

Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund Helps Our Future Forests

1.5 Million Acres of Colorado's Forests Affected by Mountain Pine Beetle
Tree mortality from the current mountain pine beetle (MPB) infestation is unprecedented in Colorado's recorded history. Since the infestation began in 1996, it has been intensifying and spreading to new areas.



Willow Creek Pass: Photo on the left taken in 2005; on the right in 2007. Although proactive forest management would not have stopped the current MPB epidemic, it would have resulted in more young forests that are resistant to MPB.

To date, approximately 1.5 million acres of lodgepole pine have been infested in Colorado. The total acreage affected represents the vast majority of the state's pure lodgepole pine forests. However, not all of the infestation is occurring in stands comprised of predominantly lodgepole pine; some of the MPB-infested acreage is in mixed forest types that have a lodgepole pine component.

Nearly 1 million acres of lodgepole pine were infested in 2007 alone. More than half of these acres occurred in areas that were previously unaffected.



Fall colors comprised of beetle-killed lodgepole pine and aspen trees paint the landscape on Berthoud Pass.

Beetle epidemics are a natural part of forest ecosystems, but the old age of many of the state's lodgepole pine forests makes them susceptible to large-scale epidemics. Old forests, drought, lack of forest management, years of fire suppression and warm temperatures all have a role in fueling this epidemic.

At current rates of spread and intensification, it is likely that MPB will kill the majority of Colorado's *mature* lodgepole pine trees within the next 3-5 years. However, younger lodgepole pines will survive and continue to grow.

Mountain Pine Beetle Spreads

Pine forests in Larimer, Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Lake counties all experienced MPB increases from 2006 to 2007, primarily in lodgepole pine forests. More than 100,000 additional acres were infested in Larimer and Jackson counties in 2007.



The MPB epidemic has moved from the Western Slope to counties along the Front Range.

In areas where the epidemic first started, MPB has killed most of the mature pines and beetle populations have decreased.

The Real Costs

The state's economy could be affected by the epidemic in several ways. Eighteen of Colorado's 24 ski areas are affected by bark beetles, which can detract from ski experiences. Dead and burned forests also could impact non-ski related tourism, as well.

Fostering Healthy Forests

The current epidemic is a symptom of unhealthy forests and it underscores the need for landscape-scale forest management, which will help make forests more resilient to wildfire and insect and disease epidemics in the future.



A commitment to essential forest management will stimulate the development of markets for forest products, which can offset the cost of managing our forests.

The role of CSFS is to treat priority acres on state and private lands for the protection of life, property, communities, critical infrastructure and watersheds. In addition, CSFS promotes long-term sustainable forest management to reduce the impacts of insect and disease outbreaks and wildfire, and foster more resilient forests for the future.



Removing beetle killed trees reduces fire hazards, promotes healthy growing conditions and enhances wildlife habitat.

How You Can Help

Your voluntary donation to the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund will help shape the next forest and nurture the natural environment that we all depend on and enjoy.

Donations will be used to remove dead and dying beetle-infested trees on lands that are owned and managed by the State of Colorado, which will improve the health of our forests today and for future generations.

[Click here](#) to donate to the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund.

This link will take you to the Warner College of Natural Resources "Make Your Gift" page. Follow the instructions and choose the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund.

