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Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands
Chief Forester's Office

CUT LEVEL DECREASED FOR PRINCE GEORGE TIMBER SUPPLY AREA

VICTORIA – Effective immediately, the allowable annual cut for the Prince George Timber Supply Area will be 12.5 million cubic metres, chief forester Jim Snetsinger announced today.

In 2002 the allowable annual cut for the Prince George TSA was increased from 9.3 million cubic metres to 12.2 million cubic metres due to mountain pine beetle infestation, and further increased to 14.9 million cubic metres in 2004 to encourage more opportunity to recover value from beetle-attacked stands.

The latest allowable annual cut of 12.5 million cubic metres is more than actual timber harvest levels in recent years. Forest licensees operating in the Prince George TSA harvested about 8.9 million cubic metres in 2009 and 9.4 million cubic metres in 2008.

“The infestation has essentially run its course in the Prince George TSA. Licensees will need to continue to focus harvesting on the dead pine for as long as economically possible in order to maximize our mid-term timber supply,” said Snetsinger. “Another key factor in my determination is the need to manage healthy non-pine stands, both as a source of timber and for other forest values such as old growth and wildlife habitat, until the regenerating pine stands have matured.”

The chief forester has determined that about 3.7 million cubic metres of the total AAC will be for non-pine species. Harvest levels will be limited to 875,000 cubic metres for spruce-leading stands, 23,000 cubic metres for cedar-leading stands and 160,000 cubic metres for deciduous-leading stands in the Prince George and Fort St. James forest districts. The other 2.64 million cubic metres is for the incidental harvest of non-pine timber in stands dominated by pine.

The chief forester also noted that Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands analysis shows a significant amount of timber that is considered uneconomic for harvesting under current market conditions. However, if market conditions continue to improve, this same timber could become economically viable and would help ease the mid-term timber supply challenge.

The Prince George TSA contains three forest districts: Prince George, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James. The pine beetle infestation peaked in Prince George and Vanderhoof in 2004 and peaked in Fort St. James in 2006.

The Prince George TSA is one of the largest timber supply areas in the province. It covers nearly eight million hectares from Tweedsmuir Provincial Park along the TSA's southwest arm, up to Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park in the north, and over to Kakwa Provincial Park along the Alberta border. Of the total area, about 3.1 million hectares is Crown forest land available for timber harvesting.

The chief forester's determination is an independent professional judgment based on information ranging from technical forestry reports, First Nations and public input to the government's social and economic goals.

Under the timber supply review, the chief forester or deputy chief forester must determine how much wood can be harvested in each of the province's 37 timber supply areas and 34 tree farm licences at least once every 10 years. A new allowable annual cut may be determined earlier in response to abnormal situations, or postponed for up to five years if an allowable annual cut level is not expected to change significantly.

Copies of the chief forester's allowable annual cut determination are available on the Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands website at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/> or from the Prince George, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James district offices.

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