



NEWS RELEASE



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US FOREST SERVICE AND COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF FOREST HEALTH SURVEY

DENVER, Jan. 14, 2008 — The US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service announced the results of the 2007 forest health annual aerial survey today. Survey results reveal that the bark beetle infestation affected about half a million new acres in 2007, bringing the total number of acres of infestation up to 1.5 million since the first signs of outbreak in 1996.

“Dead and dying trees that were isolated to five northern Colorado counties last year can now be seen in some Front Range areas, as well as southern Wyoming,” said Rick Cables, Rocky Mountain Regional Forester for the US Forest Service. “Working with our many partners to mitigate impacts to high-value areas from the bark beetle epidemic is a top priority for the Forest Service.”

Although bark beetles are a natural part of lodgepole pine ecosystems, warm winters and the drought of recent years have intensified the problem — and provided an ideal environment for the beetles to multiply and spread.

“Restoring forest health and reducing fire danger across such an expansive area requires an investment in human and financial capital on the part of all stakeholders including land management agencies, local communities, private landowners, environmental organizations and elected officials in order to be successful,” said Jeff Jahnke, director, Colorado State Forest Service.

The US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service are committed to working with diverse partners, communities and private landowners throughout the state to address forest health issues. The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative and the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership represent dozens of organizations that are implementing on-the-ground projects to protect high-value areas such as communities, popular recreation destinations, transportation corridors and water supplies.

In addition, legislation introduced and passed by Colorado’s state and federal legislators has directed much-needed funding to accomplish priority projects in critical areas in order to protect lives and property and improve forest health.