



May 2025, Issue 7

TRIA-FoR: Transformative Risk Assessment and Forest Resilience Using Genomic Tools for the Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak

Newsletter



Research Group Spotlight:

An Ode to Fieldwork

Activity 1: Coordinated Field Activities has officially concluded as our 2024-field season wrapped up and our two field technicians completed their contracts. Since the beginning of our first TRIA-FoR field season in 2022, the work completed as part of Activity 1 has directly contributed materials to 14 student and PDF led research questions and many others will use the data generated from these experiments.

Although sometimes shorter than we would have liked, our field seasons were active and intense. We persevered through challenges related to wildfires, floods, COVID-related restrictions, unexpected field site harvests, non-work-related injuries, and dynamic MPB population levels. We prepared 15 field activity plans involving many, many, revisions. Sixteen (mostly) enthusiastic team members completed extra training and put in additional time to plan, assist, and lead fieldwork that benefited not just themselves. To locate ideal sites, we drove countless hours, and stayed positive when we had to change plans. In total we obtained over 400 bolts with live MPB from the trees we harvested, a rare commodity in these endemic times! Our field sites have included 6 sites in Treaty 6 territory (Lac La Biche, Robb, Edson, Cynthia, Hinton, and Rocky Mountain House, AB), one site in Treaty 7 territory (Canmore, AB), one site in Treaty 8 territory (Slave Lake, AB) and one site on the



Photo Credit: Marion Mayerhofer



Photo Credit: Marion Mayerhofer

traditional lands of the Ktunaxa Nation (Cranbrook, BC). At the Lindgren collections in the John Prince and Alex Fraser Research Forests in central BC, we collected more than 900 dendrochronology cores over two years. We hosted a field trip as part of the 2023 AGM, where many HQP were able to see and even hold live MPB, the animal so instrumental to their work. We made lasting research contributions and even longer lasting connections.

None of our Activity 1 field experiments would have been possible without the assistance we received from Caroline Whitehouse and the Alberta Ministry of Forestry and Parks, who provided extensive guidance, permits, and support. We are eternally appreciative of Amanda Roe and our collaborators at the Great Lakes Forestry Centre (Canadian Forest Service), who



provided training, support, equipment and more for our MPB experiments. We are also thankful to Jen Klutsch (Canadian Forest Service) and the Government of British Columbia for their help with our Cranbrook harvest. We are grateful to all of our collaborators who provided samples, including but not limited to Rory McIntosh (Government of Saskatchewan), Nathan Havill (USDA Forest Service), Kathy Bleiker and Greg Pohl (CFS), Dezene Huber and Brent Murray (University of Northern British Columbia), Paul Batista and Celia Boone (BC Government).

New Team Members



Dr. Obed Asamoah

Post Doctoral Fellow
Carleton University

[Meet the team](#)

Awards



CU Research Achievement Awards

The Carleton University Research Achievement Awards celebrate exceptional accomplishments in research. This year, Catherine Cullingham has been awarded based on her work on Understanding how climate adaptation affects host-pathogen interactions in North American pine



The Associate Dean of Learning and Innovation Besties (ADLIB) Awards

This past year, UAlberta departments were invited to recognize an instructor who exemplified the following quote by Albert Einstein: “**Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.**” In the Department of Biological Sciences, the ADLIB award was presented to Maya Evenden. Maya’s imaginative and impactful teaching style stood out to her colleagues, earning her this well-deserved recognition.



Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) Award for Outstanding Mentorship

Colleen Fortier has been selected as a recipient of the University of Alberta Award for Outstanding Mentorship in Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities in the Non-Academic or Technical Staff category. This is a student-nominated award recognizing U of A faculty, staff, graduate students, or technical staff who have gone above and beyond to help support the development of undergraduate researchers engaging in creative activities.



Bob Boutilier New Investigator Award

Dr. Heath MacMillan, an Associate Professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, ON, Canada, has been awarded the 2025 Bob Boutilier New Investigator Award by the Canadian Society of Zoologists. This honor is presented to an emerging leader in Canadian Zoology within seven years of their first principal investigator appointment.

First Nation and Land Acknowledgement

The various TRIA-FoR University researchers are based at institutions located on traditional/ancestral First Nations lands. As such, we respectfully offer these acknowledgements:

- UBC Vancouver is situated in the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam).
- The University of Alberta acknowledges that it is located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.
- Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation.
- Western University acknowledges that it is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

Funding and Support



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