

Fires, Bark Beetles, and Healthy Forests



Approximately 21 million acres of America's forests are at catastrophic risk to fires and bark beetle outbreaks.

Red areas represent coincidences of risk by fire and insect-caused mortality.



Fires and bark beetles play a critical role in the development, aging, and rebirth of entire forests. They can also kill trees on thousands of acres when a forest is unhealthy. In 2002, wildland fires burned over 7.1 million acres and bark beetles caused tree mortality on over 14.2 million acres of public and private lands.

The risk of wildland fire and extraordinary insect- and disease-caused tree mortality remains high in many areas because of past fire suppression practices, overcrowded forests, damage from snow and wind storms, and unprecedented drought. These risks jeopardize human lives and properties, wildlife habitats, and water resources.

Healthy, actively managed forests are more resistant to bark beetle attacks and severe fires.

They have the capacity for renewal, for recovery from a wide range of disturbances, and for retention of their ecological resiliency while meeting current and future needs of people.

Working with other Departments and agencies; State, local, and tribal governments; and the public, the USDA Forest Service is protecting communities and restoring forest and rangeland health, including completing over 1,000 rehabilitation, restoration, and insect and disease prevention and suppression projects in 2002.

For more information about healthy forests, fires, and bark beetles, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/HFI.shtml>.

For information on how to protect your property and community, see <http://www.firewise.org>.



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FS-755
May 2003

A HEALTHY FOREST PROMOTES A HEALTHY COMMUNITY