



Carrier Sekani
Tribal
Council



British Columbia
Assembly of
First Nations



Union of
British Columbia
Indian Chiefs



First
Nations
Summit

BC FIRST NATIONS & THE MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE EPIDEMIC

Developing a Strategy and Action Plan & Implementing the "New Relationship"

September 19-20, 2005 – Civic Centre, Prince George

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2005

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council & BC First Nations Leadership Council organize emergency forum to address impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic

Dakelh Traditional Territory/Prince George, B.C. – BC First Nations leaders have organized an emergency forum to deal with the immediate and long-term impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic that is spreading across First Nations' territories and communities in British Columbia at an unparalleled rate.

The forum, to be held **September 19 and 20, 2005** in Prince George, is being co-hosted by the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and First Nations Leadership Council of BC, which is composed of the executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the BC Assembly of First Nations.

Patrick Michell, Chief of the Stelat'en First Nation and Vice-Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council said the initiative will bring together 86 First Nations impacted or potentially affected by the beetle's infestation.

"This epidemic is an extremely serious crisis," stated Chief Michell. "As it runs its course, it will challenge our communities by placing extraordinary pressures on each First Nation's ability to sustain and thrive."

"This coming together of our communities will enable us to address the challenges of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic from environmental, ecological, social, cultural and economic perspectives, as well as assist us to identify economic opportunities now and into the future," said Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

"The Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic creates a set of incredibly large and difficult challenges for all in the impacted areas. First Nations will need to work with the federal and provincial governments and coordinate their efforts with municipalities to meet these challenges head on," said Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit Task Group.

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“The forum will result in a much needed action plan for First Nations as we move forward with the vision set out in the New Relationship document, especially on shared forestry and land use decisions,” said Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Other topics up for discussion include the BC government’s preparations to address the Mountain Pine Beetle crisis and the federal government’s role.

For further comment on the *BC First Nations & The Mountain Pine Beetle: Developing a Strategy and Action Plan* Forum see contact people below. For more information on the forum, visit www.cstc.bc.ca/mpb/.

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