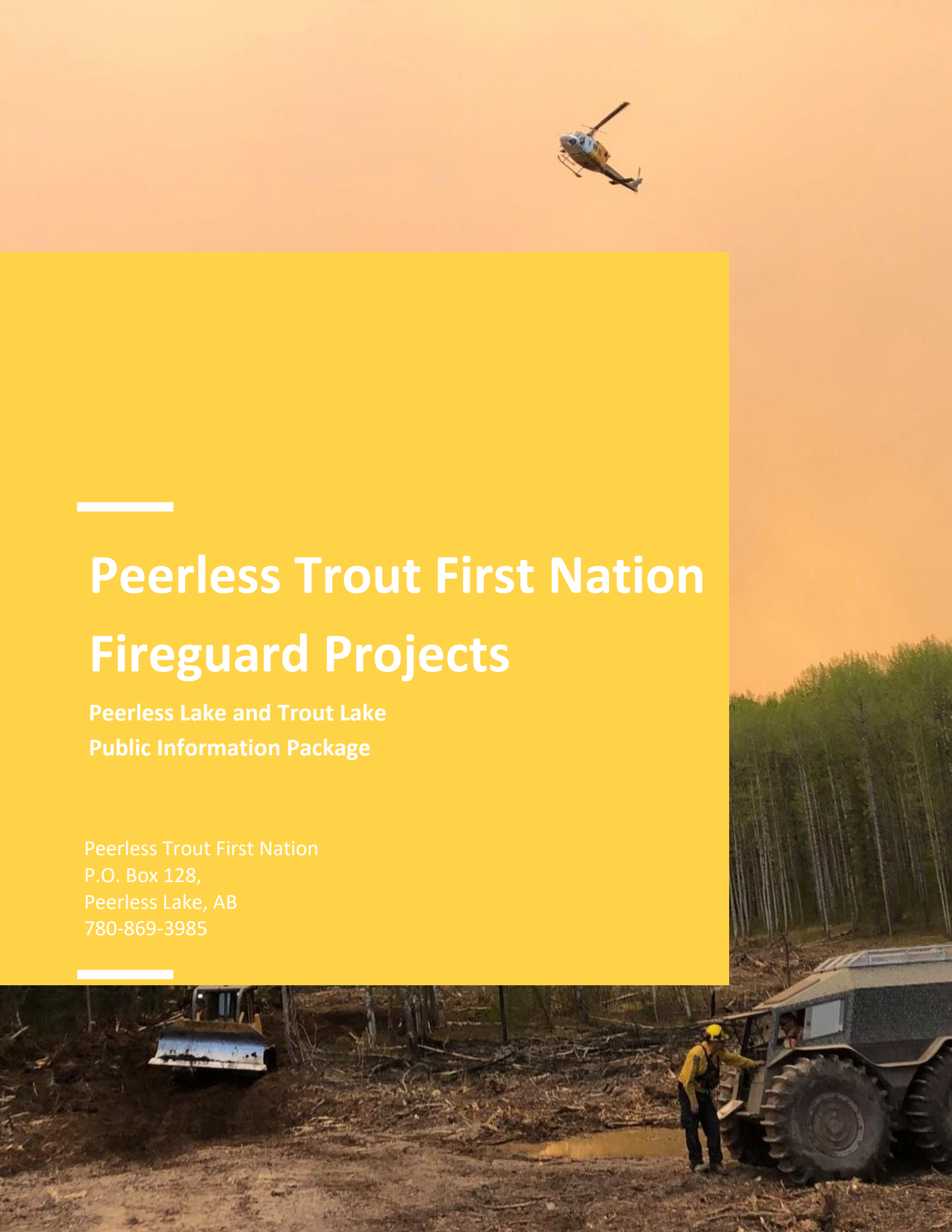

Peerless Trout First Nation Fireguard Projects

Peerless Lake and Trout Lake
Public Information Package

Peerless Trout First Nation
P.O. Box 128,
Peerless Lake, AB
780-869-3985

1 Project Overview

1.1 Protecting Communities from Wildfire

Wildfires are a natural occurrence which have shape Alberta's landscape. However, communities in the boreal region are at a higher risk of being impacted by wildfire. A Wildfire Mitigation Strategy was completed for Peerless Lake and Trout Lake in 2012, which included a Wildfire Threat Assessment. The assessment evaluated fire behaviour potential in the area based on existing fuel types and historical weather conditions. The results showed that potential wildfire behaviour is high in areas south and southeast of the communities. The 2012 Mitigation Strategy recommended additional FireSmart treatments for these areas to further reduce the threat of a wildfire to the community.

