestis became the director of forestry when Ted Blefgen left in 1948, and deputy minister of Lands and Forests from 1963 to 1966. He then took the role of the Civil Service Ombudsman until his retirement in 1970.

One legacy of the Dominion Forestry Branch in Alberta is a rich collection of photographs from the early 1900s

Abraham Knechtel, inspector of forest reserves before Millar, had discussed silviculture as early as 1910, but it was not until 1920 that reforestation trials really got started in Alberta. They began on the Cooking Lake and Cypress Hills Forest Reserves since they were "*located on the prairie in poorly timbered country.*" After establishing beds for seeding and seedlings in both locations, actual planting trials began. A 21-acre planting of 65,478 trees was done in Cooking Lake in 1923, half each of jack pine and white spruce. The next year 200 acres at Cooking Lake were spot-seeded. Planting was also done in Cypress Hills and seeding in the Crowsnest Forest Reserves. Results were variable, and references were made later to problems with rodents, frost and drought. The small DFB nurseries in Cooking Lake and Cypress Hills Forest Reserves were maintained by the

Alberta Forest Service after 1930 but soon abandoned in favour of a new central nursery at the Oliver Hospital site, an area now part of northeast Edmonton.

One of the lesser-known Dominion employees was Colonel Robert Palmer. He was one of the original members of the Lord Strathcona Horse and saw service in both the South African War and the First World War. He was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the 49th Battalion in 1917, following W.A. Griesbach's promotion to Brigadier General. Palmer was appointed chief fire ranger of the Edmonton Fire Ranging District in 1912 at age 44. He held this position for 19 years, transferring to the Department of Indian Affairs in August 1932, following the 1930 Transfer of Resources to Alberta. What is remarkable was the geography in which Colonel Palmer



was in charge. On May 9, 1912, the Claresholm Review said, *"Palmer's sphere of activity will extend from Edmonton west to the boundaries of the Brazeau and Athabasca forest reserves and Jasper park; south to include the railroads being built from Red Deer to Rocky Mountain House and the boundary of the Brazeau reserve; east to include Lac La Biche and as far north as it is practicable to provide Fire Rangers"*. He did this with very few men, infrastructure or resources.

The early Dominion forest rangers were hired from among local Alberta settlers, ranchers, trappers and loggers. They tended to be

independent of mind and spirit, and included such stalwarts as "Posthole" Smith, Boer War veteran and rancher in the Porcupine Hills. Others were Fred Nash at Turner Valley, whose horses were always a forestry feature at the Calgary Stampede; Bill Shankland, another Boer War veteran from Nordegg and Bragg Creek who always rode tall in the saddle and who led Alberta's first Forest Ranger training school in 1946; Jack Glen, a First World War veteran who built many of the trails and cabins west of Entrance and captured his experiences in his memoirs; and Albert Foley, the ranger from Swan River in the Lesser Slave Lake Forest

Reserve, the first in a four-generation line of Alberta rangers.

A key legacy of the Dominion Forestry Branch in Alberta was the forest reserves, its fire prevention and tree planting initiatives, and the infrastructure built. Infrastructure included lookouts and lookout towers, roads, bridges, telephone communication links, and ranger stations. The evidence of this infrastructure still exists today. DFB forest rangers were issued cameras to take pictures of the work they did day to day. Thousands of these photographs taken in Alberta tell a compelling story of the work the DFB and its rangers did in establishing the early Alberta Forest Service.



1

1. Dominion Forestry Branch timber berths in the Crowsnest Pass (1884), Brule (1909), Grande Prairie (1911), and Jasper (1919)

2. This map shows the Forest Reserves, Proposed Forest Reserves, and National Parks around 1929





1

1. Land Registration and Crown Timber Office's in Edmonton. The Crown Timber Office was set-up in 1884, with this building being built in 1893

2. Forester J.A. Doucet was one of the Dominion Forestry Branch employees tasked to survey the Forest Reserves between 1910 and 1915. Photo shows Doucet and his survey crew in the Athabaska Forest near Entrance; Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1912

3. Dominion forester and surveyor publications confirming timber and geographic conditions on the Crow's Nest Valley (1909), Lesser Slave Lake (1912), and the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve (1913)

4. Forest ranger McDonald searching for smoke or fire while standing on an improvised ladder style lookout tower, Brazeau Forest Reserve; 1912



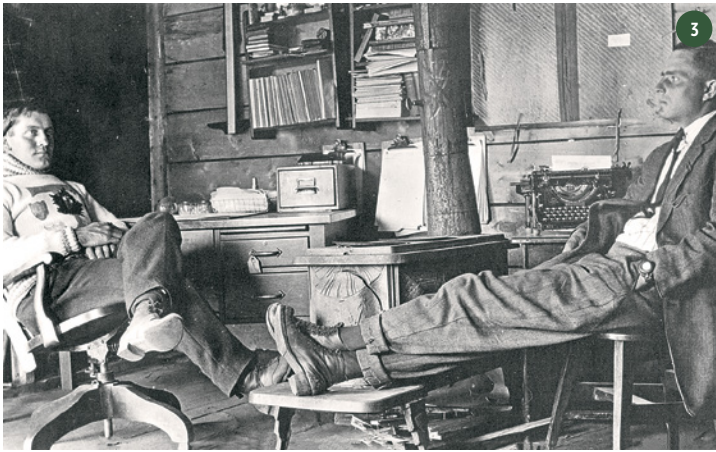
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1. Rangers and foresters outside the Brazeau Forest Headquarters, Coalspur; Brazeau Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1913
L to R: L.C. Tilt, W. Shankland, Mr. Hensler, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Blythe, and J.P. Alexander

2. Never one to avoid hard work ranger Ted Blefgen on the right, Crowsnest Forest Reserve; 1912. Blefgen became the first director of forestry for the new Alberta Forest Service in 1930, following the Transfer of Resources

3. Stan Clark (L), forest supervisor of the Athabaska Forest; with Charles Morse, Alberta district superintendent; Hinton; 1913

4. Rangers Greenwood and Rance patrolling the Brazeau Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve, on DFB speeder; 1913

5. Dominion Forestry Branch Stop Fires, Grow Timber parade float; Winnipeg; 1915

6. Dominion Forestry Branch staff at the Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve headquarters; 1918
L to R: Barney Barnes, Herb Hall, Ted Blefgen, and C. Bailey



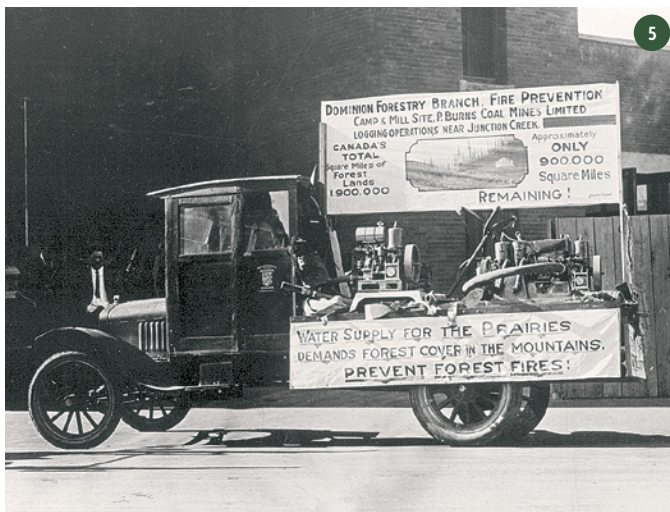
1. Logging and log decks on the Brazeau Collieries timber sale, southwest of Edson; Brazeau Forest Reserve; 1914

2. Gateway into the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve; 1920

3. Short wood decked for tie production on the Canadian National Resources timber permit, southwest of Edson; Brazeau Forest Reserve; 1914

4. Nursery seed beds at the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve tree nursery; 1921

5. Seedling transplant beds at the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve tree nursery; 1921



1. Three-man crew planting seedlings at the Cooking Lake Forest Reserve; 1922

L to R: Peter Ward, Ben Shank, and an unidentified person

2. Dominion Forestry Branch prevention sign on the Athabasca River near Fort McMurray; 1922

3. Dominion Forestry Branch fire prevention float at the Calgary Stampede; 1923

4. Gateway to the Bighorn District, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1921

5. Dominion Forestry Branch fire prevention float at the Calgary Stampede; 1923

6. Aura Ranger Station, Bow River Forest, northwest of Calgary; 1923. The stone cross was an identifying marker that could be seen by passing aircraft



1. Forest ranger Fred Nash leading pack outfit in the Stampede Parade, Calgary; 1925

2. Construction of the Marten Mountain Lookout, Lesser Slave Forest Reserve; 1923

3. E.H. Finlayson and crew member wake up to an early snowfall at Monaghan Creek, Athabasca Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1916. Finlayson was the chief inspector for the Alberta District of the Dominion Forestry Branch from 1915 to 1920

4. Dominion Forestry Branch rangers jacking up and leveling timbers on the bridge crossing the Elbow River, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1923



1. Completed Dominion Forestry Branch wooden bridge over Canyon Creek, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1924



2. Dominion Forestry Branch wooden bridge constructed over the Elbow River, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1923



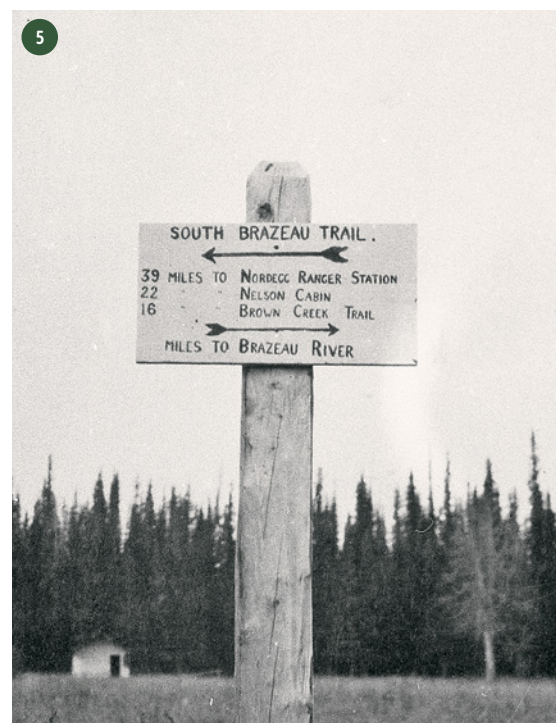
3. Road construction near the Highwood Pass, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1925



4. Dominion Forestry Branch Fire Rangers, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve, early 1920s



5. Foresters and Rangers at the Porcupine Hills District, Crowsnest Forest, Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve; 1921
Front Row (L to R): E.B. (Eb) Walker, Assistant Ranger; Lloyd van Camp, Forester Pincher Creek; W. Antle, Assistant Ranger; and J.A. (Jock) Frankish, Forest Ranger. Back Row: H.G. (Harry) Nash, Forest Ranger Livingstone (Gap); R.J. Prigge, Assistant Ranger; J.H. (Harry) Boulton, Forest Ranger; J.H. McLeod, Forest Ranger Crowsnest Pass; J.P. (Jack) Alexander, Supervisor Pincher Creek; H.B. (Posthole) Smith, Forest Ranger Porcupine Hills; G.A. Ritchie, Forest Ranger; T.D. (Tom) Best, Assistant Ranger; F.T. (Fred) Monk, Assistant Ranger; and W.A. Lyndon, Forest Ranger



1. Construction of the Blue Hill lookout, Bow River Forest Reserve; 1927

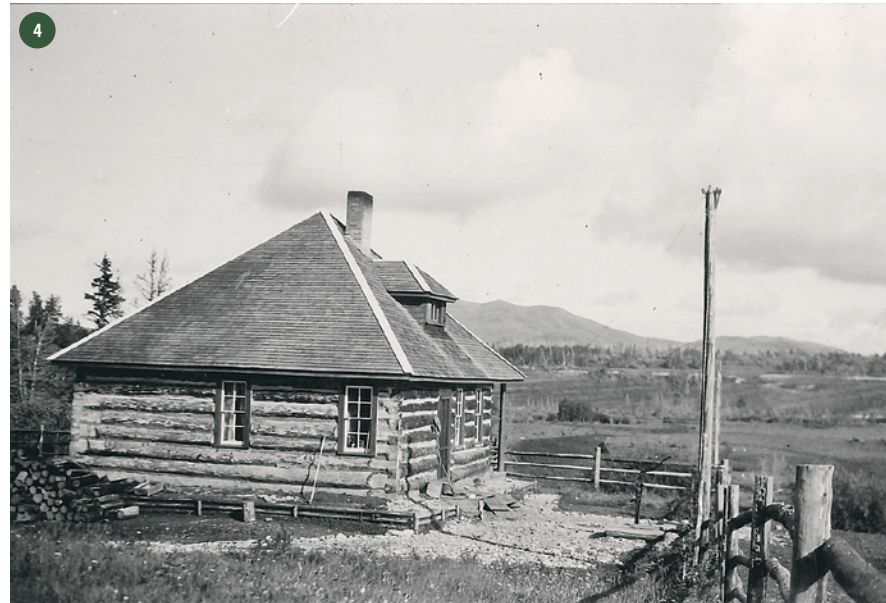
2. Flattop Tower, Slave Lake Division, Northern Alberta Forest District; 1940s

3. Marten Mountain lookout, Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve; 1923

4. Dominion Forestry Branch staff in 1926. Many transferred to the Alberta Forest Service in 1930 with the Transfer of Resources

Back Row (L to R): Tom Burrows, Forest Supervisor Athabasca Forest; Charles McDonald, Assistant Supervisor Bow River Forest; R.M. Brown, Forest Supervisor Crowsnest Forest; Harry L. Holman, Forester Calgary. Middle Row: C.K. Le Capelain, Civil Engineer Calgary; Harry A. Parker, Forest Supervisor Cypress Hills Forest Reserve; A.G. Smith, Forest Supervisor Clearwater Forest; Don McKenzie, Forest Supervisor Brazeau Forest; J.P. Alexander, Forest Supervisor Crowsnest Forest; Freeman Kelley, Chief Ranger Cooking Lake Forest Reserve; Symen Nelson, Accountant Calgary office. Front Row: Col. Robert H. Palmer, Head Edmonton Fire Ranging District (E.F.R.D.), Edmonton; James A. Hutchison, Forest Supervisor Bow River Forest; Charles H. Morse, Inspector of Forestry Calgary District; James Smart, Assistant Inspector of Forestry Calgary; and Ted F. Bleggen, Forest Supervisor Lesser Slave Lake Forest Reserve

5. Dominion Forest Service trail marker post; Clearwater Forest; 1928



1. Bow River Forest boundary sign at the Jumping Pound District. The sign advised visitors that "Permits to camp or travel on a Dominion Forest must be secured from a Forest Ranger". Bow River Forest; 1922

2. Bow River Forest Exhibit at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede; July 1924

3. Gap Ranger Station with registration check-in box, Crowsnest Forest Reserve; 1930s

4. Elbow Ranger Station and house, Bow River Forest Reserve; November 1926

5. Signing of the *Natural Resources Act*, transferring control of Alberta's natural resources over to the province, Privy Council Chamber, Ottawa; December 14, 1929
Seated (L to R): Dr. James H. King, Charles Stewart, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Alberta Premier John Brownlee, George Hadley, John F. Lymburn. Standing: Col. Oliver Mowat, Robert Forke, James Malcolm, J.C. Elliot, and J.L. Ralston. Provincial Archives of Alberta, A10924



1



2



3

1. Dr. R.J. Bourchier, a forest pathologist with the Forest Entomology and Pathology Laboratory in Calgary during 1960, and B.M. McGugan, coordinator of Forest Insect and Disease Survey in Ottawa; on the Liard River; 1956

2. Canadian Forest Service staff launching their boat "Borealis"; Fort Nelson, British Columbia; 1956

3. Canadian Forest Service staff inspecting Wrights sawmill operations south of Aklavik, Northwest Territories; June 1956

THE FROZEN LOGGER

Song by James Stephens, Sung by the Weavers, Recorded by Vanguard Records

As I sat down one evening, 'twas in a small café,
A forty-year-old waitress to me these words did say.

"Well, I see that you are a logger and not just a common bum
'Cause nobody but a logger stirs his coffee with his thumb.

"My lover was a logger, there's none like him today,
If you'd pour whiskey on it he could eat a bale of hay.

"Well, he'd never shave his whiskers from off of his horny hide,
He'd just drive them in with a hammer, and bite them off inside.

"My lover came to see me upon one freezing day,
He held me in a fond embrace which broke three vertebrae.

"Then he kissed me when we parted, so hard he broke my jaw,
I could not speak to tell him he'd forgot his mackinaw.

"I saw my lover leaving, sauntering through the snow,
Going gaily homeward at forty-eight below.

"The weather it tried to freeze him, it tried its level best,
At a hundred degrees below zero he buttoned up his vest.

"It froze clear through to China, it froze to the stars above,
At a thousand degrees below zero it froze my logger love.

"And so I lost my lover and to this cafe I come,
And here I wait till someone stirs his coffee with his thumb."

A WALK IN THE WOODS, A WALK THROUGH TIME

Submitted by Bob Bott - Below is one of my favourite Peter Murphy stories, a sidebar in Learning from the Forest that we co-authored with Bob Udell in 2003

The core team that prepared this book met in January 2001 to review our work and get up to speed on the latest developments at Hinton. We saw technological marvels in the mills and woodlands, and we heard managers describe sophisticated strategies to meet the new century's myriad challenges. But what brought us together in the first place was a keen interest in both human and natural history, so we were especially thrilled by Peter Murphy's discovery of two lodgepole pine snags on the edge of a cutblock near the hamlet of Robb.

The harvest contractor, using the latest cut-to-length stumpside processing system, obligingly cut cookies (cross-sections of the dead trees, about thirty centimetres above ground) so Murphy could study the rings. We already knew that the mature pine stand being harvested had originated from regrowth after a fire in 1896, and Murphy expected the rings on the snags would tell the story of the site during the preceding century or two.

He was right about one of the snags, but the other one turned out to be much, much older—most likely dating from the late fourteenth century. The older snag apparently survived the fire, around 1686, that cleared the ground for the second tree to begin growing about two years later. Both trees died much later but remained standing to the present.

Murphy pieced together a fascinating history of these few hectares. The big events were the fires that swept through in 1387, 1595, 1686, 1708, 1740, and 1896. In between, there were years of lush growth, and times when drought or long winters resulted in just the tiniest increments. There are scars, perhaps indicating another tree fell against the more wind-firm survivors. A charred ring on the stump of a harvested tree nearby indicates that yet another low-intensity fire occurred in 1908.

It was a wonderful reminder that despite the seeming vastness of the foothills forest, and the apparent uniformity of many stands, each tree is a unique individual and each site a unique ecosystem.

The snags also reinforced that the forest and the landscape operate on different time scales than humans. In 1387, for example, Chaucer had just begun writing the *Canterbury Tales*, and the Ming Dynasty was consolidating its power in China after overthrowing the Mongol Empire. Even in 1896, the most recent "big year" in this site's history, Alberta was still part of the North-West Territories, and the Robb area was known only to a few Aboriginal people and government surveyors.



WHERE DID THE BURL COME FROM?

Did you ever wonder where the white spruce burl outside the Agriculture/Forestry Centre building at the University of Alberta came from?

An unusually large spruce burl is on display at the University of Alberta. The plaque reads: "*SPRUCE BURL. This large spruce burl was collected by Ken Brown and Alex Taje of High Prairie, Alberta. The tree on which it was growing was located in the sub-alpine forests south of Grande Prairie. Burls are not uncommon on spruce but seldom grow to this size. The cause of these swellings is not known. The University thanks the finders for making this specimen available, and the Alberta Forest Products Association for the donation which enabled us to obtain it.*"

The 1986 Alberta Trees of Renown publication shows Alex Taje standing with this burl he found about 140 kilometres south of Grande Prairie. The burl measured 123 centimeters (48 inches) in diameter. The publication also states: "*Burls are lumps or swellings on tree trunks, most commonly occurring on spruce. They are caused by accelerated growth in the cambium layer under the bark, which results in the swollen stems or lumps, often quite irregular. What brings this about is not known. Suggestions range from bacteria or viruses, or genetic quirks, to soil or environmental factors. Most are small, but a few become quite large.*"



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO – FORESTRY 6T6 58TH REUNION

The 1966 University of Toronto (UofT) Forestry graduates were in Ontario for their 58th reunion in September 2024. Bob Udell said the graduates try and meet every five years, with their 60th anniversary planned for 2026. Ten graduates were able to attend their 58th reunion. In 1962, around 32 students started the forestry program, only 18 graduated. According to Bob, Des Crossley, a 1935 UofT graduate, had a soft spot for University of Toronto forestry graduates. When Crossley was chief forester for St. Regis (Alberta) Ltd. (formerly North Western Pulp & Power) in Hinton, Alberta, he hired a number of UofT forestry graduates. Graduates included:

Jim Bocking	Class of 1951
Jack Wright	Class of 1953
Bob Carman	Class of 1954
Russ Powell	Class of 1965
Bob Udell	Class of 1966
Paul Atfield	Class of 1974



1. First year of the University of Toronto forestry class, 1962-63; University of Toronto

2. Attendees of the 58th reunion of the University of Toronto forestry class; steps of the Kingston Penitentiary; September 2024
Top Row (L to R): Bob McGee, John Ambrose
Second Row (L to R): John Johnston, Bob Wanless, Ron Neilson, Bob Udell
Front Row (L to R): Derrick Coleman, Bill Fisher, Crandall Benson
Missing from Photo: Terry Johnson

THE FIRES OF '36

Submitted by Rick Arthur

The extended drought of the 1930s, particularly during the Dust Bowl era, set the stage for a series of significant wildfires in 1936. Year after year, the persistent drought transformed the lush, green prairies into withered grasslands and barren wastelands. Between 1933 and 1937, only 60 per cent of the normal rainfall occurred in the prairies. Crops failed, thousands of livestock starved, and approximately 250,000 people abandoned their land in search of better opportunities. Any moisture near the soil's surface had long since evaporated. Without substantial precipitation to replenish soil moisture, the water table continued to decline, causing many watercourses to dwindle to a mere trickle or completely dry up.

For most of the summer of 1936, much of North America was under the influence of high-pressure ridges, leading to one of the largest documented heat waves on the continent. In June, record-breaking temperatures were recorded in eastern North America. By mid-June, the heat had extended from the Rocky Mountains to the southeastern United States, enveloping much of Canada. The heat wave unfolded in two deadly episodes. From July 4th to the 17th, a stable upper ridge settled over North America, resulting in dangerously high temperatures, particularly in the populated areas of the eastern United States. At that time, air conditioning did not exist, and over 5,000 deaths across the United States were associated with this heat wave.

In mid-July, another upper ridge weather pattern developed, this time over much of western North America.

This high-pressure ridge became well established and remained stationary, dominating the weather for a significant portion of the summer and funneling heat across the Great Plains to the Great Lakes. The parched prairies, lacking soil moisture and green vegetation, acted like a furnace, driving temperatures to record levels in July and creating desert-like conditions for much of the month. This relentless heat scorched the landscape, exceeding the first heat wave in terms of destructive power, claiming more lives. The heat wave caused numerous deaths, though the toll was lower than expected due to the sparse population in the West.

Between July 5th and 17th, Canada sweltered from Alberta to Ontario. Temperatures soared to 44.5°C in St. Albans, Manitoba. Winnipeg registered lows of 28.3°C, while Atikokan, near Thunder Bay, set a provincial record of 42.2°C. The intensity of the heat wave was such that it prompted authorities to relax social norms, allowing men to "free the nipple" by permitting topless bathing suits. In total, 780 Canadians died because of the heat wave, with an additional 400 indirect casualties, including several drownings. Horses pulling carriages collapsed from the heat, and fruits shrivelled and baked on the trees. During this time, authorities even recruited transients from freight trains to fight the resulting forest fires.

In Alberta, June set the stage with well-below-normal precipitation and above-normal temperatures. By mid-July, drought conditions were a growing concern, as was

the potential for wildfires. On July 21, 1936, Alberta entered its sixth week of a prolonged heat spell, with new record temperatures frequently becoming the norm. The dry air over the parched Canadian prairies resulted in very low relative humidity and minimal precipitation from mid-June onward.

