

Mountain Pine Beetle and Healthy Forest Issues



To learn more about our forest health issues or to join us in the Colorado Forestry Association, please visit: www.coloradoforestry.org

Members of the Colorado Forestry Association would like you to understand the issues surrounding the catastrophic forest insect infestations that are now striking all Colorado forests. We must begin with a clear understanding of the facts and must all work toward the common goal of restoring the health, vigor, and long-term sustainability of our forests. Together, we can accomplish this goal before it is too late. The Colorado Forestry Association (CFA) was founded in 1884 and is the Colorado chapter of the National Woodland Owners Association.

The Problem

Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) is currently attacking limber, lodgepole, ponderosa pine and isolated Engelmann spruce within lodgepole stands. It is MORE than just pine beetles – there are numerous insects attacking all species of forest trees in Colorado.

Mountain pine beetles and blue-stain fungus are the knock-out combination for killing trees.

There is ample evidence that MPB has killed ponderosa pines in Grand County, in southern Wyoming, and on the Front Range. MPB moves from lodgepole pines to Ponderosa pines *best* in the places where lodgepole mix with ponderosa pine.

When assisted by wind, MPB can fly 62 miles per day to the next host trees. They were found as high as 2600' above the canopy in British Columbia, Canada.

Mountain pine beetle larvae have glycol in their bodies. This is similar to the antifreeze in your car. It takes extreme cold, -30 degree F for 14 days, to kill the larvae.

Pine trees at any elevation are susceptible to attack.

Pine trees greater than 1 inch in diameter are susceptible.



The Impacts

The quality and quantity of Colorado water is at stake.

Green trees guarantee clean water.

Infrastructure (roads, power lines, water storage and delivery systems) integrity requires healthy forests.

Future degradation of forests will dramatically limit hiking, biking, off-roading, fishing, hunting, and skiing in the forest. As dead trees fall, trails will clog, wildlife movement will be impeded, soil erosion will increase and fire danger will increase.

Fuel loads will build on the forest floor as the dead trees fall in coming years. This will result in catastrophic wildfire killing fire fighters, residents, and visitors, and sterilize soil, destroy homes, and damage infrastructure.

What Can Be Done Now

Adult mountain pine beetle emerge from June through September. The needles do not fade to red (lodgepole)/yellow (ponderosa) until the summer following the attack. The typical flight season is mid-July to mid-September. The 2008 flight extended into October.

Continued on next page

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Cutting red trees down does not contribute to control of the MPB. If the beetles are still under the bark (usually in pupa or callow adult stage when the foliage has faded) they must be killed to prevent them from flying out of that tree to infest new trees. If the beetles have already flown to new host trees, it is too late. The newly infested trees must be found and treated.

Treatment can include: removal from forested area, chipping, or debarking.

Preventive spraying does work. It works best in stands that have been thinned, pruned and when applied by a conscientious applicator.

Insects are only a part of forest health: Healthy forests require management.

The health (wellness) of a forest is measured by its vigor (age), diversity (number of tree species), and stocking (trees per growing space).

Wood markets drive and sustain healthy forests. The bottom line: BUY and USE COLORADO WOOD. One of the greatest reasons the insect problem has exploded has been a lack of active forest management that utilizes Colorado's forestry products. We have no market to support sustainable, sensitive tree harvesting in the state.

There is a lack of forest landowner management efforts from both private and government forest land managers.

Fire mitigation efforts cannot keep up. Waiting for a forest fire to "solve the problem" is not a viable alternative.

Forest over-growth and over-population are significant parts of the problem. Even without insect infestations, our forests are not healthy.

