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## UPDATE

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE AFFECTS 8.7 MILLION HECTARES**

2005 aerial overview surveys show the mountain pine beetle infestation proceeding according to Ministry of Forests and Range forecasts, with about 8.7 million hectares of B.C. forests in the red-attack stage. This is up from just over seven million hectares the previous year.

The red-attack stage occurs in the year following the initial attack (green-attack). The beetles have left the tree and the needles have turned red, indicating that the tree is dead because the beetles, and the fungus they carry, have cut the tree off from its supply of water and nutrients. In subsequent years the needles fall off the trees and only the branches remain (grey-attack).

The ministry relies on aerial overview surveys for monitoring infestation levels and assessing the amount of damage caused by the beetle. These surveys are non-cumulative and only record red-attack for the year. Affected pine in the green-attack or grey-attack stages is not included as part of the survey.

These annual surveys are part of B.C.'s Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan. The survey data provides the provincial government and industry with the information to make the necessary decisions in managing the infestation.

Of the total area affected in 2005 by the mountain pine beetle:

- 2.3 million hectares showed trace amounts of red-attack (less than one per cent of the trees killed in the past year)
- 2.3 million hectares sustained light amounts of red-attack (one to 10 per cent of the trees killed in the past year)
- 2.1 million hectares sustained moderate mortality (11 to 30 per cent of the trees killed in the past year)
- 1.2 million hectares experienced severe levels of red-attack (31 to 50 per cent of the killed in the past year)
- 784,000 hectares saw very severe signs of infestation (more than 50 per cent of the trees killed in the past year)

Using the annual aerial overview surveys, the Ministry of Forests and Range and the Council of Forest Industries are able to determine the amount of timber affected by the mountain pine beetle.

As of Fall 2005, it's estimated that the mountain pine beetle infestation has now affected more than 400 million cubic metres of timber, up from about 283 million cubic metres at this time last year.

This volume survey is cumulative and records timber in all three stages of attack – green, red and grey – as well as infested pine that has already been harvested and processed.

See the attached backgrounder for a regional and district breakdown of the total area affected by the mountain pine beetle in 2005.

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