

Agroforestry and Woodlot Extension Society Winter 2019 Newsletter



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AWES Staff:

Noel St. Jean - Executive Director
Rebekah Adams - Agroforestry Technician
Ian Cameron - Agroforestry Intern



AWES Team Luke Wonneck (left), Ian Cameron (center left), Rebekah Adams (centre right), Noel St Jean (right)

Happy holidays from the AWES team!

A word from our president: Mikel Jackman, Mercer Int. Inc.

Season's Greetings! At this time of Year, I often find myself reflecting on the year gone by and planning for the year to come. This year, I have been thinking about a recent conversation I had with an organic grain farmer who was clearing land and selling me some trees. He was telling me that his input costs were going up and his yields have been going down. He is expanding his operation to try and offset his overhead costs, but that has not really worked out because he had to hire more employees. He said to me, "I wish I was smarter. I work harder than ever before and make less." So, as it turns out, on his original farm, he had native shelterbelts around every $\frac{1}{4}$, his equipment was smaller and he had less land so he was able to tend them more often and he was making a good living. As he expanded, he cleared all the trees, made as much cropland as he possibly could, bought larger more efficient equipment and now he is struggling to be profitable, yet he was hesitant to even entertain the possibility that the shelter belts may have contributed to the higher yields he saw on his original farm. This is our challenge! In 2020, I would like to see

AWES put together a package and presentation that we can handout or deliver that references research and provides real life examples of ecological and economic benefits of maintaining Native Shelterbelts on their farms when they are clearing land. This is a far more economical approach than trying to plant them back after the fact. Part of the challenge will be to secure the financial resources to not only prepare the information, but to deliver it to landowners in Northern and Western Alberta where the majority of agricultural land clearing is going on. It has bothered me for a while now that we are only able to get funding to do restoration work while the same activities that created the need for restoration are still being practiced. Unless we can make a sound business case that illustrates an economic benefit to having trees on the farm, I fear the trend will continue. I look forward to hearing our members and partners thoughts on this idea and I encourage you all to bring forward your own goals, ideas, suggestions or expectations for AWES in the new year. I wish everyone and your families a safe and enjoyable holiday season and I hope to see you all at our January meeting.

Best Wishes,
Mikel Jackman, President

Alley-Cropping: “the new or a re-visit of the old”

The name **alley-cropping** can also be referred to as strip cropping, strip harvest and some cases when incorporating cattle, it is called **Silvopasture**. This type or form of agriculture has been used across the world for as long as agriculture has existed including in western Canada (Alberta) until the past 40-50 years. This approach (alley-cropping) where trees and agricultural crops were grown adjacent to one-another was used for many reasons, although some of them were not recognized until some studies were conducted in other jurisdictions to prove the benefits. The benefits of this adjacency relationship for snow and wind control was obvious to the average person, but other benefits such as increased productivity, yield, and habitat creation for beneficial insects for crop pollination all will contribute to an increase in value to the landowner for both economic and environmental aspects.

In the past 50 years the agricultural industry has moved away from this form of farming to larger and more open growing areas or fields and this has drastically reduced the amount of land in an alley-cropping form. There have been various reasons for this move, but recently there has been a renewed interest in the agroforestry or alley-cropping approach. Several organizations in the United States and the other prairie provinces have set up projects to demonstrate the value of the alley-cropping approach. In Alberta not much has been attempted in trying to quantify the adjacency benefits.

However, in 2003-2004 a small project in the Manning area of the Peace County was established, by the Prairie

Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) and several other organizations. This was to demonstrate how alley-cropping (initially Silvopasture) could be used commercially and to evaluate the yield increases on forage crops due to the adjacency to trees. This project called Murdoch Lake was measured for several years (2009-2011) but not sufficiently to provide acceptable values. It was also only designed for the purpose of crop.

AWES with partners is now rejuvenating the Murdoch Lake project using the initial site, but also incorporating 2 more similar sites in the Peace Area for Phase I and in the future adding in 3-4 more sites in central Alberta for Phase II. This new Murdoch Lake will eventually document the growth and yield of a variety of agricultural crops (forage and canola, etc.), along with the yield of the trees and also the increase in soil nutrient levels and carbon capture. These project sites will be designed as modified **ecobuffers** and will be measured to collected data will evaluate all of the benefits listed above using an alley-cropping type of approach for farming.

