



BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Mountain Pine Beetle

The Mountain Pine Beetle is a tiny insect about the size of a grain of rice that attacks and kills pine trees. In summer 2006 unprecedented swarms of Mountain Pine Beetles from the ongoing massive beetle infestation in British Columbia invaded Alberta. Left unchecked, the beetles could kill most lodgepole pine trees throughout the Alberta Foothills, including the forest habitat for several threatened caribou herds. See the Alberta Government news release dated December 8, 2006 for information about the mountain pine beetle: <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/whatsnew/features/061208a.html>

Mountain Pine Beetle and the Hinton Wood Products Forest Management Area

The potential impact of Mountain Pine Beetles on the Hinton Wood Products Forest Management Area (FMA) is enormous. About 70% of the mature trees on the FMA are vulnerable lodgepole pines. That's enough to last almost 70 years at current harvest levels. If beetles kill most of the pine trees, HWP won't be able to salvage and use all the dead trees before they deteriorate. A sea of dead pine trees would have tremendous impacts that last for many decades on all forest values. Values affected include wildlife and habitat, watershed, old-growth, recreation, traditional uses, and fire threat.

Hinton Wood Products has recently developed an interim 5 year MPB Strategy. The Company plans to harvest the most vulnerable pine stands to reduce the potential beetle food supply and slow the spread of beetles into the FMA. The interim strategy will be replaced by the new Forest Management Plan to be completed within the next 2 years. Hinton Wood Products will also cooperate with the Alberta Government to actively respond to MPB when they arrive on the FMA. See the Hinton Wood Products website for a copy of the 5 year plan:

<http://www.westfraser.com/hintonforestry>

Woodland Caribou

Woodland Caribou are a Threatened Species in Alberta. Many of the 19 Alberta caribou populations (herds) are declining in numbers for a complex mix of reasons. The ranges of two Alberta caribou herds overlap the Hinton Wood Products Forest Management Area in the northwest corner. Most of the overlap consists of about 7% of the range of the A la Peche caribou herd, which has about 150 caribou and is ranked "stable" by the Alberta Government. Some caribou from the Little Smoky caribou herd occasionally cross onto the FMA, although most of the Little Smoky herd range is north of the FMA. The Little Smoky herd of about 80 caribou is declining and is ranked "immediate risk of extirpation" by the Alberta Government.

The deferral area consists of all of the currently recognized caribou range on the FMA. This includes a core area used regularly by A la Peche herd caribou and other areas used periodically by A la Peche caribou and Little Smoky caribou.

Alberta created the Alberta Caribou Committee to recommend Alberta Caribou Recovery Plan actions. A subcommittee called the West Central Caribou Landscape Planning Team is developing recommendations for 6 caribou herds, including the A la Peche and Little Smoky caribou herds. Hinton Wood Products is participating in the WCCLPT process. See the Alberta Caribou Committee website for information about the Alberta Caribou Recovery Plan process: <http://www.albertacariboucommittee.ca/>

Forest Management Plan

Hinton Wood Products manages 1 million ha of public lands called a Forest Management Area (FMA) under a Forest Management Agreement with the Alberta Government. As part of the Agreement, HWP is required to prepare a Forest Management Plan (FMP) every 10 years for Alberta Government approval. The FMP describes forest values on the FMA and details the HWP management plan to address the values over the long term. HWP proposes a sustainable timber harvest level and forecasts how the future forest will change in response to harvest, and what that means for all forest values. Examples of forest values evaluated in the FMP are fish and wildlife habitat, water quantity and quality, recreation, and historic/cultural sites.

Hinton Wood Products has produced 5 Forest Management Plans since the Agreement was first signed in 1954. The current Forest Management Plan was approved in 1999 and is due to be replaced in 2008.

Hinton Wood Products is optimistic and hopeful that the commitment to develop a new Forest Management Plan will help us to responsibly address caribou conservation and the Mountain Pine Beetle threat. We appreciate the involvement of the Alberta government and our stakeholders and partners to help us develop cooperative solutions. See the Hinton Wood Products website for a copy of the 1999 Forest Management Plan:

<http://www.westfraser.com/hintonforestry>

Each Forest Management Plan must follow the Alberta Government planning framework. See the Alberta Government website for a copy of the current Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard: <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/forests/>

Foothills Model Forest

The Foothills Model Forest is a non-profit partnership that has provided practical solutions for stewardship and sustainability on Alberta forest lands for 15 years. The outstanding research knowledge and management tools developed by the Foothills Model Forest have been used widely by forest managers in Alberta and other locations. Examples of Foothills Model Forest research programs include the Grizzly Bear Research Program, the Fish and Aquatics Research Program, and the Natural Disturbance Research Program. See the Foothills Model Forest website for more information: <http://www.fmf.ca>

NatureServe

NatureServe is a non-profit conservation organization that provides the scientific information and tools needed to help guide effective conservation action. NatureServe and its network of natural heritage programs are the leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems.

NatureServe represents an international network of biological inventories—known as natural heritage programs or conservation data centers—operating in all 50 U.S. states, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. NatureServe collects and manages detailed local information on plants, animals, and ecosystems, and develops information products, data management tools, and conservation services to help meet local, national, and global conservation needs. The objective scientific information about species and ecosystems developed by NatureServe is used by all sectors of society—conservation groups, government agencies, corporations, academia, and the public—to make informed decisions about managing our natural resources.

For more information about NatureServe see: <http://www.natureserve.org>

West Fraser

<http://westfraser.com>

Hinton Wood Products (a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.) operates a sawmill and manages the 1 million ha Hinton Forest Management Area to produce logs for the sawmill and residual chips for the Company's adjacent Hinton Pulp Mill, an 825 tonne per day NBSK facility. The Forest Management Area is public land managed under authority of a Forest Management Agreement with the Alberta Government.

Management of the Forest Management Area is certified under the Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standard. Certification is described in the Sustainable Forest Management Plan and performance is reported annually in the Sustainable Forest Management Stewardship Report.

Copies of the Forest Management Plan, SFM Plan, and SFM Stewardship Report are located on the Hinton Wood Products website: <http://www.westfraser.com/hintonforestry>