



Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition

July 2010 Update

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www.sibacs.com

The Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition (SIBAC) is committed to helping communities understand the probable effects of the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic; and to develop and implement appropriate MPB mitigation measures in the southern interior of BC. A membership based organization; SIBAC represents local and First Nations governments from across the southern interior.

Overview:

In October 2009, SIBAC submitted its' final Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) Assessment and Mitigation Plan to the Province of BC. The plan represented two years of work studying the current and expected impacts of the MPB epidemic in the southern interior on the forest sector, the socio-economic health of communities, the environment and First Nations. The SIBAC final report includes 24 recommendations to assist in mitigating the anticipated impacts of the MPB epidemic. Copies of the Executive Summary and full final report are available on the SIBAC website at www.sibacs.com.

The completion of the SIBAC final MPB mitigation report was an important milestone to the real work of taking action that will mitigate the impacts of the MPB epidemic on the southern interior. The SIBAC Board believed that it was vitally important that the organization continued to provide a coordinated voice for southern interior communities on this critical socio-economic and environmental challenge. SIBAC believed that it was important that the organization secure multi-year funding for at least the next three-year period and allocate appropriate resources to implement projects in the priority areas identified by SIBAC for mitigation of MPB impacts on communities and First Nations.

To that end, in the fall of 2009, SIBAC requested that each of its member organizations make a \$5,000 annual contribution to cover the operational costs of the organization. SIBAC also requested additional funding from the provincial government. In December 2009, the Province of BC provided SIBAC with an additional \$450,000 in funding so that SIBAC could begin to develop and implement projects that would address some of SIBAC's priority recommendations.

SIBAC – CURRENT INITIATIVES

SIBAC has identified 6 of their 24 recommendations as immediate priorities. Over the past six months, the SIBAC Board and staff have been working with partner groups to develop and implement projects that will help address these priority issues and recommendations. To assist in developing and selecting projects for SIBAC support, the Board adopted several funding criteria: Strength of Partnership Participation

Regional Inclusion
Project Sustainability
Expert Involvement
Reach of Project
Timing of Project

The following pages provide a brief description of some of the major projects SIBAC is currently supporting or developing. Please feel free to contact the noted project contact person or Dalyce Brandt, SIBAC Administrator for more information on any of the following projects (e-mail: admin@sibacs.com).

Thompson Rivers University - RED TREE Rural Tourism Development Project

Tourism is a major component of the southern interior economy and many communities are looking to the tourism sector to assist with economic growth and diversification in light of probable MPB impacts in the forest sector. As a result, SIBAC has partnered with Thompson Rivers University, Western Economic Diversification and Shuswap Tourism to develop and fund the Rural Economic Development Tourism Research Education Enhancement (RED TREE) project. The three main components of the project include: 1) Assembling, analyzing, producing, and disseminating information materials on tourism product development in small rural communities; 2) Developing and “piloting” new small rural community tourism development resources by working directly with three small interior communities to assist them in tourism product development and 3) Organizing and hosting a major rural tourism conference to facilitate knowledge transfer of best practices for tourism product development. Three “pilot” communities in the region selected for this project were the Town of Princeton, Lytton First Nations and North Shuswap.

Project Contact: e-mail: Red.Tree.Project@gmail.com or on the web: redtree.tru.ca

Bridges – Linking Resources for Community Forests

Community Forest tenures have expanded rapidly over the past six years. For many small rural communities, Community Forests play a significant role in local employment and economic development. The MPB epidemic will ultimately result in a decreased mid-term timber supply in the interior of BC. This has increased community and stakeholder interest in encouraging more value-added wood production in BC. As a result, SIBAC partnered with the the BC Community Forests Association, the Community Futures Development Corporation of Cariboo-Chilcotin, the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition, the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, the University of BC, and the Ministry of Community & Rural Development to fund and implement the “Bridges” project. This project has two major objectives: (i) to develop information and tools that would facilitate movement of fibre from BC’s Community Forests to the Value-added sector and (ii) to identify potential supply chain business opportunities that would benefit Community Forests, Value-added producers and/or rural communities in BC. The project was officially launched in late June 2010.

Project Contact: Larry Stranberg, CFDC of the Cariboo E-mail : happytrails@cfdccariboo.com

Developing a Strategic Framework and Action Plan for the Completion of a Watershed Management Plan for the Kettle River Watershed

SIBAC has partnered with the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Real Estate Foundation of BC and others to design a strategic framework and action plan for the completion of a comprehensive watershed management plan for the entire Kettle River Watershed. The Kettle River provides critically vital environmental, economic and social benefits to the communities and population in its watershed. However, the watershed and river are under significant development pressures. This project will examine the watershed in terms of current use; the predicted impacts from climate change, the MPB epidemic, other environmental factors and future human development; and design a Framework and Action Plan for completion of a full Watershed Management Plan for the drainage.

