

BACKGROUND

September 2005

Ministry of Forests and Range

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE: LIMITING THE SPREAD

Research indicates the mountain pine beetle poses a tangible threat to the forests of other provinces. Jack pine is found across the prairies and eastern Canada and is a potential host species if predicted climate change expands the range of the beetle.

The Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response: Canada-B.C. Implementation Strategy directs \$21.7 million over the next three years to minimizing the potential for British Columbia's beetle infestation to spread into the boreal forests of Alberta and beyond.

This money will be used to control beetle populations by removing infested trees and destroying the beetles before they can emerge and fly to new stands. The spread control program also calls for aerial and ground surveys, spot treatments, and prescribed burns. The goal is to treat 10,850 hectares bordering Alberta by the end of 2007/08, and also to slow the advance of the beetle southwards within British Columbia.

The Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response: Canada-B.C. Implementation Strategy also designates an additional \$2.7 million to control the spread of beetle in parks and protected areas. This funding will treat at-risk sites through treatments such as controlled burns.

Some of the other actions the provincial government has already taken to protect susceptible forests include:

- The B.C.-Alberta memorandum of agreement signed in March 2005 for co-operative and jointly funded beetle suppression and mitigation activities along the shared border,
- Forest Investment Account funding for bark beetle control activities,
- Updates to the Emergency Bark Beetle Management Area, which provides the administrative structure to enable aggressive response in new outbreak areas,
- Annual aerial overview surveys to closely monitor and track the spread of the infestation, and
- Calling for a national response to the devastation caused by the mountain pine beetle at the 2005 Western Premiers' Conference.

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