

DEPARTMENT UPDATES**Westbank Community Forest****Forest Investment Account Projects**

The province of British Columbia developed the Forest Investment Account (FIA) to assist government to develop a globally recognized, sustainably managed forest industry.

FIA programs provide provincial funding to:

- support sustainable forest management practices;
- improve the public forest asset base; and
- promote greater returns from the utilization of public timber.

Since 2006 Westbank First Nation has secured FIA funding for projects on the Community Forest. These projects have included:

- Mountain pine beetle reconnaissance
- Development of an archaeological overview assessment tool
- Inspections of road culverts on fish streams

In March of 2009 two major inventory projects will be completed on the Community Forest.

Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping – This is an ecological mapping project that will provide us with insight into the habitats that occur on the Community Forest. This product will have the potential to locate potential habitats suitable for traditional and medicinal plants of cultural significance to WFN.

Vegetation Resource Inventory – The current forest inventory on the Community Forest is over 20 years old. This new inventory will provide us with a more reliable base on which to make decisions on where and when we harvest.

The FIA funds that were allocated to the Community Forest were not enough to cover the costs of these two projects. I want to take this opportunity to thank our neighbouring forest licensees for contributing some of their FIA allocation to us this year which allowed for the completion of these projects.

Gorman Bros. Lumber Ltd. - \$5,800 towards the TEM project

Tolko Industries - \$15,800 towards the TEM

Okanagan Innovative Forest Society - \$46,000 towards the VRI

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If you have any questions about WFN's forestry program feel free to contact Grant Thompson at 768-5617, via email at Grant.Thompson@wfndc.ca or drop in to see us at the old Grizzly office.