



## South Dakota Mountain Pine Beetle Suppression Program Plan FY2016

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Forestry (RC&F) plan for mountain pine beetle (MPB) suppression during the MPB treatment year 2015-2016 is structured for a collaborative all lands response as directed by SB 152. An appropriation of \$750,000 was provided by the legislature for this effort, which is estimated can survey, mark, and treat 20,000 acres. Other funding sources include a \$300,000 MPB suppression grant from the US Forest Service State & Private Forestry that can be used on state and private lands. The grant funds plus remaining funds from previous year's state appropriations will be used to complete another 20,000 acres of MPB suppression efforts for a target of 40,000 acres surveyed and treated. Efforts will focus on Custer State Park, other state land, private land, and Black Hills National Forest land. This plan provides guidance for use of MPB suppression funds.

### **Aerial Imagery**

RC&F has contracted with Sanborn Map Co Inc. to acquire aerial imagery of the Black Hills of SD and WY. The imagery will be acquired as early as possible in August or September, 2015. Contributors to the cost of acquisition include RC&F, State of WY, Black Hills National Forest (BHNF), and Bureau of Land Management. The imagery will be analyzed to map the expansion of MPB during the 2014 flight by identifying faded pine trees and ultimately help direct suppression efforts. Analysis will be completed by RC&F, WY State Forestry, and Neiman Timber Co.

### **Priority Areas**

RC&F has selected three priority areas and seven potential timber sales throughout the Black Hills for the focus of this year's survey and marking efforts. The purpose of establishing priority areas is to focus MPB suppression efforts to get the most value out of limited funds. These areas represent the collaboration with members of the Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group.

The primary priority areas contain approximately 27,689 acres of land area for potential treatment.

The total acreage within the priority areas is beyond our projected working capacity for a single season. Private landowner participation has averaged near 50 percent in the past. Assuming 50 percent of private acres are signed up the total area to be surveyed and marked will be 16,474 acres. This is a ratio of 65 percent private lands to 35 percent BHNF lands. This is the ratio we will use for planning.

The secondary priority area will be private lands in Pennington County that have signed up for this year.

Surveying and marking will begin October 1, 2015. The areas that historically receive and retain the most snow will be completed first.

All work on National Forest lands will be coordinated with the local district ranger.

**Maitland Priority Area (Northern Hills RD)**

This area includes 4,893 acres of privately owned land and 1,000 acres of National Forest. Suppression tactics on National Forest lands will include cutting and chunking and/or removal of mountain pine beetle infested trees. National Forest land within 300ft of participating private lands in this area will be surveyed and infested trees marked. Private lands will be given instructions to sign up for the adjacent lands treatment program.

**Strawberry Priority Area (Northern Hills RD)**

This area includes 1,648 acres of privately owned land and 48 acres of National Forest. Suppression tactics on National Forest lands in this area will be cutting and chunking. All National Forest land within 100 feet of participating private lands in this area will be surveyed and have infested trees marked. Tree marking and/or cutting will not occur on National Forest lands outside 100 feet from a private land boundary. Private lands will be given instructions to sign up for the adjacent lands treatment program.

**Custer Priority Area (Hell Canyon RD)**

This area includes 14,842 acres of privately owned land, and up to 908 acres of National Forest. The private lands will be the main emphasis since the majority of the National Forest had or is having management accomplished through the Vestal project. We will survey private lands that sign up for the program along with the areas of National Forest lands within 300 feet of the Custer State Park property boundary that have been cleared for this project. Trees may be marked beyond 300 feet from CSP boundary on National Forest if the group of infested trees starts within the 300-foot area of National Forest. Suppression tactics on private will include all approved treatment methods, and National Forest lands will include cutting and chunking and/or removal.

**Expedited Shooting Star Project (Hell Canyon RD)**

This is a proposed timber sale area on NFS lands south of Custer, SD, and adjacent to the Star Academy West campus. The sale area is approximately 1,890 acres that was not recently cut in commercial harvest. The area is within the Custer Priority Area boundary and adjacent to state and private lands. The intent is to have RCF use MPB suppression funds to contract with the South Dakota State Historical Society Archaeological Research Center (ARC) to complete the necessary heritage surveys and reports in the areas where they have not yet been completed. Once the surveys and reports are completed and reviewed, the goal is to have the area thinned in commercial harvest prior to bug flight 2016.

**Goalie & Crosscheck Timber Sale Units (BHNF Northern Hills RD Special Projects)**

This area is comprised of two adjacent timber sales. Within these sale areas, approximately 2,200 acres of cutting units will be marked to remove green infested trees, where infestation levels are near 50%. The intent is to have these units marked by the middle of October so the sales can be sold and harvested prior to MPB flight 2016. Harvesting will be completed by Forest Service contract with no treatment costs to the State.

**Small Timber Sales & Adjacent Private (BHNF Mystic RD Special Projects)**

This area is comprised of five small timber sale cutting units. The five sales make up approximately 2,150 acres, and are directly adjacent to 741 acres of private lands in Pennington County to be surveyed and marked for the removal of green infested trees prior to bug flight 2016. These landowners will be given instructions to sign up for the private lands treatment program. Once these sales and private lands are marked, harvesting will be completed by Forest Service and private contracts with no treatment costs to the State.

### **Private Landowner Program**

Private landowners in priority areas will have similar options for cost share as in the past. The allowable cost for cutting and chunking will be based on 75 percent of \$15 per tree. The removal and salvage costs will be based on 75 percent of \$10 per tree. Landowners with large acreages and a significant number of infested trees will receive follow-up phone calls and possibly site visits to encourage them to have infested trees harvested, and to manage their entire property to utilize infested trees and reduce residual stand susceptibility to infestation. Greater emphasis will be put on getting merchantable materials to sawmills by using industry contacts if landowners agree to pursue this option.

Landowners in the priority areas will be mailed a packet of information that will include instructions about how to sign up for the program. Landowners outside of the priority areas will be able to sign up and encouraged to do so, but they will be given the message that they will only be surveyed if conditions, time, and funding permit. Sign-up will take place from mid-August to mid-September.

A few private properties will be used to train crews. This provides us the opportunity to have first-hand knowledge of what the mountain pine beetle population is doing in those areas.

### **Custer State Park**

Marking crews will survey and mark about 20,000 acres of Custer State Park. Trees will be treated either through harvest and removal, or cutting and chunking in inoperable areas. Semiochemicals will be used to establish lethal baited trees in strategic locations to attract beetles to trees sprayed with insecticides. Limber pines will be protected by chemical repellents and insecticide spraying. Other high value trees will also be sprayed to prevent infestation.

### **Information, Education, and Training**

Landowner workshops will be provided this fall in locations throughout the Black Hills. The workshops will have an emphasis on identification of an infested tree and what to do with an infested tree.

Infested tree identification training will begin in mid-September for both county and state personnel.