As a response to the prolonged heat wave, officials from the Alberta Forest Service enacted a forest closure for the Bow River, Crowsnest, and Clearwater Forest Reserves. This closure meant that the public was barred from entering or traveling within the Forest Reserves, except for a few exceptions. J.P. Alexander, the forest superintendent for the Bow River and Crowsnest Forest Reserves, announced the closure on July 22nd, stating that conditions throughout the reserves were drier than he had ever experienced. The declining water table led to very low flow in creeks and rivers, resulting in minimal water sources available for fighting fires.

The forest closure reduced the risk of accidental fires caused by recreational users and allowed Rangers to focus on fire suppression rather than patrolling frequently used campsites. At this time, efforts were underway to control a fire on Moose Mountain, northwest of Bragg Creek, as well as firefighting on two fires in the Clearwater Forest Reserve. The Caledonia Lake fire near Jasper, which was within two miles of the townsite, was also being managed.

THE PASS CREEK FIRE

By mid-July, the Bow and Crowsnest Forest Reserves had already experienced an active fire season. The hot weather and dry conditions made new fire starts a significant challenge for fire suppression efforts. Fires burning just west of the Great Divide in British Columbia were equally concerning.

On July 2nd, thick smoke from a fire west in the Flathead Valley drifted eastward into Alberta. Ranger Joe Kovach from the Castlemount Ranger Station set out to patrol the area to determine the source of the smoke. He rode along the West Castle River on horseback, following a trail that led away from the West Castle and up to the Great Divide at Middle

Kootenay Pass. Upon reaching the top of the Pass, Kovach looked westward into Pass Creek and the Flathead River Valley. It was there that he first observed the fire, which had been burning since mid-June, and speculated that it may have been started by careless campers. He estimated the fire to be about one square mile in size, located one mile west of the mouth of Pass Creek and one mile from the Flathead River on the southwest side, approximately 13 miles from Middle Kootenay Pass. There was no evidence that British Columbia forestry was taking any action on the fire. Alberta had limited authority to enter British Columbia to control it, as there were no firefighting agreements between the provinces at that time.

Recognizing the potential for the fire to cross into Alberta, Kovach returned to the Castlemount Ranger Station and reported the fire to the

Bow Forest Headquarters via the Forestry radio-telephone system. Communication for all of the lookouts, the ranger stations, and the forest headquarters was done through the radio-telephone system. There were no wireless radios at the time. Lines had been cut through the forest allowing telephone wires to be strung from the lookouts to the ranger stations and to the Forest Headquarters. These were built and maintained by the rangers assigned to the districts.

Kovach requested approval for a patrolman to conduct regular patrols to Middle Kootenay Pass to monitor the fire's progress. If the fire continued to grow, it could spread along the Flathead River, take a run up the Pass Creek and cross over into Alberta. The following day, with approval in hand, Kovach took patrolman Carl Sepata and supplies back to Middle Kootenay Pass.

Pass Creek fire, 1936; Joe Kovach Collection



Sepata was tasked with continuing to monitor the fire's development. At that point, the fire exhibited minimal spread, primarily behaving as a surface fire with some candling.

On July 12th, the fire remained quiet and had not spread significantly; however, Kovach still considered it dangerous and a serious threat if winds were to pick up. Fortunately, the winds had remained relatively calm.

On July 16th, Kovach and Sepata conducted a thorough assessment of the area. The fire was slowly spreading northward along the Flathead River, with the fire front estimated to be 1.5 to 2 miles wide. It was still some distance from Pass Creek, but Kovach believed that with even a slight increase in wind speed, the fire could pose a serious risk within the Pass Creek drainage.

On July 17th, winds picked up and pushed heavy smoke into Alberta, resulting in limited visibility within the Crowsnest Pass, and the air was filled with the strong smell of fresh smoke. Residents grew increasingly concerned that the fire was approaching. Patrolman Sepata reported that the fire was advancing rapidly northward. As it reached the mouth of Pass Creek, it became clear that suppressive action was required to prevent it from running up Pass Creek, crossing over Middle Kootenay Pass, and entering the forest reserves in Alberta. A request sent to Calgary received swift approval. Sepata proceeded to address the situation while Kovach gathered a small crew of 16 men to accompany him to Middle Kootenay Pass. They drove five miles and then walked the remaining 11 miles, carrying their equipment, and arrived at the summit by 11:30 PM. There, they joined patrolman Sepata and set up camp in

a secure location on the east side of the Pass below the summit. The rate of spread had slowed considerably.

Conscription was standard practice for recruiting firefighters, allowing forestry officials and the RCMP to mobilize able-bodied men for fire suppression work. Most crew members were from the Crowsnest Pass area. Kovach described them as "mostly good fellows". When they were picked up and brought out to the fires, they mostly only had their regular clothes and shoes. The wages were 15 cents an hour for firefighters, 25 cents for "straw bosses," and 30 cents for foremen. Mike Yagos, who later became a long-time seasonal employee in forestry, worked on this fire at around 16 years of age. He was quite pleased to earn 15 cents an hour during the Great Depression, plus an additional 10 cents an hour for his horse.

Conscription was not limited to just firefighters. Ralph Vroom had been guiding a group of fishermen into the West Castle Valley when ranger Jack Frankish arrived at camp one morning with urgent orders. Ralph was to dismantle the camp quickly and evacuate the fishermen to the Castlemount Ranger Station. Frankish, a ranger at the Elk Lodge Ranger Station near Mill Creek, which is about six miles from Castlemount, knew Ralph well. Once the fishermen were safely out, Ralph was conscripted along with his pack outfit to transport supplies and equipment for the firefighters. Frankish had assessed the fire and anticipated that it would be "a big one."

Fighting the fire became a community-wide effort, with everyone available working to protect their homes. Women participated as well. Twenty-year-old Mae Vroom, having grown up on a ranch, was

capable and independent. Mae could drive trucks, load pack horses, and wrangle pack outfits with the best of them. She quickly became essential in providing logistical support for the firefighting efforts. She loaded food, equipment, and supplies from the Beaver Mines Store into a half-ton truck and drove them to the Castlemount Ranger Station. There, she would meet her Uncle Ralph, help load the pack horses, and then return for more supplies. Pack horses were the only means to transport equipment and supplies into the fire area along the narrow trails and steep terrain. As a guide, Ralph not only knew the area well but was also an excellent camp cook, which proved invaluable for firefighters staging out of the Castlemount Ranger Station.

"Commissary" was available to the conscripted firefighters, allowing them to order essential items such as boots, work clothing, towels, tobacco, and more. These items would be purchased at a local store and charged against their salaries. Yagos recalled buying a long-sleeved shirt for 25 cents.

The forest cover at the lower end of Pass Creek was dense and made up of mature coniferous forest, making any attempt to approach the fire's edge extremely hazardous. With the prevailing westerly winds, the fire would have quickly spread uphill toward the descending firefighters. Although the fire had slowed upon reaching the Flathead River and Pass Creek, it remained a dangerous situation, as the winds could shift and intensify at any moment.

Kovach would have preferred to directly attack the fire near the bottom of Pass Creek in British Columbia. However, after careful assessment, it was determined that the firefighters could not safely

traverse the creek to the fire's edge due to limited access through the dense underbrush. There was a genuine risk that if the fire's intensity increased, it could race up Pass Creek, potentially developing into a very high-intensity fire incited by the steep terrain. With no safe way to reach the fire directly, Kovach opted to construct a fire guard at the top of Middle Kootenay Pass to prevent the fire from crossing the summit. This guard was built on the B.C. side of the pass, measuring 400 yards long and between 100 to 200 feet wide. While building the guard, the fire continued to spread, now on the northwest side of Pass Creek and approximately nine miles west of Middle Kootenay Pass.

For the next few days, there was some recovery in relative humidity overnight. Although it remained very hot and dry, the winds were lighter, and the fire's spread slowed. In the mornings, fire behaviour was relatively calm, but by 1 PM, the intensity increased, and visibility decreased due to heavy smoke. The reduced visibility made working conditions uncomfortable for the crew. There was hope that the fire would not rapidly spread up Pass Creek but instead move slowly northward in the Flathead Valley until it encountered an old burn from 1931. If the fire entered the Pass Creek drainage, perhaps the rate of the spread would be slow, given the lighter winds and current fire behaviour.

On July 20th, wind speeds increased throughout the day, and there was minimal recovery in overnight humidity, leading to heightened fire activity early in the morning. By 6:00 AM, the fire had reached the south bridge on Pass Creek, and observed fire behaviour intensified, threatening to ascend the Pass Creek drainage towards the top of Middle

Kootenay Pass. Kovach immediately departed to report the change in fire behaviour to Calgary via phone from the Castlemount Ranger Station. He ordered an additional crew of 30 men. By 1 PM, only 23 men had reported to the Castlemount Ranger Station. Hoping to contain the fire on the west side of the Continental Divide and unwilling to wait any longer, Kovach left the Castlemount with the additional 23 men. They arrived at the fire at 5:30 PM, increasing the number of firefighters to 41. The crew immediately set to work, splitting into two shifts. Numerous spot fires were visible about 8 miles down Pass Creek.

On July 21st, both shifts continued working on the guard, cutting it by hand and widening it to contain the blaze at the top of Pass Creek on Middle Kootenay Pass.

On July 22nd, forest superintendent J.P. Alexander visited the fire to assess the potential for it to cross into Alberta and the efforts to contain it. After reviewing the progress on the fire guard and consulting with Kovach, he recommended building a second guard below the summit on the Alberta side. This additional guard would supplement the main guard should the fire move up Pass Creek and jump the initial guard. If conditions permitted, firefighters could potentially use the two guards as tie points for a backfire attempt. Alexander conveyed to Kovach that they could not descend into the Pass Creek drainage to fight the fire due to safety concerns. The crews began work on cutting the line, continuing through the 23rd to widen it in hopes of stopping the fire. Four men were assigned to patrol the ridge and warn the crews of any changes in fire behaviour.

By early afternoon on July 23rd, the guards were completed just as the winds picked up and the fire began to advance up Pass Creek toward Middle Kootenay Pass and the Great Divide. The crews continued to widen the lines until thick smoke and very active fire behaviour forced them to stop working. The fire was racing up the steep draw of Pass Creek, driven by winds channeling from the Flathead River Valley. The combination of topographic features, wind conditions, and a heavy fuel load created ideal circumstances for a chimney-driven fire. The fire behaviour was extreme, characterized by a fast-moving, high-intensity crown fire at the front, sending embers well ahead of the fire's leading edge.

A chimney-driven fire is hazardous. Fire behaviour intensifies as the fire runs upslope in a steep draw. The heat and smoke column rise quickly, following the draw towards the top of the slope. The hot air and smoke are replaced with air drawn from the bottom of the draw, dramatically increasing wind speeds. The fire responded, becoming a severe crown fire rapidly moving upslope driven by the chimney effect. Increased wind speeds caused long-range ember transport to occur well in front of the head of the fire. Thick, heavy black smoke enveloped the men on Middle Kootenay Pass completely blocking out the sun.

On the evening of July 23rd, the chimney-driven fire raced towards the top of Pass Creek. The winds increased from the southwest, reaching gale force likely due to a combination of the prevailing wind pattern and the topographic effects. Down below, in Pass Creek, the head of the fire was fully crowned out and rapidly moving up the Pass Creek drainage towards Middle Kootenay

Pass. The erratic winds were carrying embers, causing the ignition of numerous spot fires in Pass Creek, with a distance of three to four miles apart.

Fighting or trying to stop the fire from crossing the Great Divide was now impossible. The winds were funnelling the fire rapidly towards the top of Pass Creek and at the Divide. Visibility dropped to just a few yards with the heavy smoke, and the sky had darkened from the heavy black smoke billowing up from the fire below. The winds were howling, and burning embers were being thrown into the West Castle Valley below and to the east of Middle Kootenay Pass. The falling embers ignited numerous spot fires deep in the West Castle Valley. They quickly grew in size, crowning out in the heavy fuels within the upper West Castle Valley.

Topography affects wind direction and speed. While the westerly winds blew over the Pass, the Great Divide's east side was the slope's lee side. Eddies on the lee side cause the winds to pull up against the prevailing winds. Burning embers from Pass Creek were thrown over Middle Kootenay Pass by the wind, starting fires on the east side below in the West Castle Valley. A second topographic effect has the prevailing westerly winds blow northwards in the north/south aligned river valleys. Some new spot fires in the West Castle Valley also started spreading northwards down the West Castle River. At the same time, other spot-fires were caught in the eddies and started to run up the Lee slope westwards towards the Pass and the firefighters. The fire crew was in a safe zone within the open terrain around them. However, they were now fully entrapped by fire on all sides, with fire below them on

either side of the ridge, a hazardous situation.

It was now clear that they were no longer trying to stop the fire from crossing into Alberta; the fire had encircled and entrapped them. They were now fighting to save their own lives.

Kovach ordered the crew to move to a high point on Middle Kootenay Pass near a cliff face and wet the surrounding area with the Johnson pump and hose. He also sent a man back to the base camp below on the Alberta side with directions to protect the provisions and tools as best as possible. At the same time, they were to save themselves by moving into a nearby "glacier," actually a large snow patch on the north aspect that had not fully melted. Two men, Albert Hovan and Foss Boulton, supervised the hurried work. They had the crew bury the tools and provisions and camp in the creek to prevent them from being burnt and lost.

After storing the goods in the creek, Hovan, Boulton, and their nine men made their way to the snow patch. While there, they were nearly hypothermic despite being surrounded by fire and bombarded by embers.

Kovach took the main crew under the cliff. For the next one and a half hours, extreme fire behaviour was exhibited all around them. Embers from burning cones and branches and millions of sparks blew on them. Some of the men's clothing started to catch fire. As each one extinguished their clothes, clothing on the crewman beside him began igniting. The air was hot and filled with dense smoke, making it almost impossible to see or breathe. Cloths were dampened with water and used to wipe the stinging eyes. One man was

panicking and threatened to commit suicide rather than being burnt by the fire. Kovach and Harold Vroom calmed him down and convinced him they would get out safely.

The fire had passed over them and eased after five hours, which would have felt like an eternity. The main crew left the cliff face and went into the burned-out area. They were anxious for the safety of the afternoon shift crew below them, whom they had not heard from. As they made their way down, they could only see ten men. One of the men had injured his ankle, but they also found him safe. Two of the main crew reached the snow patch, began to run, then slipped on the ice and fell, scraping their faces and chests before stopping.

The men rejoiced as they reunited; they had survived and were alive, safe, and secure. They made hot food and coffee. The warm clothes were recovered from the cache and put on. They remained there for the rest of the night in the dense smoke. Kovach's expertise had guided his men through the ordeal unscathed. Down below on the west branch of the Castle River, the fire raged northwards, driven by the gale-force winds.

Although the prevailing winds were westerly, they would follow the topography and blow northwards in the valley. The change in wind direction from the prevailing westerly winds is a typical topographic effect in the north-south aligned valleys. The fire continued to exhibit extreme fire behaviour as it spread northwards with the heavy fuels of the West Castle Valley.

The winds blew northward in the West Castle Valley, pushing the fire towards the Castlemount Ranger

Station. The fully established fire was now spreading north, with flames leaping from tree to tree. Embers were igniting spot fires ahead of the main fire front, demonstrating complete crown involvement in the heavy fuels and causing spotting across West Castle Valley.

At the Castlemount Ranger Station, the fate of the summit crew was unknown as the fire rapidly advanced. The fire front spanned the entire West Castle River Valley, fully crowning out with flames spreading from tree to tree and spot fires igniting ahead of the main blaze due to ember transport. It was advancing towards Beaver Lake (Beaver Mines Lake) and Mill Creek. Approximately 1,200 cattle from the South Fork Cattle Association had been grazing in the area, but only 500 had been rounded up and brought to safety. Stragglers became lost in the bush, bewildered as the swiftly advancing

fire overtook them. The fate of these cattle was uncertain. Large herds of elk were observed fleeing the blaze to safety. The fire was declared "the worst fire that had ever been seen in this country." A request was made for additional manpower and resources to combat the blaze, and the Castlemount Ranger Station was evacuated.

On the morning of July 24th, the wind eased at the top of Middle Kootenay Pass. The entire area surrounding the crew had burnt black; smoke still filled the air, leaving no visibility. However, the crew was safe and unharmed. Kovach selected a small group of men from the crew and took them back to the original camp location, only to find it charred. They secured the site by thoroughly wetting the surrounding area with a pump and extinguishing nearby hot spots. The rest of the crew joined

them, and together they continued to mop up the area.

In the meantime, Kovach sent foreman Albert Hovan to investigate the trail to Castlemount. The trail was impassable, blocked by fire. They climbed to the highest point to observe the fire front, which was 2.5 miles below their camp and raging on the west side of the Castle River's west branch, spreading northward. Above them, they heard an airplane dispatched from the High River Aerodrome, attempting to locate the missing crew. However, heavy smoke obstructed visibility, and the plane returned without confirming the crew's survival. For the crew, while they could not see the plane, the sound of it above gave them hope.

The media had picked up the story of the entrapped fire crew. The fate of the crew trapped at Middle Kootenay Pass was still uncertain, and some

View of the Castle River fire from Cherry Hill, 1936; Joe Kovach Collection



reports were prematurely declaring their loss. Forestry officials remained hopeful for the crew's safety, emphasizing that there was little concern regarding their well-being. Ranger Joe Kovach was in charge of the trapped crew. They were well-equipped and well-provisioned, but more importantly, Kovach's extensive experience fighting fires and his intimate knowledge of the area suggested that the crew would be unharmed.

The fire front spanned the entire valley, but as the head of the fire moved northward, it became irregular due to numerous spot fires ahead of it. Ranger Reg Prigge was assigned the task of warning all of the settlers in the area that they had to prepare for evacuation. When he arrived at Ralph Vroom's homestead, his family gathered around, and Reg gave them direction to gather up their most essential possessions and be ready to evacuate. A bigger concern for Ralph's wife Mollie was that they had no idea where Ralph was. Prigge had not seen him personally but had heard that Ralph was cooking at a fire camp way up in the Castle. He and his pack train had been conscripted for fire duties. Mollie with her children gathered the essentials, piled them in the yard and covered them with a tarp so that they were ready to go.

Meanwhile, at Castlemount, a plan was devised to launch an indirect attack at a point where the West Castle River turned east. The goal was to clear enough of a fireline before conditions worsened, steering the fire into the rocky Barnaby Ridge on the east side of the river. If everything went according to plan, fire crews could complete their work by morning, well before the heat of the day set in and peak burning conditions arrived. The crews began moving south early in the day to

reach the fire's edge before fire behaviour intensified.

Unfortunately, the winds did not subside during the evenings of the 24th and 25th, and there was little to no recovery in humidity those nights. The fire continued to burn and spread throughout those two nights, worsening during the daytime, especially during the critical burning period. On the 25th, extreme fire behaviour was exhibited, with full crown involvement, rapid spread, and long-range spotting. This increased fire activity forced the young and inexperienced crew to abandon their fire line efforts, as the fire moved beyond that point and outflanked their fire guard.

The intensity of the fire made direct attack firefighting impossible, prompting the crew to retreat northward. These conditions were extreme and exceeded the limited experience of the young crew members. Once they returned to Castlemount, most of the young crew were released and sent home for their safety. In the meantime, the RCMP in the Crowsnest Pass were conscripting more experienced men as replacements for the task at hand. Eighty additional men were brought overnight to the Castlemount staging area.

The combination of high winds spreading northward up the valley, heavy coniferous fuels, and arid conditions made it clear that direct fire suppression or moving south toward the fire was exceptionally hazardous. Significant spread occurred that day, and by nightfall, the fire had reached Syncline Mountain. The irregular fire front burned a line to a ridge north of Beaver Mines Lake and east of the main Castle River. The new personnel brought in to combat the fire could

not be dispatched safely southward through the dense timber to reach the fire's edge.

Later, on July 25th, the winds calmed at the top of Middle Kootenay Pass. The trapped crew had gathered all their tools, gear, equipment, and supplies and moved them into a snow patch as the fire passed, leaving everything around them blackened. They had been extinguishing smouldering spots in the vicinity. It was still unsafe for them to attempt to move northward back to Castlemount.

As the fire continued to spread and burn fiercely, an attempt was made from Castlemount to reach the firefighters who were trapped. Ralph Vroom volunteered to find them. He saddled his best horse and rode south, moving through the flames. Navigating through the dense, choking smoke, hot embers, flaming trees, and smouldering ash pits, Ralph pressed on despite the intense heat along the trail. He made his way to the top of Middle Kootenay Pass, where he found the crew. To his surprise, he found his brother, Mae's father, Harold, also in the camp.

Kovach gathered the men and briefed them with strict orders to "obey all orders given in case of complications." They then began their trek down the trail toward the West Castle River, equipped with hand tools, a pump, and 900 feet of hose. Once they reached the river, Kovach staged the crew on a gravel bar near the "oil well" and held them there until nightfall. During the peak burning period, the fire's intensity was too great for the crew to travel through the area. At dusk, led by Kovach and the Vroom brothers, they started moving northward, hoping that fire behaviour would ease throughout the night.

Traveling through the burned area at night was perilous and slow. The darkness was profound, dense smoke filled the valley, fallen trees blocked the trail, and burning trees continued to fall in the freshly burned area. Although they had four lanterns, these proved unnecessary, as every standing tree or stump acted as a beacon. Hot ashes, ten inches deep, had accumulated in low lying areas and filled the light footwear and boots, burning the ankles of many crew members. Initially, they cautiously made their way along the river, attempting to avoid hot and deep ash pits that were nearly impossible to detect in the dark. After traveling along the river for some distance, they moved to the road, where conditions for travel improved significantly. They eventually caught up to the head of the fire, passing through areas that had burned just hours earlier. Once they navigated past the head of the fire and back into unburned timber, travel became comparatively easier and improved as the trail widened. By then, they were nearly at Castlemount. They finally arrived at the Castlemount Ranger Station with their tools and equipment at 3:30 AM on July 26th.

Eerily, Castlemount had been evacuated; no one remained, and even the furniture was gone. Nearby, a newly established staging area was also serving as a fire camp, where eighty additional firefighters had arrived to replace the young, inexperienced crew.

The report of the safe return of 56 men and horses from Middle Kootenay Pass brought considerable joy to their home communities. They were dirty and tired but safe and uninjured.

At this point, Kovach had not slept for 48 hours. Though he managed

to sleep for a few hours, he knew that further rest would elude him. Forest superintendent J.P. Alexander and Fred Green had arrived from Headquarters. After conferring with foreman Hovan and assistant ranger Corrigan, Kovach took Alexander and Green to Mile 3, where they observed the fire to the west. The fire had moved west of the Castlemount Ranger Station and beyond Beaver Mines Lake to the east. Its spread eastward had slowed in lighter fuels, but it still posed a threat to the settled area.

After assessing the fire, they developed a new plan to contain it. Crews were reorganized to build new east and west fireguards. Given the large size of the fire and the limited resources, the eastern flank was determined to be the highest priority. This section of the fire, closest to the settlement, had the greatest potential to threaten property and lives. It also aligned with the prevailing wind direction, which could drive the fire into the settlement. The fire had spread eastward along a relatively even fire front. Firefighters could work safely along the line's edge, and if conditions became too intense, they could retreat into the already burned area, a designated safe zone. This technique is still employed by fire crews today.

Under assistant ranger R.J. Prigge's direction, one crew began fighting the fire on its eastern flank near Beaver Mines Lake. This area was prioritized for the protection of property and the settlement. They organized themselves and set out on foot, using pack horses to carry food and equipment. For several days, the focus remained on the fire's eastern flank, as it continued to be very active. Prigge would be able to request support from the newly

J.L. Irwin, in an October 1948 article in *Canadian Finance*, said that before being put out, the two fires from British Columbia had burned over 102,422 acres in Alberta, with an estimated loss of \$1,274,367 based on timber dues, and \$68,995 in firefighting operations. Aggregate value of timber destroyed totalled approximately ten times the total of these two figures.

recruited firefighters to bolster his existing resources.

The western side of the fire was not a clean burn; numerous large "spot" fires were present on the windward side of the timbered ridge. The risk of high-intensity fire in that area posed a significant danger to personnel. Any of the spot fires could flare up into a fast-moving crown fire, putting firefighters at high risk. The best strategy would be to build a guard along the fire's flank with the intention of pinching it off at the head. Working along the guard at the fire's edge would allow crews to operate from a secure point. If fire behaviour became unmanageable, the crews could step back into the already blackened area, which was relatively safe.

