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June 18, 1976.

SPRUCE BEETLE IN THE NELSON FOREST DISTRICT,

Cliff Cottrell and Bob Erickson

A small infestation of spruce beetle, *Dendroctonus rufipennis*, was recently reported at the headwaters of Cultus Creek (elevation 5,500 feet) on the southwest side of Kootenay Lake. Two five-acre pockets of Engelmann spruce were attacked in 1974. The problem was recognized by a company forester during the winter of 1975-76 and the infested trees were logged by April, 1976. Most infested trees were removed from the area prior to the 1976 beetle flight, but some beetles escaped from several exposed log decks apparently early in May during a period of warm weather. This resulted in a few current attacks on standing trees with egg galleries up to seven inches long by June 11. Some adults, however, were still present in shaded stumps but recent windfelled trees were left as traps to absorb this population.

There have been three known major epidemics of spruce beetle in the Nelson Forest District, namely, 1934 to 1936, 1953 to 1959 and 1964 to 1969, with estimated losses of 3, 9 and 41 million cubic feet, respectively. There is no apparent indication that a major spruce beetle epidemic is imminent, but this incidence serves as a reminder that spruce beetles are a constant threat.

Early reports to the Canadian Forestry Service of spruce beetle attacks or of extensive windfelled spruce trees help in the early detection of pending outbreaks.

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