



# Newsletter

April 2007

## OBAC Receives Beetle Funding

OBAC Executive Committee Member Mayor Bernice Magee was pleased to receive a cheque for \$900,000 on behalf of OBAC, handed to her at a news conference on April 12 by Minister of Forests and Range, Honourable Rich Coleman. The funds will enable OBAC to deliver the 2007-2008 Work Plan. During the announcement, Minister Coleman said, "The Province is committed to supporting communities affected by the mountain pine beetle. As we carry out the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan [www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain\\_pine\\_beetle](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain_pine_beetle), we will continue to draw on the expertise of people living in the communities to manage the impacts of the beetle and strong communities with healthy economies." OBAC Vice-Chair Councillor Don Bassermann thanked the Minister on behalf of the OBAC Board. "OBAC has a number of ideas to keep economies healthy," said Bassermann. "There is lots to be done on the initial priorities of alternative energy, mineral exploration and retention and recruitment of people in the region." OBAC General Manager Elizabeth Andersen stated, "This money gives OBAC the resources to move forward. You don't raise people's expectations and say you're going to do something if you don't know you're going to have the money and resources to do it. Now we have the money, now we can move forward."



*Minister of Forests and Range, Rich Coleman presents a cheque to Burns Lake Mayor Bernice Magee*

## Province to Focus on Beetle Reforestation

As part of a multi-faceted response to the MPB epidemic the province will focus an increasing amount of attention on reforestation activities in areas affected by the mountain pine beetle epidemic over the next several years. BC's Assistant Deputy Minister - MPB Response, Ray Schultz, says the focus is based on several pillars. These include:

- Realizing the collateral reforestation benefits of the accelerated salvage program in all areas logged by industry that are reforested by law;
- Ramping up the Forests For Tomorrow program over the next several years to address more areas outside of licensee obligations hit hard by the beetle; and
- Researching and then implementing the role of advanced regeneration that already exists under many dead pine stands.

The Forests For Tomorrow program ([www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/fft/](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/fft/)) is a provincial government reforestation program launched in 2004-2005 to address areas hardest hit by the devastating forest fires of 2003 and areas impacted by the MPB epidemic that are outside of industry obligation to reforest. The program has seen a steady increase in the number of hectares reforested each year and is anticipated to reach a peak of about 25,000 hectares in 2010-2011. Once the areas hit by past forest fires have been reforested, more the



activity will be targeted to areas hit by the mountain pine beetle including those in the OBAC region. This year, the Forests For Tomorrow program will target about 6,000 hectares for planting with about 300 hectares in MPB areas in Northern Interior Forest Region. This equates to about 7.2 million seedlings. Schultz says the amount of reforestation work in MPB areas will increase in future years as the forest fire areas are dealt with.

If reforesting areas hit hard by the beetle wasn't challenge enough, a new problem is emerging. Ministry of Forests and Range staff have noticed a sharp increase in rabbit populations in many recently planted areas and they happen to like eating new seedlings. Preliminary research suggests the increased rabbit population is a direct result of the changing landscape in pine forests hit by the beetle. The dead pine trees allow more light to reach the forest floor which has resulted in more plant and young tree growth. In turn this increased under-growth provides shelter and hiding spots for the rabbits and hence the increased population. Forest researchers are currently trying to determine how best to deal with this new challenge. Next month's OBAC Newsletter will examine some of the research being carried out on natural regeneration of forests in pine stands killed by the beetles.

### OBAC to Focus on Communications

A large part of the OBAC 2007-2008 Work Plan involves enhanced communications with communities in the OBAC region. Participants of the spring 2005 dialogue sessions stated clearly that they want OBAC to help people understand what's going on, both with opportunities and challenges in the region and with the OBAC initiative. OBAC General Manager Elizabeth Andersen has just completed a series of project updates across the region to City Councils and Regional District Boards. "Everywhere I went, people showed a real interest in OBAC and the work ahead," said Andersen. "People appreciate that OBAC is being guided by local government leaders who can be contacted on a regular basis." OBAC is looking forward to the official 'kick-off' in May and June of work on the Alternative Energy and Mineral Exploration strategies. OBAC plans to begin work on these strategies with a series of topical speakers presentations and local-level discussions in OBAC communities.

### Red and Blue Beetle Art Exhibition in Saik'uz

The Saik'uz First Nation near Vanderhoof will host the Red and Blue Beetle Art Exhibition May 28 to June 11, 2007. The College of New Caledonia Nechako Campus ([www.cnc.bc.ca](http://www.cnc.bc.ca)) and Arts Unlimited are hosting a juried exhibition that explores the theme of the Mountain Pine Beetle. Artists, writers and composers in the central interior were invited in March and April to submit up to three of their works in any medium of their choice.

'Red and Blue' refers to the red of the trees and the blue of the stained wood. "We believe that artists, writers and composers often have a special insight and way of looking at things" states Annerose Georgeson, Exhibition Coordinator. "Mountain pine beetles are making a significant impact on the forests of the central interior of the province resulting in a unique and important current event.

The CNC Nechako Campus and Arts Unlimited look forward to presenting the images, words, music and emotion of the MPB epidemic from the artists in the region." The deadline for delivery of submissions to CNC Nechako is noon, May 7, 2007. More information can be obtained by contacting Annerose Georgeson at: [georgesona@cnc.bc.ca](mailto:georgesona@cnc.bc.ca). As part of OBAC Communications, OBAC is supporting this special event to encourage broad understanding and discussion in the region about the impacts and opportunities associated with the MPB epidemic.



## ‘Virtual Front Door’ - Updates to the OBAC Website

Look for updates to OBAC’s website in the coming days. The website is OBAC’s principal communications hub for sharing information and receiving feedback and input from people living in the region. The website will provide new and updated information, more links and photos, and a host of other changes. A new ‘Events’ section will include information and dates about the topical speakers series on Mineral Exploration and Alternative Energy coming to OBAC communities in May and June. OBAC General Manager Elizabeth Andersen states, “The OBAC website is an essential support to maintaining contact with people throughout the OBAC region. OBAC will continue to publish its monthly newsletter but the website is the ‘virtual front door’ to OBAC which allows people to access information and see and share ideas.”  
[www.ominECAcoalition.ca](http://www.ominECAcoalition.ca)



## OBAC Seeks Feedback on Newsletters

This April newsletter is the sixth that we have produced and we would like to hear from you, our audience. Please drop us an email at: [info@ominECAcoalition](mailto:info@ominECAcoalition) and let us know what you like, what you would like to see more of and what else you want to know about OBAC and its activities. Tell us what you see as the challenges and opportunities. What does a bright future in the OBAC region include? Please use the contact information below and continue to visit our website to find out more about OBAC.



*OBAC Board members join BC Government MLAs at funding announcement news conference, March 2007.*

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