Project Contact: Grace McGregor, Director Regional District of Kootenay Boundary E-Mail gem9293@gmail.com

My Brothers Place

The northern areas of the Thompson Nicola Regional District have been particularly hard hit by the MPB epidemic. In response to job losses in the forest sector and a desire to encourage economic diversification, a regional citizens group is exploring the feasibility of creating and operating a treatment centre in the 70 Mile house area. The concept of My Brother’s Place is to create a community based transitional housing facility for men (maximum 20 beds) to address issues of addiction and substance abuse and the consequences of that abuse leading to incarceration and/or homelessness. SIBAC provided a small grant to the citizens group to prepare a feasibility study.

Project Contact: Sally Watson, Director Thompson Nicola Regional District e-mail: sallywatson55@yahoo.ca

Gold Country Geo-Tourism Program

The communities of Lillooet, Lytton, Spences Bridge, Cache Creek, 70 Mile House, Logan Lake, Ashcroft, Merritt and Savona have been exploring ways for the communities to work collaboratively to expand tourism in the region. As a result, they formed the Gold Country Communities Society. In the past year or so, the Society decided to fund and operate a Geo-Tourism (geo-caching) program. SIBAC has partnered with Northern Development Initiative Trust and other funders to assist the Gold Country Communities Society in completing the next phase of the Geo-Tourism program. This phase of the project entails identifying key sites of significance within the region, researching and writing interpretive website pages on each location and then utilizing Geo-Tourism to preserve the heritage, educate youth and attract visitors (interested in geocaching) to support local businesses and promote community economic development.

Project Contact: Ida Makaro, Gold Country Communities Society email: imakaro@telus.net.

BC Log Home & Timber Frame Building Manufacturers – Business and Market Expansion Initiative.

BC's Log Home & Timber Frame building industry is a marquee value-added product for BC providing employment throughout the province. Several studies have indicated that BC enjoys an international competitive advantage in Log Home and Timber Frame construction and that there is considerable market expansion opportunity. As a result, SIBAC has partnered with the BC Log Home & Timber Building Industry Association, the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition and the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic Response Division of the Ministry of Community & Rural Development to develop a project to identify and implement actions that would help to expand markets for the sector. Such market expansion would help drive an expansion of BC's Log Home & Timber Frame building sector, resulting in more value-added employment in rural communities.

Project Contact: Gordon Borgstrom, MPB Epidemic Response Division, MCD e-mail Gordon.Borgstrom@gov.bc.ca

The Futures Game Partnership

SIBAC, the Boundary Economic Development Commission (through the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary), the Rural BC Secretariat (Ministry of Community & Rural Development), and the Community Futures Association of British Columbia have developed a partnership to purchase six copies of the "The Futures Game" (a regional scenario planning tool) and to train facilitators to deliver this Game. The Futures Game is a fun and educational tool to encourage community dialogue and strategic planning around long-term community and economic growth. The Game is available free of charge to individuals and groups throughout BC by contacting one of the partner groups.

Project Contact: Dalyce Brandt, SIBAC Administrator e-mail: admin@sibacs.com

Futures Game brochure can be viewed at: <http://sibacs.com/links-resources/>

"Keeping it Clean" Video

During SIBAC's community consultation processes, a concern that was repeatedly expressed throughout the southern interior was the potential impact that the MPB epidemic would have on the hydrologic cycle and drinking water quality. As a result, one of SIBAC's six priority recommendations is that communities, First Nations and both senior levels of government work collaboratively to examine the potential risks that the MPB epidemic poses to watersheds that provide domestic drinking water. To facilitate increased public understanding and dialogue of the potential risks to drinking water quality, SIBAC commissioned the "Keeping it Clean" video. This video educates viewers on the various potential impacts the MPB epidemic and other climate change related factors could have on consumptive watersheds in the Southern Interior. The video can be viewed on the SIBAC website at this link: <http://sibacs.com/videos/>

Green Energy as a Rural Economic Development Tool.

Green Energy development will be a major activity in rural BC over the next decade. Many communities and First Nations are keenly interested in learning how Green Energy development can provide direct employment and economic benefits to small rural communities. As a result, SIBAC has partnered with the other two Beetle Action Coalitions in the province (CCBAC & OBAC) and the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic Response Division to develop a new project on Green Energy. This project has three major objectives: (i) to assist at least three small MPB “at-risk” communities to develop a Green Energy project in their community, (ii) to develop and widely circulate information and resources that will help rural communities throughout the interior understand the opportunities associated with Green Energy development and (iii) to identify potential rural business development opportunities associated with Green Energy developments in the interior.

