



PROJECT REPORT

# The Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network

## A survey of user awareness, use, and satisfaction

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past five years, research efforts related to the mountain pine beetle have intensified dramatically. Funded by the FIA–FSP Provincial Forest Extension Program (PFEP), FORREX Forest Research Extension Partnership (FORREX) has been charged with the responsibility of synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying user information needs, enhancing awareness and application of extension practices, and providing users with the knowledge and tools they require to sustainably manage mountain pine beetle-affected forest lands.

Beginning in 2006, as part of the MPB Extension Project, FORREX created the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network in an effort to achieve the objectives laid out under PFEP. In July 2006, the Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Warehouse was launched alongside the Mountain Pine Beetle Events Manager. Housed under FORREX's Natural Resources Information Network (NRIN), the Bibliographic Warehouse and the Events Manager were designed to provide users with up-to-date information, reports, and event announcements related to the mountain pine beetle. In July 2007, FORREX assumed responsibility for the third component of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network: the Bark Beetle Links website. Originally created by the MacGregor Model Forest, [www.barkbeetlelinks.ca](http://www.barkbeetlelinks.ca) categorizes and provides links to most known mountain pine beetle resources on the internet.

In January 2008, FORREX launched a survey designed to evaluate awareness and utilization of both the individual components of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network and the Network as a whole. This report presents the results of the survey.

### 1.1 Objectives

The survey was composed of 30 questions designed to measure the awareness and utilization of both the individual components of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network and the Network as a whole (Appendix 1). The survey also queried respondents on the quality of the services offered and the purposes for which the services were used. Questions were posed in a variety of formats, including yes or no, multiple choice, ranking scale, and open-ended.

The survey was designed to poll all forest practitioners, researchers, and other professionals working in the context of mountain pine beetle, and not just those who are already familiar with the services provided by FORREX. The results of this survey will be used in further development and promotion of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network.

The survey was also designed to promote and increase awareness of the Network. The survey questions included links to the various services in question, allowing respondents to familiarize themselves with the Network if they were previously unfamiliar.

## 1.2 Methods

Distribution of the on-line survey (created using Zoomerang™ software) reflected the different privacy policies associated with the various professional organisations in Alberta and British Columbia. The survey contained the same questions and formatting, but was sent differently to the two groups as follows.

- For members of the College of Alberta Professional Foresters Council (CAPF) and the College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists (CAPFT), a preliminary email was sent out (Appendix 2) asking them to respond via email if they were interested in participating in a survey related to Mountain Pine Beetle. The email request for participation was sent to 748 foresters and 546 forest technologists for a total of 1294 people. The nature of the survey was not described in the email so as not to bias survey results. The survey was then emailed to the seventy-four (74) people who replied that they would be interested in participating.
- For British Columbia, the survey was distributed to a list of 276 contacts selected at random from a master list of 2970 members of Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP), the Association of Professional Biologists of BC (APBBC), the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA), the Alberta Institute of Agrologists (AIA), the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC), the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC), the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative (FNMPI), and the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition (SIBAC), as well as faculty members in the forestry departments at Simon Fraser University, Thompson Rivers University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and the University of Northern British Columbia. Contacts on the master list were limited by fields of expertise and/or geographic regions related to the current mountain pine beetle epidemic.

The survey was not posted on the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network nor in any FORREX circulations or publications to avoid survey bias by specifically targeting existing FORREX clients.

## 2 RESULTS

Surveys sent to the College of Alberta Professional Foresters/College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists were completed by 55 respondents with 6 additional respondents partially completing the survey, resulting in a response rate of 5%. Surveys sent to the list of 276 British Columbia contacts were completed by 41 respondents with 2 additional respondents partially completing the survey, yielding a response rate of 16%.

The 104 surveys submitted provide an excellent picture of the awareness of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network in British Columbia and Alberta. However, information on use and quality of the Network resulting from this survey is limited, as the majority of respondents were previously unfamiliar with the Network and its individual components. Nonetheless, many suggestions for further development of the Network were submitted in the general thoughts and

comments section of the survey after respondents had a chance to briefly review the Network services (see Appendices 3 and 4 for detailed comments).

Results from both surveys have been synthesized separately unless otherwise indicated.

