



For Immediate Release
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Ministry of Forests
Chief Forester's Office

FIRES AND BEETLES LEAD TO INCREASED HARVEST

VICTORIA – The annual harvest in the Kamloops timber supply area will be increased to deal with the serious devastation resulting from wildfires and the mountain pine beetle infestation, chief forester Larry Pedersen announced today.

The temporary increase of about 1.67 million cubic metres a year for three years is effective Jan. 1, 2004 and includes:

- up to 670,000 cubic metres a year to harvest timber damaged by the McLure, McGillivray, Venables Valley, Vermillion Creek and Strawberry Hill wildfires; and
- up to 1 million cubic metres a year aimed at control of the mountain pine beetle infestation and to harvest trees killed by the beetles.

“For the last several years, the Ministry of Forests and the forest industry in the Kamloops timber supply area have been working hard to slow the spread of the mountain pine beetle infestation,” Pedersen said. “Faced with the significant increase in the infestation last summer and the devastating wildfires, ministry staff requested that I urgently revisit the allowable annual cut.

“Based on my review of the new information, I have increased the cut level to allow more aggressive management of the mountain pine beetle epidemic in new infested areas and along the leading-edge. This increase also allows fire-damaged timber to be harvested while it still has its full economic value and, in turn, speed up the reforestation of these areas.”

The Kamloops timber supply area, covering about 2.7 million hectares in B.C.'s southern Interior, currently has an allowable annual cut of about 2.68 million cubic metres, which took effect Jan. 1, 2003. Within this area, last summer's wildfires burned more than 56,200 hectares. Recent surveys show the mountain pine beetle epidemic has affected almost 35,000 hectares of its forested land and continues to almost double every year.

These two events created an extraordinary situation and due to the forest values at risk and the need to act quickly this decision was expedited. A copy of the chief forester's rationale increasing the allowable annual cut for the Kamloops timber supply area is available on the Ministry of Forests Web site at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/tsa/tsa11/> and at the following Forest Services offices:

- Kamloops forest district 250-371-6500
- Headwaters forest district 250-587-6700

For more information on the timber supply review, visit <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/>
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Visit the province's Web site at www.gov.bc.ca for online information and services.