The strong winds were not a localized occurrence but part of a broader weather system that was causing havoc for other large fires. The July 25th edition of the *Calgary Herald* reported that the Highwood fire, which had also crossed into British Columbia, was spreading rapidly eastward toward settled areas. A massive fire in the Elk Valley had been raging unchecked since early June, prompting some settlers to pack their belongings in anticipation of evacuation. Crews were dispatched to the Elk Valley to prevent a second

fire from crossing into Alberta as the Elk River fire moved northward to Elk Pass, the boundary between British Columbia and Alberta, just south of the Kananaskis Lakes.

Smoke from these significant fire events blanketed southern Alberta, making it impossible to determine the fire's spread or spot new fire starts. In Lethbridge, Pincher Creek, Crowsnest Pass, and even Calgary, the heavy smoke reduced visibility to less than a quarter mile. The roar of the fires could be heard from miles away, accompanied by the crashing sounds of heavy trees falling. Some people likened the crackling of the fires to machine gun fire.

Kovach organized the remaining men into crew configurations and selected foremen to oversee the crews. They began working westward from the pastures by the Castlemount Ranger Station, constructing a guard to prevent the fire from spreading further west. Kovach mounted a fresh horse and rode west to scout the fire and determine the optimal location for the guard.

On July 27th, the guard was progressing from the Castlemount Ranger Station pasture, with crews working directly along the fire's edge. Although they worked frantically to reach the fire's head, they could not build the guard quickly enough. The fire was progressively increasing in size, exhibiting crowning and the development of spot fires due to the wind. The new spot fires were quickly overrunning portions of the guard. As the wind intensified, embers were propelled into the air.

On July 29th, half of the remaining crew was sent to Elk Lodge to combat a fire along the boundary, with 12 more crew members following shortly after.

On July 30th, due to the size of the fire and the lack of experienced fire supervisors, ranger Harry Boulton was brought in from Coleman to take charge of the firefighting operations. Under his leadership, crews were organized to work on both sides of the Carbondale River. One crew was stationed off the Castlemount Trail, while a second crew operated south of Beaver Mines Lake along the wagon road.

Ranger Joe Kovach remained on the fire and, due to his familiarity with the area, conducted continuous patrols to monitor the blaze. He advised ranger Boulton on hotspots along the fire's edge that were starting to heat up, helping to set priorities for the crews to work more effectively.

Kovach was assigned to a large crew working near O'Hagen Creek. They were able to contain the fire for the first three days, but as the winds picked up, the fire jumped the containment line and ran out of control for the next three days. The crews began building new containment lines along O'Hagen Creek. Instead of just digging the line by hand, they also utilized water with the pumps to extinguish hot spots, allowing them to move forward with much greater efficiency. With more resources arriving at the fire, it became possible to work westward from Castle River across the O'Hagen Creek valley.

It was in the O'Hagen Creek valley that they encountered their first serious injury. Harold Vroom was cutting down trees when one snapped and fell, breaking his leg. Fellow crew members fashioned a stretcher using two sticks and the sleeves of two shirts, carrying him three miles to the Castlemount Ranger Station. From there, he underwent a rough truck ride over

challenging roads to the Pincher Creek hospital. The doctors assessed his injury, put a cast on his leg, and eventually released him. After recovering, Vroom was back on the fire line with his crew before the fire was extinguished.

Boulton then directed the crews to return to the west side of O'Hagen Creek near the Carbondale River. They utilized a slough as a tie point and started working toward the head of the fire, successfully constructing 2.5 miles of containment line. On August 8th, Boulton and Kovach recognized an opportunity to initiate a backfire while the winds were favourable. They planned to use the Carbondale River as a tie point for this maneuver. Once completed, the backfire would enable crews to work westward without the risk of the fire crossing behind them and trapping them. The backfire was successful, allowing crews to start their work west from the Castlemount Ranger Station. However, the fire continued to blaze further west. On August 9th, Boulton brought in an additional 30 personnel to O'Hagen Creek to patrol the backfire, cool down the edges, and prevent spotting across the unburned areas. At 1 PM, the wind picked up, causing the fire to jump the newly constructed lines in several places and spread rapidly, nearly trapping 60 men.

The fire, well out of control, also moved toward Gardner Creek and continued westward. Crews managed to maintain a one-mile containment line for the next three days, extinguishing most of the hot spots along it.

The Gardner Creek valley remained problematic. The existing weather conditions made it unsafe to place crews into Gardner Creek. Numerous large hot spots in the valley became

active due to high winds, and putting crews in the valley to address these would have posed a high risk. Until crews stabilized the fire west of the Castlemount Ranger Station, there was a risk of it spreading into Gardner Creek again, endangering the crews. The crews working westward along the Carbondale River made significant progress in controlling several hot spots that threatened the Gardner Creek area.

Another threat loomed from Flathead Valley in British Columbia, where the fire that initially crossed over Middle Kootenay Pass continued moving northward. It could cross over North Kootenay Pass, the MacDonald Creek Summit, and into Gardner Creek valley, further complicating the situation. A small crew was assigned to patrol the North Kootenay Pass to prevent the fire from crossing over and compromising the crews working in Alberta. Another crew was sent to the MacDonald Creek Summit to stop the fire from crossing into Alberta, which would have created more complications in the Gardner Creek drainage. They were successful.

Additionally, another small crew worked near Castle River Falls, extinguishing hot spots and preventing the fire from increasing in intensity. Crews worked in the lower part of the Gardner Creek drainage, putting out numerous spot fires that had the potential to spread into the Carbondale district.

On August 14th, Kovach took a large crew into the headwaters of Gardner Creek to start cooling the large spot fires. He left the crew in a secured, burnt-out area while he scouted the hot spots in Gardner valley. As Kovach was scouting, the fire behaviour became more intense earlier than expected, creating too great a risk for the crews to remain

on the fire line. He quickly pulled the crew back to safety. Working with Boulton, they devised an alternative plan. They decided to direct the crews to create a trail from the Carbondale River to a shoulder

running from Mount McCurtly down to Gardner Creek. They also tasked the North Kootenay Pass crew with cutting a trail to the timberline on Mount McCurtly. While these were indirect routes, they offered a safer

Portable Fire Pumps

Portable forestry wildfire pumps were new at the time, and this event marked the first significant use of the pumps during a major fire in Alberta. Watson Jack & Co. Ltd, based in Montreal, began producing a pump in 1925. They partnered with Evinrude to design and build the "Evinrude Twin Forestry Pump." It was also marketed as the "Wajax Pump", a nod to the founder's name. The pump featured an eight-hp, two-cycle, two-cylinder Evinrude motor coupled with a Wajax vane pump, capable of producing 200 psi and weighing about a hundred pounds. Mounted on an aluminum frame, it had handles similar to a first aid stretcher, allowing two men to carry it. A pack horse was often used to transport the pump over longer distances to a fire. The Alberta Forest Service wisely invested in a substantial number of these "Wajax" pumps for the considerable sum of \$325.00 each at the time. This pump eventually evolved into the wildfire standard known today as the Wajax Mark 3.

Eric Huestis, retired Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, recalled the advent of fire pumps at an Orientation Course for new Forest Officers in 1972. "They decided we would start to use fire pumps... you know these gasoline fire pumps, you've got them, hose, etc.... We got these things,

and boy, we thought we were free... we didn't have to worry about shovels, axes, mattocks or anything else. We had fire pumps and all we had to do was rush out and get these things going and we could put out any fire, just like they did in town. The only thing about it was we couldn't get the damn things to run. We worked for hours; I pulled on the starter rope until my hands blistered and they burst and everything else and we got a brain wave. I was at Rocky at the time, and we had this old Model T. I said to hell with this noise, so we jacked up the back wheels, and you know... you could put it into gear, and the other one sat still, fortunately, so we just shoved the flywheel against the back wheel and jumped it in reverse and adjusted the carburetor, and we got it to go so we told all the boys about in it. We finally got the damn things going. But it was amazing to me that when we started to use these things on very large fires - one in the Castle River valley that burnt out practically the entire valley and the other one up on the Highwood. As soon as the fire pumps arrived and the hose and it was out there working, the fellows that were using the axes and shovels and so on digging the fire line - said we don't have to work that hard because this fire pump is going to put it out."

way to access the fires burning in Gardner Creek. It took them two days to reach the fire. Once there, they constructed a containment line along the fire's edge and connected it to Gardner Creek.

The slight break in the weather between August 15th and 18th proved to be the only significant respite during the fire. Light showers fell over much of the affected area, marking the first rains in a long time. This rain was crucial in allowing crews to complete the fire guard west of the Castle River and made the firefighting efforts less hazardous for a while.

Prior to this, moving personnel directly into many areas of the fire had been precarious. The combination of heavy timber, steep terrain, high temperatures, low relative humidity, and strong gusty winds created dangerous conditions, with frequent flare-ups along the fire's edge and within the large patches of unburnt timber. With extremely dry fuels, direct firefighting was only successful in lighter fuels and under favourable wind conditions. This temporary break allowed crews to be more productive and work directly on the fire's edge. They put in long, hard days, resulting in a secure fire guard by August 19th.

By that date, the line was complete along the western edge of the fire and linked back to where they had started. However, maintaining control of the fire remained a struggle. The light precipitation from the scattered showers was insufficient to mitigate the risk posed by the severely desiccated forest fuels. While it bought more time, the fire remained calm for five days due to the cooler weather. Crews took advantage of this window to patrol the line and extinguished any potential threats,

further securing it. They also focused on mopping up hot spots in the Carbondale, O'Hagen, and Gardner Creek areas.

On August 24th, foreman Albert Hovan led 12 men up Gardner Creek. They tackled numerous spot fires and built an additional 1.5 miles of fire guard, extending half a mile east of Mount McCarty.

Unfortunately, the weather reverted to being hot, dry, and windy. As the light precipitation evaporated, the desiccated fuels became more responsive once again. Trees along the edge of the line began to ignite individually or in clusters, sending embers across the line and igniting new spot fires. Crews had to remain vigilant in their patrols to catch and extinguish each fire before it could expand and become unmanageable. Larger unburnt patches within the fire continued to smoulder, periodically crowning and sending embers over the line, starting additional fires. A 22-man crew was pulled from their assignment along the Carbondale Road to assist with patrolling and mopping up in the Gardner Creek area.

On August 29th, fire behavior grew increasingly responsive. By mid-afternoon, it was noticeably more active as the fuels dried further. The following day, August 30th, the fire jumped the Gardner River guards and quickly advanced towards the top of a ridge two miles from the Carbondale River. Boulton ordered an additional 50 men for the following day. The crews continued their work, focusing on the edge of the burn and securing the escaped fires.

On August 31st, they began constructing a new fire guard on the west side of Gardner Creek, working towards the lost guard on

the east side. Kovach insisted that placing a pump in Gardner Creek was necessary to effectively manage both sides of the creek. Despite the high demand for pumps, Boulton eventually agreed. The following day, Kovach set a Johnson pump into the creek, allowing the crew to work on hot spots more effectively. With the pump, they could extend a fire hose 1,100 feet along the guards, extinguishing burnt areas faster than ever before. The following day, they made significant improvements in controlling the stubborn fire, managing to keep it stationary.

However, progressing westward to build the line remained a challenging task. With no precipitation, the fuels were exceptionally dry and responsive, and the high winds continued. The crew struggled to keep up, leading to the loss of more fire line than they were able to secure. Crew safety was a critical concern.

Early September brought cooler, wetter weather, with scattered showers providing relief for the desiccated fuels. On September 4th and 5th, most fire personnel were sent home, and fire operations were scaled back to patrol actions only. They prioritized extinguishing hot spots and moved on to the next ones. Patrols continued to mop up, but the weather turned warm and dry for most of September, once again drying out the forest fuels.

On September 21st, the fire jumped the guard and began spreading. The lookout at Carbondale failed to report this breakout, mistakenly believing the smoke was coming from an unburnt patch of fuel well within the fire. Kovach investigated and discovered that the fire was actually one mile past the guard. He ordered

more personnel who arrived to assist in managing the situation.

They managed to contain the fire, but on September 28th, the winds picked up to gale force again, forcing Kovach to relocate the crew and the camp to avoid the threat posed by the fire. Fortunately, they were able to prevent it from crossing the Carbondale River, effectively minimizing the damage. If the fire had crossed the river, it would have resulted in significant losses of valuable timber.

By the end of September, a change in weather brought cooler and damper conditions, which reduced fire activity. Most of the crew were laid off, returning the fire management to a patrol status. Only 12 men were left to monitor the fire, but with the cooler conditions, the crew size was further reduced to just 4 men. As the days grew shorter, the relative humidity recovery overnight improved, helping to slow the spread of the fire. Patrols were finally discontinued on October 7th after snow fell over the fire area. One spot remained smouldering, but it was well within the main body of the fire and safely away from the perimeter. As deeper snow accumulated, the risk of further spread significantly diminished. The greater fire danger and the potential for large-scale spread had passed. In Southern Alberta, the weather changes rapidly, and there's a saying that they are always just one week away from a flood or a drought.

However, late October brought strong winds that evaporated the accumulated snow, drying out the forest fuels once again. On October 26th, gale-force winds caused the fire to break through the containment lines, burning some areas even faster than before. By mid-November, there was finally enough snow over the fire

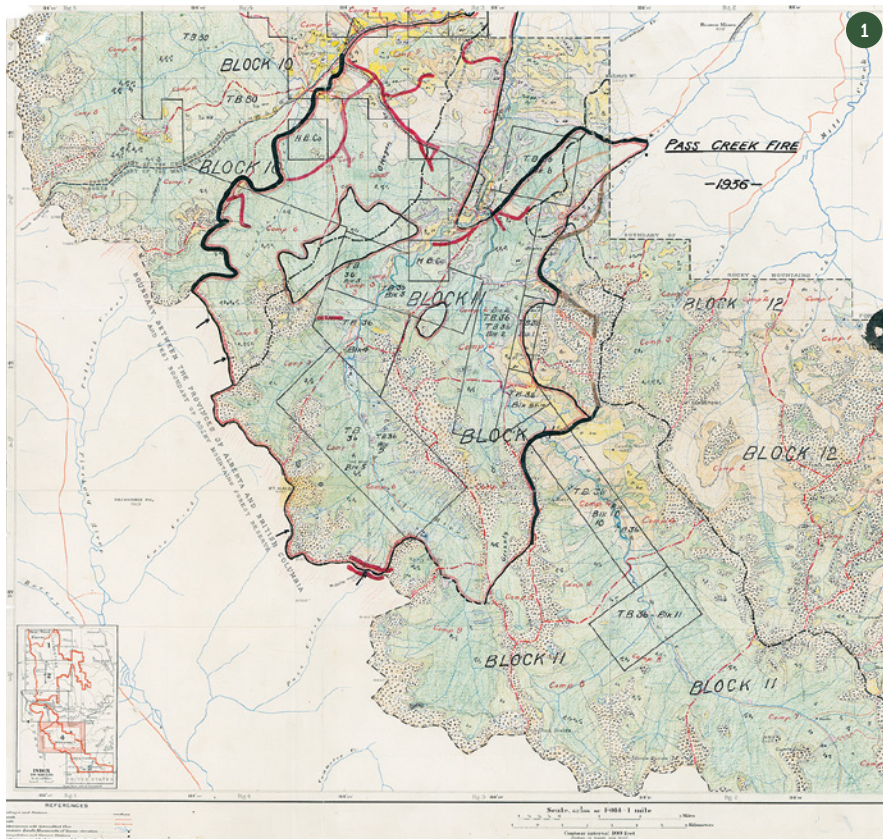
area to conclude fire operations. The winter that followed that hot, dry summer became one of the coldest on record.

The Pass Creek Fire burned from July 17th to November 18th, scorching over 45,800 acres of land. Between 180 and 225 men participated in fighting the blaze, which was one of the most devastating fires in Southern Alberta's recent history. According to J.P. Alexander, superintendent of both the Bow and Crowsnest Forest Reserves, the fire devastated around 30,000 acres of mature, commercial timber, some of the best in Alberta. Local sawmills, coal companies, and ranchers were able to capitalize on salvage operations for many years afterward.

At the time, the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Indices had not been developed, and fire behaviour science was still in its infancy. The current fire danger indices are derived from historical weather data. In 1936, the Build-Up Index (BUI) would have reached a high of 247 based on weather data from Calgary. This would have been the highest value recorded until fall 2017, when the C2 station in West Castle recorded a BUI of 267 during the Kenow fire. Generally, fire danger indices are much higher in the Castle area compared to weather stations further north. As no historical weather data exists for the immediate West Castle area, it is plausible that the fire danger indices in 1936 could have set a record that would still have stood today.

Continuous coniferous fuel loads before the 1936 Pass Creek Fire, looking northward down the West Castle Valley; Bridgland, 1914; Mountain Legacy Project





1. Fire Map of the Pass Creek Fire

2. Castlemount Ranger Station; 1930s

3. Joe Kovach on horseback, 1930s; Joe Kovach Collection

4. Dominion Forestry Branch forest rangers at the Coleman ranger station, 1920s; Joe Kovach Collection
L to R: Ted Bleffen, J.P. Alexander, Jack Morden, Mac MacLeod, and Harry Boulton

5. Crew of conscripted firefighters from Bush Town, Bellevue, and Castle Mountain outside the Castlemount Ranger Station, 1936; Joe Kovach Collection



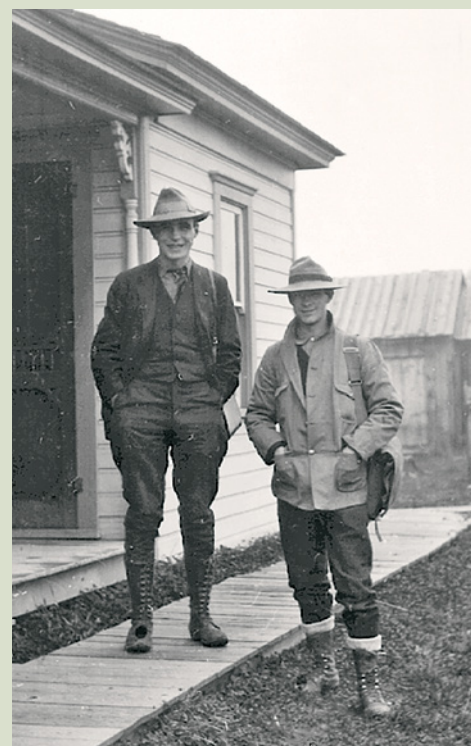
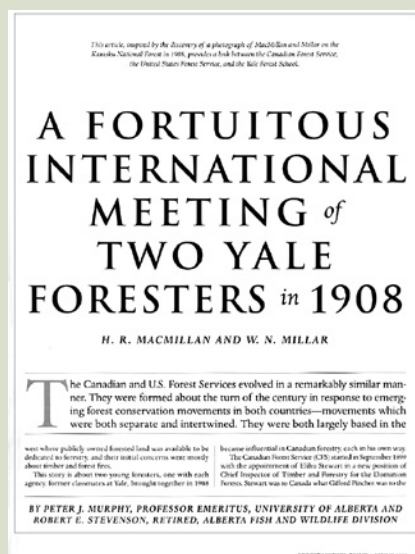


1. Carbondale Fire Camp, 1936; Joe Kovach Collection
2. Adjusting a Johnson Twin Fire Pump
3. Ralph Vroom pack horse string; Edi-May Smithies

A FORTUITOUS INTERNATIONAL MEETING

In 1999, Peter Murphy and Bob Stevenson wrote a story about a historic meeting between H.R. MacMillan and W.N. Millar, two 1908 Yale Forest School graduates. The two foresters had impressive careers, influencing both United States and Canadian forest policy. The article was inspired following the discovery of a photograph of MacMillan and Millar on the Kaniksu National Forest.

Visit the article at [A fortuitous international meeting of two Yale foresters in 1908: H.R. MacMillan and W.N. Millar \(cif-ifc.org\)](#).



HISTORY ON THE MOVE

Material submitted by Pat Wearmouth and the Peace Country Historical Society

An initiative of Pat Wearmouth and the Peace Country Historical Society, museum curator Charles Taws and the Grande Prairie Museum, and Kelly Burke and Alberta Wildfire, the fire lookout cupola at the Grande Prairie Forestry and Parks wildfire office was moved to the Grande Prairie Museum on September 30, 2024. The cupola atop a wooden tower frame has sat in the Alberta forestry compound since 1980. Prior to that, one sat in what is now the Northwestern Polytechnic dormitory site. In the past, Alberta Forestry and Parks used the cupola to train fire lookout observers for their seasonal employment. In the summer of 2024, Alberta forestry donated the cupola to the Grande Prairie Museum. There, it will form part of an outdoor display, planned to open during 2026. ROIL Projects Inc. of Grande Prairie was contracted to move the cupola.



1. L to R: Wally Born (forestry manager Grande Prairie), Bill Werry (Deputy Minister), and Robin Campbell (Minister); August 5, 2014

2. Fire lookout cupola used for lookout observer training

3. ROIL Projects cutting supports while cupola is secured to a crane hoist

4. Cupola being moved from its support to a trailer

5. Cupola loaded onto the trailer to move to the Grande Prairie Museum site

6. Museum curator Charles Taws with the cupola at the Grande Prairie Museum site

MACKENZIE REGION – 2024 AND 2025 FOREST CAPITAL OF CANADA

Information provided by Mackenzie Region Forest Capital of Canada Team

The Mackenzie Region of northwestern Alberta accounts for nearly 80,000 km² of boreal forest. This is a substantial landmass, larger than New Brunswick, and over 70 per cent of the region's citizens are involved with, rely on, or work in the forest in some capacity. The Mackenzie Region has several important industries including forestry, energy, agriculture, trapping and tourism. It's home to a rich history and vibrant cultures. When asked what comes to mind when you think about the forest in the Mackenzie Region, Lisa Wardley, Mackenzie County Councillor and Forest Capital of Canada (FCC2024) co-chair responds, *"Lately, it might be wildfires. But, if you really think about it, everything we do here is connected to the forest or the land. It's where we live, and it makes us who we are as individuals and as a community. Being the Forest Capital of Canada is something to honour and celebrate."*

In late 2023, the Mackenzie Region of northwestern Alberta was awarded the title of Forest Capital of Canada (FCC) 2024. Throughout 2024 the FCC Board ran a multifaceted marketing campaign, earning engagement through collaboration by promoting FCC 2024 at dozens of events, on social media, with a podcast series and more. With 2024

starting to wind down, the FCC Board recently launched *"Boris in the Boreal Forest"* as a forest legacy brand that will live on well into the future. Boris the Spruce Tree is an animated boreal buddy promoting the importance and significance of forests for years to come.

"Everyone around the world can take part in the Boris in the Boreal Forest adventure online to get a taste of Northwestern Alberta's forest and learn from local experts," said FCC Board Co-Chair Lisa Wardley. *"We launched locally with the 'Boris in a Bag' package delivered to all our local students with Boris-branded swag."* Dražen and Kathleen Rukavina, owners of Long Sleeve Productions, are the husband-and-wife duo behind Boris. *"The Boris adventure is a mix between a nature show and an interactive video game,"* said Kathleen. Kathleen initially came up with the idea for Boris and his



forest adventure. She wanted to add more positivity and education to the dialogue about local forests, especially since they are one of the region's greatest natural resources. *"I thought a character could break through the clutter and bring back a sense of adventure and exploration for kids,"* said Kathleen. *"My goal was to take the fear out of forests and replace it with wonderment and excitement instead."*

During his interactive adventure, Boris travels through Mackenzie County starting south of La Crete. Then, he makes stops throughout the region at places such as Fort Vermilion and Machesis Lake where the online participant can select which multiple choice answer is correct or which adventure to take next. Users can join Boris to visit a real pioneer home,

**IN LATE DECEMBER 2024, THE CANADIAN
INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY DESIGNATED
MACKENZIE REGION AS THE FOREST CAPITAL OF
CANADA FOR 2025.**

an Indigenous elder, a forester, a woodland supervisor, and a wildfire centre. They can take a hike with Gale and John to discover a real bear den and learn how to make forest crafts. Then, they can spend time kayaking, go on a helicopter ride, and learn about planting trees, building houses and more.

