

Introducing the 2024 **FOREST** CAPITAL OF CANADA



AT THEIR NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NANAIMO, BC, IN SEPTEMBER, THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY/INSTITUT FORESTIER DU CANADA (CIF-IFC) FORMALLY RECOGNIZED THE MACKENZIE REGION AS THE FOREST CAPITAL OF CANADA (FCC) 2024.

Lisa Wardley, Councillor of Mackenzie County, and Co-Chair of FCC2024, and Josh Knelsen, Mackenzie County Reeve, attended the CIF-IFC conference to accept the designation.

“Our forests mean more to our region than just the forestry industry,” said Wardley. “They encompass our enjoyment, education, recreation, employment, sustenance, history, health and overall connection to the land and to each other.”

The FCC designation was established in 1979.

It celebrates a community or a region for its connectivity to the forest.

“The Forest Capital of Canada designation helps recognize how we are all connected to the forest, and the integral role forestry plays in the Mackenzie Region of Northwest Alberta is apparent,” said Doug Reid, Past President, CIF-IFC. “We are excited to see their forestry celebrations unfold in 2024.”

The FCC program focuses on the valuable role forests play in the socio-economic

and environmental health of our communities—past, present and future—while also recognizing and celebrating the rich forest heritage and commitment to sustainable forest management practices across Canada.

The Mackenzie Region accounts for nearly 80,000 km² of Boreal Forest. This is a substantial landmass—larger than New Brunswick—and over 70% 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.

“What comes to mind when we think about the forest in the Mackenzie Region? 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

“**There are so many ways to celebrate our connections to our forests.**”

Torry Protz,
FCC2024
Board Member.

Forest Capital of Canada is something to honour and celebrate,” said Wardley.

What can people expect?

“We will be showcasing our stories, our history and our spirit,” said Melanie Plantinga, FCC2024 Co-Chair. “This designation is now part of our legacy, and we’re developing strategies to capture our culture and celebrate it.”

Behind the scenes is the FCC2024 Board made up of experienced and engaged people from across the region. They will be partnering with communities, non-profits, businesses and organizations to build on scheduled events and to help develop new events throughout the year.

With seed funding coming from partners like Mackenzie County, Town of High Level, Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) and from local industry—including Tolko, West Fraser, La Crete Sawmills, Boucher Bros. Lumber and Mercer—the opportunities to get involved, partner, volunteer and sponsor are plentiful.



Photo by Tyson Fehr

With national recognition and support from the CIF-IFC, and from partnering organizations, the FCC2024 Board will bolster engagement, awareness and a sense of civic pride across the Region.

The FCC2024’s kick-off celebrations were held in January in Zama City, High Level, Rocky Lane, Fort Vermilion and La Crete. Each celebration was different and offered a combination of food, drink, live entertainment, skating, games, prizes, fireworks and more. It was the start of a year-long celebration.



Adam in the Wild Photography

FCC2024 will be launching a website, and their social media team is developing fun and interesting content

to educate, entertain and provide opportunities to get involved throughout the year.

“We are confident our region will work together throughout the year and take every opportunity to celebrate and showcase our forest and our connection to it,” said Wardley. “Watch our socials and get ready to like, share and engage!”



Photo by Meghan Fehr



Adam in the Wild Photography

Follow the Forest Capital of Canada 2024 on **Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.**

Learn more about upcoming events and contests at **FCC2024.com.**

Join in the celebrations: use hashtags **#FCC2024** and **#ForestCapitalOfCanada**