



JANUARY 21, 2022 – LAKE BABINE MEMBER UPDATE: CANFOR CUT BLOCKS IN MORRISON LAKE AREA AND SPRUCE BARK BEETLE MANAGEMENT

Canfor will be logging cut blocks in the Morrison Lake Area this winter to address urgent forest health and human safety concerns. There is major spruce bark beetle infestation in most of these cut blocks, plus pockets of spruce budworm and mountain pine beetle. The spruce bark beetle is spreading, killing trees. Trees attacked by spruce bark beetle cannot be left standing for years the way they can with mountain pine beetle: they dry out within 2-3 years at which point they become hazards and lose their economic value.

The logging in the Morrison Area needs to happen this winter to

- reduce the risk of wildfire in Lake Babine Territory and the threat to our members, our communities of *Nedo'ats* (Old Fort) and Fort Babine (*Wit'at*), and our *yintah*;
- reduce blowdowns which are dangerous for humans and which can block wildlife travel corridors and streams; and
- reduce the spread of spruce beetle before the 2022 spring beetle flight into more of Lake Babine Territory and in LBN's forestry tenures.

Lake Babine Chief and Council approved this logging program at their December 15, 2021 Council meeting for these urgent forest health and safety reasons. All Council members in attendance supported the decision.

Canfor knows how important the Morrison Lake area is to Lake Babine, culturally and environmentally. They will improve on standard logging practices, including by:

- a) leaving bigger buffers than required by law along some streams and in the "Special Harvest Areas" identified in Canfor's Forest Stewardship Plan to avoid any impact on salmon and salmon habitat.
- b) following the best practices for culturally modified trees (CMTs) in Lake Babine Nation's 2019 Archaeology Policy.
- c) setting up wildlife debris piles in logged areas to help support habitat for fur-bearing animals, to the extent that this can be done without supporting the spread of spruce beetle; and
- d) de-activating logging roads once the program is done.

Lake Babine will participate in monitoring to ensure that Canfor meets these commitments. Canfor will also deliver firewood to Fort Babine.

Lake Babine Chief and Council agreed to the logging because it is urgently needed for forest health and human safety. In the longer term, though, Lake Babine Nation needs more than consultation. It needs to get into the drivers' seat. Therefore, under section 7 of the Foundation Agreement, Lake Babine is pursuing business partnerships and forestry tenure in the Morrison Lake area that would give the Nation control over forestry. Lake Babine will also be able to pursue legal protections for this area and/or the return of lands around Morrison Lake to the Nation as part of Aboriginal title implementation under section 6 of the Foundation Agreement.

For more information about Lake Babine work under the Foundation Agreement, please contact Councillor Verna Power.

For more information about Canfor's logging program, please contact LBN Forestry's General Manager, Duane Crouse.