Boris' interactions with numerous local experts are integral to the adventure, all of whom made filming an easy and fun process for the Long Sleeve Productions team. "The experts, educators and historians we worked with are naturally entertaining and engaging. They were eager to share their knowledge," said Kathleen. "This region is innovative with active groups of people, and they never disappoint. The content we got was incredible and so genuine." Boris' adventure is geared toward youth, and many of the local experts have experience educating children about the outdoors. "Knowing who the audience would be made them want to be involved right from the beginning," said Kathleen. "We created many iterations of how Boris would look," said Kathleen. "And, ultimately the committee decided on a white

spruce because it was important for him to be a tree that represents the region."

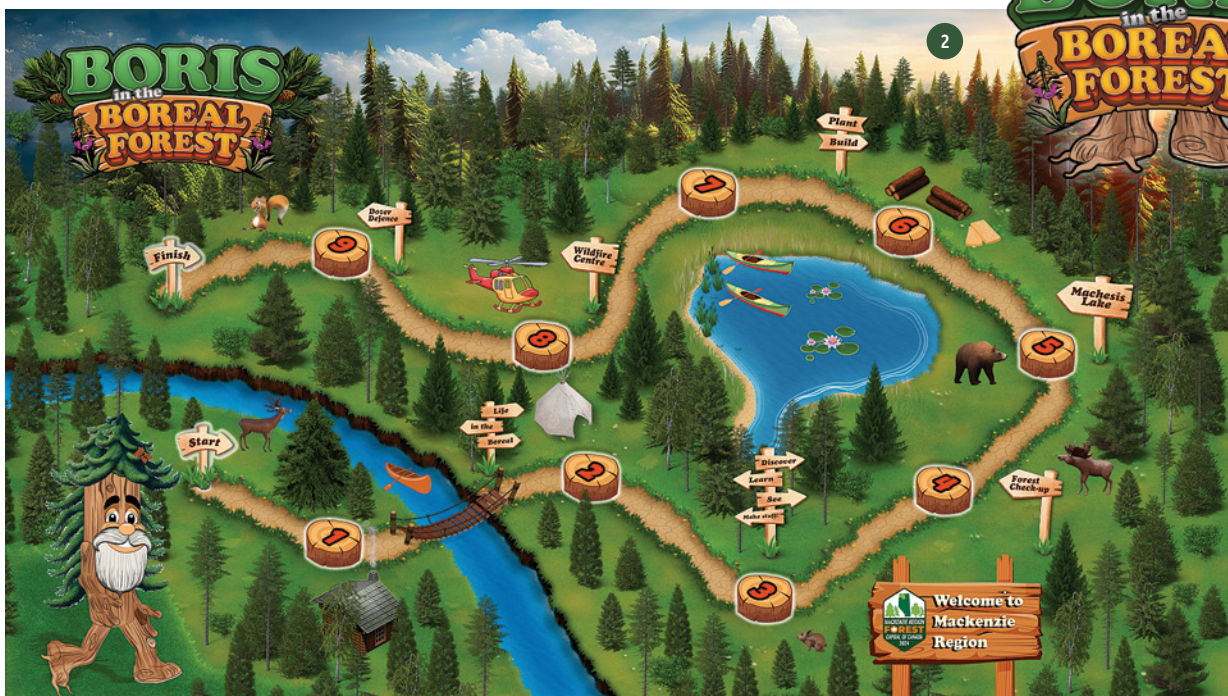
On top of highlighting interesting forest facts, Boris' adventure serves to foster love for nature and quell some of the fears people may have about exploring wooded areas. "Boris is a way to bridge that fear. Even if you're still afraid to explore on your own, you can watch these videos and feel like you're there," said Kathleen. "He truly brings the forest to you and shows all the possibilities of the great outdoors."

In addition to the forest focus, Boris promotes the Mackenzie Region. "We created him to showcase the boreal forest and how different and unique it is in Northern Alberta," said Kathleen. "I think people from further away will be inspired to explore forests in their areas after watching him, and maybe they'll be more inclined to travel to the region." The full adventure is made up of 11 stops and takes about

two hours from start to finish. Viewers can return to the interactive adventure at anytime on the same device and continue from their last stop.

On October 9, 2024, the FCC Board officially launched the Boris in the Boreal Forest adventure at the Alberta Forest Products Association's annual general meeting held in Banff attended by hundreds of representatives from the forest industry. It was a great success. "This whole thing has just been amazing from the start," said Wardley. "Now we're having discussions with Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta about creating more student education packages and fanning this whole thing out province wide. What a great campaign this has been for our region."

1. Boris in the Boreal Forest
2. Boris in the Boreal Forest adventure map



1. Mackenzie Region Forest Capital of Canada information booth at the Alberta Forest Products Association annual general meeting in Banff; October 10, 2024
2. L to R: Todd Loewen, Minister Forestry and Parks; with FCC's Co-Chairs Lisa Wardley and Melanie Plantinga; Banff; October 10, 2024
3. L to R: FCC Co-Chairs Melanie Plantinga and Lisa Wardley with fellow board member Jesse Petroskey (Tolko woodland supervisor); Banff; October 10, 2024
4. L to R: Jason Boucher and Kris Kennedy of Boucher Bros Lumber with Lisa Wardley and Boris; Banff; October 10, 2024
5. Allen Plantinga beside the Mackenzie County Forest Capital of Canada sign
6. Ask Boris the Spruce Tree anything postcard



COMMUNITY SUPPORTER – MAGNETIC NORTH IMAGES

Thank you to Brian Hohner and Magnetic North Images, for supporting the Forest History Association of Alberta (FHAA) and the Canadian Fallen Firefighter Foundation (CFFF), by donating a portion of the proceeds from sales of his print *Descent to YZH*. Brian is renowned for his aviation-related

artwork but is equally talented with landscape and wildlife images.

If you are interested in purchasing the print *Descent to YZH*, or any others, contact Brian at info@MagneticNorthImages.com.

See Brian's website at www.magneticnorthimages.com.

Editors Note: YZH is the Transport Canada designation for the Slave Lake airport.



1. *Descent to YZH*, a painting artist Brian Hohner completed of Alberta's 4-CL215T skimmer airtankers. Proceeds from sales of this print are donated to the FHAA and CFFF.
2. Brian's recent painting, *LongLiner*, an Electra airtanker with retardant load
3. Hunting Marten
4. July Sunset, After the Storm
5. Wildcat Coming Home
6. First Duck of the Day

THANK YOU

Publication of the February 2025 Forest History Association of Alberta Tales & Trails is sponsored by the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta.



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This lumber advertisement was in the newspaper, the Northern Echo, Vol. 1, No. 9; Edmonton; April 1946.

PETER MURPHY AND THE WOOD STOVE

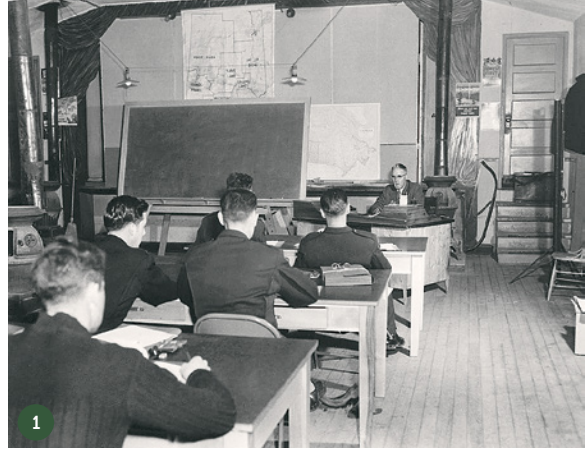
In a March 12, 2010 interview, Peter Murphy talked about the last days of the Forestry Training School in Kananaskis and packing up the coal and wood stove they used to heat the classroom.

"1960 was quite an eventful year. The new Forestry Training School in Hinton was useable by early summer, we'd held our second towerman training course and spent a lot of time on the road moving furniture in and unpacking from Kananaskis. The final trip from Kananaskis for Jack Macnab and I was quite nostalgic. We had a lot of good times, and had done a lot of good work. We felt very comfortable there. So, we had a two-ton truck that we borrowed from the Forest Service, and we had loaded everything into it and there was just a little space left. I said let's take one of these old stoves.

We really appreciated them. One of the things I really remember was the clustering of the desks around the stoves that were glowing red on the cold days at the end of November and December, and the blizzards would come -- clusters of desks around the free stove -- very informal classroom arrangement.

I don't know if I said at the time that when we moved into Hinton, we were so impressed with that new facility. We spent a lot of time in the boiler room. If you can imagine, we'd been through Kananaskis for all those many years with these coal stove

heaters in the classroom and the snow blowing under the door and perfect conditions. And the boiler room was just beyond, it was a technological marvel is what it was. It was the central heating and the hot water; we couldn't get over our good fortune having a facility and that central heating plan."

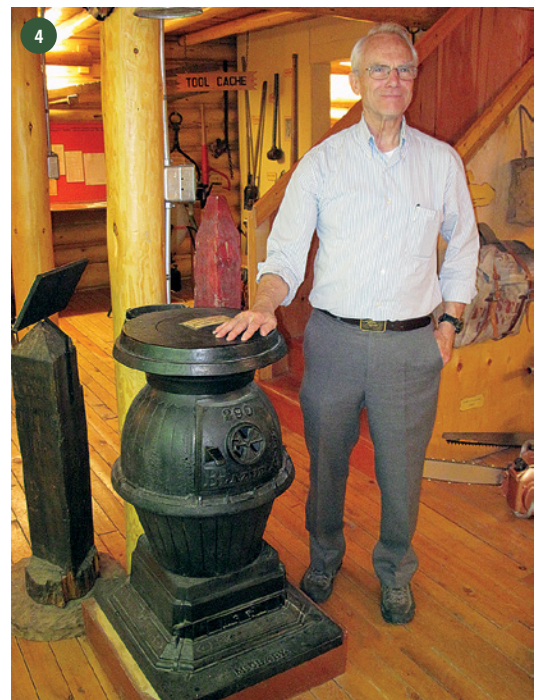


1. Director of Forestry and Commissioner of Game Eric Huestis seated at front of class during one of the first training classes held at the Forestry Training School, Kananaskis; 1951. Note the pot belly stove behind Huestis.

2. Note the second pot belly stove in the middle of the Forestry Training School classroom; Kananaskis; 1951

3. Old pot belly stove or wood heater, one of the last items remaining to be packed up from the old Kananaskis Forestry Training School; 1960

4. Peter Murphy standing beside the coal and wood stove used to heat the Kananaskis Forestry Training School. This stove is now located at the AFS Museum in Hinton; 2010



EARLY FIREFIGHTING

Submitted by Connie Matlock

Editors Note: Connie Matlock worked 24 years with Alberta forestry out of DeBolt, Valleyview and Grande Prairie. Now as the manager of the DeBolt and District Pioneer Museum, she asked two retired forest rangers she had worked with, Don Cousins and Ken Hennig, to write a story on firefighting from their perspective.

EARLY FIREFIGHTING, DON COUSINS, 2023

The airstrip in Valleyview by the staging camp was built in the mid 1950s by the Alberta Forest Service for air patrols with small fixed-wing aircraft, and to move firefighters. Back in those days firefighters were not hired and put on standby, rather they were picked up when actually needed on forest fires. This resulted in what some referred to as conscription, and the occasional picking up firefighters from drinking establishments. They were hauled around in the back of a dump truck, or the forest ranger's own vehicle. In the mid seventies it was becoming more common to hire firefighters in advance for a more rapid response to fire occurrences. Back then there were three-man seasonal initial attack crews housed in trailers near the ranger stations. Otherwise, it was the local native firefighters. The configuration was eight men to a squad (one squad boss and seven firefighters). This was extended to a crew, which was made up of three squads, a cook, cook's helper, a timekeeper and a crew boss. Depending on the fire hazard, either one squad or two complete with a cook would be hired on

standby. As the hazard rose, then the manpower would be increased to a full 28-person crew. There were no accommodation facilities at the grass airstrip. The camp was comprised of what was used on the line fire (canvas tents, two per squad) plus additional tents for the cook, helper, timekeeper and crew boss along, with grocery storage.

Groceries were determined by the forest service fire-line manual. The grocery stores had a copy of these manuals, so a phone call was made to the grocery store for a three-day order for a squad or crew. Orders could also be called in for a week's rations which were substantial food orders. There was no refrigeration in those days, so the crews would dig a meat pit and cover it with cardboard, branches and moss – natural refrigeration. Pre-packed camp kitchen kits were supplied by the warehouse. There was no such thing as bottled water, the water was either hauled to site in big tubs or taken from nearby streams or lakes. The firefighters built a camp set up of tents, tool racks, tables and a bush stove (elevated campfire, or log crib), complete with a hanging grill for the cooks to use. They also had a four-burner propane stove. Over the years it became difficult finding enough tent poles when setting camps up in the same area over and over. The solution in the 1980s was to set-up

hard-sided tent frames with plywood floors and rafters that the tents could be dropped over. We couldn't put a hard roof on them because of the industrial regulations governing camps at the time. The hard sided tent frames like the ones at the Frying Pan camp down the forestry trunk road, were used for many years. Eventually kitchen facilities began to be constructed in the early 1990s. Man-up camps were located strategically throughout the province with hard-sided tent frames complete with a kitchen and warehouse facilities. In the mid 2000s, the standard was upgraded to the types of facilities now being utilized that house all firefighters of all levels, from heli-tack, rap-attack and Type II and Type III firefighters, plus additional staff as required. Cooking became a contracted business, complete with camp attendants. This standard was set up across the province, so everyone was housed the same.

I initially located the Frying Pan camp in its present location as a forward base, a location in the middle of where the hazard was, so we could meet the initial attack objectives. As it was being cleared as a firebase, we responded to 30 plus fires in one evening. The camp was cleared and constructed by initial attack crews and native firefighters. Everyone loved the place and took excellent care of it as their place in the woods. Ken Hennig (former forest ranger) and I relocated old forestry cabins into Frying Pan to preserve their historic significance, with a new one being built to ensure forest rangers learned the skills and understood the history of building forestry cabins. Other camps such as

White Mountain and Graham Base followed, but Valleyview and Frying Pan staging camps were among the first in the province. To me the real significance is that these camps were constructed for and by the native firefighters and they took great pride in their camp. The hard wall tent frames at Frying Pan camp were constructed in Grande Prairie in pieces and taken to site and assembled by hand. The local native firefighters, many retired or passed on, built the camps initially, and they and the local bands had great input into these designs.



1. Tool crib holding shovels, axes, and pulaski's; May 1968
2. Canvas wall tents and firefighter camp; 1957
3. Hard wall tent frames at a man-up or standby camp; 1984
4. Elevated log crib cooking fire; 1980s



1. Log table at fire camp; 1982

2. Canvas wall tents set-up for firefighter training; 1980s

EARLY FIREFIGHTING, KEN HENNIG, 2020

In 1958, Ken Hennig graduated from the Kananaskis Forestry Training School and then went to work in Grande Prairie for six months. He then took the assistant ranger position in Valleyview. Throughout his career

Ken worked in Valleyview, DeBolt and Grande Prairie, all part of the Grande Prairie Forest. In later years he worked in Grande Prairie as a land-use officer.

The initial attack standby crew consisted of a cook and three young guys. In Valleyview they were stationed with a trailer across the creek from the ranger station. If a smoke was called in by the towerman, Ken grabbed the initial attack crew and away they went. Ken's truck was a 1969 Chevrolet

pickup, and the crew had a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton with racks on the sides. They would get a bearing from the tower and compass their way into the fire. They would drive as far as they could and then walk in, searching for the fire using an approximate location that the tower gave them. There were a lot less seismic lines in those days, so access was on some oil company and logging roads. The initial attack crew went with hand tools and food and were prepared to stay overnight. If more resources were needed, then a crew of native firefighters would get picked up. They were picked up with a dump truck and rode in the box. Ken would pick up the groceries just before they headed out. Occasionally, one of the native firefighters would take a gun and shoot a deer, moose, grouse or rabbit. Forestry supplied them with ammunition. The firefighters were given tents, blankets and hand tools. Chainsaws were rare.

One big fire south of Sturgeon Heights in 1970, was near the Side Lake sawmill. The sawdust pile had caught on fire. In that case they had approximately 50 firefighters. In most cases they would get cats in (D6s and D7s) to build a fire guard around the fire. Where it was inaccessible by cats, picks and shovels were used to hand dig a fire guard.

On the Isaac and Esau fire at Side Lake, the firefighters found a baby moose calf that was abandoned on the fire. They assumed the cow moose had been spooked and left the area, scared of the fire. The firefighters kept the moose calf in camp and fed it. It slept with the crew. Later they took the calf to Fish and Wildlife, who then took the calf moose to a game farm near Edmonton.

MANNING WEST FRASER SAWMILL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

Submitted by Manning Forest Products Staff

On August 23, 2024, West Fraser held a 30th anniversary celebration at their Manning Forest Products sawmill. Local community members, dignitaries and elected officials enjoyed a barbeque and mill tours. With the mill not working Friday's, the tours were very detailed, quiet, and in turn very informative. That evening, there was a supper, and a ball game and social for the mill employees and their families.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Alberta government was actively seeking investors to build mill facilities in the northern part of the province to capitalize on the unallocated forest resource. Manning Diversified Forest Products (MDFP) was one such proposal. Jean-Paul Bielech was the first employee hired in the spring of 1993 and was heavily involved in the mill start-up. Steve Blanton was hired in August of that year. Their role was to ensure timber was available in the log yard once the sawmill

was ready to operate. Clarence Budal and Andy Shandro filled out the team, supporting long-term and annual plan development, block layout, scaling, operations supervision, silviculture, etc. Al Wardale joined as well in 1993, setting up the sales and shipping department.

Norm Boucher was the lead proponent of the owner partnership. Other partners included Alphonse Dechant, the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, Real Arsenault, Steve Kaufmann, Ben Sawatsky, Robert Schmidt, Sekisui House, and Frank Lovsin. The first logs were put through the mill in October 1993, which was remarkable since MDFP only got the quota allocated in February of that year. When Jean-Paul Bielech moved to Manning in April, 1993, there was only a snowy farmers field where the mill was to be built. Forest service staff Phil Dube (chief ranger, Manning), Paul King (senior forester), and Carl Leary (Peace River Forest superintendent) were all quite helpful in getting everything pushed through. Timber allocation options included Grande Alberta Paper at the time, but when they folded, the timber went to MDFP and Canfor Hines Creek. At the same time the government created a no harvest zone in forest management unit P8 and the Chinchaga Wildland Park, both designed for caribou conservation. The first log through the mill was on December 21, 1993, with sawmill production of 64 million feet the first year. West Fraser purchased MDFP in 2015, creating Manning Forest Products.



1. L to R: Kevin Albright, Regional Manager, West Fraser; Charles Schwab, Director of Public Works, County of Northern Lights; Gloria Dechant, Councillor, County of Northern Lights; Daryl Richards, General Manager, Manning Forest Products; Terry Ungarian, Reeve, County of Northern Lights; Gerhard Stickling, CAO, County of Northern Lights; and Clay Bassendowski, Woodlands Manager, Manning Forest Products

2. Aerial view of the Manning Diversified Forest Products millsite and log yard; May 10, 2012

EDSON WEYERHAEUSER OSB MILL TURNS 40

Submitted by Edson Weyerhaeuser OSB Mill Staff

Weyerhaeuser Edson mill current and past employees, local dignitaries, and other guests joined on October 14, 2023 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the oriented strand board mill. The first press load occurred on October 7, 1983.

When it officially opened on October 14, 1983, Edson was Canada's first-ever Oriented Strand Board (OSB) manufacturing facility, with an initial focus on sheathing products. *"Al Owen, who founded the mill, had an incredible entrepreneurial spirit,"* long-time employee Rick Gardiner said. *"He was driven and creative and had a great rapport with his employees. That's the spirit we've worked to keep alive all these years in terms of innovation, safety and our relationships with each other."* After Weyerhaeuser acquired the mill in 1988, it expanded into flooring, producing our Edge™ and Edge

Gold™ products. But no matter the product they were producing, the Edson team always recognized the mill's role in the community and the many ways it's intertwined with the lives of its neighbours. The Edson team spends countless hours volunteering in their community, which has translated into monetary volunteer match rewards through Weyerhaeuser's TREE-mendous Matching Gifts program in addition to about \$45,000 U.S. annually in Giving Fund donations to local schools, nonprofits, sports organizations, the Lions Club, public trail systems and various community events.



1. Cyril Tejada (L) and Allison Hinks (R) stand in front of an old sign from when the mill was part of the Alberta division. The sign was discovered in a storage shed by Timberlands team members and brought to the mill for the anniversary event.

2. 40th Anniversary plaque presentation, Edson; October 14, 2023
L to R: Dan Lux, Assistant Deputy Minister, Forestry Division; Natalie Peace, Mill Manager; Ryan Beaver, Vice President Western and Canadian Lumber; and Jeff McKay, Timberlands Manager

COMMERCIAL THINNING AS A PART OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Submitted by Mike Haire, Woodlands Manager, Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.

In the mid 1990s, Bob Vanderwell started acquiring private land for a variety of purposes. Growing trees for the future was at the top of the list. At the same time, Bob hired Con Dermott to sustainably manage these lands for Vanderwell. Today, these lands provide environmental values, with the company investing in intensive forest management.

In the fall of 2021, we worked with one of our long-term logging contractors, Les Zeller, owner of Zell Industries, to complete a five-year plan for these lands. Les had completed commercial thinning work like this in the past, and was very familiar with the harvest system and equipment needs.

We are utilizing a harvest system using a harvester and forwarder. The harvester cuts parallel extraction trails approximately 18 metres apart, and then reaches in to remove selected trees, and processes them at the trail for forwarding to the landing. One of the significant challenges with implementing this harvest system in Alberta, is the lack of contractors with the right equipment, and access to operators that can operate the equipment. We believe this will change in Alberta over the next five to ten years as more companies focus on implementing this type of harvest in managed stands. The neat thing about this is that we can harvest these 25 to 30-year-old trees

in a selective method that produces sawlog material for the mill.

Some of these 25 to 30-year old trees that we are harvesting have butt diameters over 12 inches, and we can get a 16 foot sawlog from them. To date we have completed over 325 hectares of commercial thinning on our private land, with a goal to move into similar stands on crown land in the fall of 2025. Our five-year goal is to commercially thin more than 1,000 hectares and continue into the future. We believe this is one of the investments we must make now to

help counter the projected mid-term wood supply decrease. This mid-term wood supply challenge has been identified in the majority of the forest management units across Alberta due to a variety of issues; mountain pine beetle, large catastrophic wildfires, and addressing other important non-timber values during the development of sustainable forest management plans.

In the fall of 2024, we commercially thinned two private land blocks north of Athabasca known as the "Mike Cardinal Plantation". This

Dedication of the Mike Cardinal plantation, private land owned by Vanderwell Contractors; December 2004
L to R: Not Identified, Con Dermott, Daryl Mackay, Rob Stronach, Ron Sparrow, Allan Robertson, Mark Froehler, Mike Cardinal (Minister), Carmen Jarrah, Sherra Quintilio, Therese Yacyshyn, Donna Ballard, Lionel Cherniwchan, Randy MacNamara, Neil Shelly, Les Zeller, Frank Crawford, Bob Vanderwell, Ken Vanderwell, and Lou Foley





plantation was named after Mike for the support he, as the local MLA, and more importantly as the minister of forestry, provided to forest industry. Bob Vanderwell and Con Dermott were both passionate about Vanderwell's investment into private land forest management and would be proud of the results of their work. It makes everyone involved this operation very proud, and we plan to carry on the focus so future foresters and others can benefit from this investment.

