



Southern Interior **BEETLE ACTION COALITION**

Future Tasks Planned for SIBAC

i. Rural Development Workshops

SIBAC is coordinating the delivery of three workshops on rural development leadership and scenario planning in the southern interior. Workshop major sponsors include SIBAC, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, and the Ministry of Community Development. Speakers from Oregon and Australia will conduct workshops in three communities in the SIBAC region: Kamloops on May 25th, Christina Lake on May 26th and Cranbrook on May 27th, 2009.

ii. SIBAC Pilot Projects

The Board of SIBAC has a goal to be as action oriented as possible. SIBAC Board has designated to use a portion of its funding to fund "pilot" projects that develop, implement and test possible MPB mitigation related activities and initiatives.

Project consideration is based upon the following criteria:

- Must provide new tools and/or information that helps address a MPB related issue that is important to the Board
- Preference will be given to projects that benefit more than one organization or community
- Project will not be funded by SIBAC if full funding is available from other government programs
- Project must not duplicate the efforts, funding or subsidization of existing organizations

Summary

Great strides have been made by SIBAC over the past year with the establishment of the organization and the initiation of important research and analysis that will be key in creating its final report. SIBAC recognizes that the impacts of MPB are substantial throughout the Southern Interior and hopes to develop potential solutions to the MPB infestation. There are a large number of other organizations that are interested in the MPB epidemic and SIBAC sees great value in partnering with various groups on projects related to MPB.

The engagement of communities during consultation has been a high priority of SIBAC. Upon completion of the final draft report, SIBAC staff will be presenting the findings from completed research, studies and reports commissioned by SIBAC over the past 18 months. The presentation will be scheduled in five or six community throughout the Southern Interior in early May. The SIBAC Board encourages the active involvement of interested stakeholders and individuals.

For More Information Please Contact...

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Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition

Beginning in early 2006, concern grew over the devastating effects of the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) epidemic on many communities in BC's interior. That spring, the City of Merritt hosted a select group of mayors, regional district directors and First Nations' organizations that had a vested interest in forming a MPB coalition.

Funding collected from these organizations and seed funding from the Provincial Government financed the operation of the Southern Interior Communities Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group (SICMPBWG) who began preliminary research, analysis and stakeholder consultation. Research revealed six significant concerns and impacts:

- Decline of Forestry Economic Base
- Impact on Watersheds-Domestic & Agriculture
- Impact on other Economic Base Sectors- tourism and Agriculture
- Decline in Recreation Experience
- First Nations Eco-system Stewardship Planning & Management Issues
- Public Safety in Isolated, Rural & Reserve Communities

Findings from this preliminary assessment were used in a proposal to the Government to form an official beetle coalition in 2007. Following this proposal, SIBMPBWG transformed into the Southern Interior Action Beetle Coalition (SIBAC) which received an initial \$800,000 from Provincial and Federal Governments to help complete an assessment of the impact of the MPB epidemic in the region and make recommendations on ways to mitigate its effect.



Southern Interior BEETLE ACTION COALITION

The following organizations make up the membership of the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition (SIBAC):

- * Central Okanagan Regional District
- * Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- * Community Futures Development Corp. of Central Interior First Nations (CFDC-CIFN);
- * Kootenay Boundary Regional District;
- * Lillooet Tribal Council;
- * Nicola Tribal Council;
- * North Okanagan Regional District;
- * Okanagan Nation Alliance;
- * Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District;
- * Regional District of Central Kootenay;
- * Regional District of East Kootenay;
- * Squamish Lillooet Regional District;
- * Shuswap Tribal Council; and
- * Thompson Nicola Regional District
- * Ktunaxa Nation Council
- * Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal

Tasks Completed to Date

Tasks that have been completed by SIBAC to date include staff recruitment, financial management procedures, incorporation as a non-profit society, as well as the development of various policies and procedures. In addition, a strategic plan was implemented and website created.

As the geographic distribution of the SIBAC Board of Directors is quite expansive challenges have arisen with the logistics of meeting face to face. Technology is regularly utilized to connect Board Members in addition to full day, face-to-face meetings three to four times per year.

Given Government funding for the express purpose of preparing and submitting a MPB mitigation report, SIBAC's primary focus is on planning and analysis projects that provide information necessary for this report. SIBAC works hard to ensure the work of other organizations is not being duplicated and that all stakeholders are aware of the impact and plans for the mitigation of MPB.

