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News - For immediate release

Now is the time to take action against pine beetles.

The Town of Estes Park offers free *Beetle Buster* inspections and free disposal of infested trees.

Pine beetles are changing the look of forests in Estes Park and throughout the West. Although the forests will recover, many property owners will see trees around them die. By taking steps to minimize the beetles' impact, property owners will speed the recovery of the forest around them and reduce the danger of wildfire to their property. Now is the time to take action.

Meet the Beetles

The mountain pine beetle (MPB) is native to western North America. Except for a few days during the summer when adults emerge and fly to new trees, all MPB development takes place under the bark of infested trees. Females lay tiny white eggs under the bark of pine trees in the late summer and early fall. Eggs hatch in 10 to 14 days. The white larvae overwinter in galleries under the bark and begin to mature the following spring. By July, most pupae have transformed into adults. Adults are black and 1/8- to 1/4-inch in length.

MPB adults feed under the bark and emerge through an exit hole, usually from mid-July to mid-August. Within a few days, the beetles enter other trees. There are usually enough insects emerging from one tree to attack several additional trees. In Colorado, MPB attack all native species of pine, including lodgepole, ponderosa, limber and bristlecone, and even some urban pines like Scotch and Austrian. Beetles carry the spores of blue-stain fungi and introduce them into pine trees. The combination of the feeding beetles and spreading fungi kills the trees within a year.

The Ips beetle is also native to Colorado. Its primary hosts are the same as MPB—lodgepole and ponderosa pines. Ips beetles emerge and take flight as early as March and as late as November. They are 1/8- to 3/8-inch in length, reddish-brown to black and can be distinguished from MPB by the depressed cavity and spines at the rear end of the body.

Take Action Now

Removal of beetle-infested trees early will have a positive impact on forest health, reduce the number of standing hazard trees and decrease potential wildfire danger. Both the Town of Estes Park and Larimer County require the removal of beetle-infested trees by private property owners. Trees should be inspected beginning in the fall. The Town offers free *Beetle Buster* inspections by calling the Public Works Department at 970-577-3588. A trained *Beetle Buster* volunteer will visit with property owners and confirm

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successful beetle attacks on trees. *Beetle Busters* can provide advice on forest health and recommendations specific to the landowner's situation.

There are many treatment options for beetle-infested trees. Experts recommend removing the trees during the fall and winter months. After they are cut down, trees must be treated to destroy live beetles.

The Town of Estes Park provides, free of charge, disposal of infested trees from Estes Valley properties at a sort yard located at 666 Elm Road. The site is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Trees must be stripped of branches, cut into sections and delivered to the site by the property owner. Logs should be kept as long as possible for transportation. Although shorter logs can be accepted, logs at least 8 feet 3 inches in length are preferred. Shorter logs will be burned in an air-curtain burner, while logs longer than 8 feet 3 inches will be treated and used as wood products such as fence poles and lumber. For more information, please call the Town Public Works Department at 970-577-3588.

More options for treating infested trees include:

- Chip the entire tree and/or slash pile to destroy the beetle. Spread the chips out in a thin layer so they will dry quickly.
- Peel the bark from the trunk with a chain saw or draw knife and store peeled logs for firewood.
- In the fall, lay logs in a single layer in a very sunny, south-facing location. Cover the logs with clear (not black), 6 mm plastic and leave the logs covered for at least 8 weeks. If you choose not to cover the logs with plastic, leave them for at least 3 months and partially roll the logs every few weeks to ensure all sides of the log are exposed to direct sunlight. This treatment often is not as effective at higher altitudes because it requires a lot of heat to kill the beetle. A common misconception is that the plastic is used to trap beetles, but in fact, the beetles can easily chew through it. Plastic is used to raise the temperature under the bark enough to kill the beetles.
- Use infested wood for firewood. In the fall, cut wood to firewood length and split—this will allow the wood to dry out enough to burn in the spring. Make sure the entire pile is burned before July, when remaining beetles could fly to live trees.

This is the first in a series of articles that will appear through April, 2010. The Town of Estes Park Public Information Office utilizes scientific information provided by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado State University, and Larimer, Jefferson, Clear Creek, Boulder and Gilpin Counties. For more information on pine beetles and Town services, please visit www.estes.org/publicworks or call 970-577-3588. To receive Town news in your e-mail inbox, please e-mail spetrie@estes.org.

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Photo Captions:

MPB.jpg: Mountain pine beetle adults are black and 1/8- to 1/4-inch in length.

Ips.jpg: Ips beetles are 1/8- to 3/8-inch in length, reddish-brown to black and can be distinguished from MPB by the depressed cavity and spines at the rear end of the body.

TreeDisposal.jpg: Residents can take advantage of the Town's free air curtain burner to reduce pine beetle impact on Estes Valley forests.