1. Trail constructed as an extraction route for removal of logs harvested as part of the thinning operation, Chisholm area; October 2022

2. Logs decked from the thinning harvest operation south of Calling Lake; September, 2024

3. Logging contractor Les Zeller beside the Mike Cardinal private land plantation sign south of Calling Lake; September 2024

4. View of logs harvested from the Mike Cardinal private land plantation south of Calling Lake; August 2024

5. Ponsee Scorpion harvester used to log trees from the Mike Cardinal private land plantation, Kinuso; September 2023

6. Aerial view of the thinning harvest operation on the Mike Cardinal private land plantation, Kinuso area; October 2023





1. View of stand at the Mike Cardinal plantation post thinning harvest operations south of Calling Lake; September, 2024
2. View of stand at the Mike Cardinal plantation post thinning harvest operations, Chisholm area; October 2022



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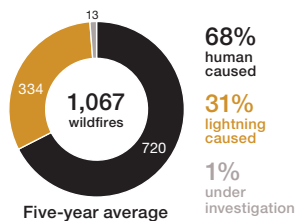
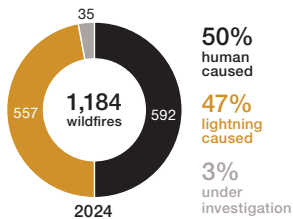
2024

Alberta Wildfire's seasonal statistics

Wildfire season within the Forest Protection Area - March 1 to October 31, 2024



1,184 wildfires



Top wildfire causes



557 lightning



131 resident



125 recreation



84 incendiary*



79 power lines



60 agricultural

* A wildfire that has been intentionally lit, which includes but is not limited to arson.

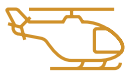
Lightning-caused wildfires



685,849 hectares

97 per cent
total hectares burned

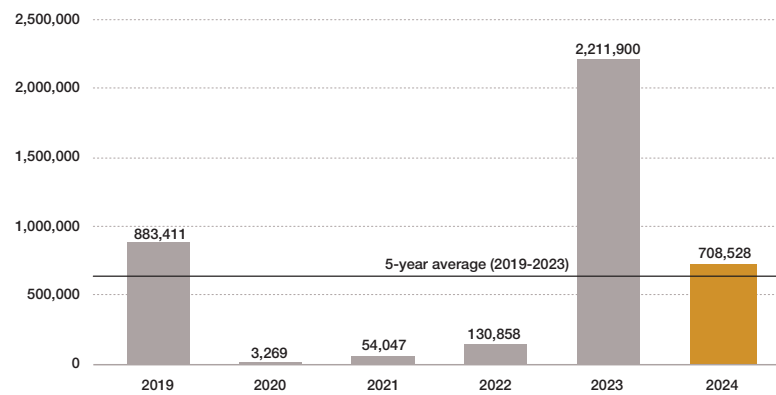
Night vision helicopters



232 missions

1,102 hours flown

Hectares burned



1,320

total support staff from around the world



680
Canada



215
South Africa



188
Australia



102
Mexico



91
Costa Rica



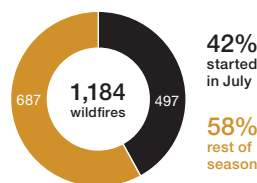
23
United States



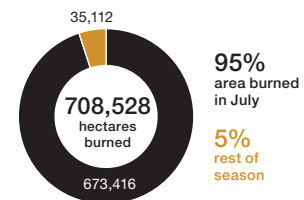
21
New Zealand

Wildfire activity - July

New wildfires in July



Hectares burned in July



Data as of November 30, 2024

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Alberta

DONATION OF SIMPSON TIMBER MATERIAL

A graduate forest technician from Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay, Ontario in 1971, John Wooding originally worked for the Ontario Department of Natural Resources out of Geraldton, Ontario. In 1973, he began working for Kimberly Clark out of Longlac, Ontario, timber scaling in a bush camp south of Geraldton. He moved to Alberta in 1978, working for Simpson Timber at their Blue Ridge sawmill until his retirement in 2002. He recently donated to the Forest History Association of Alberta a couple of scaling sticks, some forestry documents and Simpson Timber films. The films contained a number of gems; an introduction about the new Blue Ridge operation, an introduction to the Simpson Timber Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan operation, and Simpson Timber mill and operation news reels 1971 to 1979.



1. John Wooding standing in front of donated historic material

2. Photo of donated items, including the Simpson Timber film reels. These reels contain film on recent news of Simpson Timber operations in the United States and Canada, including the Saskatchewan Hudson Bay and Alberta Blue Ridge operations.

3. Simpson Timber produced an information film for school children titled a "Seed Grew Tall". The Synopsis states: "This film offers an insight into one of America's oldest industries. Through the words and job activities of six employees of Simpson Timber Company, we learn how timber is grown and harvested. Emphasis is on forest management, research and environmental protection. Scenes are filmed in forests, mills and offices in Washington, California, and Canada."

RETIREMENTS



MIKE WILLIAMSON

Submitted by Mike Williamson

As an English major reading a Jack Kerouac novel on a Mexican beach in the heart of February, Mike was somehow inspired to spend a summer on a fire lookout. Days later he was fortunate to be applying in a forestry office as someone pulled out of a position, and Jack Carter sent him off to a mountain lookout in the Crowsnest Pass, Hailstone Butte. This was 1981, and his first visitors were Kelly O'Shea and Don Harrison. After several years and many seasonal wildfire positions, he found himself creating a forestry warehouse in Blairmore, and building a full logistics function, becoming a permanent employee. In a new initiative, the wildfire branch sponsored him to become a forest officer, and he took up the position in Peace River. Very quickly, he found an interest in designing and implementing community mitigation plans, leading

landscape prescribed burning for stewardship goals, creating collaborative, risk-based wildfire management plans and injecting science into effective wildfire operations. Mike was deeply involved in creating integrated strategic plans, co-authored proposals for change management and enjoyed writing an abridged version of wildfire history in Alberta for easy staff consumption. He retired in January, 2024 after 43 years and continues to explore and explain the puzzle of wildfire and promote effective wildfire management.



DARYL MCEWAN

Submitted by Daryl McEwan

I was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, as my parents were both in the Canadian military stationed in the United States. I have been lucky enough to live in a variety of places stretching from as far east as Goose Bay, Labrador to the west coast in

Tacoma, Washington to the south in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with many stops in between throughout Canada. We moved every two to three years, so the upside was to see a lot of the world and meet new people, but the downside is we did not really have a place called home. I went back to North Bay, Ontario to finish my high school and play some hockey while my parents were posted to Germany for eight years. I had the opportunity to travel a lot in Europe as I would visit my folks during summer holidays. I got my love of the outdoors from camping, fishing, and hunting in the Rocky Mountains near Grave Flats, and graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelors of Science in Forestry in 1989.

During my university years, I worked for the Alberta Forest Service as an initial attack crew member for two seasons out of Lodgepole, and one season on the timber management crew out of Blairmore. Don Harrison was my boss in those days, and I truly appreciated his support and guidance. Upon completing university in 1989, I vowed to settle down and plant some roots, but an opportunity to work in Sweden came up, and I decided to take this job. As the job was part of an exchange program, our team was composed of two Canadians, one Austrian and one person from Scotland. Our boss, Leonard Johnsson, was an awesome guy who gave us some tremendous experience in all aspects of forestry in Sweden. We cruised timber, did silviculture surveys, tree planting, thinning, operated forest harvesting

machines, and some wildfire response.

When I returned from Sweden, I worked in Whitecourt as part of the timber management crew, and then headed west to Prince George, B.C., taking a job with Industrial Forestry Service (IFS). At IFS I was able to obtain my B.C. Registered Professional Forester status and continued to build my skills and capabilities in forestry. Roles included cruising timber, cutblock layout, forest inventory and photo interpretation work. As a natural transition from forest inventory, I began completing timber supply analysis work and helped build forest management plans for the various forest companies in the area. In 2000, I returned to Alberta as the Alberta Vegetation Inventory (AVI) manager with the government. As the AVI manager, we finalized and operationalized the AVI 2.1 standard. We also introduced SoftCopy Photogrammetry (digital photo interpretation) which is now the standard across the province. We introduced the new federal National Forest Inventory (NFI) program to Alberta and built the NFI protocols into the newly formed Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, a standard still being followed today.

I then moved to section head of the Data Acquisition team within the Resource Information Management Branch. My role was to coordinate data acquisition for all key base feature datasets required by all government ministries. At the same time the government was driving the Sustainable Resource Environmental Management (SREM) concept, the idea of ministries having a shared environmental management outcome they would work together to deliver. SREM led to the creation of the Landuse Framework (LUF),

with common data and information being key to success. I was seconded to the SREM Information Sharing team, the precursor to GeoDiscover Alberta (GDA). I became lead of GDA, where we built the foundational pieces of the provincial spatial data infrastructure. GDA was designed to be the one stop shop for any of the government geospatial datasets and was recognized across North America for its innovative approach to data sharing. At the GDA, I built two business models to support a more efficient and cost effective approach to data sharing. The collaborative model has all partners combine their funding and make one collective purchase of the data. The second model was the data supply model. This approach leveraged the ESRI GFX (feature exchange) and we applied it to an Alberta Road Network initiative. This data would be used by first responders, planners, Google maps or anyone that needed a road network coverage.

From GeoDiscover Alberta, I was then seconded to the Integrated Resource Management System Secretariat (IRMSS). The IRMSS was comprised of four ministries (Environment, Sustainable Resource Development, Energy, and Indigenous Relations), plus the Alberta Energy Regulator. The purpose of the group was to bring consistency to resource development policy by facilitating cross ministry teams to discuss implications of policy development and potential impacts of decisions. While at the IRMSS, I was the lead of the cumulative effects team and served as executive director for 18 months.

In October 2020, I became the consequence manager with the Environmental Emergency Management Branch as part of the Ministry reorganization. When not responding to any significant environmental incidents, my role was to ensure all the hazard

plans were developed for floods, droughts, invasive species and all environmental pollution related events. Our team developed a training standard to ensure safe operations of all the personnel, we built a geospatial capability to allow easy access to data and information and we built an operating procedure for the Department Coordination Centre (DCC). We exercised all of our plans with the annual government training event in the fall, and with a spring flood event in conjunction with the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre. I retired in 2024.

In retirement, my wife Rosemary and I are looking to travel and see other parts of the world. We enjoy travelling around Alberta and B.C., hiking, fishing and sight seeing to enjoy what nature has to offer. With my forestry and emergency management background, I will see how I can support the province and the local municipalities as we are faced with the ever changing climate and the increased impact of natural disasters.



FERENC SCOBIE

Submitted by Ferenc Scobie

Born in the United Kingdom in 1966, we moved to Canada in 1974. After brief stays in Calgary and Airdrie, we settled in Hinton where I completed high school. I had always planned

to join the military and was part of the Army Cadets. However, a presentation to our cadet corps from the Alberta Forest Service about wildfires opened my eyes to another action-oriented career path. I also participated in a few exercises with the Canadian military, but didn't feel the sense of elite purpose I expected. Given my passion for the outdoors, I ultimately decided to pursue a career in wildfire after graduation.

I spoke with Ross Risvold, an instructor at the Forest Technology School, who recommended I enroll in the Forest Technology program at NAIT. At the time, a degree wouldn't allow you to become a forest ranger. After working for a year to save up, I entered the program and graduated in 1987. As a passionate learner, I've taken nearly every wildfire course available in Alberta. I've also dedicated significant time and resources to pursuing additional courses and programs in various fields, including HR, training, business management, and personal growth.

My first job with the Alberta Forest Service, between first and second year of NAIT, was a Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) position paying \$5.50 an hour, measuring permanent sample plots. After graduating NAIT, I worked seasonally for a number of years starting as the Clearwater River guardian in Fort McMurray and also including various jobs for the Alberta Forest Service as timber cruiser, helitack member and leader, and sector boss in Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, High Level, Nordegg and Lac La Biche. I've also done a few jobs in the private sector working in the oil and gas industry and for private forestry contractors.

Personally, my accomplishments include getting married to Pat, raising

two great kids, Noah and Eric, and corrupting any dog my wife adds to our family. Professionally, I consider my ability to connect with Indigenous people and generally most people outside of our organization to be one of my best accomplishments. I have won two Premier's awards (House River Fire, Hinton Training Centre), received a life-saving commendation from the Deputy Minister and won a few Deputy Minister awards for innovation projects.

For retirement I plan to do more travelling, fishing and SCUBA diving. I also plan to work a few summers as a recreation engagement officer, similar to the guardian position I started my career with. I also have a real estate business, and a training and public speaking business that keep me busy.



SCOTT MILLIGAN

Submitted by Scott Milligan

I grew up in Okotoks, Alberta where I spent a lot of time camping and exploring in the foothills forests west of Turner Valley and Millarville. This sparked my interest in working outdoors and doing something related to Alberta's beautiful forests. I decided to get into forestry after working summers in high school taking down dead balsam poplar at the Kinsmen campground on the Sheep River in Okotoks. I had this misinformed notion I could cut

trees and hike all day if I got into forestry! Here I sit at my keyboard in downtown Edmonton realizing that didn't exactly work out!

I graduated from the University of Alberta with a BSc in Forestry in 1992. I've always been proud to say I have a forestry education and always had an interest in the dynamics of forest ecosystems. During university I worked summers for the Alberta Forest Service timber cruising and doing regeneration surveys. When I graduated in 1992, there weren't many full time jobs, but I was very happy to get on permanent in what was the Slave Lake Forest in the Red Earth Ranger district in 1994. I reported to Chief Ranger Barry Gladders and loved my time in Red Earth and Slave Lake. I made some great friends and was fortunate to work with 'legends' in the forest service! We had Howard Gray as our Forest Superintendent and Jerry Sunderland was our Chief Forester. Wayne Johnson and Al Hovan were senior foresters who mentored me as well. Al showed me the hard way how to drive in northern Alberta 'gumbo' (wet clay roads in the boreal!). I learned how to use a winch several times on the 'so-called' road between the Marten Hills and Smith. I couldn't ask for a better experience starting my career. My exposure and love of the boreal forest grew substantially during this time. I was no longer just a 'foothills' guy.

After Slave Lake, I spent time in Peace River as the forester who worked with Mercer (Daishowa at the time). This exposed me to policy and larger forestry agreements and operations. From there I moved to Edmonton to head up the

new Forest Operations Section under Doug Sklar, our executive director of Forest Management. Again, working with legends in Edmonton and mentoring under Doug and broader guidance (if that's what you call it!) from our Assistant Deputy Minister, Cliff Henderson. Cliff is probably the most recognizable name in forestry and that's a good thing. No one is more passionate about Alberta's forests than Cliff, you just didn't want to end up on the wrong end of that 'passion'!

I was lucky enough to be part of the group that led development of the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan Regional Land-use plans from 2010 to 2014. I'm proud of some of the tools for managing cumulative effects of development on the environment that we developed in those plans – air and water frameworks, footprint management plan, and new conservation areas added to Wood Buffalo National Park that allow us to claim the largest boreal protected area in the world. I'm also very proud of some of the standards and guidelines I was involved in leading, the Grazing Timber Manual, the Tree Improvement Manual, Timber Harvesting Ground Rules, and the updated (Phase 2) Reforestation Standards. I formed a permanent Land-use Planning Branch in what was then Environment and Sustainable Resource Development in 2015. In 2018, I shifted to working in our regulatory area, supporting streamlining and reducing red tape in our regulatory system. My final role with the government of Alberta has been working on Land Policy, focussed on reclamation and remediation standards, and development of Alberta's first nature or biodiversity strategy.

When I look back after 32 years, I am most proud and fond of the relationships and friendships built. I'm grateful for all the people who supported my learning and made me a better forester and frankly, a better person. I'm so fortunate to have worked in such a variety of work. My foundation in forestry set me up well to work on more complex projects such as land-use planning. As for the next phase of life, I'm very much looking forward to spending more time with my family and outdoors with my fuzzy buddies. If some 'work' comes my way that doesn't involve a government briefing note, I will probably kick the tires and keep busy that way as well, especially if it's something related to forests!



BERNIE SCHMITTE

Submitted by Bernie Schmitte

Born and raised in Stratford, Ontario, Bernie graduated from Northwestern Secondary School in 1983. Family camping trips throughout Ontario and adventures in the hardwood forests of southern Ontario led to his interest in forestry. Bernie attended Sault College in 1985 and graduated with forest technician and forest management technologist diplomas in 1988. Summer forestry positions included two seasons on an initial attack crew in Chapleau, Ontario, two seasons as a forest management tech in Sioux Lookout, and one winter with

the mining recorder in Ontario. In the winter of 1990, Bernie was successful in obtaining a full time position with the B.C. Forest Service as a harvesting inspector on Vancouver Island. Moving from Ontario to Port McNeill was an adventure across the prairies and mountains of western Canada to Vancouver Island. While stationed in Port McNeill, Bernie spent time boating, fishing and whale watching in the Queen Charlotte Straights. Bernie's work assignments included inspecting harvesting operations on mainland B.C., experiencing many different harvesting operations from Heli-logging, long line and high lead logging, grapple yarding, beach combers and root buckers. In October 1992, Bernie had the opportunity to work for the Alberta Forest Service in High Level. Loading up his possessions and yellow lab Nessie, he set out for new adventures in Alberta.

The High Level Ranger Station (DF2) was his first of many posts in Alberta. The experience gained as a forest officer working in northern Alberta served him well throughout his career in Alberta. In 1997, Bernie transferred to Grande Prairie as a forest officer II in the forest management section. It was a short stay of eight months before his next move to Fort Chipewyan. Dale Huberdeau convinced Bernie this would provide new opportunities and growth within the organization, and it seemed like a new and unique opportunity at the time. After accepting the position and flying to Fort Chip thoughts of "what did I just get myself into" crossed his mind. But it turned out to be his most memorable post of his career. Fort Chipewyan is a very unique community

with ties going back to the first explorers and fur traders. The people are friendly, generous, resilient and love to laugh. Lake Athabasca, Wood Buffalo National Park and the many river systems provided new experiences and adventures. While stationed in Fort Chip many of the forestry assignments occurred in the Fitzgerald and Fort Smith area. That small piece of Alberta has a rich history of forestry and land management. From grazing on Ryan Island, to recreation leases for a golf course and biathlon trail system and the occasional logging for building logs. Other unique features include a man-made float plane lake, Pelican nesting areas along the Slave River rapids, and farming. The establishment of a new reservation for the Smith Landing Band, clean-up of an abandoned granite quarry and the establishment of float plane miscellaneous leases kept him very busy. Wildfires north of Lake Athabasca kept the initial attack crew and local firefighters very busy in 1998. The people of Fort Chip are resilient and strong, they welcomed Bernie into the community and provided a new perspective on the Indigenous culture.

In 2002, Bernie transferred to Rocky Mountain House as a wildfire technician, and in 2005 he transferred back to High Level as the wildfire operations officer. In 2007, Bernie transferred back to Rocky Mountain House to take on wildfire prevention officer role in the area. In 2011, Bernie promoted to the forest area manager position in Fort McMurray. The opportunities in Fort McMurray provided growth, awareness and challenges in the management of the provincial resources, growth of staff and management of programs. Mentoring staff and watching them excel in their careers was extremely rewarding for Bernie.

The 2016 Horse River wildfire pushed staff to the edge. They experienced loss and hardship but pulled through as an exceptional team helping each other along the way. Bernie and the Fort McMurray team were grateful for the assistance and support they received throughout this period. In 2021, Bernie promoted to the executive director of forestry field operations and moved to Edmonton. Leading and guiding the ten forest areas was an opportunity to guide the field in all aspects of forestry, a very challenging but rewarding time. The 2023 fire season was by far the most difficult and challenging year in wildfire for Bernie, but with the support of executive, government staff, and national and international personnel, the team was able and resourced to battle the wildfires and assist in mitigating the devastating impacts to communities and people.

Bernie's career in forestry spanned 30 years in many communities within the green area and Edmonton. Bernie's career in Alberta was diverse and challenging, providing opportunities in forest management, wildfire prevention, wildfire operations, wildfire management, land management and recreation. Bernie maintained certifications in aerial ignition, air operations and incident command throughout his career. He was fortunate to deploy throughout Alberta as well as B.C., Ontario, Yukon, and Montana on wildfire assignments. He is most proud of his commitment to the organization, service to Albertans and loyalty to the government of Alberta. Forestry staff are very resilient people and should be proud of their contribution to the safety of Albertans and the management of Alberta's unique resources. The legacy of the Alberta Forest Service will live on within all those who serve Alberta.



CHRISTINE KREIBOM QUINN

Submitted by Canfor Grande Prairie Staff

Christine was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta. Following completion of her high school education and looking to align her passion for the outdoors and keen science acumen with a career path, Christine began her forestry education at the University of Alberta in 1983, graduating in 1987. Her first forestry job following completing her forestry degree was in High Level working as a timber cruiser for the Alberta Forest Service, Timber Management Branch. In May 1988, Christine moved to Grande Prairie, migrated to the industry sector and began her career with Canfor in Grande Prairie as a planning forester. This included field activities such as layout and planning of harvest areas. From 1992 to 1997 Christine was the land-use forester reviewing energy sector dispositions and managing road-use agreements.

In September 1995, Canfor initiated its public advisory group, where Christine played an integral role in working with the group creating goals and objectives for Canfor's Forest Management Plan. Those goals and objectives are reflected in Canfor's forest management practices to this day. From 1997 to 2003, Christine was the operations and compliance forester for Canfor, overseeing harvesting and log haul activities, in addition to forest certification and

environmental compliance. Prior to the days of external third-party forest certification, Christine facilitated the development of an internal standards compliance and audit program, that formed the basis for Canfor Grande Prairie's future direction in forest certification. Following this, Christine guided and facilitated Canfor's move to external certification through the Canadian Standards Association in 1999.

In 2003, Christine further expanded her forestry experience and for the next three years became the planning and silviculture superintendent for Canfor Grande Prairie, coordinating operational planning and silviculture activities, as well as data management and government reporting. Beginning in 2011, up until her retirement in 2024, Christine found her true passion in forestry, acted as the silviculture forester for Canfor, focused on developing and implementing its reforestation strategy. With an extremely hard work ethic and dedication to all she does, Christine applies 110 per cent of her effort to everything she invests herself in whether that be professional or personal.

Christine has a lengthy history of volunteering in the community that spans over 30 years. As part of her many years of volunteering with local ski patrol, in February 2013, Christine received an Exceptional First Response Award in recognition of critical care rendered to save the life of a 10-year-old child. Her volunteer work also earned her a Long-Term Service Award from her ski association. On top of her regular employment duties, Christine helped develop and oversee a local program that promotes forestry in the community with a focus on educational outreach. This often-included participation and

involvement in events such as Arbor day and Walk Through The Forest, which are still happening to this day in the Grande Prairie area. In 2022, Christine received an award from Canfor titled "The Community Builders Award". This award recognizes the achievements made by a Canfor employee who selflessly offers their time and efforts to give back to the communities where they live and work.

Not one to sit still, Christine plans on continuing her volunteerism work, further exploring her passion of the art world while, continuing to work part time within the industry on a contract basis. Christine will, however, be taking the opportunity to spend more time with her family as well as travel with her husband and friends. Christine's dedication, passion and sense of humour will be greatly missed within the industry, but no doubt applied to anything and everything she tackles in life moving forward.

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Canadian Forestry Association Movie Poster; 1960s

OBITUARIES

CAPTAIN WILLIAM M. "TURBO" TARLING, CD

Biography information courtesy of the New Brunswick Aviation Museum

Born October 8, 1937, William "Turbo" McColman Tarling of Cold Lake, Alberta passed away on December 23, 2023 at the age of 86 years. Captain Tarling was born and educated in Toronto, Ontario. In 1949, he joined the 218 "Danforth Lions" Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets, and in 1954, completed his flying training and received his private pilot's license on his 17th birthday. In September 1955, he joined the RCAF and was selected for pilot training. Flight Cadet Tarling trained on the venerable Harvard at RCAF Station Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer (P/O) a few weeks before his 19th birthday. After further training on the T-33 Silver Star at RCAF Station Gimli, Manitoba, he was promoted to Flying Officer and was presented his RCAF Pilot's Wings in January 1957 by his father, Flight Lieutenant William Tarling. The senior Tarling was the Adjutant of 218 Air Cadet Squadron and had flown out to Gimli from Toronto for the occasion.

Posted to Cold Lake, Ottawa, Bagotville, the far arctic on the DEW line, Winnipeg, Lahr, Germany, Shearwater, Val d'Or, Chatham, Tarling spent most of his career flying and instructing on the T-33 Silver Star. In 1974, he passed the 5,000 hour mark on the T-33; the 6,000 hour mark in 1977; and the 7,000 hour mark in January 1980. Captain Tarling retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 1982 when he reached

compulsory retirement age. In his air force career, he amassed 11,645 flying hours in 50 different aircraft, including 28 different jets. With more than 10,400 hours jet time, Captain "Turbo" Tarling may be the most experienced jet pilot to ever serve in the RCAF/CAF. His total flying time is now 12,956 hours on 65 types of aircraft with 7,690 on the T-33 Silver Star. That may be the World Record for hours flown in a T-33!