## 2.1 Awareness

In the first question on the survey, 22% of all survey respondents indicated that they were previously familiar with the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network (Table 1). This statistic varied slightly between the two survey groups, with 18% of the respondents from the CAPF/CAPFT indicating that they had heard of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network or any of its components, compared to 26% of the respondents from the British Columbia survey group indicating the same.

*Table 1 Have you heard of any of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network extension services provided by FORREX?*

	British Columbia		Alberta		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
MPB Bibliographic Warehouse	6	14	6	10	12	12
MPB Events Catalogue	7	16	7	11	14	13
NRIN Catalogue	3	7	1	2	4	4
Bark beetle links website	10	23	10	16	26	25
I have not heard of any of these services	32	74	50	82	82	78

The survey also asked respondents to identify how they became aware of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network (Table 2). Respondents from Alberta had heard of the Network via word of mouth (43%), the FORREX website (29%), and general web browsing and FERIC/FORREX Operations Extension Specialists (14%). Respondents from the British Columbia group indicated similar trends, with 25% learning of the Network via word of mouth, 25% via the FORREX website, and 25% from “Other” sources. The greatest difference between the two surveys groups was the role of LINK, the FORREX newsletter. Forty-two (42) percent of the British Columbia group became aware of the Network via LINK, whereas no respondents from the CAPF/CAPFT indicated LINK as a source for information. Of those who indicated “Other” as their primary information source for the Network, the majority made the additional comment that the survey itself was their primary source of information.

Table 2 How respondents heard about the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network services\*

	British Columbia		Alberta		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Colleague/Word of Mouth	3	25	6	43	9	35
Radio	0	0	1	7	1	4
Postcard Advertisement	0	0	1	7	1	4
General Web Browsing	0	0	2	14	2	8
FORREX Website	3	25	4	29	7	27
LINK	5	42	0	0	5	19
FORREX Listserv	1	8	1	7	2	8
FORREX Extension Specialist	1	8	1	7	2	8
FERIC/FORREX Operations Extension Specialist	1	8	2	14	3	11
Other	3	25	4	29	7	27

\* Respondents were allowed to select multiple sources (i.e., all answers that applied).

## 2.2 Use

Because the majority of surveys respondents had not previously heard of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network, survey questions designed to measure use of the Network and its components yielded little information. From the CAPF/CAPFT survey group, only two respondents indicated that they had used any of the Network services, one having used the network only once and the other having used the Network at least ten times in the last six months. From the B.C. survey group, only three respondents indicated that they had used any of the Services, and all had used them only once. The following synthesis combines the results from both survey groups.

### THE MPB BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATATBASE

Three respondents indicated that they had used the Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Database. One user indicated that they were searching for a specific publication, while one user indicated that they were searching for information on a particular topic. Two respondents were able to find information that was useful to them. One respondent used the ‘Tips on Searching’ link. None of the users had any difficulty interpreting their search results.

### THE MPB EVENTS CATALOGUE

Three respondents also indicated that they had used the Mountain Pine Beetle Events Catalogue. Two respondents had used the Events Catalogue to search for a particular event, and two respondents to see what events were scheduled.

**THE BARK BEETLE LINKS WEBSITE**

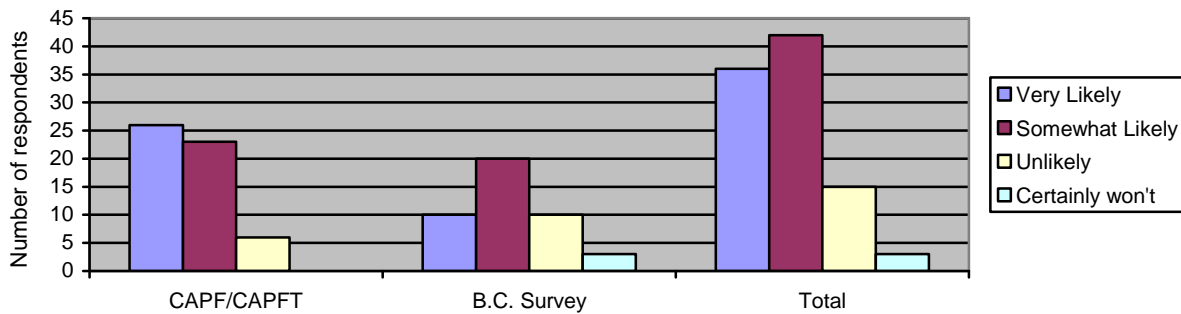
A total of three respondents indicated that they had used the Bark Beetle Links Website. Two respondents indicated that had used the website seeking information on non-governmental organizations, and two indicated that they were searching for general mountain pine beetle background info. One respondent used the website for information on mountain pine beetle research projects, and one respondent used the website to find information on federal and provincial programs.

