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## NEWS RELEASE

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

### **CUT LEVEL DECREASED FOR MERRITT TIMBER SUPPLY AREA**

VICTORIA – The allowable annual cut for the Merritt Timber Supply Area has been reduced to 2.4 million cubic metres, chief forester Jim Snetsinger announced today.

The previous allowable annual cut for the Merritt Timber Supply Area (TSA) was about 2.8 million cubic metres and included a temporary uplift of one million cubic metres to address mountain pine beetle infestation.

In recent years, the cumulative percentage of pine projected to be killed in the Merritt TSA has gone from 79 per cent by 2017 down to 65 per cent by 2019. The decrease is due in part to the pine beetle's low survival during the 2008-09 winter, combined with aggressive harvesting.

“Licensees have performed well in targeting pine stands to recover economic value, and the infestation appears to be slowing. The increased rate of harvesting is no longer necessary,” said Snetsinger. “Reducing the total cut and establishing a partition for non-pine will conserve healthy stands needed to mitigate the extent of the mid-term timber supply decrease.”

The chief forester's latest allowable annual cut determination includes a 720,000-cubic-metre partition to limit the amount of non-pine (specifically spruce and Douglas-fir) that can be harvested, while still encouraging spruce beetle management in the Merritt TSA.

The Merritt TSA covers 1.13 million hectares. It includes the Cascade Mountains in the west, the Thompson plateau in the east, the Nicola river system in the north, and the Similkameen river system in the south. Of the total area, 803,558 hectares are 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 ten years. A new allowable annual cut may be determined earlier in response to abnormal situations, or postponed for another 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 <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/> or from the Cascades forest district office in Merritt.

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