

BACKGROUND

September 2005

Ministry of Forests and Range

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE AND FUEL MANAGEMENT

Mountain pine beetle-attacked forests represent an added risk in the ignition and spread of wildfire.

The Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response: Canada-B.C. Implementation Strategy directs \$24.8 million over the next three years to fuel management activities to help protect communities and First Nations from forest fires.

The strategy calls for about 26,000 hectares of interface area (where wilderness and urban development meet) to be treated. Activities will include removing beetle-attacked stands adjacent to at-risk communities, prescribed burning, and removing slash from logging sites. Work will be integrated with that being done under existing Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

The Province has committed to implementing all of the recommendations of the Filmon Firestorm Review, including increasing the resources available for fuel management. B.C. now has more firefighters, aircraft and resources to help protect human life, property and natural resources.

Some of the provincial government's other fuel management activities to ensure public safety and protect communities against interface wildfire risks include:

- Completing the *Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis*, identifying hazardous forest fuels around communities that have the potential to spot fire into urban interface areas. Some 1.7 million hectares have been categorized as high, moderate, and low threat, and are being prioritized for treatment.
- Working with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to assist local governments to prepare community wildfire protection plans. To date, over 60 plans have been developed.
- Conducting pilot projects to test the effectiveness of different fuel treatments and their economic and operational viability. As well, provincial fire crews conduct fuel treatments aimed at public safety and community protection while not on fire duty. A total of 46 areas are to be treated in 2005/06 alone.
- Funding of \$1.2 million to the City of Prince George to assist with forest rehabilitation and fuel management costs, and inviting the city to apply for a community forest licence to deal with beetle-killed timber within municipal boundaries.
- Working with First Nations' Emergency Services Society to provide funding for fuel management planning and risk reduction activities in beetle-attacked forests adjacent to First Nations communities.
- Conducted fuel reduction programs in provincial parks, including Mount Robson and Silver Star provincial parks.
- Promotion of the FireSmart program to educate the public on how to reduce the risks of wildfire to their homes.

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