On his retirement from the air force, Tarling began a second career as an airtanker pilot with Air Spray Aviation flying the B26 tanker. Colleague and friend Dave Dalke said that Turbo was a good bombing pilot, with unerring judgement. He said Turbo was an amazing guy with instincts, was fit and healthy, and would spend an hour each day on his investments. Tarling retired from his second career in 2004. Rob Thorburn remembers Turbo as a real nice guy and a real gentleman. He kept fit and ate healthy during our duty days at bases and was always the ambassador of the group when it came to giving public tours of his aircraft and the airtanker base. Rob also said, *"In the early 1960s, I lived on a RCAF nuclear missile base that my father had been posted to. Our back yard skirted the runway fence, and I would always take time from play as a kid to watch the T-33s do touch and go's. I mentioned my experience once to Turbo and he said it was most likely him and his team in the aircraft who touched down in front of me. Who would have thought 15 years later I would be flying with that guy, one of*

the most well known pilots in the air force from that era."

HARVEY TRACE

Born in Elnora, Alberta, Harvey Trace passed away on February 20, 2024 at the age of 93 years. He was raised around central Alberta, taking most of his schooling in the Lacombe area. As a boy he had paper routes delivering the Edmonton Journal and Calgary Herald on his bike. One day, at about 12 years old, he went to a fair. He had saved up \$3.00 from his job and was able to go for a 15-minute airplane ride. He was hooked on flying. He decided he was going to be a pilot someday but that took money, so he found a job to earn more. At 17, he went to Yellowknife, N.W.T. to work in the Con Gold Mine. Coming back from there he worked with his brother for Borger Brothers Construction, building water reservoirs, sewage lines, etc. He went on to road construction, driving taxi and flying instructor, working to make money so he could rent a plane. Harvey did ferrying for Stan Reynolds at the Wetaskiwin Airport. He said he swept floors to work his way up for more flying lessons. Next, he joined the R.C.A.F. and flew Harvard's out of Gimli, Manitoba. In 1951, he was sent to Trenton, Ontario with his unit, for the trooping of the colours for Princess Elizabeth when King George died. He left the R.C.A.F. in 1952, returning to become an Alberta forest ranger in the Kananaskis in southern Alberta. One of his jobs there was riding his horse, leading a pack horse, checking the forestry phone lines in the mountains, summer or

winter. After a few years he decided to go back to flying. He was a flying instructor for a while, then ended up working for Associated Helicopters, the first helicopter company in Alberta. Harvey flew for them for 36 years. Associated Helicopters had the contract to fly and maintain Alberta Forest Service aircraft in the 1950s and 1960s.

His jobs with the helicopter were varied ... fighting forest fires, counting game, patrolling pipelines, stringing powerlines, hauling surveyors with oil companies, spotting illegal hunters, and flying mercy flights (long before S.T.A.R.S.). He also did timber cruising, looked after and fed stranded cattle in snowstorms, and took flood victims to safety. Several times Harvey flew new helicopters from Texas to Alberta. His jobs took him all across Canada plus several months in Belize and Bombay. Harvey had many hobbies. He enjoyed the HAM radio, loved to fish, go game hunting and competitive shooting, selecting nice wood and building anything he could from it. In later years he bought a lathe and built tools and other things from metal. He built helicopter parts. One time he built a hockey puck throwing machine. In later years he took up sewing and made many braided rugs and placemats, as well as a few quilts.

The competitive side of Harvey brought out many events where he came home with ribbons, pins or trophies. These competitions took him all over Canada and the U.S., along with some of the family to be proud and cheer him on. He has won many t-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, hats, etc. Other winnings were a Rolex Oyster wristwatch that came from flying 8,800 accident-free hours with the helicopter.

Harvey and Esther formed their own company, Trace Scope Repairs (repairing scopes & building stocks) and Nu-Line Distributors Ltd. (selling scopes for the Burris factory out of Colorado). The scope company was sold to his daughter and son-in-law in 2006.

GORDON BOSSENBERRY

Born on September 18, 1930 in Calgary, Gordon Bossenberry passed away in Sherwood Park on January 23, 2024 at 93 years of age. After graduating high school, his education led him to a career with the Alberta Forest Service. He held different positions within forestry at several different Alberta locations; the most interesting and challenging being a district ranger in an isolated station at Embarras Portage, north of Fort McMurray. Gordon started his forestry career on the Kananaskis Lookout in 1959. From there he went to the Elbow Ranger Station as a forest ranger, then to Embarras Portage, then back south again to Cadomin, Robb and Livingstone. Gordon attended the Basic ranger training course in Hinton in 1963. Gordon loved to share many entertaining stories of his time spent working in forestry. He had a passion for the outdoors, for nature and wildlife, making forestry a most rewarding career. After working for a short while in the forestry office in Edmonton, Gordon left the industry and became a successful travelling salesman. Gordon had a passion for sports, he himself was a goalie in hockey and a catcher in baseball. This led Gordon to years of volunteer work with minor hockey, where in 2007 he received a Centurion Award from Hockey Alberta for his 52 years of volunteer and dedication to Alberta Minor Hockey.

LEONARD KENNEDY

Born in Notikewin, Alberta, Leonard Kennedy passed away in High River, Alberta, on April 24, 2024 at 83 years of age. Leonard moved to Turner Valley in 1959 and started his career as a forest ranger with the Alberta Forest Service on the Sheep River Ranger Station, west of Turner Valley. He met his wife Marlene in 1964. The Kennedy family relocated to the Red Deer Ranger Station and spent the next 12 years in the Sundre area. In 1977, the Kennedy family moved back to Turner Valley. Leonard retired from the Alberta Forest Service in 1995 and was extremely proud of his career having fought fires in many locations, including Alberta, Northern Ontario and Oregon, as well as his work on the design and construction of the equestrian stalls and trails in Kananaskis Country. After his retirement, Leonard continued to regularly visit the Sheep River Ranger Station area to check on his Big Horn Sheep. He enjoyed salmon fishing in the summer on the ocean off the coast of Vancouver Island and spent many hours in his shop where he loved to do wood working.

KEN PLOURDE

An anecdotal history written by Conn Brown

Born in 1936, Ken was raised in Haliburton, Ontario, and passed away in Fort St John, British Columbia in June 2024. Raised in a sawmilling family, Ken was the son of a saw filer who worked in a Weldwood hardwood mill. He spoke about an active childhood, even picking tobacco as a youth to earn some cash, a dirty job. Ken joined the navy and served on the HMCS Ontario, the last big warship in our navy. When he mustered out, Ken went to the University of New Brunswick to study forestry. He stated he was a problem student in the first year, and

then exemplary the next three. His professors took credit for turning him around, tongue in cheek of course, ever the kidder.

Career moves and highlights include working for Domtar in Beardmore, Ontario, a brief time in New Brunswick, then back to Beardmore. Ken's career there evolved from horse logging to skidders and tracked loaders, with wood going into Lake Superior. Ken was then recruited to help start logging in Labrador at Happy Valley, with wood going to Cornerbrook, Newfoundland, and Scotland by boat. He spoke about fun at the military base next door. Next, he was off west to Takla Logging in the Prince George region, logging near Mossvale and Takla Lakes, moving the wood by rail to Prince George Pulp.

He then moved to the Canfor Chetwynd Division in 1974, where he met Conn Brown. Ken was the woodland manager until 1980, then moved to the Lignum sawmill at Williams Lake. He then joined the Canfor Fort St John Division, before moving to Edmonton, joining the Alberta government. Here he worked for university colleague Al Brennan in the forest industry development branch.

In 1991, Ken was recruited to the Alberta Pacific startup pulp mill near Athabasca. There he reunited with Conn Brown; Conn being the operations manager on the west side of the Forest Management Agreement area, Ken on the east. They hired staff and the harvesting and road building contractors to begin moving wood to the mill. Ken headed up the Alpac Carbon team that won awards for Alberta-Pacific from the federal government for waste wood and chemical recovery energy generation for the pulp mill.

Ken had a great smile, a quick wit, and was a credit to his professional forestry faculty.

Alpac colleague Greg Safer, said "Ken had a real sense of humour, and I recall him saying that he maintained a positive attitude no matter what, just like Bugs Bunny! He loved being a part of any practical jokes and in large part, built the camaraderie that existed in woodlands operations."

In an email to Bruce Mayer in 2012, Ken said, "I think I worked about 16 years in Ontario (including college), and about 17 years in B.C., before settling in Alberta. These times were interrupted by a 2 year stint in Labrador, and a short time in New Brunswick. All great experiences! I was a Charter Member of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (1962), and a member in B.C. since 1975. I am currently a Life Member in B.C."

Ken wrote a family history for the Forest History Society of Ontario in 2011 about his experiences at the Kenisis Lake sawmill. (https://www.fhso.ca/media/forestory/fhso_journal_vol_02_iss_2_fall_2011.pdf)

One quote stands out from Ken's early forestry career, "When I was a teenager, my dad was trying to steer me towards an outdoor job, as I couldn't sit still, so he talked about biology and wildlife as possible careers. There were some young foresters working in the area in the mid-fifties, and the locals called them "Brush Pile Detectives". I hadn't heard of forestry as a career, so I thought that might be interesting, so I talked to the manager about it. He thought that if I were interested in that sort of work, I should be out in the bush with the log scaler in the winter logging season, so I scaled logs with a local scaler from Harcourt, Ontario, named

Harcourt Pacey. Everyone called him Sunny.

In the summers of 1951 and 1952, I tailed the edger and worked on the lumber sort at the tail end of the process, where I learned valuable experience in lumber quality and grading. I also learned the finer art of grading white pine, which is so valuable that they estimate the clear cuts from the board for making sash and door. Where there are three grades of other species, there were 6 grades of white pine."

JEAN LOUIS BOUCHER

Born May 16, 1942 in Jonquiere, Quebec, Jean Louis passed away on April 7, 2024, at the age of 81. The family moved to Marie Reine, Alberta in 1951. Jean Louis attended school until 1956, when he chose to leave and go to work with his dad Camille, at the sawmill in Keg River. Jean Louis worked various jobs in the family business, including falling trees, log driving on the Peace River, and working in the sawmill. This is where he developed a passion for logging, and along with his brother Vic, started a logging operation in High Level. After the loss of brother Vic (1972), and a sawmill fire (1978), Jean Louis and brother Normand joined forces and built the sawmill in Nampa in 1979. Jean Louis always took pride in his business but took it to the next level when it came to his family. He and wife Wanda made many special memories with their children and grandchildren, whether at home, abroad, or the lake. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, quadding, spending time with family and friends, and was often found in his shop working on a project for someone. It was important to Jean Louis to encourage and support the younger generations with life and business goals, doing so with his experience and wisdom.

GAIL TUCKER

Born February 9, 1955, Gail Tucker passed away on May 4, 2024 at 69 years of age. After graduating in 1978 from McMaster University with a BSc. in Biology, Gail Tucker moved to the Yukon Territory eventually working on an initial attack crew in Ross River, Yukon in 1980. In September of the same year, she left the Yukon to take Forest Technology at NAIT, graduating in 1982. After graduation, Gail worked seasonally in Edmonton in the Reforestation and Reclamation Branch as a field assistant, and in Slave Lake on the timber management crew as a forestry aid and assistant party chief. In October 1986, she was posted in Red Earth Creek as a project forest officer then as a permanent forest officer. In November 1989, she moved to the McLennan Ranger District until the ranger station closed in June 1991, then transferred to Peace River. In Peace River, Gail was a forest officer and then was promoted to silviculture technician in 1993. That northern pull continued, and Gail moved to Footner Lake as the senior ranger in November, 1996, and then was promoted to forest area manager, Land and Forest Service in April 2000. A number of reorganizational changes had Gail in various management roles, forestry and land manager, land manager and most recently approvals manager in the new Operations Division of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. Gail was very active with the Girl Guides of Canada, particularly the Pathfinders. In April 2015, Gail retired from Environment and Sustainable Resource Development after 32 years, moving to Winter Brook, Newfoundland.

PAUL STEFFES

Born in Traverse City, Michigan on July 18, 1936, Paul passed away in Edson, Alberta on May 12, 2024, at 87 years of age. After high school, he ventured towards the great Alaskan frontier but only made it as far as Montana when his funds ran dry. It was there he found work in the forest industry, where seasoned foresters encouraged him to pursue further education. Paul headed back to Ann Arbor and earned a forestry degree from the University of Michigan before returning to work for the United States Forest Service in Montana. In 1967, Paul relocated his family to Grande Prairie to serve in the Alberta Forest Service before settling in Edson, where Paul and his wife Ann lived for the next 55 years. Leaving his government position behind in 1981, Paul started "Wolf Creek Oil Consultant Services", specializing in right-of-way timber assessment and forest management.

DAVID MCNABB

Born on June 4, 1947 in Pleasanton, Kansas, Dave McNabb passed away in Edmonton, Alberta on May 11, 2024, at the age of 76 years. Education and research were always the focus of Dave's life, which began in a one room schoolhouse and didn't end until an aggressive brain tumor felled him while he was still quite active. Dave received his BScF in 1970, and MScF in 1972, at the University of Missouri, and a PhD in Soil Science from Oregon State University. Dave worked as an extension watershed specialist in Oregon from 1978 to 1989. Moving to Canada in 1990, Dave was hired as a soil physicist and researcher at the Alberta Environmental Centre in Vegreville from 1990 to 1996, and was the manager at the Alberta Research Council from 1996 to 2002. Dave's passion for teaching would see him

become a sessional lecturer at the University of Alberta from 2011-2018. Dave was named as a Canadian representative to the United Nations Team of Specialists, where he served four years meeting and lecturing in Europe and New Zealand. Dave's focus on soil failures as a function of slope and soil wetness, and changes in bulk density following machine trafficking would see his expertise continue to develop as he quantified the benefits of deep soil tillage for restoring soil quality on forested lands. This dedication in developing applied and operations research solutions for complex natural resource issues resulted in Dave receiving a patent for his engineered design called the RipPlow, a winged-subsoiler attached to bulldozers and excavators now used widely across western Canada for soil physical restoration on forest roads, landings, and seismic lines by companies like Weyerhaeuser and ConocoPhillips. Most recently, he was presented the Tree of Life award by the Canadian Institute of Forestry for his contributions to sustainable forest management.

ED GILLESPIE

A graduate of the University of New Brunswick, Ed passed away on July 19, 2024. Ed worked in Ontario following his graduation in 1962, managing an area in the Coldwater area. Moving to Alberta in 1978, he began working for the Alberta Forest Service (AFS) in the timber management branch. He was one of the two AFS representatives on the Forest Management Agreement Forestry and Wildlife integration task force in the early 1980s. In the late 1980s he left the Alberta government to start his own consulting company. Ed loved to read. He could be frequently found curled up on the sofa with a good book, preferably

hardcover but definitely not an e-Reader. When not reading, he and his wife Bonita travelled the world by car, boat, or plane. Being a forester, he loved the outdoors; Wyoming and Maine being his favorite spots. He was always ready for the next adventure.

KEN JANIGO

Born in Nordegg, Alberta, on November 8, 1931, Ken passed away in Lacombe, Alberta, on August 8, 2024, at 92 years of age. Ken filled his younger years with schooling, sports, horseback riding, and outdoor activities. He also worked underground in the mine as a driver. He later joined the Alberta Forest Service, where he remained until his retirement in 1988. In 1950, he met his wife Nita, while on a fishing trip to Goldeye Lake. On April 19, 1954, Ken and Nita were married and continued to live in Nordegg. In 1960, he transferred to Rocky Mountain House, where he remained until 2022 before moving to Lacombe.

BRIAN WUDARCK

Submitted by Dave Redgate and the Wudarck family

Born in Edmonton in May, 1953, Brian passed away peacefully on the evening of August 14, 2024 at 71 years of age. Brian was a stalwart member of the "old Alberta Forest Service" from 1975 through to 1996; but, like so many of our "community" who have departed before him, 21 years does not convey the contribution and influence that Brian exuded over those years. In the early 1960's, Brian enrolled in the Junior Forest Rangers and from that point on, the seed was sown for his future in the management of Alberta's Crown land forest reserves. Following graduation from McNally

High School in 1972, Brian worked on the Bitumont and Muskeg fire towers and then enrolled in NAIT's Forest Technology program in 1973. The summer break offered Brian an opportunity to work as the initial attack crew leader in the Nordegg area, and it was there that he "solidified" his future by proposing to Betty atop Baldy Mountain. Graduating from forest technology in Hinton in 1975, Brian commenced his forest career as a forest officer I in Fox Creek, Whitecourt Forest, followed soon by his marriage to Betty in October of 1975. In 1977, Brian was transferred to Fort Vermilion and then off to Fort Assiniboine as a forest officer II in 1980. In 1981, the opportunity arose for Brian to expand his career when he was promoted to McLennan as a forest officer III in charge, followed quickly by another promotion to forest officer IV, forest protection technician, in the Whitecourt Forest in 1982. The rapid progression of Brian's career through this period demonstrated his exceptional practical knowledge and leadership and finally, in 1985, he was promoted to forest officer V, chief ranger in Wabasca, Slave Lake Forest. In 1987, Brian was transferred to the Slave Lake (DS-2) district as chief ranger and it was here that Brian completed his forest officer career in 1996, when he "retired" and transitioned into the private sector. This was a "natural" progression for Brian allowing him to become self employed in the development and management of Alberta's thriving oil and gas industry, working in areas from Wetaskiwin, Valleyview, and Slave Lake. But like so many before (and after) him, his personal self-evaluation of himself always returned to his love and commitment to the Alberta Forest Service and the management of Alberta's natural resource sector. In 2011, Brian suffered a stroke which limited some

mobility. But again, Brian persevered and completed his commitment to his business until "it was time" for the next step. Brian and Betty retired in 2015 and 2018, respectively. This culminated in their move to Brian's old neighborhood in Edmonton. Brian's impact on individuals, communities and enterprise around him are unparalleled. As a husband and father (first and foremost), co-worker, technician, leader, assistant chef de mission for Alberta's Arctic Winter Games, board/committee member, and friend, he will be remembered forever.

MARIE HALLADAY

Born November 16, 1954, Marie passed away on August 22, 2024 at the age of 69.

Marie started her career with the Alberta Forest Service in the Slave Lake Forest warehouse, working there from 1988 to 1995. Moving to Edmonton, Marie was hired on as an emergency warehouse stockkeeper in spring, 1998 to assist the provincial warehouse during the Virginia Hills wildfire. She stayed employed and in 2003 became acting supervisor of the warehouse section. In 2004, Marie became the permanent warehouse services supervisor, retiring on January 2, 2018. In 2003, she was awarded "The Alberta Emergency Service Medal" and in 2016 she was awarded "The Wood Buffalo Wildfire Response Team" medal for her efforts during Alberta's worst ever wildfire.

DON WHILLIER

Born on June 6, 1930 in the Gilby district of Medicine Valley, Alberta, Don Whillier passed away in Slave Lake on September 5, 2024 at 94 years of age. After farming for a number of years, Don moved to Wetaskiwin working with his brother

at the Ford dealership. There, Don became a mechanic and a partner in two gas stations. In 1966, the highway moved out of town and the gas stations were struggling, so Don decided to look for something else and applied for the mechanic job with the Alberta Forest Service in Slave Lake. Don started on January 1, 1967, working for 26 years, retiring in 1993. Don was a volunteer fireman in the 1960s and 1970s, doing a term as fire chief. He also volunteered with the old stock car club, the curling club, and the Slave Lake Pioneers; and served on the board of the Native Friendship Centre and Slave Lake Developments. Hobbies were hunting, snowmobiling, ice fishing, curling, camping, and many other family activities.

BRANDEN SOROKA

A long time resident of Manning, Branden passed away in Peace River on September 3, 2024, at the age of 30. Branden was born in Peace River on July 1, 1994. He was raised in Manning and recently moved to Grande Prairie. Branden attended school at Rosary School and Paul Rowe High School in Manning. After graduation, he attended NAIT and completed the Forest Technology program, becoming a Registered Professional Forest Technician. Branden had a passion for life and lived life to the fullest. He was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting, fishing, and traveling, and was willing to participate in any adventure. Especially if it included snowmobiling, jet boating, or really anything with horsepower. In 2023, he entered the aviation space to follow one of his many dreams. Branden was very young but had many accomplishments, some of which included owning and operating Forteck Forestry, and Gemini Heli. He was an active

member in many organizations, and a member of the Association of Alberta Forest Management Professionals.

WILLIAM 'BILL' THOMAS

Born on December 10, 1939 at James River Bridge, Alberta, Bill passed away on September 19, 2024 at 84 years of age. Bill was educated in Falun, Alberta, and held many jobs in his younger years from farming to the oil rigs. He found his calling with the Alberta Forest Service as a radio communications officer in Fort McMurray. Not only did he look after the aircraft during fire season in northern Alberta, but he developed a love of flying. Planes or helicopters, it didn't matter to him as long as he could be in the air. Bill played hockey into his 60's. As a young man he tried out for the Detroit Red Wings as a goal tender and while he didn't make the team, he never lost his love for the game. Playing in the "old timers" league in Fort McMurray, he was able to fulfill his dream of traveling to different parts of the world while playing. His team "The Tarsand Turkeys" traveled to Japan and California to play in a world tournament. Bill also played ball, curled and bowled.

DON HARRISON

Born in Red Deer on November 14, 1953, Don passed away on November 1, 2024 at 70 years of age. Don graduated from the NAIT forestry program in 1975. His career spanned many roles and locations from forest officer in Rocky Mountain House, Slave Lake, Blairmore, Lodgepole, and Nordegg; to timber management and forest protection technician in Calgary, and forest area manager in Hinton. Don moved to Edmonton as the manager, Wildfire and Aviation in 2000, and helped coordinate the response to the 1999 Alberta

Fire Review. With a departmental reorganization in 2001, Don became director of the Wildfire Service Branch, later Forest Protection Branch. The last eight months Don was acting assistant deputy minister of Forestry Division. A retirement party was held for Don on May 23, 2009, celebrating his 35 years with the department. He always said he was protecting the forest so his grandchildren and their children would be able to enjoy it as much as he did. When Don retired, his adventures had just begun. He trained firefighters in Mexico, drove a mining bus in Hinton, was director of timber works in N.W.T., managed the Royal Canadian Legion Innisfail Branch #104, and drove school bus. He was a past town councillor and mayor in Onoway, serving its council admirably from 2006 to 2015. Don's last privilege was work for the people of Innisfail when he was elected to Innisfail's town council.

GARRY NELSON

Born in the Crowsnest Pass in 1950, Garry passed away in Athabasca on November 14, 2024. As children, Garry and his twin brother Larry always did things together, and their thoughts were always the same. They both joined the Coleman Junior Forest Wardens (JFW) club in 1963, a club their father volunteered with. Garry was proud to show off a plaque he had showing his father Harold's badge as one of the first JFW club members in Alberta in 1930. Garry worked for the JFW program full-time in various capacities in Alberta, helping start the Stetler club, and as assistant camp director at the Blue Lake Centre. Prior to his retirement in 2008, Garry served as the regional coordinator of the JFW program in north-east Alberta for more than a decade. Following retirement, Garry carried on as a proud JFW alumni, and a volunteer with the Athabasca club.

ODEAN ST. JEAN

Odean St. Jean passed away in Lac La Biche on October 2, 2024 at the age of 75. Brought up in the Amesbury area, Odean was a third generation logger and sawmiller, operating in the Wandering River, May Tower and Lac La Biche River areas. Odean's father Ovila bought out his father and brothers shares of the original operation, bringing his children into the fold. Many improvements were made over the years from the original steam powered mill starting in the 1930s, to a diesel caterpillar unit in 1975, and then electrical power in 1989. A beehive burner was added in 1986; a change from line skidders in the bush to grapple skidders occurred in 1986; the first feller buncher was purchased in 1992; and the planer mill was rebuilt in 1992, after a fire in 1991. In 1994, a weigh scale was added to the operations. In July 1998, St. Jean Lumber planted its first tree and celebrated the planting of its one millionth seedling in May 2004. In 1984, the company was re named St. Jean Lumber (1984) Ltd. with Ovila and his son Odean as the principal owners. In 2002, Odean and wife Emily bought out Ovila's shares of the company and the timber quota. An additional quota was issued to St. Jean Lumber (1984) Ltd. in June 2004 for volume in forest management unit L8, an area St. Jean had previously operated under commercial timber permit. In 2003, St. Jean stopped using the beehive burner and began selling all wood fibre not produced for chips as hog fuel to Alpac. St. Jean Lumber utilized 100 per cent of each tree hauled into the yard. The entire mill was rebuilt and opened in May 2005 after a devastating fire on October 6, 2004. Odean retired selling his timber quotas in 2015.