**2.3 Quality**

As previously mentioned, the majority of surveys respondents had not previously heard of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network, and thus, survey questions designed to measure quality of the Network and its components yielded little information. Six respondents rated the quality of the services housed under the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network. Two rated their experience as fair, three rated their experience as good, and one rated their experience as excellent.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood that they would use the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network in the next three months (Figure 1). Forty-seven (47) percent of respondents from the CAPF/CAPFT indicated that they were very likely, 42% indicated that they were somewhat likely, and 11% indicated that they were unlikely to use the services in the next 3 months. Twenty-three (23) percent of respondents from the British Columbia survey group indicated that they were very likely, 44% indicated that they were somewhat likely, 23% indicated that they were unlikely, and 7% indicated that they were certain that they would not use the services in the next 3 months.

**FIGURE 1** Based on your awareness of the MPB Information Network, how likely are you to access it in the next 3 months?



Given the opportunity to comment on why respondents were unlikely to use the services, 13 indicated that the topic never had been or was no longer relevant to their current job duties or research areas, while 5 indicated that they prefer information from other sources and search methods.

### **THE MPB BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATATBASE**

Of the three respondents who indicated that they had used the Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Database, none indicated that they had any difficulty interpreting their search results. One respondent suggested that the format in which the search results were displayed was discouraging to use. It was suggested that search results be displayed in standard citation format that shows the authors, the title, the date, and the type of publication.

### **THE MPB EVENTS CATALOGUE**

Of the three respondents who indicated that they had used the Mountain Pine Beetle Events Catalogue, two indicated that they were able to find information that was useful to them, while one was not. One respondent suggested that all events be included in a general list, and that users need not search for individual events, given the limited number of events available to view.

### **THE BARK BEETLE LINKS WEBSITE**

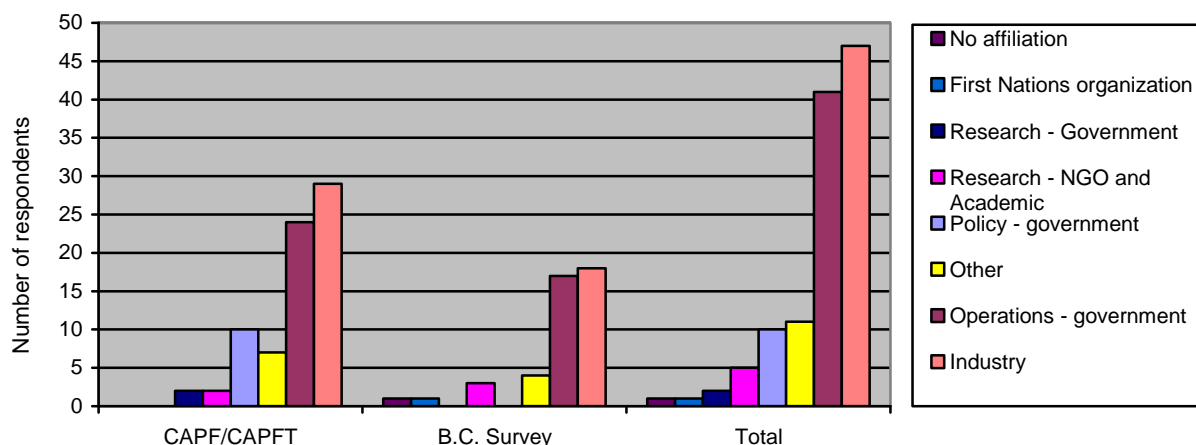
Of the three respondents who indicated that they had used the Bark Beetle Links website, all found that the website easy to navigate and indicated that it contained the information they were seeking.

