



OKIB Forestry LP

## McGregor Creek Douglas Fir Beetle Infestation

### Communique to OKIB Band Members

January 10, 2019

An infestation of “Douglas Fir Bark Beetle” was discovered in the McGregor Creek Drainage. OKIB Forestry LP’s Forest Licence A91117 is being used to respond to this infestation.

Forsite Consultants Ltd. (Forsite) was hired to assess the area and provide a plan to manage the beetle infestation. In 2017, the first phase of the plan was to fall “Trap Trees” in order to trap beetles and see how bad the infestation was in the area. These trap trees confirmed there was a significant amount of Douglas Fir Bark Beetle in the area. An assessment of the entire area was carried out in 2018 to determine how the beetle was spreading and how best to respond to and try to control the infestation.

The affected areas were broken into three zones that represent the top three priorities with specific management plans, including tree removal, based on the level of infestation. This information was presented to the Band Council and the community in the summer of 2018. The work in the Priority 1 area started in the summer of 2018. The steps are as follows:

*Step 1 Confirm the Infestation:* When inspected it was discovered the trap trees were 100% infected with the beetle and immediate action was recommended to manage the high risk that is present. The risks include further beetle infestation, which will increase the amount of dead trees and increase the risk of wildfires.

*Step 2: Remove Infested Trees and Those At Risk of Infestation:* The trap trees must be removed by March 30, 2019 to prevent the beetle from spreading, as they emerge in the spring and fly and infest adjacent more trees. The plan is to remove the infested trees and the surrounding trees that are at risk of infestation. The trees are being removed in small cut blocks or individually where possible. Hauling of the removed trees started in mid-December 2018 with the haul route including Six Mile Creek Road and Westside Road. This work is being carried out by Interfor Corporation under an agreement with OKIB Forestry LP and should be completed before the end of March, 2019.

*Step 3: Follow Up and Monitor:* Once the trees are removed, Forsite will continue to monitor the area to measure the effectiveness of the tree removal to control the outbreak of Douglas-fir Bark Beetles in the area.

“**Douglas Fir Bark Beetles**” are native to British Columbia and are a natural part of Douglas Fir ecosystems. Left uncontrolled, beetle populations can grow large enough to kill trees and can lead to the loss of larger sections of the forest area, impacting other values and increasing wildfire hazards.

“**Trap Trees**” are a control mechanism known for being a “light hand on the land” approach as Douglas Fir Bark Beetles, unlike some other bark beetles, are very attracted to freshly fallen fir trees. The Douglas Fir Bark Beetle in the area the beetle will attack the downed “trap tree” which can then be removed, so the beetles will not attack the adjacent stand.

For more information, contact Jenelle Brewer, Operations Manager, OKIB Forestry LP at 250-309-4400.