1.2 Community Fireguard Construction Program

Peerless Trout First Nation (PTFN) successfully applied to the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) for grant funding under the Community Fireguard Construction Program. A fireguard is a strategically placed barrier intended to stop or slow the rate of spread of a wildfire (Figure 1).

The main component of this funding is targeted towards vegetation clearing to help reduce the threat of wildfire to rural communities while providing economic diversification, promoting community resilience, and providing local job opportunities during the construction and ongoing maintenance of the fireguard.

Figure 1 Fireguard Example

The grant funding will go towards the construction of two fireguards, one in Peerless Lake and one in Trout Lake.

- **Peerless Lake** - a 200 m wide by approximately 9 km long right-of-way that runs southeast from Cougar Oil and Gas Access Road (LOC890226) to Highway 686 (160 ha total).
- **Trout Lake** - a 200 m wide by approximately 3.5 km long right-of-way that runs southwest from Graham Lake to Maria Lake (70 ha).

These fireguards will be constructed by clearing vegetation and fuels along the entire 200 m wide corridors. Where possible, PTFN would like to work with the local community to leverage regional employment and Indigenous knowledge throughout the project implementation. The work will include activities to support both the fireguard construction (logging & vegetation clearing) and debris disposal. It is anticipated the employment opportunities created under this project will provide a direct and indirect economic stimulus to the community. Moreover, the local and regional workers who support this project can take pride in knowing they will be helping protect the community from the threat of wildfire.

2 Fireguard Construction Activities

The purpose of these fireguards is to protect critical community infrastructure in the event of a wildfire by creating cleared rights-of-way adjacent to the communities, amounting to approximately 160 ha in Peerless Lake and 70 ha in Trout Lake. Logging operations will begin in December 2021 and will be completed no later than March 15, 2022. All clearing will take place under frozen ground conditions to minimize the impact on wetlands and soils. All vegetation clearing will avoid riparian areas which will be buffered according to the stream setback best practices (e.g., 30m). These areas will remain vegetated to protect the integrity of water quality in the region. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued to complete the clearing and disposal work. A field supervisor will also be hired from the local community to supervise operations and report on the project progress over the winter months. A job posting will be issued this fall for this position. The project is separated into two overarching phases:

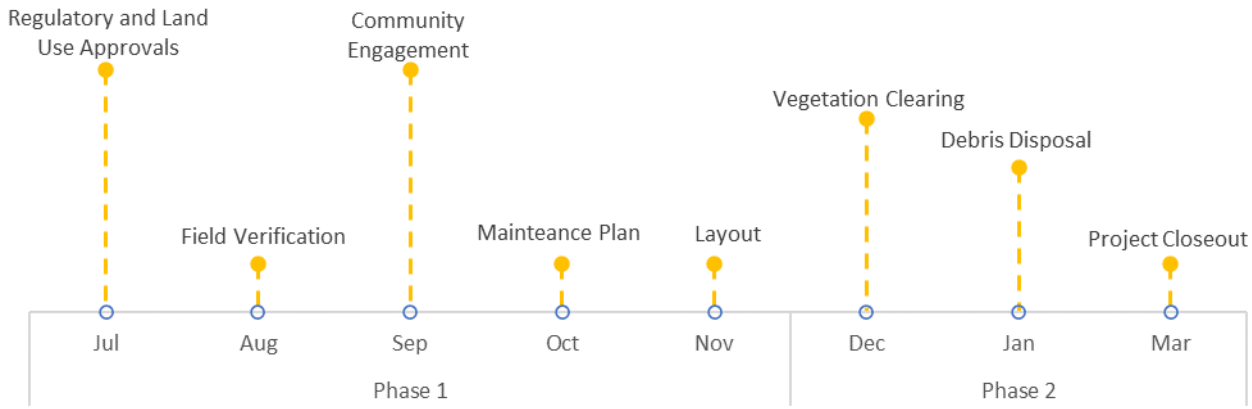

Figure 2 Project Timeline

A maintenance plan will be developed to ensure the ongoing success of the fireguard. The maintenance plan will include either mechanical treatments (such as mulching or thinning) or prescribed burning.

