

Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan 2006-2011



September 2006

This document outlines the seven objectives of the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan and some of its key actions.

The extent of the mountain pine beetle epidemic in the interior of British Columbia has grown well past the point of being just a forest health issue.

The epidemic has now affected over 400 million cubic metres of timber. About 8.7 million hectares were affected in 2005.

The 2006-2011 Action Plan guides and sets out the next steps to be taken – both immediate and five-year – for mitigating beetle impacts to forest values, communities and the provincial economy.

1. Encourage economic sustainability for communities by:

- Continuing to work with First Nations, community groups such as the Cariboo-Chilcotin and the Omineca beetle action coalitions, and local governments.
- Supporting economic development strategies through the Northern Development Initiative Trust and the Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust.

- Developing other resource-based sectors such as mining and energy to diversify the economic base for the regions.
- Continuing to encourage outdoor recreation and tourism businesses.
- Continuing to encourage value-added and innovative forest product businesses.
- Supporting joint initiatives with First Nations for managing and harvesting non-timber forest products.

2. Maintain and protect worker and public health and safety by:

- Working with forest companies and contractors to ensure high safety standards continue to be applied on roads and forestry operations.
- Identifying and monitoring water supplies that may be impacted as a result of the infestation.
- Carrying out fuel management activities where the beetle epidemic has seriously increased the threat of wildfire.

- Assessing the long-term safety needs of the transportation network in the impacted regions to develop plans for maintenance, upgrades, or changes.
- Identifying and monitoring areas of unstable terrain that may result from the infestation.

3. Recover the greatest value from dead timber before it burns or decays, while respecting other forest values, by:

- Consulting with local governments, regional coalitions and First Nations in the ongoing development of salvage strategies.
- Researching how long dead timber will retain commercial value (shelf-life) under different site conditions to better guide salvage priorities.
- Pricing damaged timber in a manner that better reflects its market value.
- Encouraging emerging and alternate timber processing industries such as production of OSB, cogeneration of electricity, pellets for heating fuel.

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- Developing and implementing measures to encourage value-added wood processing.
 - Keeping the marketplace informed and confident in the quality of forest products made from beetle-killed timber.
- 4. Conserve the long-term forest values identified in land use plans by:**
- Working with First Nations, monitoring committees, and stakeholders to ensure that land use values continue to be respected.
 - Ensuring infestations in parks are appropriately managed with prescribed burns or tree removal projects to reduce the risk to values in adjacent areas.
 - Leaving some areas unharvested as temporary conservation areas.
 - Assessing impacts to tourism, water, agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation use, visual quality, and biological diversity.
- 5. Prevent damage to forests in areas that are susceptible but not yet experiencing epidemic infestations by:**
- Focusing on early detection and removal of infested trees where it is still feasible to take an aggressive "leading edge" management approach.
 - Monitoring infestation levels and success of mitigation actions with timely detection surveys.
 - Working with Alberta to contain outbreaks and reduce damage in border areas.
 - Continuing a streamlined approach to operational planning and approvals for emergency harvesting measures.
 - Investigating silviculture methods and systems to increase the resistance of commercial timber stands to insect attack.
- 6. Restore the forest resources in areas affected by the epidemic by:**
- Prioritizing to return healthy timber supplies to the most productive sites as quickly and efficiently as possible.
 - Examining the opportunities and costs for silviculture techniques to address the mid-term timber supply gap.
- 7. Maintain a management structure that ensures coordinated and effective planning and impact mitigation by:**
- Improving forest resource inventory information.
 - Encouraging adaptive management monitoring, research and innovation.
 - Involving all levels of government, community beetle action coalitions, non-government groups, industries and First Nations in response to the epidemic.
 - Working with First Nations as they implement the BC First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan.
 - Assuring inter-ministry coordination through the Emergency Response Team.
 - Establishing a mountain pine beetle information network.
- A complete copy of British Columbia's Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan for 2006-2011 can be downloaded from:
- gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle