

NEWSLETTER

HARMONIZING FIRST NATIONS AND GOVERNMENT
IN MANAGING THE MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE EPIDEMIC



Dealing with the Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

In addition to establishing the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative (FNMPBI) over the past year, our team has focused on community protection, specifically fuel management and emergency management, as one of the most pressing concerns. The MPB infestation has created a huge fire threat to over 100 First Nations territories throughout the Province where timber is dead or dying. Few of our territories are prepared to deal with this threat.

To help protect our communities, we have worked with people from the threatened territories, government, industry and the broader community to identify ways to reduce the risk and impact of wildfires on First Nations.

Utilizing the Balanced Scorecard, the FNMPBI developed a harmonized *Community Protection Strategy* identifying objectives, deliverables and performance measures in response to community protection concerns in high risk First Nations territories. At present, the FNMPBI is engaging strategic partners (e.g., First Nations, Government of BC and Government of Canada) in their collaborative discussions on fuel management and emergency management initiatives in First Nations territories.

As the FNMPBI moves forward, we will continue to support implementation initiatives to protect our communities, while facilitating and developing harmonized strategies for economic diversification and restoration of our forests.

Like community protection, these new MPB theme areas – sustainable economy and ecosystem stewardship -- will be addressed by engaging and building capacity in First Nations territories and communities.

Dan George
Chief Executive Officer

The Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic has cut a swath of devastation and destruction through First Nations communities that will be felt for many years to come. BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Shawn Atleo was asked how MPB will impact First Nations communities, "The MPB will have severe and lasting effects on the culture and traditions of First Nations people. We are all inextricably linked in spirit and culture to our sacred lands, to which we have an inescapable legal and economic interest based on our Aboriginal Title and Rights."



Chief Atleo believes it is extremely important for First Nations to establish relationships with government if we are to be successful in dealing with the infestation. "I appreciate the continued effort by the FNMPBI to harmonize First Nations and Government activities in responding to community protection concerns in high risk First Nations communities."

Atleo is also pleased that government is addressing relationships with First Nations, "The establishment of the FNMPBI marks the beginning of a partnership between the Province of British Columbia (particularly the Ministry of Forests and Range) and the First Nations Leadership Council (particularly the First Nations Forestry Council). Hence, this initiative will align both First Nations and government action plans across jurisdictional boundaries while respecting the appropriate roles and jurisdictions of all parties."

"There is an ever-increasing need to establish and implement joint (federal and provincial governments, municipalities, and industry) sustainable forest management practices to ensure...the epidemic's destructive impact on forest ecology can be met head on."

- Regional Chief Shawn Atleo, BC Assembly of First Nations

NCC Launches Biodiversity Study in Central Interior

In fulfilling the FNMPBI's mandate of building effective working relationships and facilitating harmonized dialogue, our team is ensuring synergies are created with the broader community on projects and programs related to the MPB epidemic. One such initiative is the Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) *BC Interior Project*.

The NCC is launching a groundbreaking ecological study of British Columbia's Central Interior ecoregion. The study will identify the most important places for biodiversity conservation within the region and serve as a strategic decision-making tool for ecosystem stewardship.

"The Central Interior and Fraser Basin are experiencing large-scale ecological and economic impacts due to the current mountain pine beetle epidemic. We hope our work in the area will help ensure that critical environmental values are secured for future generations" said Pierre Iachetti, NCC's Director of Conservation Science and Planning and one of the lead scientists on the project.



Daphne Ogilvie Nature Sanctuary - recently donated to NCC in the southern Cariboo.
Photo Credit: Ted Boyle

The NCC has completed similar biodiversity conservation assessments resulting in the protection of over 450,000 acres of ecologically significant land and water in British Columbia. NCC would like to work with First Nations in the region to ensure that traditional environmental knowledge, especially in land claim areas, are respected and acknowledged. This study is an exceptional opportunity for First Nations territories to receive the best available biophysical science in areas of interest without having to secure funding and human resources.

For more information, please contact:

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Upcoming Events

Date	Location
Sustainable Economy Strategic Planning Sessions	
September 24 & 25	North Saanich
October 2	Prince George
October 16	Kamloops
October 30	Williams Lake
November 20 & 21	North Saanich
Ecosystem Stewardship Strategic Planning Sessions	
September 26 & 27	North Saanich
October 3	Prince George
October 17	Kamloops
October 31	Williams Lake
November 22 & 23	North Saanich

For further information on these events, please visit our website at www.fnmpbi.com. If you are interested in participating in our upcoming events, please RSVP to Zandra Ross, Executive Assistant to the CEO – email: fnmpbi@telus.net OR telephone: (250) 963-9291.

FNMPBI Now Available On-Line

All you ever wanted to know about the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative is now available on-line at www.fnmpbi.com. You'll find information on our plans, results, what we're doing, upcoming events, reports and more. Visit our new site soon and often!



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