BEC-Tree Species Description: SBPSmk

The SBPSmk represents a landscape where stand replacing fires of varying size were relatively common. Prior to the recent catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak, mature and near mature (> 60 year old) forests occupied most of the forested land area of this subzone. Younger immature forests (<60 years old) covered over one fifth of the forested area, much of this was represented by young previously harvested stands. Prior to the beetle outbreak, mature forest cover was largely made up of lodgepole pine and lesser amounts of interior spruce. Aspen and Douglas-fir each made up about 7% of the mature forest cover. It is important to note that as a result the mountain pine beetle epidemic most of the mature lodgepole pine and the larger diameter immature trees in the SBPSmk have been killed. Depending on stand age, beetle-killed stands often have a live sub-canopy layer of immature spruce and occasionally Douglas-fir. 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	34	2	41	1	4	17

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	Pl	S	Fd	At
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	70	16	7	7
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	75	10	3	12

RESULTS data for the period 1988 to 2008 indicates that lodgepole pine comprises close to three quarters of the regeneration on harvested sites followed by hardwoods (primarily aspen at 13%). Spruce and Douglas-fir are the next most common regeneration species. Species suitability is currently somewhat limited in the SBPSmk with pine and spruce being the principal species and Douglas-fir on some areas where growing season frosts are less common.

High levels of pine stand mortality as a result of the recent mountain pine beetle outbreak in the SBPSmk landscape has resulted in the current forest cover inventory not being up to date in terms of stand mortality, area harvested and regeneration status, so it is not possible to accurately characterize the current species composition over much of this subzone.

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

	Pl	S	Fd	Bl	Hardwoods
% of harvested area	72	9	4	<1	13

Author: R. Coupé (January 2012)

Note:

- Black spruce in this subzone only occurs northwest of Quesnel while tamarack currently only occurs in forested wetlands north of the Euchiniko River.
- Douglas fir is relatively common south of Quesnel with more frequent occurrences in the transition to the IDFdk3 and SBSdw subzone/variant and on steep warm aspect slopes.
- Aspen dominated stands are most common in the Williams Lake and 100 Mile TSA portions of the SBPSmk