



NEWS RELEASE



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US FOREST SERVICE AND COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE RELEASE RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL FOREST HEALTH AERIAL SURVEY

The Mountain Pine Beetle, Spruce Beetle and Aspen Decline are Conditions of Concern

DENVER, Jan. 16, 2009: The US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service released the results of the annual forest health aerial survey today revealing three insect and disease conditions of concern on forested lands:

1. The spread of the mountain pine beetle in Colorado from 2007- 2008 affected 400,000 new acres, bringing the total number of acres impacted to nearly 2 million since the outbreak was first detected in 1996.
2. Spruce beetle infestations are a concern statewide and were detected on 64,000 acres in southern Colorado.
3. The decline of large aspen groves has been a concern for a few years. The 2008 survey adjusted its methods to focus on tree mortality and damage resulting in 542,000 acres detected throughout the state.

“The aerial survey gives our managers a landscape view of areas of concern where we can focus projects and research” said Rick Cables, Regional Forester, US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region. “Foresters routinely monitor insect infested and diseased trees to help prioritize projects consistent with management objectives, including public safety. Epidemics that affect the forest on a landscape level, like the mountain pine beetle, require a strong and coordinated effort among all of those impacted by this infestation.”

“Forest health restoration and fire risk reduction are priorities for the Colorado State Forest Service, and the aerial survey helps us determine where to focus resources to most effectively achieve those priorities,” said Jeff Jahnke, state forester and director, Colorado State Forest Service. “The aerial survey also is a major tool in the development of the annual report on ‘The Health of Colorado’s Forests,’ which is used to inform forestry legislation in Colorado.”

Legislation introduced and passed by Colorado’s state legislators and congressional delegation has directed much-needed funding to accomplish priority projects that help protect lives and property and improve forest health.

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Every year the US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service conduct an aerial survey to observe trends in insect and disease conditions on forest lands. The data and images gathered from these surveys provide forest managers a 'birds-eye-view' of conditions that may be observed on the ground to determine the most suitable action to mitigate the impacts.

References:

- US Forest Service, Bark Beetle web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bark-beetle/>
- Colorado State Forest Service: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>
- Colorado 2008 Forest Health Aerial Survey Press Kit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/news/>

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