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Abstract

Wildlife/danger tree assessment in unharvested stands attacked by mountain pine beetle in the central interior of British Columbia

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This extension note outlines work that was part of a broader study designed to collect baseline forest structure data in the Sub-Boreal Spruce dry cool biogeoclimatic subzone (SBSdk) of the Lakes Timber Supply Area (TSA). This data will help to assess the future ecological impacts of the mountain pine beetle. A primary component of our research was to determine the safest possible work or recreation window for individuals planning entry into stands killed by the mountain pine beetle. The provincial Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment criteria were used to determine the types and frequency of danger trees in these stands. Data collected included species, height, diameter at breast height, and the presence or absence of danger tree characteristics for each mature tree. The majority of the trees in this study were classified as either class 1 (alive and healthy) or class 3 (recently dead). One mountain-pine-beetle-killed tree had fallen. Approximately 85 stems per hectare, or 5.5% of all trees, had a defect considered potentially dangerous. Most defects were found in the smaller diameter classes. The study area was significantly affected by mountain pine beetle; areas of high use (e.g., recreation-, cultural-, or work-related) may require specific mitigation activities to ensure user safety.

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