

Black Hills Forest Initiative Activities (Private Lands)

FY 2012 was the first year of implementation for Governor Dauggaard's Black Hills Forest Initiative. The initiative was designed to provide much needed assistance to landowners affected by the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation and Forestry Division (SDDA) administered the program. This program was administered for a 3-year period, FY2012-FY2014.

The program consisted of:

- 1) Identification of priority areas that were severely impacted by MPB;
- 2) Surveying private properties within priority areas to identify MPB infested trees;
- 3) Work with counties to survey and identify infested trees outside of priority areas;
- 4) Provide cost-share to landowners to treat or remove infested trees;
- 5) Provide information to private landowners and the public.

Survey and Marking. The SDDA contracted with the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts (SDACD) to provide personnel to survey and mark infested trees on private lands within priority areas. The division provided training to SDACD crews, and trained crews from counties and cities that also surveyed properties to mark infested trees for FY2012. During the seasons of FY2013 and FY2014, the counties focused their efforts on Forest Service lands and the private lands were left to the state. The marking effort on private lands resulted in:

- 186,695 acres surveyed
- 3,848 private owners assisted
- 363,982 infested trees marked

Information was sent to landowners that participated in the survey and marking program that contained cost share assistance forms and procedures, a list of contractors, a list of private professional foresters, and maps showing locations of marked trees on their property.

Cost Share Assistance.

- 960 landowners
- 189,175 infested trees treated

Another 851 landowners treated 86,290 infested trees without cost share assistance.

Outreach and Education. MPB workshops were presented in the fall and spring throughout the Black Hills that attracted 1,500 landowners over the three years. The website <http://www.beatthebeetles.com/> was developed for the public to get current and local information on mountain pine beetle in the Black Hills.



2012 Aerial Photography

Aerial Photography. The division coordinated an effort to obtain high-resolution aerial photography to more accurately assess the progression and severity of the epidemic. Contributors included US Forest Service, National Park Service, State of Wyoming, and Neiman Enterprises. A team of analysts from the division, the US Forest Service, and Neiman Enterprises completed analysis of the photos. Aerial photo analysis revealed:

- 30,000 acres infested in 2012
- 33,000 acres infested in 2013

Other Activities

Dr. John Ball (SDDA) and Kurt Allen (USFS) continue to work on current and new techniques for treating infested trees. Their results are used to ensure that we are using and recommending efficient and effective treatments for the Black Hills area.

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Training survey and marking crews



Typical map of property and infested trees provided to landowners after survey and marking



Dr. John Ball inspects trees treated for MPB