Project Contact: Gordon Borgstrom, MPB Epidemic Response Division, MCD e-mail Gordon.Borgstrom@gov.bc.ca

In addition to these initiatives, SIBAC is currently working with a variety of partners to develop projects on bio-energy feasibility assessment, watershed mitigation and a strategic rural communications initiative.

COMPLETED SIBAC PROJECTS

Princeton Wood Waste Fibre Supply Analysis Project

Princeton, like most small rural communities is constantly looking for opportunities to diversify its economic base. SIBAC partnered with the Town of Princeton, the Cascades Forest District and the local forest sector to analyze the volume of wood-waste and MPB killed timber in the surrounding region. The overall goals of this project were to define the potential wood biomass economically available in the Princeton area and identify the various opportunities available to utilize the fibre supply. The project also helped refine a web-based MPB planning tool to assess fibre supply location and availability that can now be used in the remainder of the Merritt Timber Supply Area. A copy of the final report is available on the SIBAC website at: <http://sibacs.com/reports/>

Nupqu Fuel Management

SIBAC partnered with the Ktunaxa Nation Council to implement a project to document the collaborative wildfire hazard reduction planning and treatment program led by First Nations in the Cranbrook and Columbia Basin areas. The purpose of this case study was focused on developing forest fuel management plan guidelines specific to First Nations reserve lands. This information, however, is also considered relevant for treatments conducted off reserve lands; this includes planning, permitting, coordinating with adjacent land owners/tenure holders, applying for funding, and utilizing qualified professionals. A copy of the final report is available on the SIBAC website at: <http://sibacs.com/reports/>

Lillooet Wood Pellet Plant Feasibility Study

Lillooet has been particularly hard hit by both the MPB epidemic and changes in the forest sector. As a result, both the Tribal Council and Town of Lillooet have been examining ways to develop new forest related products in the region. SIBAC partnered with the Lillooet Tribal Council and the Town of Lillooet to fund a feasibility study for a Wood Pellet plant in the community. The purpose of this project was for the completion of a feasibility study and business plan report for a wood pellet plant in Lillooet, BC.

“Fighting Back” Video

To encourage wider public understanding of the MPB issue, SIBAC commissioned a short video that explains SIBAC’s mandate and summarizes the priority recommendations of SIBAC’s MPB Mitigation Plan. The video can be viewed on the SIBAC website homepage: www.sibacs.com

**SIBAC Financial Assistance to Regional Western Economic Diversification –
Community Economic Diversification Initiative Projects**

In recognition of the fact that many smaller rural communities and First Nations might have difficulty in raising their proponent's portions of funding to apply for the Western Economic Diversification Community Economic Diversification Initiative (CEDI) Program; in November of 2007, the SIBAC Board agreed to allocate \$150,000 of SIBAC funds to help fund successful CEDI applications. SIBAC agreed to fund 50% of the CEDI applicants' 10% contribution requirement up to a maximum of \$10,000 per project. At the end of the process, SIBAC provided \$124,262 in funding assistance to 22 projects ranging from \$1,125 to \$10,000. The projects receiving SIBAC funding assistance are noted below.

| <u>Project Proponent</u> | <u>Project Description</u> |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Adams Lake Indian Band | Alternate Energy Study |
| Adams Lake Indian Band | Commercial Park Feasibility Study |
| BC Community Forest Association | Brand Marketing |
| City of Rossland | Gondola |
| Council of Tourism Associations | Tourism Strategy |
| Cooks Ferry Indian Band | Memorial Project |
| First Nations Agricultural Association | Training & Certification |
| Gold Country Communities Society | Geo-Tourism marketing & training |
| Kamloops Indian Band | Range Management |
| Kootenay Aboriginal Business Advocate Society | Business Training |
| Kootenay Rockies Reg. Economic Alliance Soc. (KRREA) | Baseline Economic Assessment |
| Lower Nicola Indian Band | Pellet manufacture viability study |
| Merritt Walk of Stars Society | Training & Skill Development |
| Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council (NNTC) | Value added & Bio-energy |
| Okanagan Nation Alliance | Business Facilitation |
| Okanagan Nation Alliance | Nursery Feasibility |
| Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen | Economic Development Strategy |
| Seton Lake Band | Heavy Equipment Training |
| Shuswap Nation Tribal Council | Capacity Assessment |
| Skeetchestn Indian Band | Carpentry Training |
| Upper St'at'imc Language, Culture and Education Society | Culture, Heritage & Tourism |
| Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band | Design for residential lots |