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PEST REPORT

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SUMMARY OF FOREST PEST CONDITIONS IN THE PRINCE GEORGE FOREST REGION, 1994

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This report summarizes the major forest pests active in the Prince George Forest Region, excluding bark beetles in the Mackenzie, Dawson Creek and Prince George forest districts.

Mountain pine beetle, *Dendroctonus ponderosae*

Mountain pine beetle infestations increased in the Fort St. James Forest District, killing lodgepole pine over 13 000 ha in 247 infestations, up from 11 000 ha in 1993. The increase occurred mostly in the Skeena and Sustut River drainages north of Bear Lake. In the McBride Forest District, mountain pine beetle populations decreased to 150 ha from 290 ha in 1993. Sixteen infestations were recorded along McNaughton Lake.

Balsam bark beetle, *Dryocoetes confusus*

In the Fort St. James Forest District, balsam bark beetle killed alpine fir over almost 33 000 ha, up from 25 000 ha in 1993. The increase in area of attack occurred in the Salmon, Mosque and Nation River drainages. Large infestations continue along Bates Range east of Takla Lake, along Silver and Kwanika creeks, the Nation River and Lakes and scattered throughout the Mitchell Range. Populations decreased in the McBride Forest District with 650 ha of current mortality recorded, down from over 2400 ha last year. The largest concentration of infested stands occurred along the south side of Moose Lake outside Robson Park and along the Holmes River.

Douglas-fir beetle, *Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*

The area of beetle-killed trees decreased to 750 ha in the McBride Forest District and 500 ha in the Fort St. James Forest District. Decreases in the size and number of infestations occurred in all areas where mortality was reported last year: along both sides of McNaughton Lake from Valemount south to the district boundary in the McBride Forest District and around Stuart, Pinchi, Tezzeron, and Trembleur lakes in the Fort St. James Forest District.

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Western hemlock looper, *Lambdina fiscellaria lugubrosa*

Successive years of severe defoliation by the looper killed about 40% (range 10-90%) of mainly old growth western hemlock and western red cedar over 35 000 ha. Current defoliation was mapped over 5 000 ha. In the Prince George Forest District, tree mortality occurred over 22 000 ha with current defoliation mapped over 3700 ha. Dead trees were recorded from Purden Lake in the west to Walker Creek in the east, mainly in the ICHvk2 biogeoclimatic subzone. In the McBride Forest District tree mortality and defoliation were recorded over approximately 14 000 ha, up slightly from 12 000 ha in 1993. New areas of defoliation occurred in the Ptarmigan Creek and LaSalle Lakes areas. The largest concentrations of tree mortality were mapped between Ptarmigan and Catfish creeks.

Two-year-cycle spruce budworm, *Choristoneura biennis*

Light defoliation of spruce and balsam stands by the budworm decreased to about 71 000 ha in 1994 from 104 000 ha in 1992, the last year of mature larval feeding. Defoliation was recorded in the Prince George Forest District mostly in the Bowron and Willow river drainages. In the McBride Forest District defoliation was concentrated in the Morkill, Goat, Dore and Milk river drainages.

Forest tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma disstria*

The tent caterpillar defoliated more than 40 000 ha of trembling aspen throughout the region in 1994, similar to the area defoliated last year. In the Prince George Forest District, populations increased for the second consecutive year over nearly 33 000 ha, mostly south of Prince George. In the McBride Forest District, the area decreased after three consecutive years of increase. Severe defoliation occurred over 4500 ha, down from over 16 000 ha in 1993. The feeding was noted from Rider, west of McBride, to Valemount in the east. Almost 1500 ha of severe defoliation was mapped in the Dawson Creek Forest District south of Taylor.

Satin moth, *Leucoma salicis*

For the first time, satin moth has been detected in the Prince George Forest Region. Large moth flights were noted in the Robson Valley from Valemount to McBride in late July. It is possible that some of the aspen defoliation that occurred in the Robson Valley this year caused mainly by the forest tent caterpillar could be attributed to the satin moth. However, assessments in the area during June found no evidence of satin moth larvae within the infestation. This indicates that populations have only recently reached detectable levels. The previous most northerly infestation of the satin moth was Avola in the Wells Gray Park area.

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Large Aspen Tortrix, *Choristoneura conflictana*

For the second consecutive year, the large aspen tortrix has defoliated several thousand hectares of mostly mature trembling aspen in the Nechako River Valley. Completely defoliated aspen trees in scattered patches of 5-500 hectares were noted from just west of Vanderhoof to Fort Fraser. The scattered pattern of infestations is caused by intermixing of farmland and coniferous forests with the aspen stands. Due to the high populations and lack of host material, webbing and feeding of current growth was also noted on white spruce.

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