



MEDIA RELEASE

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Wood Buffalo Environmental Association growing in 2008

The Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA) is expanding both its budget and its air monitoring programs in 2008.

In December of 2007 the general membership of the Association officially endorsed an \$8.6 million dollar budget for the 2008 fiscal year. This budget represents more than a 50% increase from last year's budget of \$4 million.

Executive Director, Carna MacEachern explains that most of the increase can be directly attributed to increases in the Association's programs and committee work. "We have significantly increased the dollars that we are spending on air and air related effects monitoring. Our air monitoring network has been expanded to include a fifteenth air monitoring station at the CNRL site and we have also expanded our passive sampling network from 25 sites to 35 sites in total." MacEachern says that the increase in monitoring sites will aid the Association in developing a truly regional forest health monitoring network.

In order to ensure that WBEA's work is scientifically appropriate, reliable and credible, the Association is also enlisting the services of several scientific experts in 2008, including Dr. Kevin Percy, a Senior Scientist with Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service. Dr. Percy is WBEA's new lead scientist for the Terrestrial Environmental Effects Monitoring program; a sub-program of the Association that looks at the impact of air emissions on forest ecosystems.

MacEachern says the Association is looking forward to the expertise and knowledge that Dr. Percy will lend to the Association's work. "Dr. Percy is well respected in both the national and international science community and brings a wealth of experience to the table. We are thrilled to be working with someone of his caliber."

In addition to continuing and expanding on its current work, WBEA is also taking on some interesting new initiatives in 2008; including a new mobile air monitoring van and the launch of a regional odour protocol hotline. Both of these initiatives will help WBEA and its partners to be more responsive to air quality concerns from the public.

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For more information please contact:

Melissa Pennell
WBEA Communications
780-799-4402
780-799-1567