KEN ARMSON

Kenneth Avery Armson, O.C. died December 9, 2024, at the age of 97, at North York General Hospital following a brief illness. Kenneth was born in Newtonbrook, Ontario, received his elementary schooling in Ontario, and secondary education at the Royal Grammar School, Worcester, England. His first forestry job was at Sir Ernest Debenham's estate in Dorsetshire as a forestry apprentice, thinning Douglas fir plantations. He served in the Canadian Army overseas from 1945 to 1946 as a trooper, returning to Canada to graduate from the University of Toronto (UofT) with a B.Sc. in Forestry in 1951. Upon graduation he worked for the research division of Ontario Lands and Forests on site classification. In 1952, he was invited to join the UofT as a lecturer, apprenticing to take over the course on forest soils, and assist with the descriptive dendrology course. During a leave of absence, 1954 to 1955, he attended the Department of Forestry, Oxford University and received the Diploma in Forestry for his study on the nutrition of Scots pine. In 1992, he was awarded an Honorary D.Sc. by Lakehead University. From 1952 to 1978, Ken progressed through the ranks at the UofT, quickly building a reputation as a respected professor and expert in forest soils, nursery soil management, tree seedling production, forest regeneration and silviculture. Colleague Bob Fessenden said, Ken was *"highly respected because of his ability to connect theory to practice, based on his rapidly growing field experience. He was a born teacher and loved sharing his knowledge and insights"*.

From 1975 to 1976, he undertook a review of forest management in Ontario for the Ministry of Natural Resources, and his report formed the basis for forest companies entering into forest management agreements (FMA's), whereby they assumed full responsibility for planning and integrating harvesting and regeneration of the forest. From 1978 to 1989 when he retired, he served, initially as the special advisor on forest regeneration, then as Chief Forester, Executive Coordinator of Forests and finally as Provincial Forester from 1986 to 1989. A major witness in the Class Environmental Assessment of Timber Management in Ontario from 1988 to 1992, Ken was active in the development of standards for sustainable forest management with the Canadian Standards Association, culminating in the first standard in 1996. Always interested in history, in 2009 he took the lead in founding the Forest History Society of Ontario becoming its first elected president. In 2010, he was elected Fellow of the Forest History Society (U.S.). An active member of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, the Ontario Professional Foresters Association, and the Ontario Forestry Association (now Forests Canada), he was a past president of the last two, and a longtime member of the Society of American Foresters and the Soil Science Society of America. He was the author of several books on forests and forestry, and more than a hundred scientific papers and articles. He was particularly proud to be an honorary member of the University forestry classes 5T4 and 6T0, and to take part in their class reunions.

That Ken was a leader in forestry in Canada and especially in Ontario, is evident in the many awards he received over the years. On February 17, 2017, Ken was invested into the Order of Canada. In his memoir he wrote, *"the investiture occurred two days before my 90th birthday, and 72 years since I was cutting poles from conifer plantations on Sir Ernest Debenham's estate in Dorsetshire. I felt very proud that, in accepting the honour, I was representing the forestry community from across Canada"*.

ROMAN BIZON

Born on July 2, 1939 in Prosperity, Alberta, Roman Bizon passed away on December 28, 2024 at the age of 85. Following grade 12, Roman worked several short term jobs in the construction and oil and gas patch sectors before attending the Forestry Training School in 1962. After graduating his basic training course, Roman was posted to Fox Creek as a forest officer. He worked there from March to August 1963 and then moved to the federal government as a park warden in Jasper National Park. Roman resigned in 1968 returning to the Boyle area farming for the next 30 years.

KEN GLADUE

Born in Calais, Alberta on December 26, 1950, Ken passed away in Valleyview on January 2, 2025 at 74 years of age. Ken began fighting fires for the Alberta Forest Service in his late teens and was the native fire guardian in the Valleyview area for years.

DON FREGREN

Born in Lethbridge in 1936, Don passed away on January 2, 2025 at the age of 88 years. In 1949, he moved with his parents to Saunders Creek and then Nordegg, Alberta. Teenage years spent there in the beautiful Rocky Mountains led to his career choice to be a Forester. He attended Montana State University and graduated with a Masters' Degree in Forestry in 1960. Don joined the Government of Alberta, Alberta Forest Service, which he was dedicated to and enjoyed for over 35 years, serving in Edson, Whitecourt, Grande Prairie and Edmonton. After retiring in 1993, Don and Margie left Devon to live on their rural property near Edson, Alberta. Don's passion for nature and the outdoors was reflected in the hundreds of tree plantings, landscaped yard, garden, groomed cross-country ski trails, his love of fishing and fish stories, and 'sing-a-longs' around the campfire. His talented guitar playing endeared us all. We will remember his witty, quick "come-backs", and he will be forever missed.

FORESTRY PHOTO CORNER

WHITSON LOGGING COLLECTION

Submitted by Ivan Whitson, son

Tim Whitson's experience with logging and sawmilling is outlined in the family memoir, *The Whitson Story, "On My Own"*. He first worked in the Chisholm sawmill main logging camp on the Athabasca River near Township 63, Range 3, W5M in 1935. At first it was building logging trails, later he joined the loading crew where a "jammer" was used to load big sleds to carry the logs to the river for driving downstream. In the fall and early winter of 1939, he worked at a logging camp six miles east of Whitecourt. He sawed down trees and cut them into lengths, finishing by Christmas. On weekends he remembered walking the six miles towards town, including "boating across the river in the dark with cakes of ice floating by", to arrive in Whitecourt to buy ice cream.

During the winters of 1940/41 and 1941/42, Tim worked for McInnes Company helping them to log out their berth along the Clearwater River. The camp and mill were built near Draper, just east of present day Fort McMurray. McInnes Company were involved in a number of northern ventures what we would call resource extraction (and colonization), including fish harvesting and lumbering. Tim also worked as an independent freighter in those ventures, using his team of four horses to pull freight into and out of northern Saskatchewan. After acquiring his own sawmill after the second world war, he sawed and planed lumber for various farmers northwest of Edmonton. After starting farming, he traded the sawmill for lumber and the planer for cattle. He kept the quarter section he'd taken 400,000 board feet out of and eventually that forest grew back. He logged there in 1969, 1970, and finally in 1976 by which time he had acquired another sawmill. The lumber was used for numerous buildings including sheds, a house, and granaries. He used his mill into the early 1980's and reluctantly parted with it in 1983.





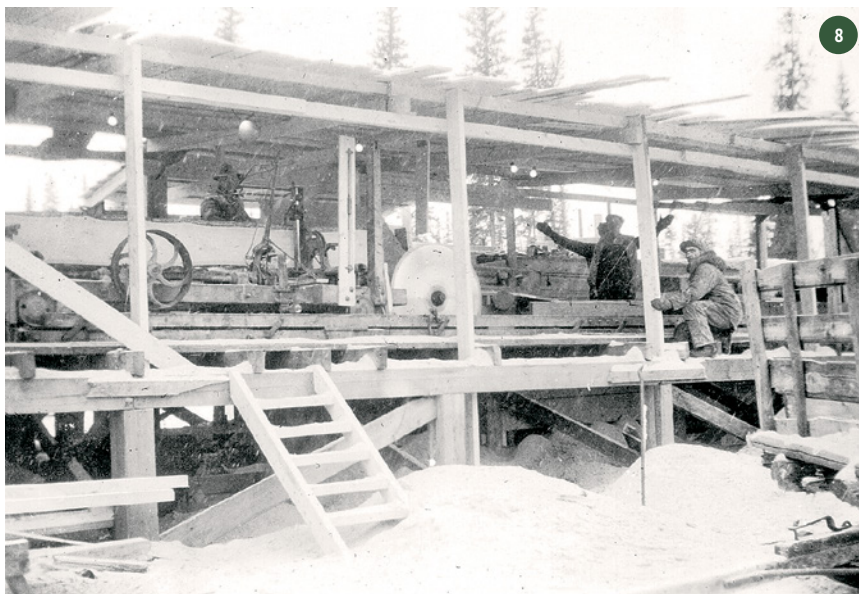
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1. Loading logs with a jammer on sleigh to pull by dozer, McInnis Company

2. Teams of horses skidding logs, McInnis Company

3. Logging camp and sawmill at Draper, McInnis Company

4. Skidding logs with teams of horses, McInnis Company

5. Truck hauling logs on Clearwater river, McInnis Company

6. Truck hauling logs on Clearwater river, McInnis Company

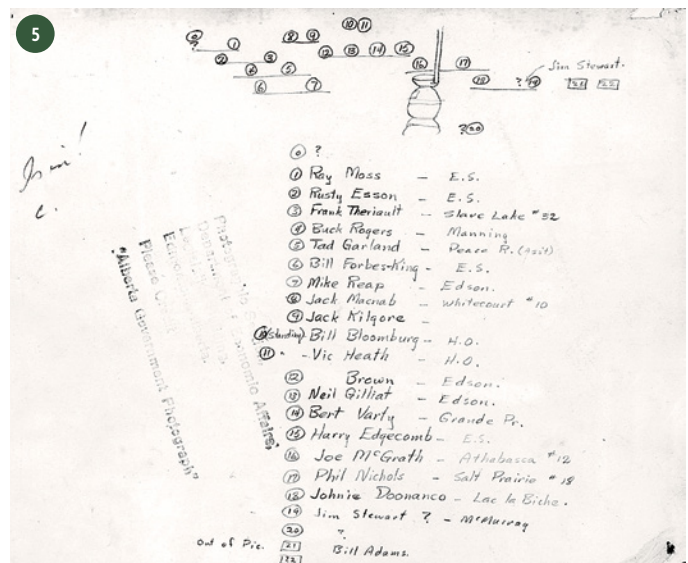
7. Sawmill of Tim Whitson and partner Curtis Mills, of Alcomdale, Alberta. They milled 400,000 board feet of mostly spruce from this quarter section in 1946/47. They used horses and hand saws to log; and sold the lumber in the Edmonton region.

8. Sawmill at Draper, McInnis Company



JACK MACNAB COLLECTION

Born in Unity, Saskatchewan, Jack Macnab graduated grade 12 in 1940 and enlisted in the air force where he trained as an aircraft mechanic. In 1944, Jack married Battleford, Saskatchewan born Rose Marie Davies. Following the war, Jack was accepted to first year forestry at the University of British Columbia. It's unknown if he attended or not, as records show he returned to Saskatchewan and taught school in Maidstone. In 1949, he moved to Whitecourt, Alberta to work for the Alberta Forest Service (AFS). Jack attended forestry training in 1951 at the first AFS training school, held in Kananaskis. He then moved to the Slave Lake Forest Division, living and working in Wabasca and Kinuso. Jack was assistant superintendent in Slave Lake from 1954 to 1958, when he joined Peter Murphy as an instructor and second in charge of the Forestry Training School. The Macnab family moved to Hinton in 1960 when the new training school opened. Jack was the AFS lead working with Des Crossley at North Western Pulp and Power in Hinton to set up Alberta's first Junior Forest Warden club in 1958. Jack moved to Edmonton in October 1971, taking on the forestry safety officer role until his retirement in 1977. Jack passed away on January 28, 1993 at 71 years of age.





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1. First graduating class of the Forestry Training School outside on porch of the Colonel's Cabin, Kananaskis Forest Experimental Station; 1951
Back Row (L to R): Rusty Esson, Bill Forbes-King (jacket over shoulder), Joe McGrath, Jack Kilgore (behind Macnab), Jack Macnab (officer cap), Bert Varty, Bill Adams, Frank Theirault, Harry Edgecombe, Tad Garland, Bill Balmer (at back in front of door), Ray Moss, Sandy Brown, and Neil Gilliat
Front Row (L to R): Jim Hereford, Mike Reap, Des Crossley (hand on chin), Phil Nichols, Victor Heath (Instructor i/c), Buck Rogers, Jim Stewart (sitting very front), Bill Bloomberg (Instructor 2i/c), and Johnny Doonanco
2. Jack Macnab sitting with a 1936 Ford; 1950
3. L to R: Jack Macnab and Peter Murphy at the Forestry Training School in Kananaskis; 1959
4. Eric Huestis providing instruction to the first Forestry Training School class, Kananaskis Forest Experimental Station; 1951
5. List of names and seating arrangements of the first class, Kananaskis Forest Experimental Station; 1951
6. Whitecourt Forest Division superintendent Rein Krause driving a boat across the Athabasca River while fighting fire 36-1-56, Whitecourt Forest Division; 1956

7. Firefighting crew on the Dutchman's Creek fire 36-1-56, Whitecourt Forest Division; 1956
L to R: Ed Jackman, Charlie Duncan (Sr.), Jack Macnab, Frank Harvey, Clarence Weeks, Fred Lewis, Jack MacGregor, Mel Willis, Nick Nickalatian, Gordon McKin, Rein Krause (superintendent), Peter Parranto, Harry Wedow, and Joe Beeman

8. Jack Macnab in his new Alberta Forest Service uniform, Wetaskiwin; 1951
L to R: Jim Wegener (Jack's cousin), Beulah Price (best friend of Rose Marie's), Jack Macnab, Rose Marie Macnab, and Rose Marie's young sister Patricia. The truck is a 1950 to 1952 International Harvester model L110.

9. Ranger refresher course, Forestry Training School; Hinton; 1964
Back Row (L to R): Bob Lewis, Stan Carlson, Vic Fischer, Ben Abel, Keith Thompson, Johnnie Johnson, and Oliver Glanfield
Middle Row (L to R): Al Walker, Harold Enfield, Ron Lyle, Karl Altschwager, Dave Schenk, Glen Sloan, Wilf (Jock) Kay, and Vic Schneidmiller
Front Row (L to R): Doug Allen, Ray Hill, Ted Loblaw, Fred Facco, Mike Burke, and Bill McPhail
Instructors at the front are Jack Macnab and Peter Murphy



1. First Alberta Forest Service Junior Forest Wardens camp, Forestry Training School; Hinton; 1960

Back Row (L to R): S.J. (Jack) Macnab (school supervisor), Douglas Davidson, Jim Wilson (Hinton group leader), Noel Armstrong, John Ross (Slave Lake group leader), Ricky Dempsey, Jim Affolter, Wayne Michener, Ricky Christie, Lou Foley, and Floyd Collin (Edson group leader)
Front Row (L to R): Gerry Kirkpatrick, Allan Wahlstrom, Gordie Sinclair, Bruce MacGregor, Dennis Maine, Teddy Armstrong, Charles Litke, Dennis Calvert, and Terry Caswell

2. Jack Macnab showing Junior Forest Wardens how to use an Abney level and clinometer, Hinton; 1960

3. Jack Macnab showing Junior Forest Wardens how to measure and age trees. Here Jack is holding the spoon from an increment borer, looking at the age growth rings on the tree ring core. Hinton; 1960

4. Cooks John and Eva Callaghan in the new kitchen at the Forestry Training School, Hinton; 1951

5. Eva Callaghan pouring milk for the Junior Forest Wardens, Forestry Training School, Hinton; 1960



ED DECHANT COLLECTION

Brought up on a farm near North Star, Alberta, Ed applied for a job with the Alberta Forest Service in July 1962 directly to the Peace River Forest superintendent Larry Gauthier. Ed was hired on the standby crew in April 1963, working as foreman for four months. He was then offered an assistant ranger job at the Three Creeks ranger station, 25 miles east of Peace River, on the edge of the Green Area. Ed graduated from the Forestry Training School basic ranger course in the spring of 1965, transferring then to the Edson District (DE4), Edson Forest in October 1965. In 1975, Ed was promoted to chief ranger in the Whitecourt District (DW3), Whitecourt Forest, a role he held until being promoted to land-use officer in 1990. Ed retired in April 1995 after 32 years with forestry. For the next dozen years, Ed took on a second career coordinating seismic programs and conducting reclamation inspections for Aguila Exploration.



Editors Note: A graduate of the spring 1965 Alberta Forest Service basic ranger training course in Hinton, Ian Methven carried on with a rewarding and contributing forestry career. In 1960, Ian emigrated to Canada and worked on ranches and in the forestry sector. He worked as a fire tower observer for the Alberta Forest Service, then moved to High Level as a ranger. In the fall of 1965, Ian attended the University of New Brunswick studying Forestry, and following graduation went on to Duke University for his Ph.D. in Forest Physiology. Upon graduation, he joined the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) at the Petawawa Forest Experiment Station as a Research Officer. In 1979, he left the CFS to join the Faculty of Forestry at UNB where he served many roles including the Director of Graduate Studies, Chair of the Department of Forest Resources and numerous committees. In 1991, Ian was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management and upon retirement was named Professor and Dean Emeritus. Ian passed away in New Brunswick on April 19, 2021 at the age of 84.



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1. Peter Murphy (far left) teaching at the Basic Ranger Course, Forestry Training School, Cache Percotte Forest; 1965

2. Ed Dechant in his room at the Forestry Training School, Hinton; 1965

3. Forestry Training School building, Hinton; 1965

4. Ed Dechant standing beside the Alberta Forest Service Dornier aircraft CF-AFB, Entrance airstrip, Edson Forest; 1965

5. Basic Ranger Course, Forestry Training School, Hinton; 1965

Back Row (L to R): Denis Loiseau, Don Law, Frank Lightbound, Ray Kover, Dave Chabillon, Don Dawson, Harvey Megli, Russell Verhaeghe, and Ed Dechant
Front Row (L to R): Pete Nortcliffe, Ian Methven, Francis Zboya, Adolph Porcina, Denis Sanregret, Al Gehman, Dick Seaman, Gerald Labrie, Harold Evanson, Hank Louwerse, and Bob Yates

6. Aerial view of the Three Creeks Ranger Station, Peace River Forest; 1964

7. Ranger using a sky genie on a Bell 47J, Entrance airstrip, Edson Forest; 1965

8. Alberta Forest Service Bell 47J CF-KEY at the Fort McKay Ranger Station, Athabasca Forest; February 1966

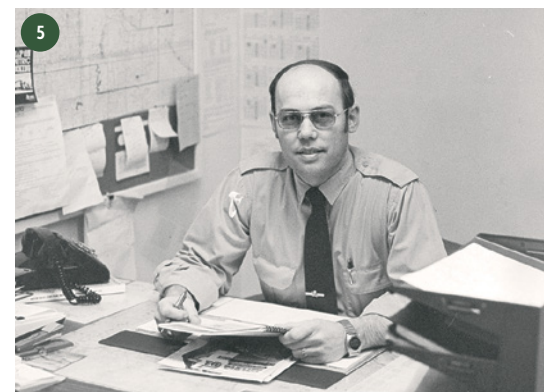
9. Adding the Flame-Out Fire Retardant with Bentonite bags to the batch mixer, Edson airtanker base; 1966

10. Mixed retardant in a holding pit, Edson airtanker base; 1966

11. Mixing water and retardant mix in the holding pit, Edson airtanker base; 1966

12. Loading retardant in an Airspray Ltd. Thrush Commander airtanker, registration CF-UND; Edson airtanker base; 1966

13. Loading retardant in an Airspray Ltd. Stearman airtanker, registration CF-KPX; Edson airtanker base; 1966



1. Bertie Beaver on a tote gote at the Edson Canada Day parade, Edson Forest; July 1, 1966

2. Ed Dechant beside two Alberta Forest Service nodwells; 1970s

3. Ed Dechant seeding the Wolf Creek airstrip, mid 1960s

4. Ed Dechant, plans chief, on Talbot Lake fire, Slave Lake Forest; 1981

5. Ed Dechant, chief ranger; Whitecourt District, Whitecourt Forest; 1980s

6. Alberta Forest Service overhead team at the Inuvik forestry compound, Northwest Territories; early 1990s
L to R: Norm Olsen, Bob Glover, and Jamie McQuarrie

7. Overhead Team meeting; Swan Hills Fire Base, Whitecourt Forest; 1993
Plans Chiefs (L to R): Rick Arthur, Howard Herman, Russ Stashko, Brian Cuttrel, Ed Dechant, Len Wilton, Bob Petite, Brian Wudarck, Darryl Johnson, and Don Law

8. Talbot Lake fire Overhead Team; Slave Lake Forest; 1981

L to R: Terry Van Nest, Dave Bartesko, Bob Hilbert, Darren Fanton, Frank Lewis (Fire Boss), Lyall Gill, and Ed Dechant

9. Land-use Forester Ed Dechant with the Honourable Helen Hunley (Lieutenant Governor of Alberta) and school children during National Forest Week, Whitecourt; May 6, 1986

10. Mostowich Lumber millsite at Meekwap Lake north of Fox Creek, Whitecourt Forest; late 1980s. Evidence of the wildfire from an ember from the burner at the bottom of the photo.

11. Alberta Forest Service belt buckle wood carving Ed Dechant did with his scroll saw; 2022

12. Alberta Forest Service overhead team at the Fort McPherson airstrip, Northwest Territories; early 1990s
L to R: Not Identified, Ed Dechant, Norm Olsen, Bob Glover, Jamie McQuarrie, and Bob Held



FOREST HISTORY CORNER



3

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND FORESTS
ALBERTA FOREST SERVICE
PERMIT TO SCALE

This is to certify that the person named hereon and whose signature appears below is hereby permitted to scale forest products on Crown Lands for the operating season

from December 5, 1960 (Date) to July 31, 1961 (Date)

at the Swanson Lumber (mill or operation) at

Timber as required No _____ until the services of a licensed scaler are available.

Name of Permittee A. H. Wahlstrom

Signature of Permittee [Signature]

Office Stamp _____

Date of Issuance _____

Scaling Permit No. 61-PI-20-S.L.

[Signature]
Officer in Charge

COPY FOR PERMITTEE





1. This Alberta Forest Service sign identified the location of the Shunda Ranger Station where camp and travel permits, and fish and game licences could be obtained. Clearwater Forest; 1962

2. In the March 2024 Trails & Tales we asked if you recognized any of the people in this picture. The photograph was taken by pilot Lloyd Anderson in 1958 Paul Rizzoli identified Stan Olszowka as the ranger on the left. He also said the photo was taken from the airstrip at the old Conklin Ranger Station, with the barn in the background.

3. Scaling permit for Allan Wahlstrom, Swanson Lumber; December 5, 1960. The permit is signed by Reg Loomis, forest management director.

4. L to R: Canadian Forest Service forester Bob Stevenson and possibly the pilot; 1960s

5. L to R: Trish and Keith Branter and Connie and Bruce Cartwright at the 50th Anniversary event for the Alberta Forest Service; October 1, 1980

6. Top Row (L to R): Ian Dunk, Rex Winn, Karl Altschwager, Joe Kirkpatrick, Bud Sloan, Stan Olszowka, Lorne Goff, Lou Foley, Don Welsh, and Dan Slaght
Third Row (L to R): Grant Munkholm, Kelly O'Shea, John Sunderman, Rodger Olsen, Laverne Larsen, Phil Nichols, Bernie Brouwer, John Branderhorst, Con Dermott, Gordon Armitage, and Not Identified
Second Row (L to R): Not Identified, Billy Sewepagaham, Not Identified, Jim Skrennek, Horst Rhode, Herb Walker, Fred Thom, Glen Sloan, Bernie Simpson, and Harold Evenson
Bottom Row (L to R): Charlie Ghostkeeper, John Jarvis, Ed Johnson, Bob Lenton, Gary Davis, Dennis York, Pat Wilson, Wally Walton, Barry Congram, and Carl Leary

7. Aerial view of logging around Lusk Creek and the Kananaskis Forest Experimental Station, Bow Crow Forest; mid 1970s

8. Aerial view of the Kananaskis Forest Experimental Station, Bow Crow Forest; summer 1978





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1. Forest officer Tom Trott briefing dozer operators; 1970s. Tom joined the Royal Canadian Engineers in 1963, graduating as a Sapper in September 1965. Upon completing his five-year commitment, he graduated forestry at the University of New Brunswick. Tom worked for the Alberta Forest Service for 10 years, and then 16 years for Alberta Parks at Cypress Hills Provincial Park. The forestry museum outside of Elkwater is named in his memory.

