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**SECOND ROUND OF MEETINGS WILL HELP DEFINE AREAS FOR POTENTIAL
TIMBER HARVESTING OPPORTUNITIES**

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and other project partners will conduct public meetings in southwest Yukon to discuss the next steps for implementation of the forest management plan for the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory.

“We look forward to finalizing harvest areas and getting some economic benefits out of the beetle affected forests,” Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Archie Lang said. “These benefits will come through initiatives such as community fuel reduction plans and timber harvesting opportunities. These ongoing activities will help lead us back to healthy forests throughout the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory.”

Public meetings will take place in Whitehorse, Champagne, Haines Junction and Silver City to seek input on how to determine timber volumes available for commercial harvest.

“Many people have devoted a lot of time and energy to this implementation process. I am very pleased that after ten years of living with this infestation, we are about to see activities on the ground,” Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief James Allen said.

The Strategic Forest Management Plan was officially adopted December 2004. Two key implementation priorities are exploring economic activities and providing communities with fuel load reduction plans.

All meetings will begin at 7 p.m. The meeting schedule is as follows:

WHITEHORSE - Sept. 27 at the Yukon Inn, Fireside Room

CHAMPAGNE - Sept. 28 at the Champagne Community Hall

HAINES JUNCTION - Sept. 29 at the Shakwak Community Centre

SILVER CITY – Oct. 3 at the Kluane Bed and Breakfast

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The public is invited to visit the First Nations Forestry Management website www.caforestry.ca.

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