## **2.4 Respondent Demographics**

Forty-two (42) of the 43 respondents from the CAPF/CAPFT indicated that they were working in the Alberta, while 59 of the 61 respondents from the British Columbia survey group indicated they were working in British Columbia. The following synthesis is the result of combined data of 104 respondents from both survey groups. Fifty-eight (58) percent of respondents primarily work in Alberta, 24% primarily work in Southern Interior British Columbia, 15% work in Northern Interior British Columbia, 1% primarily work in Coastal Southwest British Columbia, and 2% categorize the primary region in which they work as “Other.”

The majority of respondents work in industry (39%), while 35% work in government operations, 8% work in government policy, 5% work in University or NGO research, 2% work in government research, and 1% work in First Nations organizations. One respondent indicated that they had no work affiliation, and 10% classified their work as “Other.”

FIGURE 2 Which sector(s) do you work in?



### 3 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While the survey failed to provide significant statistical data on the use and quality of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network, the open comment sections throughout the survey have provided FORREX with valuable feedback and suggested improvements for its services (see Appendices 3 and 4 for specific comments). The majority of respondents from British Columbia indicated that the Network would have been more useful had they been aware of it previously. Only 26% of respondents indicated that they were aware of the network despite the variety of efforts by FORREX to increase awareness of the portal. Awareness efforts have included a postcard advertisement which has been distributed at workshops, conferences, and other events, regular updates in the Forest Resources Dynamics (FRD) Listserv, advertisements on radio and in the Association of BC Forest Professional Magazine, an article in FORREX’s quarterly newsletter LINK, and outreach by FERIC and FORREX Extension Specialists. It appears that these efforts have only been moderately successful, especially when compared to the results from Alberta respondents of which 18% indicated awareness of the network and the services provided. No major efforts to increase awareness of the MPB Information Network have specifically targeted users in Alberta. This is discouraging as it would seem to indicate that the awareness-building efforts in British Columbia have only resulted in a net increase in awareness of 8%.

Suggestions for improvement of the format of the Bibliographic Index and the Events Manager from both survey groups are similar to suggestions made by FORREX members, and improvements to the Network are already underway.

By and large, this survey suggests that better marketing of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network is needed, especially in Alberta where interest in the topic is expanding. One of the respondents from Alberta indicated that the information in the Network would also likely be useful to forest managers in Saskatchewan. In addition, changes to the format of the services need to be made to make them more user-friendly and encourage more frequent use.

## APPENDIX 1

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Have you heard of any of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network extension services provided by FORREX? Please check all that apply.  
If you have not heard of any of the MPB information network extension services listed below, please indicate such, and then go to question 26
  - a. Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Warehouse
  - b. Mountain Pine Beetle Events Catalogue
  - c. NRIN's complete catalogue listing
  - d. Bark Beetle Links Website
  - e. I have not heard of any of these services
  
2. How did you hear about these services? Please check all that apply
  - a. Colleague/Word of Mouth
  - b. Radio
  - c. Postcard Advertisement
  - d. General Web Browsing
  - e. FORREX Website
  - f. LINK, the FORREX newsletter
  - g. A FORREX Extension Specialist or Staff Member
  - h. A FERIC/FORREX Operations Extension Specialist
  - i. Other, please specify
  
3. Have you ever used any of the Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network extension services? If **No**, please go to question 26
  
4. If Yes, approximately how many times in the last 6 months?
  
5. Which elements of the Network have you used? Please check all that apply.
  - a. Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Warehouse
  - b. Mountain Pine Beetle Events Catalogue
  - c. NRIN's complete catalogue listing
  - d. Bark Beetle Links Website

If you have used the **Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Warehouse**, please answer the following questions. If you have not, please [click here](#) to go to the next set of questions

6. Were you searching for a specific publication (e.g., for a specific title or by a specific author)?  
Yes/No

7. Were you searching for information on a particular topic (e.g., management options)?  
Yes/No

8. Were you able to find information that was helpful to you?  
Yes/No

9. Did you use the **Tips on searching** link?  
Yes/No

10. Did you have any difficulty interpreting the search results?  
Yes/No

11. Did you use the **need help interpreting the results** link?  
Yes/No

12. For what purpose did you use the **Mountain Pine Beetle Bibliographic Warehouse**?  
Please check all that apply.

- a. General MPB background literature
- b. Operational level literature
- c. Ecosystems/biological literature
- d. Socio-economic literature
- e. Other, please specify

13. General thoughts on the bibliographic warehouse and suggestions for improvement

If you have used the **Mountain Pine Beetle Events Catalogue**, please answer the following questions. If you have not, please click here to go to the next set of questions

