



FHA says Forest Practices Board report is insufficient

(Dunster BC) August 9, 2002—A report released Thursday by the BC Forest Practices Board upholds the Ministry of Forests' (MOF) decision to approve logging in a highly contentious portion of the Rocky Mountain Trench near the community of Dunster. The Fraser Headwaters Alliance (FHA), the conservation group that filed a formal complaint with the Board in 2001, feels the report fails to sufficiently resolve two critical issues contained in the original complaint.

In June 2001, MOF approved a Forest Development Plan amendment submitted by McBride Forest Industries. The amendment included extensive harvesting in the Small River area just east of Dunster. Although the logging was meant to address the mountain pine beetle, later investigation by the Fraser Headwaters Alliance revealed that beetle populations existed at normal, low levels.

“Mountain pine beetles are a natural part of forests,” says Roy Howard, FHA’s Executive Director. “Using such extensive harvesting to treat low beetle populations is not only unnecessary, it can be detrimental to other environmental values.”

When the company released its plans for the area, it drew an unprecedented response from the community. Local residents packed several heated community meetings to air concerns regarding domestic water supplies and visual quality.

FHA also contends that the approval of MFI’s plan was contrary to management objectives established by the 1991 Local Resource Use Plan (LRUP), a government-led public planning process. Howard feels MOF’s disregard of the LRUP constitutes a betrayal of public faith: “If government wants the public to invest time and energy in planning, we need to have some guarantee that the outcomes will be respected.”

McBride Forest Industries has completed logging the first half of the 1,800 truckloads of timber contained in the amendment. The company’s most recent Forest Development Plan includes eight more cutblocks in the same area—an estimated 1,000 additional truckloads of wood.

The Board’s report can be obtained online at www.fpb.gov.bc.ca. For more information, contact Roy Howard, Fraser Headwaters Alliance Executive Director, at (250) 968-4490, or roy@fraserheadwaters.org.