

2026 JFR Crew Member Location Information

In order to give applicants a better idea of where they may be stationed this summer, we have put together a list of the locations for the upcoming summer. All JFR crews will take part in a core group of projects surrounding forestry and wildfire such as trail building, mill tours, learning about wildfire operations, invasive species and identification skills. However, each forest area has a different set of projects, educational opportunities, recreational activities, firebase and landscape that make them unique to one another. No matter where you are stationed, you will have an unforgettable summer. As indicated on the application, we take your top three choices into consideration but this is not a guarantee. We also have to take into consideration the needs of the program to make sure we run a successful summer program for all members and leaders. Here is the list of areas you may be stationed at during the summer:

Calgary

Mountains! The Calgary forest area offer beautiful scenery, as well as a great opportunity to learn about Alberta's parks in the south. Some projects that make this area unique include:

- Working with the fish hatchery (Bow Habitat)
- Working on Projects in the mountains (Kananaskis)
- Learning from Elders from Treaty 7 First Nations
- Seed collecting in Waterton National Park
- Trail building with the Great Divide Trail Association
- Hiking up to a mountain top lookout tower
- Crews can also expect forest health projects in Canmore,
- Great hiking and awesome fishing in the local rivers.
- Potential to earn a canoe or kayak certification

Edson Forest Area (Hinton)

Hinton is the gateway to a treasure trove of outdoor adventure, whether it be in Jasper National Park, the Provincial Parks, or out and about on nearby crown land. You'll have ample opportunity to go hiking/biking in the mountains, rafting, climbing gym, camping in beautiful spots, lots of places to go swimming (mind you, in freezing mountain stream fed water!), and much more! You will stay in cabins located only a short drive from the Town of Hinton.

A good variety of projects are what make up an excellent summer calendar here in Hinton. Some of those opportunities include:

- Welcoming staff who will spend time in the field with you: learning about harvesting and reforestation, bats, butterflies, Athabasca rainbow trout, archery, wildfire behaviour and 'sciency' stuff and of course all sorts of wildfire firefighting skills including a mock wildfire, a visit to the top of a lookout tower, a ride in a helicopter,
- Excellent relationship with local forestry companies, with the pulp mill right in town
- Trail building with Wild Yonder Rafting in Grande Cache in exchange for rafting trip and paint ball
- Projects (work and education) with Parks Canada staff (habitat restoration, FireSmart, building benches, fixing trails etc.)
- Spend a day with researchers with the Foothills Research Institute (fRI) learning about caribou, grizzly bears, healthy forests
- Projects with the Yellowhead County to help maintain historical cemeteries in the County
- Learn about Forest Health – Mountain Pine Beetle biology and ways to control their spread
- Bring your mountain bike to enjoy the great trail network in and around the Town of Hinton

Whitecourt

The Whitecourt JFR crew stays in the heart of beautiful wilderness, which includes some beautiful lakes, wildlife, and forests. The vast forests alone in this area make it a wonderful location, and some of the projects and recreation opportunities include:

- Spending some time in some local trail areas to get your ATV Certification
- Tubing down the local rivers.
- PAL Training (Firearms Licence)
- Trail Building and maintenance, Legacy Trail at E. S. Huestis Demonstration Forest
- Park Ranger shadowing with Alberta Parks
- Possible Canoe Certification
- The construction and repair of the Crystal Boardwalk
- Learning from local Indigenous instructors
- Bring your mountain bike to enjoy the Fox Creek bike park.

Grande Prairie

The Grande Prairie JFR crew have the privilege of staying in small cabins for the majority of the summer. They have their own JFR area set aside at the firebase, but also have the opportunity to interact with the fire crews. GP is home to several wonderful recreation areas including Muskoseepi Park and Crystal Lake Waterfowl Refuge. Some of the unique projects and experiences include:

- A two-day outtrip planting trees with two professional foresters
- A prescribed burn/mock fire is held in order for the crew to help out with the mop up
- Timbersports demonstration
- A day of forest health, learning about local ecology and forest pests/diseases
- A dinosaur dig with the local museum to find fossils and learn about paleontology
- Collecting songbird data using a GPS
- Some recreational opportunities include Saskatoon Island, the local farmers market and some wonderful hiking in the local provincial parks

Peace River

The Peace River Forest Area offers a diverse example of a boreal forest ecosystem, as well as spectacular views of the river valley. The landscape varies from prairies, to aspen stands to muskeg. The Peace River crew will undoubtedly have an incredible summer and these are some of the unique projects that will make that happen:

- There are a number of timber companies working in the area, offering a plethora of potential projects and networking opportunities throughout the summer.
- A highlight of our summer each year is the mock fire exercise that we offer including helicopter rides, simulated wildfire fighting operations including an air tanker drop.
- We also offer opportunities to learn about the wildlife in the area, including electrofishing, BearSmart training, boat rides with fish and wildlife, and potentially grizzly bear hair snagging.
- Working with the Centre for Boreal Research
- As for recreational opportunities in our area, besides the river itself, we have a number of water bodies in the area that offer up opportunities for fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

Lac La Biche

The Lac La Biche Forest Area offers a diverse example of a boreal forest ecosystem, as well as spectacular views of the river valley. The landscape varies from prairies, to aspen stands to muskeg. The Peace River crew will undoubtedly have an incredible summer and these are some of the unique projects that will make that happen:

- Flat-water canoe certification with Wild By Nature
- Visit the Alberta Tree Improvement and Seed Centre
- Visiting the local fire department
- Joining up with the Slave Lake area to learn from staff at the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation and doing some bird banding
- Representing the JFR program at a local parade
- Getting wildfire experience
- Learning about local bee farms

Fort McMurray

The Fort McMurray JFR crew has many projects in the area for the crew to tackle. Staying at a local firebase, the crew has access to a wide variety of work and recreational opportunities. Here is a list of some of the opportunities Fort Mac has to offer:

- Exposure to wildfire operations and suppression with spending a couple of days on a wildfire.
- The highlight of the summer is the exposure to the unique remote landscape and Indigenous culture of Fort Chipewyan. Learning about traditional life in a remote fly in community that is the oldest settlement in Alberta and has the second largest fresh water delta in the world. Activities could include traditional culture tours learning about netting and dog sledding with a wilderness survival outstrip to Bustard Island only accessible by aircraft or boat.
- Some wonderful fishing opportunities in the local rivers
- Some excellent trail building opportunities and the start of some legacy projects
- Richardson sand dunes exploration on ATV's
- Bird banding with Wood Buffalo Research Institute