Murdoch Lake project partners in Phase I include AWES, North Peace Agricultural Research Association (NPARA), Mercer Peace River, Ducks Unlimited, Alberta Agriculture, and Center for Boreal Research (NAIT) doing the science for the project. The results of the research (that will prove the benefits to doing a form of alley-cropping), will be released as scientific papers, and through extension workshops to be completed by both AWES and NPARA over the upcoming 5 years of the project lifespan. For more details on the concept of alley-cropping and the Murdoch Lake Project visit the AWES project page at the following link www.awes-ab.ca.

Possibly in the future the revived old approach will become the new approach again.

Alberta Shelterbelt Strategy for the Future

As a result of changes in Alberta in the past several years for shelterbelt management there is a great opportunity for the Agroforestry & Woodlot Extension Society to become the **premier service** provider for all aspects of

shelterbelt management. This opportunity is because AWES is really the only organization with both the professional expertise and opportunity to replace both the federal and provincial government to



Fig 1. Aerial view of Murdoch Lake Site near Manning, AB



Fig 2. Spruce and pine shelterbelt, Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton

assist rural landowners with managing their forested areas and shelterbelts.

For AWES to become the “**one-window**” to provide this service a few aspects need to be developed and/or expanded upon and then AWES will become the premier organization that can revitalize the Shelterbelt Program in Alberta. The following are several of the components that are required to be developed over the next year with the expectation that in 2021 the premier “one-window” service will be in place and functioning for all. The key components are **technical capability** (tools), the **professional knowledge and guidance** (comprehensive guideline package) and also the **capacity to deliver** the program.

The **technical capability** is being developed at the moment and should be operational by the spring of 2020. More detailed information on this can be found in the article in this newsletter regarding the Native Species Database. Also, some of the technical ability has been developed and acquired by AWES staff over the past 6-8 months.

The **professional expertise** is being partially developed by an upcoming project that is designed to create a comprehensive updated guideline package on shelterbelts.

Resource Development: Native Species Database

AWES Native Agroforestry Species Database has been given final approval and development is underway!

AWES native woody and herbaceous vegetation database to be used to identify species appropriate for specific site conditions and desired ecosystem services. With the assistance of Nine10, Cows & Fish, The Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC), North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA), and the counties of Flagstaff, Lac Ste. Anne, Mountainview, Northern Sunrise, Parkland and Red Deer we aim to have the database up and running for Spring 2020!

management comprised of the current existing advice from the Agriculture Canada, Alberta Agriculture and AWES. This package will when complete be posted on the AWES website and will be referenced by other websites for all users to know of and obtain access to the information. Also, AWES has begun working with several Counties to re-establish or re-vitalize their shelterbelt program in an effort to improve both the current shelterbelts and also potentially re-establish new ones. This assistance to municipalities is available directly or through a group format where the Counties can learn from AWES through the “train-the-trainer” program. More information on this can be found in the train-the-trainer article in this newsletter.

The third aspect is the **capacity to deliver** the program that will have to be developed over the next year(s), as the demand for the service occurs. AWES will have to evaluate its ability to meet that demand and adjust accordingly to the incoming requests. The opportunity is there for the Agroforestry & Woodlot Extension Society in conjunction with the Municipalities to re-establish a shelterbelt management service to landowners in a similar or better form to what existed in the past. This service will provide local expertise and knowledge in a **one window** approach to ensure success and an improved shelterbelt management more than exists today.

Producers and other stakeholders have become increasingly interested in using native tree and shrub species for establishing shelterbelts and other agroforestry systems (e.g. Eco-Buffers, riparian buffers, woodlot enhancements). ALUS, a large funder of agroforestry projects across Alberta and throughout Canada, even requires that landowners select native trees and other vegetation to be used in their projects. But many landowners, environmental staff and project coordinators are still uncertain about the species that are native to their home region! Many landowners are also unfamiliar with site characteristics and how these relate to the species that grow on their properties. The aim is to



Fig 3. Eco-buffer at NPARA ag research site near Manning, AB



Fig 4. University of Alberta Students touring a riparian planting project in Parkland County



Fig 5. Luke Wonneck, Agroforestry Specialist, discussing a planting site with volunteer tree planters and junior forest rangers

eliminate this barrier by developing a simple, user friendly database with which users can search key site characteristics and ecosystem services for their planting activity – and receive a list of woody and herbaceous species that would be suitable given their selected criteria.

