



For immediate release
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Forest Practices Board finds Interfor properly managed whitebark pine

GRAND FORKS – The Forest Practices Board has finished a complaint investigation into Interfor Corporation's (Interfor) logging practices north of Grand Forks.

The complainant believed Interfor did not properly manage whitebark pine and caused environmental damage during site preparation for planting.

The board found that Interfor planned and implemented special management practices for whitebark pine in the cutblock during its operations from late 2021 into early 2022. The investigation also determined that Interfor's mounding activities – a technique that uses an excavator to scoop and pile soil to create raised planting spots for seedlings – did not cause environmental harm.

"Interfor retained whitebark pine trees, avoided scarring them and preserved the species' natural seed bank," said Keith Atkinson, chair, Forest Practices Board. "Interfor also planted around 5,200 whitebark pine seedlings on the cutblock, incurring extra expenses to help maintain the species into the future."

Whitebark pine is an important tree in the subalpine forests of Western Canada. It plays a crucial role in stabilizing slopes and regulating snowmelt. The species is in decline and continues to face threats from rust, insects, climate change and logging. The provincial government designated whitebark pine as a blue-listed species in 2013, indicating the tree is of special conservation concern.

Government released updated guidelines for retaining whitebark pine in January 2023, after logging on this cutblock had been completed.

"Interfor showed good practices by consulting the most up-to-date guide on operating in areas with whitebark pine. We encourage all licensees to adopt this approach moving forward," Atkinson said.

The cutblock lies within the territories of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, the Okanagan Indian Band, the Osoyoos Indian Band, the Penticton Indian Band, the Splatstin First Nation and the Upper Nicola Band. The board recognizes the importance of these First Nations' historical relationships with the land that continues today.

Learn more:

To read the full report, visit: <https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/IRC255-Whitebark-Pine.pdf>

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