

BEC-Tree Species Description: MSxv

The MSxv represents a mid-elevation landscape of primarily fire-initiated forests. Prior to the recent catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak, the MSxv landscape was dominated by near mature and mature (predominantly age classes 5-7) mixed species stands dominated by lodgepole pine with lesser amounts of spruce. Hardwood trees are very uncommon and occur primarily at the lowest elevations of the subzone. As a result of the mountain pine beetle epidemic, most of the mature lodgepole pine and the larger diameter immature pine trees have been killed over most of the subzone. Depending on stand age, beetle-killed stands often have a live sub-canopy layer of immature pine and spruce. Subalpine fir advance regeneration is common in the understory only in the southeastern part of the subzone. Aggressive and extensive salvage harvesting is ongoing with a focus on the most merchantable stands.

Age class distribution as a % of total forest area [Source: VRIMS 2008]

Stand age class	7-9 natural forest	7-9 harvested forest	4-6 natural forest	4-6 harvested forest	1-3 natural forest	1-3 harvested forest
% of total forest area	50	0	39	0	4	7

Tree species distribution in natural old/mature (age class 7-9) and natural immature (age class 4-6) as a % of the total natural old/mature and natural immature forest cover respectively [Source: VRIMS 2008]

Species	PI	S	BI
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	83	16	1
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	96	3	<1

RESULTS data for the period 1988 to 2008 indicates that lodgepole pine is the dominant species being regenerated in harvested stands. Species suitability is currently somewhat limited in the MSxv with pine and spruce being the principal species. Under projected climate conditions many sites in this landscape will be less suitable for spruce and subalpine fir.

% species composition of post-harvested stands [Source: RESULTS 1988-2008]

	PI	S	BI	Hardwoods
% of harvested area	89	8	2	<1

The very high mortality of pine as a result of the most recent mountain pine beetle outbreak in MSxv landscape means that the forest cover inventory data used to characterize this subzone are not up to date and no longer accurately reflects the age class distribution, area harvested and regeneration status. It is not possible at this time to properly characterize species composition over much of this subzone.

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