Regulatory and land use approvals have begun. Field verification is completed, and a future maintenance plan is in the process of being developed. Community engagement will be ongoing throughout project implementation. If you have any concerns or questions regarding the project, please reach out to PTFN at any time.

3 Environmental Considerations

Environmental considerations have been taken into account during the planning of this project including:

- Riparian areas will be buffered according to the stream setback best practices (e.g., 30m) and will remain vegetated to protect the integrity of water quality in the region.
- Vegetation clearing will occur under frozen conditions to limit soil degradation.
- Debris will be piled instead of placed in windrows to reduce the potential of long-term smoke and extinguishing difficulties.

3.1 Timber Salvage Plan

An agreement with Alpac and West Fraser Slave Lake (West Fraser) will be established to purchase the merchantable timber being logged in the areas. Alpac and West Fraser will be responsible for hauling the timber to their respective mills. Logging trucks and equipment will utilize roads to access the fireguard throughout the community so increased traffic during the log haul can be expected.

Unmerchantable timber and slash will be piled and burned unless other opportunities present themselves through stakeholder engagement. Any other opportunities for unmerchantable salvage identified through stakeholder engagement will be explored at that time.

4 Community Benefits

These projects are expected to support the following community-related outcomes:

- **Economic Opportunity**
  - Local job creation
  - Economic stimulus and economic diversification to the community through construction and ongoing maintenance
- **Increased Community Safety**
  - Increased awareness and understanding of wildfire threats to the community
  - Fuel reduction in high fire-risk areas
  - Better positioned to withstand a wildfire in the coming years
  - Cleared guard areas and staging areas will double fore fire crews should a wildfire approach the community
  - Promote critical community infrastructure in the event of a wildfire
  - Promote community resilience, empowerment, ang engagement

5 Additional Information

5.1 Project Support

5.1.1 Band Council Support

A band council resolution by PTFN in support of the proposed fireguards has been obtained.

5.1.2 Wildfire Management Branch Support

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) has been engaged throughout the planning process of this project. When planning the proposed boundaries, they were able to review and comment on the efficacy of the fireguard locations in reducing fire risk. Further discussions will inform the timing of debris disposal and the future maintenance plan.

5.1.3 Other

All trappers who hold a Registered Fur Management Area in and around the proposed fireguards will be contacted to inform them of the projects.

5.2 Map of the Areas

Peerless Trout Fire Guard

Treatment Plan

- Proposed Fire Guard
- Forest Management Agreement Area
- Registered Fur Management Area
- Metis Settlement / First Nations Reserve

Digital Integrated Disposition (DIDs)*

- Surface
- Grazing
- Surface Hole Locations (AER)
- Pipeline (AER)
- Electrical Transmission Line

Treatment Type

- No Treatment
- Vegetation Clearing
- No Vegetation Clearing
  Dead and Down Removal Only

* Excludes Canceled Dispositions

Map Extent

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Kilometres

Scale 1:29,810

Map Version: 1.00
Map Date: August 24, 2021
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Silvacom Ref: D-232
Map File: ...\PeerlessTrout.aprx

