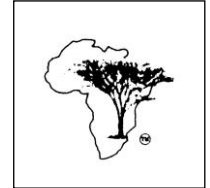




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January 8, 2024

Subject: Important Updates on Free Tree, Free Mulch, Free Drip Irrigation Program

Good Morning RM Administrator;

Over the past several weeks HELP has received numerous requests from RMs for an extension for ratepayer/ land user sign up as well as many requests for clarification on how the proposed program would operate. HELP has received additional clarifications in discussion with the federal government.

Principal changes HELP is making to the proposed program are as follows based upon RM and federal government input:

Creation of Sign up Flier for Landowners

Attached is a suggested flier RMs can send out to its ratepayers (and its regional park if applicable) to ease the system for landowner sign up. Note that HELP has sent out this flier to the small percentage of Saskatchewan landowners who happen already to be in HELP's past tree customer data base. This is why some of the RMs may have received one or more applications from landowners using our landowner application flier.)

New RM Expression of Interest Form

Attached is a new version of RM Expression of Interest form on which RMs can list the names of interested landowners including the RMs own interest as a land user if applicable.

Extension of Application Deadline

For the current intake for the 2025 and 2026 programming year HELP has made a suggested deadline of Feb 28, 2024 (this month!) for individual landowner application to HELP with cc to the RM and March 30,2024 for RMs to send in the RM's Expression of Interest after they have collated the seven interested landowners who have been identified in their RM.

New RM Expression of Interest Form

New RM Expression of Interest Form in attachment provides space for seven landowners or land users who wish to participate in the program. The RM itself is not obliged to plant trees on its own properties or facilities. However, any RM wishing to plant trees at RM facilities can simply place its name as one of the seven landowners interested.

What if an RM does not find the full seven landowners for participation?

HELP will work to try and include any RM with five or more landowners identified however RMs with minimum 7 landowners may be given priority.

What if an RM has more than seven entities interested in participating in the free tree, free mulch, free drip irrigation program?

Please include names of ALL interested landowners but place any landowners above 7 under the 'stand-by' landowners in the space provided. If HELP finds extra resources then it may consider stand-by applicants.

Program upgrade

To qualify for federal funding our program has to include the planting of a minimum of 50,000 trees per year.

We have therefore upgraded the program to include the following free resources per landowner applying through RMs with minimum landowner applicants.

If HELP's programming bid to federal government is successful,

Each Landowner will receive \$8,000 worth of the following free materials (including free shipping)

- A) 1,000 regular trees of choice (planted at average 3 m spacing means 3,000 m of tree lines). This can be any configuration including but not limited to three rows 1,000 m or four rows x 750 m; five rows x 600 m etc, an entire forest block or more than one plantation on one property so no limit to types of plantings.
- B) 25 potted saplings (landowner can choose between spruce, willow & poplar varieties)
- C) 50 berry brush seedlings for habitat development (any appropriate location for planting)
- D) 1,500 m of free plastic mulch of 3.2 mil (thickest plastic mulch available for tree belts)
- E) 1,500 m of free half inch drip line with pre-installed emitters Or for projects with tree rows longer than 500 m 7/8 inch drip line with punch and pop in emitter system. Both come with accessories including but not limited to disk filter, valves, unions. elbows etc

Note that the upgrade in trees means that only 1,500 m of the 3,000 plus meters of each landowner's tree lines have free plastic mulch and drip line to go with. Landowners can buy additional mulch film and/or drip line from HELP or from any other vendor if they decide they want all trees under mulch film and drip line. Alternately landowners can use conventional means of weeding and watering the 50% portion of tree lines not receiving free mulch and drip line. Drip line and plastic mulch should be prioritized for less drought resistant tree lines.

F) Shipping

HELP will provide free shipping for trees, plastic mulch and drip line from Weyburn to a central handover location in each RM. HELP will coordinate handowner with each landowner.

Optional Paid Services

A) Optional On-Site Assessment and Planning Sessions at individual landowner landholdings
Based upon RM requests HELP is lowering the cost of on site assessment and planning sessions from \$450 for 2-4 hour on-sites down to \$250 for a 1-2 hour onsite. Only the HELP CEO is qualified to carry these out so the price reflects this. This service is optional and especially recommended for new landowners or acreage owners who have limited or no tree design or planting experience.

B) Contracted Planting/Mulching/Drip Irrigation Installation Services

Some RM and landowners wanted to know if HELP or its affiliates can carry out contract installation for those landowners willing pay for this extra service.

Answer: HELP's affiliate GRDC is willing to carry installations with the landowner (with landowner pre-working to our specification and providing tractor and driver plus two assistants plus 1,100 five to ten lb stones plus a quad and small yard trailer on day of installations. GRDC brings its own technician team along all free materials along with tree planter, mulch machine, spools to layout irrigation etc. Cost is \$4,500 for contract installation of the free materials. Note that normal cost if the \$7,450 in material were not free would be \$12,000 plus taxes including installation. GRDC system is fast, accurate and highly innovative including a 2-4 gallon water well rain funnel at each plastic mulched tree so that even quarter inch of rain typically provides a full two gallons of water to each seedling. It is estimated that no more than 10% of participants will request contract installation services.

Legal Obligations for Program Participants

A) Is there any legal obligation of the RM in regards to this program?

Answer: There is no legal obligation on the RMs in regards to signing up landowners or ensuring compliance of landowners etc. Following sign up the relationship is directly between HELP and each participating landowner.

B) What is the legal or moral obligation of Landowners?

The only moral obligation is that each landowner will dutifully install the trees, plastic mulch and drip irrigation supplies provided. HELP itself has an obligation to follow up and visit each landowner installation so HELP can answer landowner questions and report to donors on the success of the program. If the RM places its own name as one of the seven landowners i.e.: wishing to plant trees at the RMs own facilities then the RM has the same obligation to install the trees, mulch and drip line. But the RM has no monitoring or legal obligations regarding ratepayer compliance. HELP's relationship is directly between HELP and each landowner receiving the free materials. HELP is sensitive to landowner ownership and rights. As such HELP treats its agreements with landowners as gentlemen agreements.

It is understood that any provided free plastic mulch or drip line not installed on the tree lines by a landowner will be returned to HELP for re-assignment to an alternate landowner. So the only legal ramification of not installing the materials is that any unused materials are returned to HELP.

C)Tree Plantings Longevity

There is an implicit gentleman's agreement that the trees planted will be left in place for the lifetime of the trees. However HELP is against the concept of caveats of any kind.

This means that if land with the tree installations were sold there would be no obligation on the new owner to make any commitment in regards the trees planted by the previous owner. So HELP employs a user friendly approach that has served landowners well in HELP programs of this nature in the past.

Can RMs Who Send in Expression of Interest be Assured of Being Approved

HELP is applying for a seven year program with the federal government. RMs who apply prior to the revised March 31 deadline can anticipate participation in 2025 or 2026 programming year once the government approves our proposal. As one might expect government approvals are a bit slow and we will only hear the results of our submission to government in the late fall of 2024. (By extending the deadline for RMs and landowners HELP itself was given a later deadline to apply and hence a later response timeline from the federal government.

If RMs require any additional clarifications please contact me by phone at 306-861-0814 or by email at helpint@sasktel.net

Rodney Sidloski, CEO
HELP International