

Priority actions include:

- Provide all communities in the region with a more direct role in forest management and in the benefits derived from the region's forests;
- Incorporate community resilience considerations into major forest management decision-making;
- Improve and enhance transportation infrastructure and services;
- Provide more equitable and diverse access for existing and new users of fibre;
- Increase the range of products generated from the region's forest resources. Start by determining which high value and locally wealth-generating products are best suited for production from this region's assets;
- Ensure that dead pine stands are managed in a manner which optimizes their economic and environmental utility;
- Create a positive and competitive business climate for bio-energy development through an integrated policy, regulatory, tenure, and pricing environment;
- Provide information to the public on the strength and importance of the forest sector and the collective efforts to grow future opportunities; and
- Grow the forests that we will need in the future with focused, large scale investments in a targeted reforestation program.



*These actions and overall implementation of this strategy will require key and timely decisions and actions by the provincial and federal governments. OBAC communities look forward to working with key implementers to make the vision a reality.*



To obtain a copy of the *Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy* or for information on the Coalition please visit our web site at [www.ominecacoalition.ca](http://www.ominecacoalition.ca) or contact us:

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## Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy



November, 2008

## What is OBAC?

In September 2005 the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) received financial support and mandate from the BC Government. OBAC is building priority topic strategies and a diversification plan and taking action that supports long-term sustainability for the Highway 16 communities impacted by the mountain pine beetle. OBAC is led by the local government leaders of the region and is accountable to local communities and the provincial government. OBAC works in partnership with First Nations, professionals, researchers, plus all sectors and levels of government.



## Why is OBAC Important?

British Columbia is currently experiencing the largest recorded mountain pine beetle outbreak in recorded history. This forest health epidemic is causing widespread mortality of lodgepole pine, the interior's most abundant commercial tree species. Strategies must be developed to mitigate the social, economic and environmental consequences of this epidemic now and in the future.



## What is the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy?

The forest sector is and will continue to be a complex and vitally important component of the economy of the OBAC region. Forest companies in the region are among the most efficient, capital intensive manufacturers of dimension lumber and panel products in the world. These manufacturers rely on a stable, reliable

supply of raw material, and reliable transportation of goods to market. In response to the mountain pine beetle epidemic, many larger companies recently invested in upgrades to focus on milling dead pine. Actions are required to strengthen and diversify the forest sector and enable it to take full advantage of the considerable volume of dead pine which is currently available. The forest that we are growing and managing now must also meet the needs that we will have in the future.



There is plenty of wood fibre to go around and we need to make room for new entrants into the forest sector while we continue to manufacture traditional forest products so that we can produce a much wider range of timber and non-timber forest products. This will be built upon the region's considerable forest and human resource assets. This will generate new wealth for the region and should lessen the impact of future downturns in the traditional lumber markets making our forest sector and our communities more resilient.

## Vision, Objectives and Recommendations

OBAC communities envision a diverse forest sector that: builds upon the sustainable use and regeneration of forests; produces a diverse range of timber and non-timber forest products; encourages a diverse range of business models and partnerships; balances the need for quick response to changing forestry and market circumstances with the need for business certainty; operates under regulations that cultivate innovation; and continues to manage the forest resource for all forest values including ecological and cultural wellbeing.



Six objectives must be attained for OBAC communities to realize this vision. These are:

1. Increase community benefits from forest resources.
2. Diversify and strengthen the forest sector.
3. Form stronger working partnerships and communication among First Nations, local communities, government, and the forest sector.
4. Increase the ability to train and retain the required work force.
5. Create a climate of ownership and pride in the region's forest resources.
6. Ensure the forest is managed to meet future needs and opportunities.



OBAC presents four recommendations that support diversification and sustainable development of the forest sector and forest resources. The recommendations are further developed with over 20 proposed actions for future planning and implementation of the strategy. The recommendations are:

1. Increase the benefits that communities can rely upon from forest resources and forestry.
2. Ensure that the forest sector remains a strong economic contributor to the region.
3. Recognize the pine beetle killed stands as a valuable asset which should be used to full potential before their commercial value is depleted.
4. Increase awareness and understanding of the long-term viability of the forest sector.