Because such a large area is covered by SIBAC, timber supply areas (TSAs) have been determined to be the best unit of analysis. Using the 11 TSAs found in the Southern Interior, a forest sector trend analysis was completed. The report focused on determining the following:

- Historical and projected future timber supply volumes
- Major forest sector labour force changes
- Major challenges
- Predicted MPB impacts on the Southern Interior forest sector

Using the 11 TSAs once again, a socio-economic assessment was completed to determine:

- Population and demographics
- Labour force characteristics
- Major economic sectors
- Forest income dependencies and vulnerabilities

The Environment

Through SIBAC's research and community consultation process, environmental concerns caused by the MPB were prevalent among the public in the Southern Interior. To address these concerns, SIBAC contracted The Ministry of Environment to complete an environmental scan of MPB issues in the Southern Interior. Concerns identified in this assessment include:

- Increased flooding
- Competence of existing infrastructure to accommodate increase peak flow event
- Clearcut areas increasing the vulnerability of watersheds
- Increased sedimentation and turbidity
 - Increased cost to providing water treatments
 - Need to increase water storage capacity to ensure consistent water supply
 - Environmental impacts on fish habitat
 - Slope stability and associated slope failure events
 - Visual and ecological impacts of large-scale MPB salvage harvesting

First Nations MPB Assessment

SIBAC recognizes the unique relationship that First Nations have to the forestlands of the Southern Interior, and MPB impacts on these communities must be communicated. In June 2008, SIBAC agreed to provide all six member tribal councils along with CFDC-Central Interior First Nations with funding to complete a report identifying specific concerns and recommendations. These reports will form the First Nation Tribal Council's section within the final SIBAC report. Specific topics addressed are economic, cultural, social, and other impacts as well as recommendations on prioritization of actions and legislation/policy.

Western Economic Diversification

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION INITIATIVE PROJECTS (WED-CEDI)

Following the announcement of the WED-CEDI program in November 2007, it became evident that some groups were having difficulty raising funds for their portion of the project contribution. As a result, the SIBAC BOARD passed a motion to allocate \$150,000 of SIBAC funds to provide funding support for individual WED-CEDI projects. The Board agreed to fund 50% of the CEDI applicants' 10% contribution requirement up to \$10,000 of non-repayable loans. As of December 2008, SIBAC has provided financial support to 18 individual projects ranging from \$1,125.00 to \$10,000.00 with a total of \$96,162.00 of funding assistance. For a list of these projects please see Appendix B in "Progress Report-January 30th, 2009" which can be found at www.sibacs.com.

Community Consultations

From April to August of 2008, the two of SIBAC managers conducted community, industry, and stakeholder consultations in 20 communities throughout the Southern Interior. This process included conference calls with various associations as well as community forums in 13 communities with over 200 participants. Through these conference calls and forums, the following topics of concern were discussed:

TOPIC	CONCERNS
Agriculture	Understanding existing opportunities
Bioenergy	Determination of thresholds, access to fibre, promotion of wood based energy opportunities, and planning for fibre use
Culture & Heritage	Identification and recognition of First Nations' culture and heritage values
Education & Training	Potential job impacts of MPB at municipal levels, identification of job opportunities, natural resource education in schools and the promotion of forestry as a career
Environment, Ecology & Climate Change	Concerns about limited knowledge of environmental impacts and potential air quality etc. (See "ENVIRONMENT" section for more details)
Forest Health	Effects of MPB on other pine species as well as all forest health agents and influence on future forest condition
Harvesting & Salvage	Addressing affected timber in parks and protected areas, concerns with salvage rates and harvesting non-pine species
Legislation & Regulations	Concerns about the stumpage system, parties interested in tenure, and the navigation through multiple layers of legislation and regulatory red tape for First Nations stakeholders
Linkages & Communications	Participants shared experiences and gave updates on MPB infestation and impacts
Private Land & Municipal Land	Addressed concerns lack of funding to address MPB impacts on private land and concerns about hazard trees along rights of way and public property
Program Funding & Access	Complexity of funding sources and limitations for funding to address infestation
Ranching	Market conditions, cost structure of the industry and also impacts of MPB on things including fencing, grasslands and range access.
Rural Development	Participants expressed the need to identify community opportunities, consolidation of government agencies, affordable housing, cost of fuel etc.
Silviculture Investments	Complexity of funding, reforestation investments, fibre studies for alternate use of MPB affected lumber etc.
Timber Supplies	Quantification of the impact of MPB on future timber supplies etc.
Tourism & Recreation	Impact of MPB on recreational use of forestland and the tourism industry
Value Added Forest Products	Access to markets, concerns about the US/CAN dollar exchange rate, access to capital etc.
Wildfire Protection	Lack of capacity to address wildfire protection, wildfire impacts the most serious safety concern when it comes to MPB, risk assessments, fire hazards in parks, staff resources etc.

A more comprehensive record of the community consultation findings can be found in the Progress Report - Jan. 30th, 2009 – Appendix C.