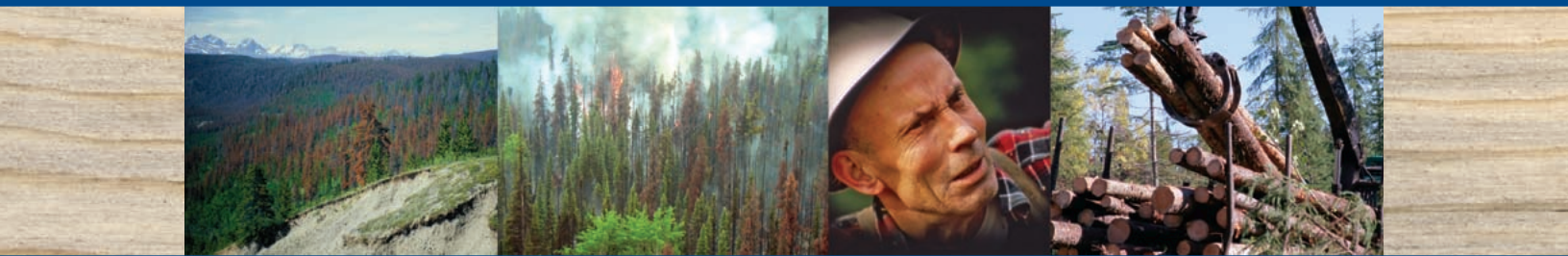




# Mountain Pine Beetle **Sustaining Communities for the Future**



**September 2007**

[www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle)



# Mountain Pine Beetle

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### **Introduction**

British Columbia's Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan guides provincial responses and helps coordinate all levels of government, communities, First Nations, industries and stakeholders working to mitigate impacts of the mountain pine beetle infestation.

The epidemic, which has affected approximately 13 million hectares to some degree, has killed an estimated 582 million cubic metres of pine that would have been an important part of the wood supply for decades. It also has an impact on First Nations and others who use B.C.'s Interior pine forests for traditional, spiritual and recreational purposes.

This document provides an overview of progress the Province and its partners have made toward ensuring economic sustainability for communities and the provincial economy.



## Sustaining the Forest Sector

Pine trees killed by the beetles can be used to produce lumber, however, their suitability declines over time. B.C.'s independent chief forester has temporarily increased allowable annual cuts in affected areas by 17 million cubic metres a year to recover economic value before dead pine trees deteriorate and to speed regeneration of infested areas.

Forest companies are focusing salvage harvesting on forests made up of at least 70 per cent pine to conserve non-pine species that will be needed to supply lumber mills 20 to 50 years from now.

Companies operating in beetle-attacked areas are required by law to replant what they harvest. As a result of salvage harvesting, it is estimated that forest companies will plant close to 40 million seedlings in the Williams Lake and Quesnel timber supply areas in 2007.

Forests for Tomorrow, a reforestation program introduced by government in 2005, is helping to reforest areas affected by the infestation, but that have not been logged. An estimated 4,000 hectares will be planted in the Williams Lake and Quesnel timber supply areas in 2008, and another 8,000 hectares of beetle-attacked stands will be surveyed during 2007 in preparation for planting in

future years. By 2010, that number is expected to increase to 25 million seedlings.

The Province is supporting activities by Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd., a crown agency, and FPInnovations to develop new uses for beetle-affected wood and increase the length of time quality forest products can be manufactured from dead pine trees. The University of Northern British Columbia has received \$2.5 million to help establish a world-leading multi-site research laboratory to find further uses for attacked pine. There are promising results from research involving composite panels, specialty plywood, and flooring and decking.

About one million board feet of primarily pine beetle lumber will be used for the roof of the Richmond Oval, home of speed skating for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. The roof will feature arched trusses and rafters, and a curvature in the surface panels that will give the roof a rippled appearance. It will be the first building in the world to include a roof of this design built exclusively from wood.

Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd. is also developing new markets for B.C. wood products in countries such as China, South Korea and Japan, and in Europe.

# Stimulating Economic Growth and Diversifying Local Economies

The Northern Development Initiative Trust, established in 2004 to identify and pursue new opportunities for stimulating economic growth and job creation, has invested \$31.7 million for 94 projects to date, leveraging total project expenditures of \$199.8 million and in 2006 alone created 145 construction jobs and 36 full-time jobs.

The Northern Trust has set aside \$32 million in a pine beetle recovery program that will support economic diversification in communities affected by the epidemic, encourage regional collaboration, and establish enduring relationships between business, First Nations, local government and the broader community.

The Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust, created in 2005, has completed its strategic plan, and intends to make funding announcements in fall 2007.

## Mineral Exploration

The federal and provincial governments and the Northern Trust are investing in geoscience information to encourage mineral exploration and mining in the epidemic area. The Province has allocated half of its geoscience field staff and budget to support completion of key geoscience projects.

The non-profit Geoscience BC has launched the largest geoscience project in B.C. history to provide a better understanding of the mineral potential over 40,000 square kilometres

extending from Williams Lake north to Mackenzie. The \$5-million QUEST (Quesnellia Exploration Strategy) project will help industry identify vitally needed mineral deposits to help diversify local economies.

Private sector investment in mineral exploration has increased by 50 per cent in the Cariboo region to \$20 million. Throughout the infestation area, mineral exploration investment has climbed to \$78 million.

## Bioenergy

Trees damaged by mountain pine beetles and wood residue from increased logging also present an opportunity for bioenergy use. The BC Energy Plan is advancing B.C.'s interests in bioenergy development, and growth in this sector has potential to diversify local economies in the Interior affected by the infestation. BC Hydro received more than 80 responses to a bioenergy request for expressions of interest, indicating strong interest in developing projects to utilize beetle-damaged wood, sawmill residue and logging debris to generate electricity.

## Agriculture

A number of actions to support the ranching and agriculture industries may provide opportunities for economic diversity. The upcoming BC Beef Cattle Industry Strategy is expected to improve sector sustainability and growth. In some areas natural livestock barriers have



been lost on Crown range lands as a result of the infestation. The Province is working with the beef industry to re-establish range barriers to ensure the continued productive use of Crown land grazing areas for livestock grazing.

The Province has developed legal objectives to maintain prime land in the Omineca region and make it available for agricultural development. In the Vanderhoof area, six parcels of 128 hectares have been identified as part of a pilot project to market arable Crown land for agriculture development. Arability studies are being undertaken to identify Crown lands in Mountain Pine Beetle-affected areas that are both capable and suitable for agriculture use.

A review of existing agricultural tenure requirements is examining the possibility for new agroforestry tenures that would integrate livestock and tree production, improved pastures and community pastures. The Province is already supporting agroforestry research and demonstration projects as well as First Nations agriculture projects through the Agri-Food Futures Fund.





## Maintaining strong communities

### Community Services

In October 2006, the province announced three new programs designed to improve the live-ability of B.C.'s communities and make them even better places to live and work.

- ▶ The LocalMotion Fund is a four-year, \$40-million program for capital projects such as bike paths, walkways, greenways, improved access for people with disabilities, and projects that support community playgrounds and children's park activities.
- ▶ Towns for Tomorrow is a three-year, \$21-million community infrastructure program, offering funding to communities with populations of 5,000 or less for projects such as water quality and environmental energy improvements, recreation and cultural amenities, and protective and emergency services.
- ▶ B.C. Spirit Squares is a \$20-million program designed to create or improve outdoor public meeting and celebration spaces such as traditional town squares or community commons

### Olympic Secretariat

The Olympic Live Sites program, which supports projects that will help build a lasting legacy of opportunity, achievement and celebration in B.C. communities, has contributed \$3.8 million for infrastructure development and upgrades to sports facilities in 18 communities in the Nechako and

Cariboo regions, which has leveraged more than \$9 million in total project funding.

