

Why Are They Here?

Mountain Pine Beetle



Mountain pine beetle (MPB) is native to the temperate pine forest with a range extending from Mexico to central British Columbia. Infestations occurred in Southern Alberta only when populations were expanding in their main range. Winter temperatures extinguished these populations.

Warmer than normal winter temperatures over the past several years allowed beetles to expand further north and east into habitats previously unsuitable. We cannot rely on the possibility of cold weather extinguishing current populations.

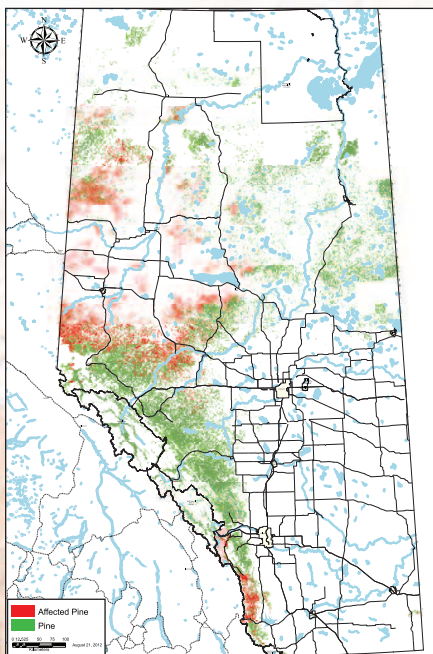
In 2006 strong winds carried beetles approximately 400 km from central B.C. to the Grande Prairie and Peace River region. In 2009 another inflight from B.C. occurred throughout Grande Prairie, Peace River, Whitecourt and Slave Lake areas.

60 per cent of Alberta's forests are in the prime MPB susceptibility range of approximately 80 – 120 years old. Normally only 15 per cent of trees should be in this age range. Effective wildfire control (protection of human values, public safety) in our past contributed to forests showing low diversity in age class.

Currently in Alberta more than 1.27 million hectares of forest have sustained some level of MPB damage. This figure represents about 20 percent of the more than six million hectares of forest at risk of MPB infestation.

It is unlikely that MPB will disappear from Alberta's forests. In some areas of the province MPB will be an issue that needs to be managed now, and further into the future. Management will continue to be adaptive to respond to current situations.

Pine Affected by Mountain Pine Beetle in Alberta



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