Phase 1 includes the tree/shrub section of the database. AWES will be working closely with Cows & Fish and the ANPC to develop between information pages for between 75-90 tree species native to Alberta; Species pages will include site characteristics such as preferred moisture regime, sunlight, soil preference, and physiological traits such as fruit type, growth rate, and mature height. Users will be able to

utilize the database in a manner similar to other online search engines, instead selecting various information obtained from a basic site assessment or desired ecosystem services.

Phase 2 of the project will include developing species pages for herbaceous vegetation like grasses, sedges, bulrushes and other ground cover.

Spring-Summer 2020 is the tentative release date; AWES will be developing workshops to test the software, educate municipal staff and landowners on its use, and obtain valuable feedback prior to its release to the public.

To provide species photos or information, or book a training workshop contact info@awes-ab.ca.

AWES 2019 project highlights

Earthworks for Cold Climate Water Resiliency

Takota Coen of Coen Farm in Camrose County, has been a longstanding leader in the rural Alberta permaculture world. His involvement in the community through water and land stewardship groups and his push towards regenerative farming has established him as an expert in the field, and Coen Farm was the recipient of the 2014 Canadian Farmer-Rancher Pollinator Award among other distinctions.

AWES staff in conjunction with Coen Farms and Adaptive Habitats developed a wetland restoration project entitled Earthworks for Cold Climate Water Resiliency – a project funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The workshop series is targets landowners looking to construct water harvesting structures on their property, which are intended to help channel water into key basins and retain water on the landscape – particularly for periods of drought. The four-workshop series will feature two fall workshops lead by Takota Coen and Rob Avis of Adaptive Habitats, focusing on the construction of ponds, swales, and dams to carefully transport water to key locations from across the

broader landscape. AWES staff, Takota Coen, Rob Avis and Derek Bruno from WIN Ecosciences will facilitate two spring workshops focusing on revegetating these water harvesting features – and the role vegetation plays in reducing soil erosion while water flows through the structures - touching on traditional ecological knowledge and traditional indigenous uses for native plants.

Landowners, local students and indigenous groups have been identified as priority participants, and the aim is to engage all three of these communities while providing a safe place for collaboration to occur. Ideally the workshop series will lead to additional connections that last far beyond the scope of the project.

We would like to thanks our funders for this project, which include PUR Projet, The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

We would also like to thank our project partners which include Coen Farms, Verge Permaculture, Battle River Watershed Alliance, WIN Ecosciences, and Camrose County and AWES alumni Luke Wonneck.



Fig 6. Earthworks for Cold Climate Water Resiliency facilitator Rob Avis of Verge Permaculture discussing pond and bioswale construction



Fig 7. Bat box installed during Innisfail Ag Society Grade 5 Tour



Fig 8. Volunteers planting seedlings in Camrose County

AWES Landowner Acknowledged by The Western Producer for Wetland Restoration Efforts In 2019

Multi-year AWES client and local Camrose County farmer was highlighted by The Western Producer as a leader in sustainable agriculture and wetland restoration efforts in her county.

In 2017, after meeting AWES staff at a local workshop, the landowner approached AWES with the desire to alter the management of her parcel farmland from conventional farming techniques to more holistic, sustainable farming practices. The property, which had been passed down in her family, was historically cleared to facilitate the growing of traditional agricultural crops like wheat and canola. The landowner recognized, however, that certain areas of the farm were producing at lower yields. Through her interaction with AWES and various stewardship groups in her county, she developed some ideas about how to convert these marginal areas of cropland into areas where she could grow new crop – trees.

With the help of AWES staff Noel St. Jean and Luke Wonneck, the project was spearheaded towards restoring degraded riparian areas surrounding wetlands on the property, and poor yield crop zones around the property perimeters and road allowances. AWES also planted an eco-buffer and food forest adjacent to the landowner's home. Project plans were developed throughout 2017 and into 2018, with on the ground work finally being started in spring of 2019.

Approximately 3,100 trees were planted, with another 2000 scheduled to be planted in the spring of 2020. A variety of native trees and shrubs were selected, for various characteristics such as nitrogen fixation properties, fruit provision, wildlife and pollinator habitat, and flood and drought mitigation.

We would like to thank our funders for this project including The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), PUR Projet, in addition to the landowner herself.

See more details and a full excerpt from the western producer visit www.awes-ab.ca.

Agroforestry systems in Southern Alberta

AWES' southernmost project of 2020 took place just south of Olds, AB on a property owned by young couple, one a farmer and one a professional. The couple has been working at integrating some regenerative farming techniques on the property. Their farm was used primarily for hayland, but the couple own a small herd of sheep and a couple of sheepdogs to manage the bunch.