14. Were you searching for a particular event?  
Yes/No

15. Were you searching to see what events were scheduled?  
Yes/No

16. Were you able to find information that was helpful to you?  
Yes/No

17. General thoughts on the MPB events catalogue and suggestions for improvement

If you have used the **NRIN Complete Catalogue Listing**, please answer the following questions. If you have not, please click here to go to the next set of questions

18. Were you able to find information that was helpful to you?  
Yes/No

19. General thoughts on the **NRIN Complete Catalogue Listing** and suggestions for improvement

If you have used the **Bark Beetle Links Website**, please answer the following questions. If you have not, please proceed to question 25.

20. Was the website easy to navigate?  
Yes/No

21. Did the website contain the information you were seeking?  
Yes/No

22. Was the website content up-to-date?  
Yes/No

23. For what purpose did you use the website? Please check all that apply.

- a. General MPB background information
- b. Information on MPB research projects
- c. Federal and Provincial program information
- d. Commercial information
- e. Community information
- f. Non-governmental organization (NGO) information
- g. Other, please specify

24. General thoughts on the **Bark Beetle Links** website and suggestions for improvement

25. How would you rate your overall experience with the various services offered within the **Mountain Pine Beetle Information Network**?

- a. Miserable
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

26. Based on your awareness of the MPB Information Network, are you:

- a. Very likely to access it in the next 3 months
- b. Somewhat likely to access it in the next 3 months
- c. Unlikely to access it in the next 3 months
- d. Certain you won't access it in the next 3 months

27. If you don't plan to access the Network in the future, please share with us why not (e.g., barriers to access, preference for other searching methods, non-applicability of topic).

28. Which sector(s) do you work in?
- a. Industry – licensees and private consultants
  - b. Operations – government
  - c. Research – government
  - d. Research – non-government and university/college
  - e. Policy – government
  - f. Policy consultants, conservation organization, or industry association
  - g. First Nations-affiliated organization
  - h. No affiliation
  - i. Other, please specify
29. Please indicate the region in which you primarily work:
- a. Northern Interior British Columbia
  - b. Southern Interior British Columbia
  - c. Coastal Southwest British Columbia
  - d. Victoria
  - e. Alberta
  - f. Other, please specify
30. We welcome your general feedback and suggestions for improving the MPB Information Network.
31. Name and organization (optional):

## APPENDIX 2

### **INTRODUCTORY EMAIL TO THE COLLEGE OF ALBERTA FOREST PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS AND THE COLLEGE OF ALBERTA PROFESSIONAL FOREST TECHNOLOGISTS**

Subject: Mountain Pine Beetle survey participation request

*CAPF IS CIRCULATING THIS TO MEMBERS IN AN EFFORT TO SUPPORT THE SURVEY BUT PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY.*

*WE ENCOURAGE MEMBERS WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH THE MPB TO PARTICIPATE AND ASSIST FORREX WITH THIS USEFUL INITIATIVE.*

Greetings

My name is Al Wiensczyk and I work for FORREX, a British Columbia based non-profit organization whose goal is to help people develop science and knowledge-based solutions to complex natural resource challenges. We are currently looking for professional foresters and forest technologists from Alberta to participate in a short on-line survey with regards to a topic area related to the current Mountain Pine Beetle infestation. If you would be willing to participate in our survey please send an email to [alan.wiensczyk@forrex.org](mailto:alan.wiensczyk@forrex.org) by January 25<sup>th</sup> indicating your interest and we will email you the URL for the survey and provide more survey details. People will be asked to please complete the survey by mid-February. This note is purposely vague in regards to the specific MPB-related topic area so as not to bias the survey results.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely

Alan Wiensczyk

Ecosystem and Stand Management Extension Specialist

FORREX - Forest Research Extension Partnership

Phone: (250) 614-4354

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Website: [www.forrex.org](http://www.forrex.org)

FORREX envisions a society of continuous learners making decisions in support of sustainable ecosystems and communities”

## APPENDIX 3

### INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS FROM B.C. RESPONDENTS

8. Were you able to find information that was helpful to you? [MPB Bibliographic Warehouse]	
#	Response
1	Search engine approach okay for looking for specifics (and if search engine can detect) but when looking generally it is very discouraging. Need a web page with catalogue available in different formats (e.g., topic areas with list, by author, by date). I prefer to glance over a list to see what is present rather than searching on unknown.