Under the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative, a \$36.6 million Community Economic Diversification Initiative will invest in projects designed to diversify the economic foundation of forest-dependent communities, creating new opportunities for jobs and growth. These funds will support:

- ▶ Community economic diversification opportunities that capitalize on regional strengths in tourism, value-added resources, manufacturing, high technology and innovation;
- ▶ Community capacity building through skills training and development, and other programs;
- ▶ Community economic infrastructure, including industrial park development, downtown revitalization and improving access to high-speed Internet; and
- ▶ Supporting activities such as new and expanded businesses and increased wealth generated by high value-added wood products.

### Economic Development

WorkBC is a provincial initiative to attract new workers, assess and address retraining needs, and support the continued development of B.C.'s labour force. WorkBC has formed regional councils in a number of beetle-impacted areas to develop long-term plans for dealing with skill shortages.

## Recreation and Tourism

Beetle killed trees may present a safety and fire hazard to public areas in provincial parks and forest recreation sites.

### BC Parks and Protected Areas

Over the past year, hazardous trees were removed from Yahk, Moyie, Crooked River, Jimsmith Lake, Green Lake, Mule Deer and Lightning Lake campgrounds. A 25-hectare fuel break in Mount Robson Park was completed and fuel break planning and layout has been completed for 140-hectare fuel break to be established in Manning Park in 2007. Priority hazard fuel reduction was also undertaken in Syringa, Premier, Manning, Fintry and Ellison parks to protect park values and adjacent communities.

### BC Forest Recreation Sites

About 11,000 hazardous trees were removed from 160 forest recreation sites. In partnership with Natural Resources Canada, this work is being accelerated to ensure tourism continues to prosper.

### Transportation

The Province has committed \$90 million over three years to upgrading public roads impacted by increased logging truck traffic in beetle areas. In 2006/07, this involved improvements to nearly 190 kilometres of paved highways, and 291.5 kilometres of gravel roads. Another \$21 million was committed over three years to upgrade and maintain Forest Service roads impacted by the increased traffic.



## Inter-Governmental Collaboration

Provincial, First Nations, local and federal governments are working together to achieve the best results in responding to the infestation.

### First Nations

Since 2005/06, the Province has provided \$11 million to First Nations with traditional territory in the infestation zone for strategic long-term planning to respond to the unique impacts of the epidemic on First Nations communities, economies and cultures. An additional \$2 million has been targeted to reduce the risk of beetle-related wildfire threats to First Nations communities.

The First Nations Forestry Council is working to determine the extent of beetle impacts on First Nations communities and to address priorities. The council's work also involves compiling First Nations land use information.

In the spirit of the New Relationship, First Nations people continue to work on firefighting crews, and qualified First Nations contractors are being invited to perform Forests for Tomorrow reforestation work.

The Province has also committed \$2 million over three years to a partnership with the First Nations



Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative to identify ways to harmonize interests and objectives for community protection, sustainable economy, and ecosystem stewardship.

### Local Governments

The issues related to the epidemic vary considerably between regions. Local representatives are in the best position to understand and prepare

## Making It All Work

This update has focused on the specific elements of the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan that ensure economic sustainability for communities in the heart of the beetle epidemic.

Achieving the objectives of the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan requires a high level of cooperation among provincial government agencies, the federal government, local governments and First Nations governments as they generate a team approach to dealing with the epidemic.

The Intergovernmental Team organizational structure depicted at right has enabled coordinated planning

strategies that are most appropriate for their regional and community needs. Beetle action coalitions in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and Omineca regions are proving to be an effective way for different levels of government to collaboratively respond to the regional impacts of the epidemic. The newly formed Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition has just received \$850,000 to assist communities in the Southern Interior with economic diversification planning.