The landowners approached AWES staff in 2017 to develop a land restoration plan focusing on integrating tree cover onto the property, particularly along the north end where high winds frequently blew through. AWES worked to develop a plan to construct an agroforestry system called the Eco-Buffer along this property line. The eco-buffer is a variation of traditional shelterbelts, in which a variety of native trees and shrubs are planted to create forest cover similar to that which may be found in undisturbed aspen parkland while also providing essential wind control and wildlife and pollinator habitat.

Over 2500 seedlings were planted on the property, with another 2000 seedlings anticipated for phase 2 scheduled to take place in 2021. The landowners did a terrific job keeping the undesirable vegetation controlled and the results after just three months reflected that! Some seedlings after just 4 months were almost 50cm tall!

We look forward to phase 2 of the project and are excited to see how the seedlings are doing in 2020.

This project was funded by PUR Projet, and we would like to thank them for their generous contribution.

Parkland County Wetland Restoration

In 2018, a parkland county couple were the recipients of funding and seedlings to complete their wetland restoration planting project!

After encountering a wet, unproductive area along the edge of their cropland,



Fig 9. AWES and Edmonton Native Plant Society pollinator garden at Crop Diversification Centre (CDC) North

the landowners sought out advice on how to best address the situation. AWES recommended the planting of riparian vegetation around the wet area, to facilitate snow trapping and help to restore wetland functionality. Seedlings were available during the planting season and with the help of Parkland County, a volunteer planting activity was scheduled for the property. 10 participants joined AWES staff, county staff and the landowners to plant just over 1000 seedlings around an intermittent wetland, laying hemp mulch mats around each seedling.

The landowners did a phenomenal job with their scheduled maintenance plan, keeping the areas tilled and weed free throughout the first and second season. They did such a great job that some seedlings on the property had grown a full meter by the time AWES completed their survival survey in June 2019. Due to the fantastic success of the project, the site was used as a demonstration site for a University of Alberta session, in addition to Parkland County's train the trainer session – both held in August 2019. Participants of these workshops were able to tour the site and conduct

a basic site assessment and develop a project plan for a secondary wetland on the property.

We are happy to highlight a job well done by our Parkland County landowners and would like to thank our great partners at Parkland County for helping to facilitate the project.

Other Projects 2019

- Blindman River project
- Flagstaff County project
- Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance (MPWA) project, Grande Prairie
- Lacombe County Volunteer Plant
- PaintEarth county project
- Parkland County project
- Red Deer County projects
- Vegreville North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Volunteer Plant
- Vermillion River County project
- PUR Projet - Camrose County volunteer plant

Project Management: 2020 Planting Program Summary

The upcoming year has plenty in store for AWES, with 15 different planting projects planned for next year, in 9 different counties. 51 000 seedlings will be planted in the various locations, many of which have site limiting factors to consider. This is up from 14 projects with 39 000 seedlings planted in 2019. Of these projects, three specifically account for the majority of seedlings.

Project Highlights

The largest 2020 project is being conducted in Lacombe county along a Blindman river tributary. Currently in hay, the landowner requested an extensive multi-year reforestation project. To start the project off, an initial 13, 255 seedlings will be planted. Some around an existing creek and nearby wetlands, and others will be planted upland, to help re-establish tree cover on the north edge of the property.

2020 will also see the return of the Bigstone project, funded by EcoAction Canada, for the second and final year of planting. This year wraps up the project with 12, 000 seedlings planted along the length of the Bigstone Creek within a quarter section of land, with the ultimate goal of restoring ecosystem functions within the project quarter section and improving water quality.

Another large Lacombe county project, with an estimated 7200 seedlings to be planted in 2020 is on a property east of Lacombe. This three-part project incorporates planting a riparian buffer around a Red Deer River tributary, underplanting an existing balsam poplar stand to re-establish a diverse, natural community, and planting modified eco-buffers to create a simple alley-cropping system. This project is expected to run for multiple years, with 2020 planting areas expanded on in subsequent years.



Fig 10. AWES Staff Rebekah And Ian (right) with landowners from 2019 planting project in Camrose County



Fig 11. AWES Intern Ian (left) with a local landowner at volunteer plant in Wetaskiwin county.



