

BEETLE BULLETIN #2

This is the second of four “Beetle Bulletins” authorized by BMFPD in 2009. Wildfire and beetle infestation are closely associated threats. Thinning the forest makes fire defense easier and also increases the health of the trees, making them somewhat more resistant to beetles. A dead and dying forest is tinder for a wildfire.

WHAT’S AT STAKE IN THE BEETLE BATTLE?

Literally, the life of the forest as we know it. Our trees are green now, but you don’t have to travel very far west to appreciate the possibility of losing nearly every **large or mature pine** tree in our fire district. While the loss of aesthetic and property values may be the first reaction, life safety issues follow. Wildfire risk is high while the needles are still on the dead trees. When the red forest turns grey, fire hazard decreases for a time. But as the dead trees fall, danger from both fire and injury from falling trees rises. Although removing beetle-hit trees can be expensive, threats to the infrastructure (power lines, houses, **recreation areas**, roads, vehicles,) could require an expenditure far higher than the cost of mitigating for wildfire and beetles.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

1. **Look for “Faders,”** trees that are changing from pale green to straw colored. They may house beetles that will mature and fly to infest new trees. By the time the trees have turned red, the beetles have often gone on to kill neighboring trees.
2. **Check trees for pitch tubes.** That 70 degree weather we had this winter encouraged early flights by bark beetles. We’ve already found fresh hits by Mountain Pine Beetles, which usually don’t fly until July or August! Drying pitch tubes from beetle attacks last fall signal an infested tree that must be removed immediately to prevent the spread of the epidemic.
3. **Act QUICKLY to remove AND TREAT infested trees.** Simply cutting the trees doesn’t help. They must be stripped, chipped, or shipped – out of the district! Boulder County has established “Sort Yards” offering free disposal of beetle-hit trees. It is too late to try a “solar” treatment for beetle eradication. This should be started in the fall to be successful. Get expert advice before trying it.
4. **Call BMFPD Mitigation Services at 303.444.0235 for estimates and advice.**
5. **Write beetlebusters@gmail.com for a free inspection of your trees.**

COME TO THE BEETLE BUSTER SEMINAR, SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 9-3!!!

Everyone is welcome at this free training session, held at Station One in Pine Brook Hills. Bring a sandwich; we’ll provide drinks and cookies. There is no obligation to become a Beetle Buster. If we are to protect our forest, EVERYONE needs to know how to recognize signs of bark beetle infestation and what to do about them. Misinformation, which is widespread, encourages the epidemic to be widespread as well.

SPACE IS LIMITED. PLEASE RESERVE YOUR PLACE BY WRITING TO BEETLEBUSTERS@GMAIL.COM. Call Suzanne Adams at 303.449.0997 for more information. THANK YOU!

For further information on the western bark beetle epidemic, visit “News and Information” page at <http://www.coloradoforestry.org>.