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Alberta preserves ‘trees of renown’ for future generations

Blairmore, Alberta... An ancient limber pine in the Crowsnest Pass area is the first tree to be designated for protection under an Alberta government program designed to preserve noteworthy trees in the province’s forests.

The tree, located near Crowsnest Lake, is estimated to be at least 1,100 years old, making it one of the oldest in Alberta.

“This designation demonstrates the Alberta government’s desire to protect trees of special worth found on public lands,” Sustainable Resource Development Minister David Coumts said in launching the Trees of Renown program at the site of the limber pine.

The Trees of Renown program is a partnership between the Alberta Government and the Devonian Botanic Garden. Trees of great size, age, historical significance or other unique characteristics are eligible for listing and protection.

Albertans are invited to nominate trees of historic, environmental or general significance for protection under the program. Nomination forms are available at local Sustainable Resource Development offices, or from the ministry’s website at <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/forests/index.html>. Albertans who nominate trees that earn the Trees of Renown designation will be recognized for their contribution to the program.

The new Trees of Renown program marks Alberta’s centennial year and the 75th anniversary of resource management in Alberta. The program applies to trees growing on public lands. It is based on a similar initiative launched in the 1980s by the Alberta Forestry Association, which recognized 115 trees in all areas of the province before the program wound down in 1986.

A committee made up of government, academic and industry representatives will choose the Trees of Renown in 2006. Two members of the original committee – University of Alberta professors Peter Murphy and Bruce Dancik – are on the selection committee.

“We applaud this renewed focus on preserving the province’s natural heritage,” Dr. Murphy said. “We encourage everyone who knows of special trees in Alberta to nominate them for protection under this program.”

Trees of Renown will also work in conjunction with the Heritage Tree Foundation of Canada, which administers a similar program on private lands.

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