Fig 12. Willow stem cuttings on a riparian restoration project site in the county of Grande Prairie

Returning Projects

Some returning landowners from this year are two from Camrose county, who are both continuing to improve their water resources. One continues to plant riparian and eco-buffers around their property. The other will be adding trees along a bioswale system constructed in fall 2019, as part an ECCC grant. Our partnership with the Global Foundation for Social Harmony and Sustainable Development also continues, with 2600 seedlings to be planted on land in Beaver County to continue to return the area to a pre-disturbance environment. Additionally, a project in Grande Prairie

county is set to plant 4170 seedlings next spring, to augment the ongoing riparian restoration that has occurred over the past year.

A special mention for the Murdoch Lake Alley Cropping, being completed in conjunction with numerous partner organizations including NAIT's Boreal Research Institute, that will begin next year; this project is highlighted in the Alley-Cropping article earlier in the newsletter.

If you would like to know more about any of the projects mentioned here, please visit our website at www.awes-ab.ca.

Education and Extension: 2019 Extension Summary

AWES was pleased to put on 19 workshops over the course of the year ranging from as far north as Manning to as far south as Consort, with workshops spanning a wide variety of topics.

Our most requested workshop topic this year was Shelterbelts and Eco-buffers, with workshops designed to inform landowners and the public on what Shelterbelts and Eco-buffers are, and how they benefit the area around them, in terms of ecosystem services and quantifiable measures such as crop yields. This year, we held these workshops in Beaver County (Tofield, AB) in central Alberta, as well as PaintEarth County (Castor, AB) and Special Area No. 4 (Consort, AB), in the southwest/central region.

Several other opportunities for extension arose throughout 2019, including the West County AG Tour hosted by Clearwater County. Presenters spoke on various aspects

their relationships with the agricultural community, and AWES staff facilitated three presentations including native pollinators, shelterbelts and eco-buffers, and an impromptu talk on mulch options. AWES also held a "Building for the Berries" workshop in Parkland County to help introduce the idea of creating and encouraging the growth of native fruiting plants, with the added benefit of the guided construction of a berry sorter.

We returned this year to the University of Alberta, where we spent a day introducing Chinese foreign exchange students to the uses, benefits, and challenges of managing private forested lands here in Canada. We spent the day working both in the field and in the classroom to convey concepts on tree health, the importance and benefits of shelterbelts and eco-buffers, and how to reclaim a disturbed site.

For more information on our extension services please visit www.awes-ab.ca.



Fig 13. AWES Director Noel St. Jean presenting on shelterbelts and mulch mats at the Clearwater County Rural Ag Tour. Photo credit to Barbara Duckworth Western Producer

2019 Extension Summary

- Shelterbelts and Ecobuffers
 - Beaver County/Special Area No. 4 (Consort)/Red Deer County
 - Manning-BMP-Shelterbelts
- Best Management Practices
 - MD Of Greenview
- Riparian Management
 - County of Lac La Biche
- Building for the Berries
 - Parkland county/Grande Prairie county
- Building for the bumbles
 - Northern Sunrise county
- Building for the birds
 - Grande Prairie county
- Earthworks for Cold Climate Water Resiliency
 - Camrose county
- Train the Trainer
 - Parkland county
 - Lacombe county
- Ag Society Tour
- Pollinators, 130 Bee Houses
 - Yellowhead county
- University of Alberta lecture Tour
- Innisfail Ag Society Grade 5 Tour
 - Red Deer County
- West Country Ag tour
 - Clear water county
- Soil erosion
 - Grande Prairie County
- Stem cuttings for riparian restoration
 - Parkland County

AWES Upcoming Events in 2020

AWES Board meeting – January 10, 2020

Fort Vermillion Weed Management and Agroforestry Systems – February 15, 2020

Wheatland County Shelterbelt and Eco-Buffer Workshop – February 22, 2020

Yellowhead County Bee House Workshop – March 7, 2020

Beaver County Shelterbelt and Eco-Buffer Workshop – March 10, 2020

AWES Board Meeting – April 10, 2020

Earthworks for Cold Climate Water Resiliency, Revegetation – Spring 2020

Two Hills Volunteer Plant – Spring 2020



Fig 14. One year old eco-buffer planted in Parkland County



Education and Extension: Train the Trainer Sessions



Fig 15. Laying biodegradable plastic mulch on a worksite in Camrose County

In 2018, AWES staff proposed the concept of a municipal staff training program entitled “Train the Trainer” to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry’s CAP (Canadian Agricultural Partnership) program. Recommended by Red Deer County Extension Specialist and AWES board treasurer Amy Delaney, the workshop series was identified as a way to address limitations that exist for county staff in developing planting projects like the ones facilitated by AWES. These limitations included insufficient understanding of AWES processes, and a limited ability to relay appropriate information to prospective landowner clients when kickstarting tree planting projects.

As such, the Train-the-Trainer workshops focus on training individuals that in future will train other individuals one-on-one or in groups. Municipal government representatives are the target of this project, particularly those involved in environmental and agricultural programming within their organization. AWES developed a workshop format in which AWES strategies are taught to municipal staff, with topics selected based on the request of the host county.

Once approved, AWES developed two Train-the-Trainer workshops in 2019. The first was hosted by Parkland County, and was attended by 24 staff from various counties across Northern, Central and Eastern Alberta. Participants were able to learn the process of conducting a planting project from the site assessment stage, and leading into the execution or tree planting and subsequent maintenance of tree planting projects. AWES regularly develop tree planting projects on private agricultural land, to maintain, restore, replace or reintroduce shelterbelts and similar

forest cover around properties, homesteads, and wetlands across Alberta. By taking participants through all the steps of developing these projects, we intend for county staff to be better prepared to complete some if not all of these processes without the assistance of an organization like AWES - and to increase the overall number of these projects that can be carried out in the province from year to year. Participants conducted an on the ground site assessment at a local landowner’s property to gain practical experience of surveying prospective project sites and interacting with landowners.

The second train-the-Trainer session was facilitated by AWES in Lacombe County. The topic for the second session was the same, planning and developing a planting project. However, participants at the second session were largely from central to southern central to southern Alberta. Many of these counties are within grasslands and special areas regions of Alberta, both which struggle with the establishment of forest cover. Some of the counties involved are working to develop municipal Shelterbelt programs in which landowners can access funding and other assistance through the county to assist with the execution of their tree planting activities. Approximately 14 staff from 10 different counties participated in the second workshop. Participants completed a site assessment of an abandoned gravel pit-turned dugout to gain a better understanding of restoration practices and site limitations that may exist for these projects.

AWES have two additional sessions planned for Grande Prairie County in the winter of 2020, and Wheatland County in the spring of 2020. Interested counties/participants are invited to contact Noel St. Jean or info@awes-ab.ca for booking, feedback or additional information.



Fig 16. Agroforestry Specialist Luke Wonneck leading a Government of Alberta staff tour at the Crop Diversification Centre (CDC) North

A special message from the Director,

A very merry Christmas to all AWES members and other partners in the organization program. This year has been very busy but satisfying from the standpoint of the AWES office and myself. We have had many projects continue successfully and have initiated a number of new ones as the articles in this newsletter illustrate. We have also had a successful year in the extension and education component of the program and completed the Riparian Restoration project funded by AEP. This particular project was extremely successful as we exceeded the project deliverables and also connected with almost twice as many landowners as anticipated. This also led to many of our on the ground planting projects detailed in the summary article.

The 2020 year will bring more challenges and a great deal more excitement with the ongoing projects and several new projects. The details for these were provided in the earlier articles but both have the potential to place AWES in a unique category as an organization. The Shelterbelt Strategy and the projects/tools highlighted in the articles will provide an opportunity for AWES working with the Municipalities, to become the primary organization in Alberta to deliver on a Shelterbelt program, that has slowly over the past years disappeared.

From a personnel standpoint AWES went through changes with Luke leaving and starting a new aspect of his career and Rebekah and Ian coming onboard with the organization. They have gone through a “crash-course” in agroforestry and environmental management and have passed with flying colors. The education they both received in the academic world has been enhanced with practical on the ground experience. I am anticipating more learnings and exceptional results from Rebekah and Ian in the upcoming 2020 year.

However, as every organization evolves there are a variety of changes that occur. The future for AWES looks great, but one other major change that will occur in 2020 is that my tenure as Executive Director will come to an end as of March 31, 2020. This change is for me to go onto future adventures. I will be assisting in the hand-over for an unspecified time after March, 31 so I will still see be with AWES for next 5-6 months. It has been an entertaining, challenging and rewarding 2.5 years.

In summary, I wish everyone we work with a great Christmas break and also the best of luck in the 2020 year. I have a feeling it will be a great year for all.

Noel St Jean, Executive Director



AWES would like to extend a gracious thanks to Agroforestry Specialist Luke Wonneck for his years of hard work and dedication to AWES, it's clients, and partners. Luke will be pursuing a PHD at the University of Alberta and we hope to maintain the legacy he has built at AWES.

Good luck Luke! You will be missed.



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