



Government of Yukon

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Forest Health Report shows spruce beetle infestation in decline

WHITEHORSE – The spruce beetle infestation in southwest Yukon is now 20 years old. The infestation has been in a steady decline since 2004, yet it does not appear ready to collapse completely, as noted in the recently released 2009 Forest Health Report.

"Forests have always been important to the Yukon way of life for their cultural, economic, and recreation values," Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Patrick Rouble said. "The research and monitoring carried out each year provides invaluable input into the management of Yukon forests for their long-term health."

The finding is published as part of the 2009 Forest Health Report recently released by the Forest Management branch. The annual report, which presents the results from last year's forest health monitoring program, shows that the ongoing spruce beetle infestation in southwest Yukon is active only on the fringes of the original infested area. The recent spruce tree mortality was mapped over an area of 3,000 hectares (ha), a reduction from the 5,000 ha mapped in 2008.

The 2009 Forest Health Report details the results of aerial surveys conducted in the Teslin-Whitehorse – Haines Junction region and the Dawson region. In addition, forests surrounding a number of Yukon communities and along highways were also surveyed last year.

"The significance of this annual report increases every year as it allows professional foresters to see the trends in forest health that occur over the long-term natural cycles of Yukon's forests," Forest Management branch director Diane Reed said.

This year's report also includes a supplementary report about the pest risk analysis of the bark beetle infestation resulting from the Southern Lakes flood in 2007.

The Forest Management branch monitors forest health using a risk-based approach. This approach provides an overview of Yukon-wide forest health issues and the information required to evaluate risks and determine the appropriate action to manage them.

In 2010, aerial surveys are being conducted in the Watson Lake – Ross River region as well as continuing to monitor the beetle infestation in southwest Yukon.

To read the 2009 Forest Health Report or to learn more about how the Yukon government is managing the forests for the future visit www.forestry.gov.yk.ca

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