13. General thoughts on the bibliographic warehouse and suggestions for improvement	
#	Response
1	Need general lists to see big picture. Search enables such to be created but makes it seem more complicated. For references I like to see upfront a more complete citation (author, date, title, source). I find just the title frustrating as you get simple brochure like documents mixed with more complex research documents.

17. General thoughts on the MPB events catalogue and suggestions for improvement	
#	Response
1	again a general list would be better given that there are not a large number of events

19. General thoughts on the NRIN Complete Catalogue Listing and suggestions for improvement	
#	Response
1	Same issues as beetle. Wish to see a full citation first rather than a title and some of the text.

27. If you don't plan to access the Network in the future, please share with us why not (e.g., barriers to access, preference for other searching methods, non-applicability of topic).	
#	Response
1	not relevant to work area
2	NOT NEEDED
3	preference for other searching methods
4	no interest
5	N/A
6	It is currently integral to my job duties. If I do access the Network it would be purely for my own interest.
7	Interest is turning to other beetles. MPB attack is past our area. Will have to deal with aftermath though...fire hazard etc.
8	never heard of it.
9	MPB infestation is waning in the area and we are moving on to other matters.
10	Until this survey I was completely unaware of the portal.

30. We welcome your general feedback and suggestions for improving the MPB Information Network.

#	Response
1	Too early to provide feedback
2	I think the best way to get the information out about the network is via email. Somehow you got my email to ask me to do the survey - that same source would have been good to use to distribute the fact that the network existed.
3	May have been vaguely aware of MPBIN but have met my needs for information in other fashion. Might have used if somehow awareness of site is kept on my mind.
4	The site wasn't as full service as I thought it should be. I would have like to see a webpage that had a menu structure dedicated to the MPB Information Network (rather than FORREX).
5	I found it somewhat odd that I should find out about this network from a reminder e-mail to fill out this survey.
6	Who knew?
7	There's likely some good information in the site. I unfortunately haven't had the time to peruse it yet.

## APPENDIX 4

### INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS FROM CAPF/CAPFT RESPONDENTS

27. If you don't plan to access the Network in the future, please share with us why not (e.g., barriers to access, preference for other searching methods, non-applicability of topic).	
#	Response
1	It is less relevant to my current position than my last jobs
2	No need at this point.
3	I am no longer researching the topic
4	Not really applicable to the work I am doing right now
5	Change of duties means I'm no longer involved with MPB planning
6	I WILL be accessing it.
7	I have looked up information on MPB on other websites. I have also attended a workshop on MPB in Hinton, AB, presented by ASRD and West Fraser.
8	Non-applicability of the topic, unless I have a specific MPB question.
9	I am working in more of the operational control aspect, coordinating the resources which will do level one control procedures in my management area.
10	We have several individuals in our site Forest management group that are working the details on containment, research etc. I get my direction and information from them

30. We welcome your general feedback and suggestions for improving the MPB Information Network.	
#	Response
1	One issue that I noticed coming from BC to Alberta was a lack of communication between the two. A list of contact information for "experts" or even area ministry representatives may make it easier for foresters new to the issue to make contact with people with answers. On that avenue I would definitely make an attempt to make this information available to foresters in Saskatchewan.
2	MPB is not in my working area yet however, I would suggest this website information be distributed to Information Officers or Forest Health officers so that they can advise the area staff.
3	I just became aware of the network today
4	This survey did not work properly in my Firefox 2.0 browser. Icons did not fully download and I fear it's incomplete.
5	I am hoping the network is up to date with relevant Alberta information. Thanks for the hard work.
6	Just taking a quick look through the links etc., I believe that the portal will be useful for reference and looking at how the issue is being dealt with.
7	I am a registered professional forester with the College of Alberta Professional Foresters. I may be wrong, but I do not recall seeing much if anything about the Network other than the invitation to participate in this survey on the CAPF website.
8	Not sure where you are promoting the site. I do MPB analysis on timber supply in Alberta and was surprised to hear this info source existed.
9	Perhaps, if not already done, the FORREX network could receive greater awareness through the College of Professional Foresters of Alberta membership.
10	I look forward to using the network in the future.