



Reference: 272779

Dec 2, 2022

Gerry Grant, Forest Practices Board Member and Panel Chair
Forest Practices Board
PO Box 9905 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8X 9R1 Canada

Dear Gerry Grant:

We appreciate the important work of the Forest Practices Board (the board) as presented in its report. The board continues to play a critical role in helping B.C. develop sound forest and range practices for the benefit of all British Columbians.

In response to the Forest Practices Board Complaint Investigation on the Management of the Spruce Beetle Infestation near Prince George (FPB/IRC/245), the Ministry of Forests (the ministry) recognizes the importance of the findings and is committed to improving the provincial bark beetle response, and to continue to build and improve upon existing forest health monitoring, and reporting, efforts in British Columbia.

Please find below the ministry response to the board's recommendation:

Recommendation: The ministry should monitor and report annually to the public on BCTS's and licensees' performance to determine whether they are meeting government expectations and implementing beetle action plans.

Efforts are already underway to build on and improve monitoring protocols for bark beetles, to make them more transparent and effective – the ministry will continue to build on this initiative. The Director, Provincial Bark Beetle Response, in collaboration with the Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch, has developed a monitoring protocol to assess harvesting of spruce beetle in the Omineca Region using licensee-submitted timber cruise data to summarize harvesting activity for spruce beetle inside, and outside, the outbreak area. This pilot report for the Omineca region will be made publicly available on the spruce beetle outbreak website before the end of 2022. The ministry is already working to expand this monitoring protocol to the rest of the province for the four major bark beetles (mountain pine beetle, spruce beetle, Douglas-fir beetle and western balsam bark beetle), beginning with the

Kootenay-Boundary region. The goal will be to expand this monitoring and reporting protocol to the provincial scale within a year.

In an ongoing effort to engage with the public and stakeholders, the 6th Annual Bark Beetle Summit took place on November 9, 2022 in Prince George. The summit was a day-long conference-style “summit” using hybrid in-person and virtual format. The purpose of the summit was to inform and engage with professionals, First Nations, and the general public. This was the first year the hybrid model was implemented and was an important step towards making the summit accessible to those outside of Prince George. Registration numbers were just over 300 attendees. Speakers included experts from both the provincial government and academia, speaking on topics focused on future health of forest ecosystems. The 7th Annual Bark Beetle Summit will be planned for fall 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Berg', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Shane Berg, RPF
Assistant Deputy Minister - Chief Forester,
Office of the Chief Forester Division, Ministry of Forests

pc: Mike Hykaway, Assistant Deputy Minister, North Area
Albert Nussbaum, Executive Director and Deputy Chief Forester
Lori Borth, Regional Executive Director, North Area
Rachael Pollard, Director, Forest Science, Planning and Practices Branch
John Huybers, District Manager, Prince George
Al Powelson, Executive Director, BCTS
Laura Chessor, BCTS Liaison



Forest Practices Board

File: 97250-20/21034

January 27, 2023

VIA EMAIL: Shane.Berg@gov.bc.ca

Shane Berg RPF
Chief Forester
Ministry of Forests
PO BOX 9352 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9M1

Dear Shane Berg:

Re: Complaint 21034 – Response to recommendations

Thank you for your December 2, 2022 letter responding to the Forest Practices Board's recommendation in its *Management of a Spruce Beetle Infestation near Prince George* report. We appreciate your commitment to improving the monitoring and reporting protocols for bark beetles.

We reviewed the pilot report that compares harvesting inside and outside of a spruce beetle outbreak area in the Prince George Timber Supply Area. While the report is a good start, it does not fully address our recommendation that the ministry monitor and report annually on the performance of BCTS and licensees to determine if they are meeting government expectations and implementing their beetle action plans.

Specifically, the report does not address:

1. Whether BCTS and licensees prioritize harvesting of stands based on the severity of infestation;
2. The progress made by BCTS and licensees in implementing their beetle action plans;
3. The comparison of the planned and actual geographic distribution of harvesting areas in relation to the beetle action plan;
4. The comparison of planned and actual harvest volumes directed towards spruce beetle-infested stands;
5. The relationship between the spruce beetle harvest data and the cumulative spruce beetle severity within and outside the outbreak area.

Shane Berg RPF
January 27, 2023
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Answering these questions would allow the ministry to report to the public on whether BCTS and licensees are meeting government expectations and implementing their beetle action plans. By improving monitoring and reporting, the ministry can be at the forefront of observing, anticipating, and adapting to changing environmental conditions and evolving social demands.

We also support your intention to expand the monitoring and reporting protocol to other bark beetles affecting BC's forests. This will help the public understand the impacts of bark beetles on BC's forests and how government, BCTS, and licensees respond to them.

We look forward to continued clear and informative reporting to the public and we look forward to monitoring the ministry's progress.

Yours sincerely,



Bruce Larson
Acting Chair

cc Mike Hykaway, Assistant Deputy Minister, North Area
 Albert Nussbaum, Executive Director and Deputy Chief Forester
 Lori Borth, Regional Executive Director, North Area
 Shawn Rice, District Manager, Prince George Natural Resource District
 Al Powelson, Executive Director, BCTS
 Laura Chessor, BCTS Liaison