2. Ken Plourde at a Forest Industry Development trade show display of wood products; 1980s

3. Gail Tucker, the last hold-out at the McLennan Ranger Station, Peace River Forest; January 31, 1991

4. Alberta Centennial Medal recipients, Edmonton; 2010
L to R: Dennis and Leanne Quintilio and Bob and Joan Udell

5. University of Toronto alumni at the March 16, 2011 Forest History Association of Alberta annual general meeting
L to R: Keith McClain, Bob Udell, Ken Armson, and Bob Fessenden

6. Ed Pichota took this picture of John Winchester near Rocky Mountain House; March 13, 2024. John is standing beside an old truck still at the millsite location west of town. John's father and uncle first started cutting props for mine sites in the late 1940s after returning from WWII. After that they started sawing railroad ties, approximately 20,000 per year. John was trained by his uncle Jim to run sawmill when he was 15, he is now 72.

7. Conair's new Q400 airtanker at the Slave Lake airtanker base, Slave Lake Forest Area; April 30, 2024

8. Slave Lake Forest Area wildland firefighter Sheldon Houle ready to begin his 26th year of firefighting; April 2024

9. Edson Forest Area booth at the Edson spring trade show; April 2024
Top (L to R) : Michael Juarez, Helitack Crew Member; Markus Husch, Forest Officer; Christopher Powell, Helitack Crew Member
Bottom (L to R): Tracy Parkinson, Senior Forester; Andrea Sharpe, Forest Health Forester; Randi-Marie Adams, Whitecourt Information Officer; Terry Abu Al-Soud, Edson seasonal Information Officer; Michaela St Louis, Helitack Crew Member; Caroline Charbonneau, Edson Information Officer

10. A couple of relaxed looking guys thinking about the upcoming wildfire season. L to R: Dan Lux and Bruce Mayer, J.G. O'Donoghue Building; May 7, 2024





1. Rocky Mountain House forestry retirees having coffee at the local A&W; May 27, 2024

L to R: Darryl Rollings, Bob Lenton, Shirley McGowan, and Diane Thompson

2. Rocky Mountain House forestry retirees having coffee at the local A&W; May 27, 2024

L to R: Laurel Koples, Cheryl Flexhaug, and Floyd Schamber

3. Alberta MLA Tany Yao visiting the Northland Forest Products office on August 21, 2024

L to R: Tany Yao, Howie Ewashko, and Ben Gill

4. Forestry friends gather for coffee, Griffiths residence; June 14, 2024

L to R: Wes Nimco, Bill Black, Bill Griffiths, Mereline Griffiths, Kelly Black, and Paulette Nimco

5. A small group of friends gathered at the Beaver Ranch group campsite in William Switzer Provincial Park from July 26 to 28, 2024 to celebrate their 35th year as graduates of the 1989 NAIT Forest Technology program.

L to R: Kim Harris, Sean Harris, Ken Podulsky, Chris Walsh, Karen Walsh, Dale Thomas, Melissa Gorman, Emery Gorman, Jeff Gourlay, and Beans the dog

6. Attendees at the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta annual general meeting, Edmonton; June 17, 2024

7. In the summer of 2024, a bunch of great friends met in Canyon Creek. All had worked for Canfor in High Level, when Canfor owned

the sawmill from 1981 to 1991. The group worked together, played together and built friendships that have endured for 42 years, and counting. They meet every few years to reminisce, and to renew their friendship.

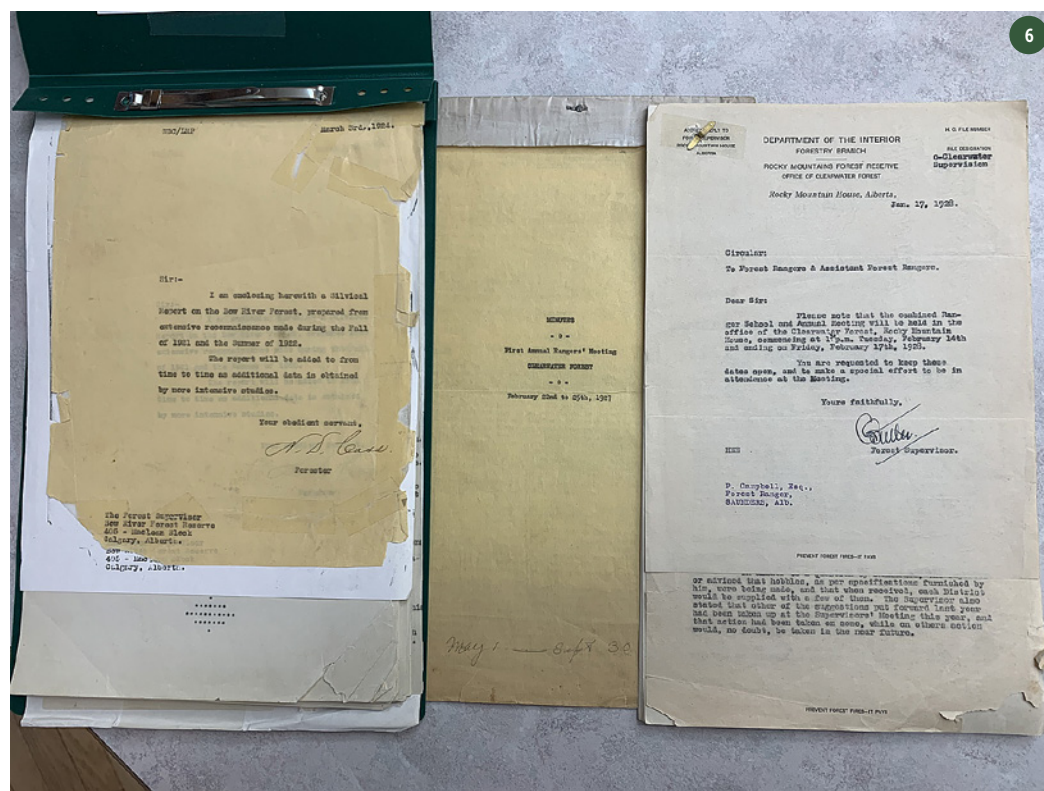
Canfor Woodlands Crew 1981 to 1991; Canyon Creek, Alberta; summer 2024

Back Row (L to R): Real Arseneault, Kim Arseneault, Bruce Avery, Cindy Avery, Chris Bokstrom, Tom Varty, and MaryAnn Varty
Middle Row (L to R): Margaret Brown, Conn Brown, Lois Carnell, Brian Carnell, Pat Chemago, and Richard Chemago

Front Row (L to R): Ken Smith, Jerri Smith, Dawn Olsvik, and Andy Olsvik
Missing from photo: Johnny Clark

8. Rocky Mountain House Forest Area staff attending Nordegg Days. This event provided a great opportunity to engage with visitors and residents about wildfire preparedness and FireSmart initiatives; September 2024
Left to right: Dianna Prawdzik, Daniel Presseault, Scott Walker, and Allanah McLean

9. Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen joins the 2024 Junior Forest Rangers at their year-end Bull-of-the-Woods event, Edson Forest Area; August 22, 2024





1. Forestry and Parks staff participate in the Edmonton Police Service Canine Unit 2024 Calendar

L to R: Rob Anderson, Theo Bailey, Tanya Letcher, Fuai Wang, and police service dog Duco

2. White spruce tree chosen and cut by Gary Smith outside of Edson. This tree was 71 feet tall and weighed 5,500 pounds when hauled on the truck. Alberta Legislature grounds; December 2024

3. L to R: Bruce Mayer, Bernie Schmitte, and Dan Lux; Bernie's retirement tea; November 6, 2024

4. L to R: Bernie Schmitte and Paul St John; Bernie's retirement tea; November 6, 2024

5. L to R: Ken Greenway, Brian Lopushinsky, and Bernie Schmitte; Bernie's retirement tea; November 6, 2024

6. Historic Dominion Forest Service documents that Gordon Bisgrove had saved from disposal when he was working in the Bow Crow Forest. These documents have now been archived with the Forest History Association of Alberta. The files contain:

- Silvical Report on the Bow River Forest, 1922

- First Annual Rangers' Meeting, Clearwater Forest, February 22 to 25, 1927

- Notice and meeting minutes of the Ranger School and Annual Meeting, Clearwater Forest, February 14 to 17, 1928

7. Forestry and Parks Forestry Division staff at their all-staff conference, Edmonton; November 27, 2024

8. Canadian Forest Service Northern Research Centre staff celebrating the CFSs 125th anniversary, Edmonton; September 9, 2024

2024 WILDFIRE SEASON

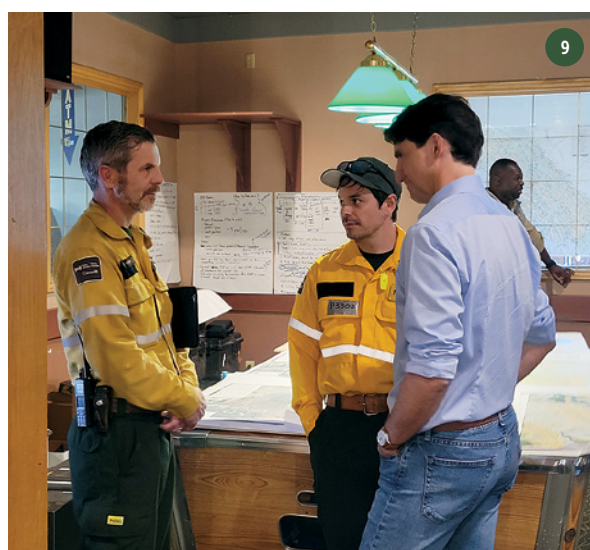




1. Alberta Wildfire agency representative Tom Patreau with the Grande Prairie and Whitecourt unit crews in Kamloops; July 2022

2. Incident Management Team in charge of the Semo Complex, High Level Forest Area; July 17, 2024

Back Row (L to R): Jason Pankratow, Operations Section Chief; Pam Morrison, Finance Section Chief; Cassie Corbin, Division Supervisor; Chris McGuinty, Fire Behaviour Analyst; Bernice Hamilton, Resource Unit Lead; Colby Lachance, Information Officer; Todd Lynch, Incident Commander; Jarret Whitbread, Planning Section Chief; Jason Hebert, Planning Section Chief Trainee
Front Row (L to R): Aaron Chalupa, Air Operations Branch Director; Troy Milledge, Logistics Section Chief; Melissa Bulldog, Operations Section Chief Trainee; Mark Schaplowsky, Safety Officer; James Kachmar, Supply Unit Lead



3. Semo Complex Incident Commander Todd Lynch at the morning briefing, High Level Forest Area; July 17, 2024

4. Quebec wildfire crews group picture; July 2024

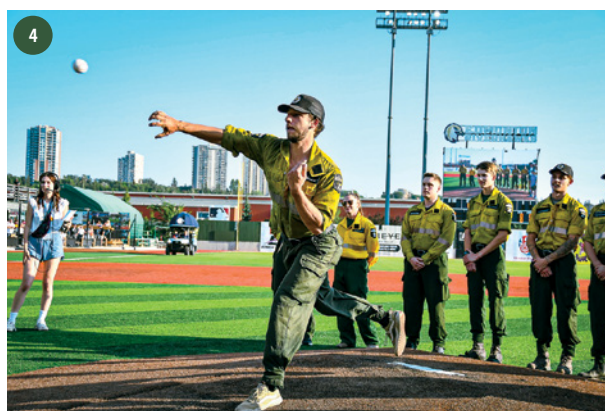
5. L to R: Tanya Letcher, Alberta Wildfire Fire Behaviour Analyst; Alberta Premier Danielle Smith; and Parks Canada President and CEO Ron Hallman; Hinton, Alberta; August 5, 2024

6. Burnout operations at the south end of the Jasper wildfire, Jasper National Park; August 3, 2024

7. Honour guard procession for fallen Alberta Wildfire firefighter Morgan Kitchen, Hinton; August 4, 2024

8. Attendees at the Canadian Fallen Firefighter Memorial, Ottawa; September 8, 2024
Alberta Wildfire representatives are Nikki Hahn-McKay and Chad Cochrane (front row bottom left); and Tom Patreau and Isaac Mutch (back row top right). James MacKinnon on the far right is the Canadian Fallen Firefighter Foundation wildland fire representative.

9. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talking with Scott Murphy, Parks Canada Operations Section Chief (left), and Matt Rance, incoming Parks Canada Operations Section Chief (right); Hinton, Alberta; August 5, 2024





1. Alberta Wildfire's Whitecourt Forest Area unit crew was assigned to clear brush under the Jasper Skytram on Whistlers Mountain as a fire guard, Jasper National Park; August 8, 2024

2. Evidence of extreme wildfire burning conditions along the Maligne Lake road, Jasper National Park; August 8, 2024

3. Alberta Wildfire Edmonton unit crew recognized at game one of the Edmonton Riverhawks and the Bellingham Bells playoff game, August 10, 2024; Photo by Husain Dhooma

4. Alberta Wildfire Edmonton unit crew member with the first pitch at the Edmonton Riverhawks and the Bellingham Bells playoff game, August 10, 2024; Photo by Husain Dhooma

5. Evidence of extreme wildfire burning conditions along the Marmot Creek road, Jasper National Park; August 8, 2024

6. Canadian Helicopters Sikorsky S61N helicopter with a night vision imaging system at the Slave Lake airtanker base, Slave Lake Forest Area; April 29, 2024
L to R: Mike Turcotte, Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen, and forest area manager Ryan Green

7. Dale Huberdeau Award of Excellence in Wildfire Operations, September 13, 2024
This group of individuals were nominated and successful for the work they did on the Eagle Wildfire (WWF-023) in the Whitecourt Forest Area. This Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) was assigned to manage the incident until a Type 1 IMT could be assigned. The fire started May 5 and burned to over 20,000 hectares by the end of the second burning period and traveled over 50 kilometres, threatening the communities of Fox Creek, Little Smoky, Highway 43 corridor and numerous personnel in major oil and gas facilities. The team set objectives, completed daily Incident Action Plans (IAP), established an Incident Command Post (ICP), air operations, tracked

resources and safely managed heavy equipment operations, aerial ignition planning and ground firefighting operations. The team also initiated unified command with the Town of Fox Creek and supported structure protection deployment.
L to R: Brian Lopushinsky, Director Wildfire Operations; Jacquie Dewar, Logistics Section Chief; Grant Forster, Operations Section Chief; Lucas Ullyot, Incident Commander; Eryn Snoddon, Planning Section Chief; and Mike Milner, Wildfire Operations Officer, Whitecourt Forest Area

8. Bertie Beaver and Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen with the Talon Helicopters Eurocopter Dauphin night vision equipped helicopter at the Slave Lake airtanker base, Slave Lake Forest Area; April 29, 2024

9. Canadian Helicopters Sikorsky S61N helicopter with a night vision imaging system at the Slave Lake airtanker base, Slave Lake Forest Area; April 29, 2024





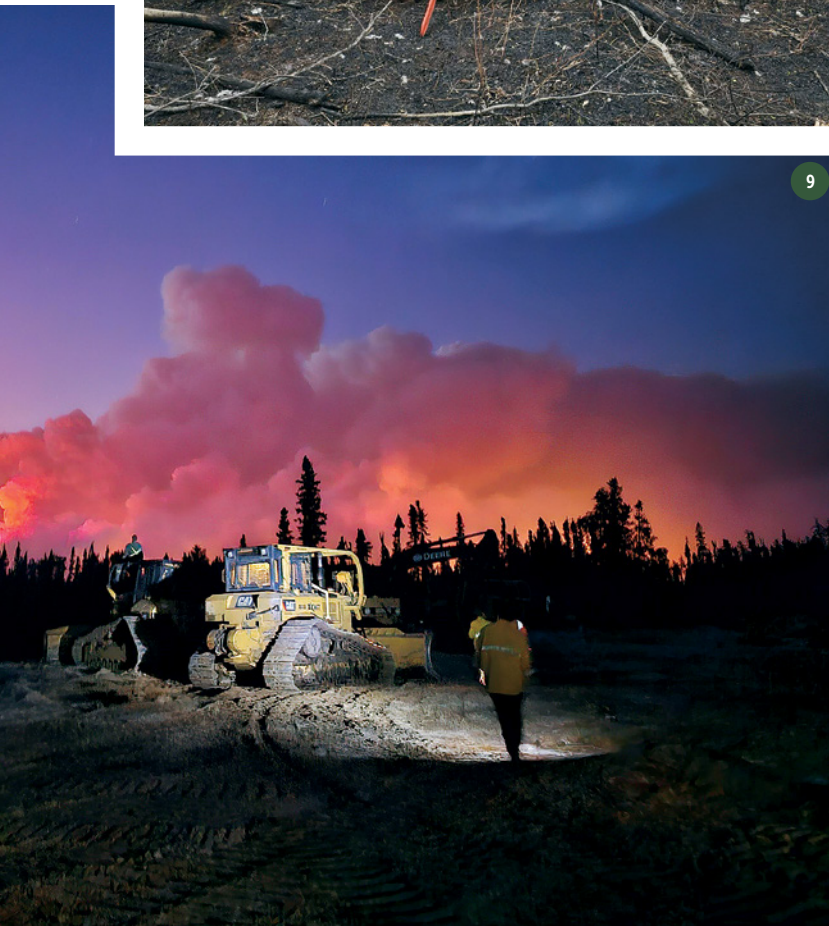
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1. Conair Aviation Q400 at the Slave Lake airtanker base, Slave Lake Forest Area; April 29, 2024

L to R: Leah Lovequist, Bertie Beaver, and Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen

2. Dozers on wildfire MWF-017-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 16, 2024

3. Incident management team in a planning meeting on wildfire MWF-017-2024; Forest McMurray Forest Area; May 18, 2024

L to R: Derek Gough (Operations Section Chief), Ryan Good (Fire Behaviour Analyst), Gavin Hojka (Incident Commander), Tracy Parkinson (Logistics Section Chief), Joe Burrows (Safety Officer), Kyla Harder (Finance Section Chief), and Josee St. Onge (Information Officer)

4. Incident management team on wildfire MWF-017-2004, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 20, 2024

L to R: Joe Burrows (Safety Officer), Roxanne Guyon (Facilities Unit Lead), Tracy Parkinson (Logistics Section Chief), Kayla Harder (Finance Section Chief), Milan Skrecek (ASGS), Paula Hoffman (Finance Section Chief mentor), Shauna Lund (Plans Section Chief trainee), Gavin Hojka (Incident Commander), Derek Gough (Operations Section Chief), Alan Gammon (Plans Section Chief), Josee St. Onge (Information Officer), Becky McGladdery (Resource Unit Lead), Ryan Good (Fire Behaviour Analyst), and Hunter Langpap (Senior Fire Inspector, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo)

5. Wildfire briefing on wildfire MWF-017-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 2024

6. Tracked nodwell with water tank on wildfire MWF-017-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 2024

7. Ontario incident management team receiving a briefing on wildfire MWF-017-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 2024

8. Slave Lake Indigenous wildland firefighters on wildfire GCU-007-2024, Grande Prairie Forest Area; June 2024

9. Heavy equipment night operations on wildfire MWF-017-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; May 20, 2024





1. Foggy Tower lookout, High Level Forest Area; July 19, 2024
2. Edson Forest Area unit crew at Kelly's Bathtub with Bertie Beaver, William Switzer Provincial Park; July 8, 2024
3. Chris McGuinty providing a safety briefing to firefighters at the Semo Wildfire Complex, High Level Forest Area; July 10, 2024
4. Heavy equipment operators on the Algar Complex, Fort McMurray Forest Area; July 23, 2024
5. Heavy equipment staged on the Algar Complex, Fort McMurray Forest Area; July 21, 2024
6. Imported firefighting resources on the Algar Complex, Fort McMurray Forest Area; July 24, 2024
7. Wildfire danger sign in Blairmore, Calgary Forest Area; July 2024
8. Safety briefing on the Cattail Wildfire Complex, Lac La Biche Forest Area; July 24, 2024
9. Wildland firefighters mopping up on wildfire EWF-077-2024, Edson Forest Area; July 30, 2024
10. Ontario incident management team arriving in Lac La Biche, Lac La Biche Forest Area; July 24, 2024





1. Aurora Helicopters Bell 205 registration C-GWWP with an aurora borealis, High Level Forest Area; August 12, 2024

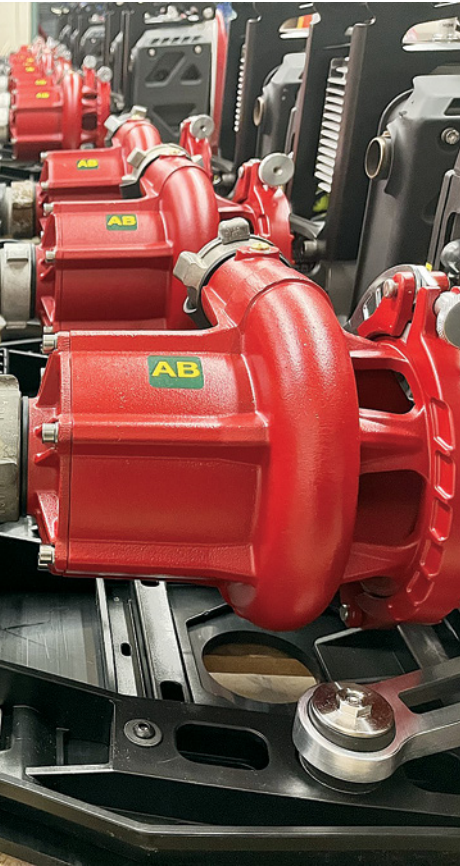
2. Air Spray Electra and retardant drop on wildfire MWF-061-2024, Fort McMurray Forest Area; July 24, 2024

3. South African wildland firefighters in Lac La Biche, Lac La Biche Forest Area; July 30, 2024

4. Alberta CL215T skimmer aircraft at the Grande Prairie airtanker base; August 10, 2024

5. Costa Rican wildland firefighters at a morning briefing on the Semo Wildfire Complex, High Level Forest Area; August 11, 2024





1. New Zealand wildland firefighters on wildfire GWF-077-2024, Grande Prairie Forest Area; August 2024

2. Wajax Mark 3 firefighting pumps; Alberta Wildfire Warehouse and Service Centre, Edmonton; Summer 2024

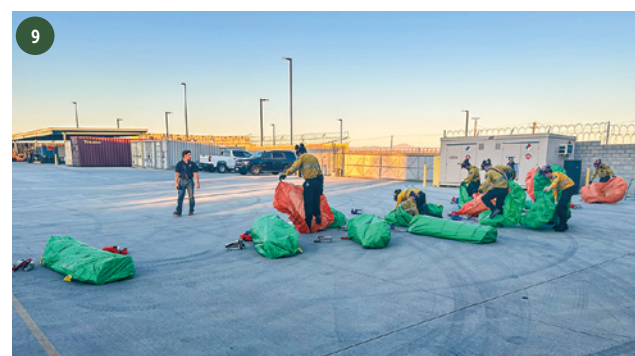
3. South African wildland firefighters with New Zealand incident management team, Lac La Biche Forest Area; August 21, 2024

4. Edson Forest Area firefighters; October 16, 2024

5. Alberta Wildfire firefighter operating floto pumps, Grande Prairie Forest Area; August 2024

JANUARY 2025 WILDFIRE EXPORT TO CALIFORNIA





1. Alberta Wildfire Type I firefighters receiving a briefing prior to export to California; January 13, 2025
2. Alberta Wildfire firefighters on the Lilac wildfire, north of San Diego, California; January 21, 2025
3. Alberta Wildfire firefighters at the United States Custom and Border Protection office; Sweetgrass-Coutts Border Crossing; January 13, 2025
4. Alberta Wildfire firefighters Jeremy Sloan and Ethan Morrison on the Eaton wildfire; Los Angeles County, California; January 17, 2025
5. Alberta Wildfire crew picture on the Eaton wildfire; Los Angeles County, California; January 19, 2025

6. Alberta Wildfire firefighters on the Lilac wildfire, north of San Diego, California; January 21, 2025
7. Alberta Wildfire firefighters hot spotting on the Eaton wildfire; Los Angeles County, California; January 19, 2025
8. Alberta Wildfire firefighters mopping up hot spots on the Eaton wildfire; Los Angeles County, California; January 17, 2025
9. Alberta Wildfire firefighters taking fire shelter training; Bakersfield, California; January 15, 2025

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