The Province is committed to its collaboration with the Beetle Action Coalitions since their work on economic and social strategies is an integral part of the overall response to the epidemic. Opportunities to advance mutually agreed strategies through programs, policy and the fiscal framework will be fully explored. Each coalition is using a different approach

– that taken by the Cariboo-Chilcotin group is included on the following page as an example.

### Government of Canada

Recognizing the unprecedented scale of the beetle epidemic, the Government of Canada has committed \$1 billion over 10 years to address its consequences, and is working with the Province.

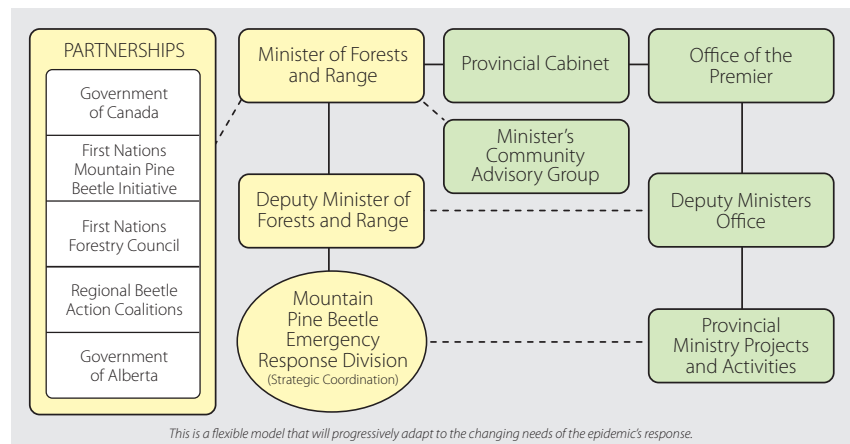
This commitment includes the federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program, led by Natural Resources Canada in a partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Transport Canada. It will invest \$200 million in measures to address both short- and long-term impacts of the infestation in three key areas:

- ▶ Communities (\$36.6 million)
- ▶ Infrastructure (\$63.4 million)
- ▶ Forests (\$100 million)

and project management across the Interior.

Government’s Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan is updated on a regular basis, and progress on meeting the

Action Plan’s objectives is reported on annually. For more information on the mountain pine beetle epidemic and government’s response, visit [www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle)





## **Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition**

### **- Submitted by Cariboo Chilcoltin Beetle Action Coalition**

CCBAC believes the mountain pine beetle challenge is about communities and governments working together in a collaborative and cooperative manner on joint solutions to mitigate epidemic impacts and enhance the region's economic and social sectors for the long term.

CCBAC is focused on forestry-dependent communities and families. The beetle epidemic issue, due to its economic and social impacts in the short-, medium- and long-term, represents an unprecedented challenge to us all.

The soon to be completed CCBAC Regional Economic Diversification Plan will comprise mitigation strategies for all of the region's key social and economic sectors.

CCBAC is pleased with the close working relationships it has developed with the provincial Ministry of Forests and Range, especially its Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response Division. CCBAC is keen to develop similar working relationships with the provincial social ministries and the federal ministries.

"When we started the Coalition process nearly two years ago,

Premier Gordon Campbell and his government immediately bought into the CCBAC concept, both philosophically and financially," said CCBAC chair Donna Barnett.

CCBAC has a Board of Directors, and several working groups (economic, social, communications and governance), and is nearing completion of a series of 14 economic sector strategies. It also is developing a social sector strategy process. Strategies from each of the sectors are being completed this year, and will be integrated into CCBAC's Regional Economic Diversification Plan. More detailed information about the specific sector needs for these funds will be a part of the plan.

Underlying CCBAC's work is the belief that the communities are responsible for their own future, and that by working together over the long term, the communities themselves will be most benefited by the regional coalition model, with benefits to the provincial and national economies following closely behind. CCBAC has determined that the Cariboo-Chilcotin region has generated a net flow to the provincial and federal governments of approximately \$500 million annually, for the past 10 years.

