BRITISH COLUMBIA

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September 24, 1999

Major Licensees
Lakes Forest District

Dear Licensee:

All tenure holders are now aware of the escalating infestations of mountain pine beetle within Lakes TSA, particularly in its southern reaches. In the East Ootsa area alone, we are estimating that 400,000 m3 of timber will be affected and need to be removed by the four tenure holders currently operating in that area. Other significant MPB infestations exist within the Cheslatta Lake area, Maxan Lake area and within the central and northeast portion Babine Forest Products operating area.

At this time, tenure holders are in various stages of developing and implementing plans to effectively deal with the infestations. Two licensees and SBFEP have completed overviews for their respective chart areas – others are in the final stages of obtaining colour photography. I am confident that all tenure holders are working adequately towards managing the MPB situation.

I have informed District staff that the mountain pine beetle infestation is a high priority within the TSA. In that light, staff is working co-operatively with licensees in the prioritization and administration of permits and documents associated with MPB management. This will continue throughout the season as we work to gain a foothold on the MPB situation. Some questions have arisen with respect to specific strategies and resource values. In order to assist all licensees with their planning and development, I provide the following direction:

- Last year, I sent a letter to all major licensees requesting commitments for action on MPB infestations following the availability of your overview flight map(s). The letter outlined my expectation for your "statement of intent" in the harvest or removal of infestation sites for the 1998-99 season. This year's overview flights are being compiled and will be made available to licensees no later than September 30, 1999.

  Once again, I ask that you formally review your maps of MPB infestation centres as you receive them, the current MPB responsibility matrix and determine your course of action for each centre. You should consider whether you wish to take responsibility for those areas outside of the buffer, whether you will harvest under SSSP or an existing permit or whether you will fall and burn. My goal with this review is to identify areas which are outside of

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Ministry of Forests
Lakes Forest District
Mailing Address:
Bag 3500
Burns Lake, British Columbia
V0J 1E0
Location:
185 Yellowhead Hwy 16
Burns Lake, BC
Tel: 250-692-2200
Fax: 250-692-7461

your responsibility and which you intend to leave as well as the "fall and burn" sites and determine whether SBFEP - SSSP can action them.

Please provide a map/tables outlining the above for your area of operations by October 15th, 1999. This will, in effect, become your "statement of intent" for mountain pine beetle control through this season. I will inform you of all decisions made with respect to the above. Also, please be aware that any trees harvested under SSSP - SBFEP will be charged to SBFEP apportionment, unless instructions are given to remove the infested timber under 106 (1) of the FPC at which time other options may be considered.

I want to confirm that the District has the infrastructure within the SBFEP program to effectively deal with infestation sites that cannot be handled by other tenure holders. It is my opinion that the risk of increased spread of MPB is too great to leave areas without action. In some cases, I may invoke Section 106 (1) of the Forest Practices Code of BC Act, where there is a need to ensure action.

- Some tenure holders have used "bait and hold" strategies in the past. It is my opinion that these "bait and hold" strategies may be appropriate in some circumstances. However, within most areas of Lakes TSA where the MPB populations are escalating, we cannot afford the risk of leaving any infestation sites. I expect that all infestation sites be considered for action, first, and only with prior approval, should the "bait and hold" strategy be applied.

- I recognise that as scenic areas become infested with MPB populations, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage the landscape optimally for the visual resource. However, where opportunity exists for retention of non-susceptible species or younger age class pine, extra efforts should be made in this regard. Good visual design should continue to be carried out. Future strategies, which should be considered after the beetle infestation is controlled within a scenic area, include rehabilitation of permanent access structures and accelerating green-up.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above direction, please contact Mark Vieweg or me at 692-2200. If you have any questions about operational permits or document processing, please contact my operational staff.

Yours truly,

R. A. Murray
District Manager
Lakes Forest District

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