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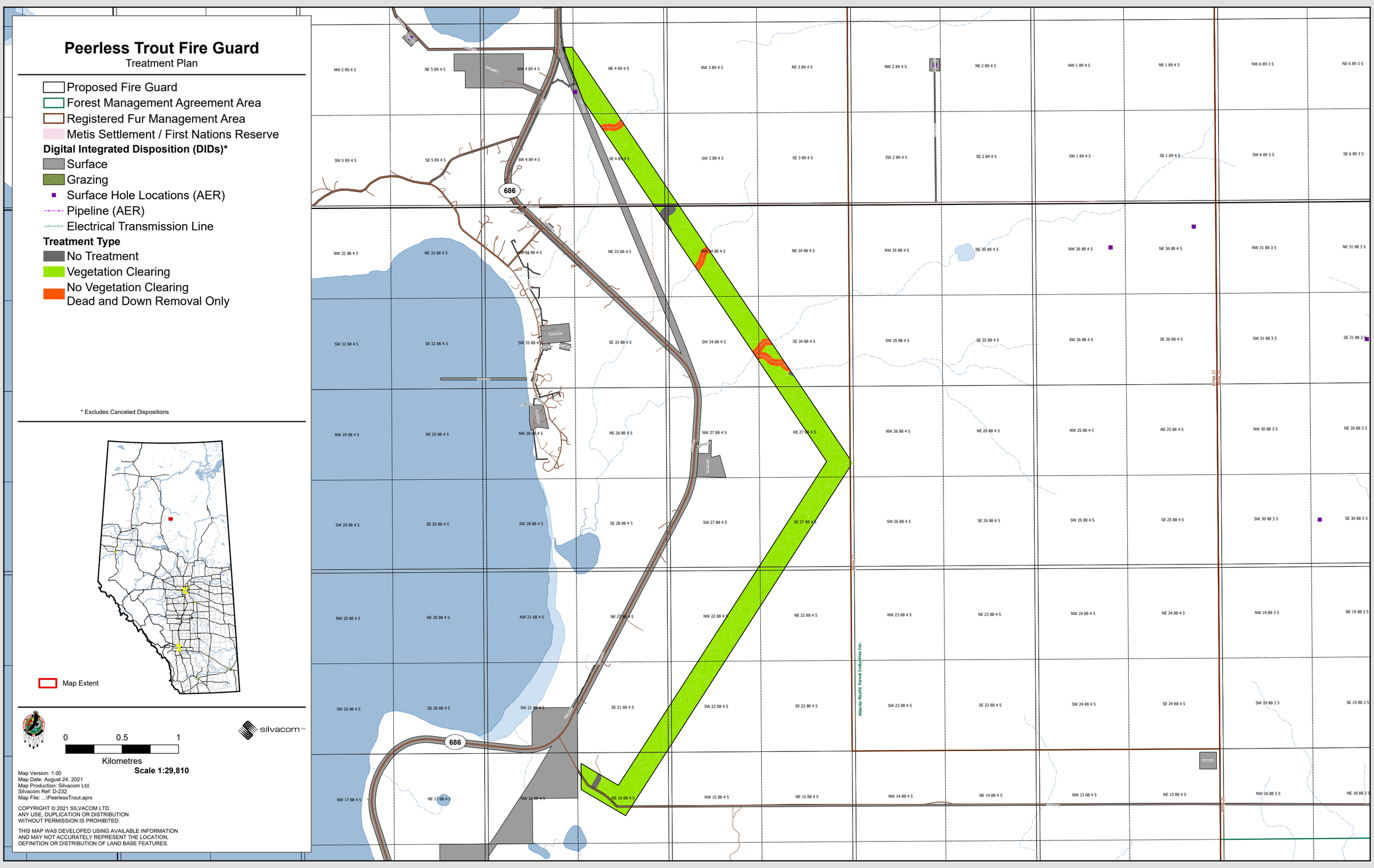

Peerless Trout Fire Guard

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- Electrical Transmission Line

Treatment Type

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- No Vegetation Clearing
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* Excludes Canceled Dispositions

Map Extent

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Graham Lake

Maria Lake

686

DML190070

DLO170139

EZE180012

EZE180027

EZE180023

EZE170031

DLO150025

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DML990057

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RFMA-13743

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

SE 33 86 4 5 | SW 34 86 4 5 | SE 34 86 4 5 | SW 35 86 4 5 | SE 35 86 4 5 | SW 36 86 4 5 | SE 36 86 4 5

NE 28 86 4 5 | NW 27 86 4 5 | NE 27 86 4 5 | NW 26 86 4 5 | NE 26 86 4 5 | NW 25 86 4 5 | NE 25 86 4 5

SE 28 86 4 5 | SW 27 86 4 5 | SE 27 86 4 5 | SW 26 86 4 5 | SE 26 86 4 5 | SW 25 86 4 5 | SE 25 86 4 5

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