

History of Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation in B.C.

After the spread of mountain pine beetle emerged as a threat in the early 2000s, infestation peaked in 2004, with 140 million cubic metres killed that year alone (i.e., green-attack). On a provincial level, the annual kill declined rapidly since then to 20 million cubic metres in 2011 (red-attack)

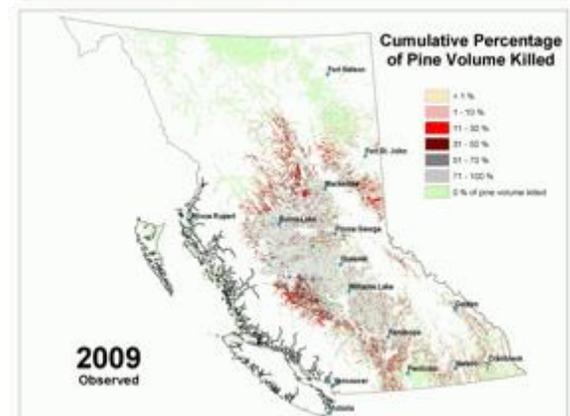
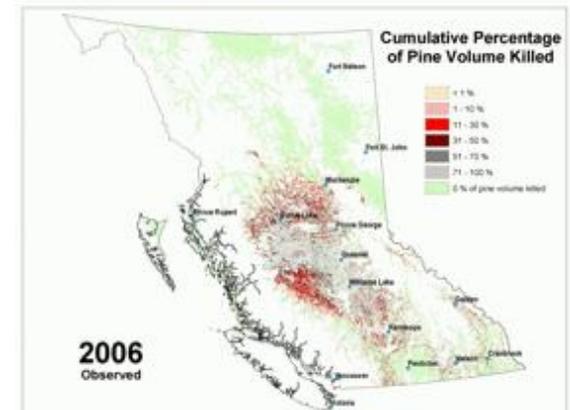
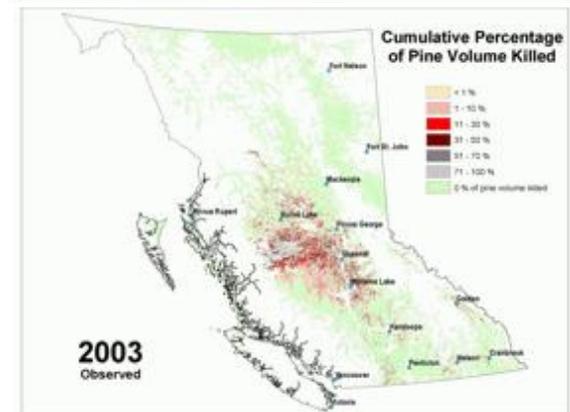
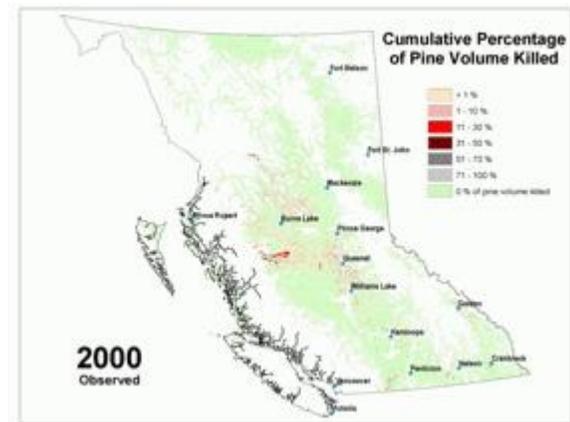
The cumulative area of B.C affected to some degree (red-attack and grey-attack – see box below) is estimated at 18.3 million hectares, or more than five times the area of Vancouver Island.

Overall, though, the ultimate impact of this infestation will be less than initially forecast. Recent computer modeling projections indicate about 57 per cent of B.C.'s pine volume killed by 2021 — significantly less than the 80 per cent pine kill projected in 2007.

Three million hectares of red-attack were identified in 2012, compared with 4.6 million ha in 2011. This decline is because:

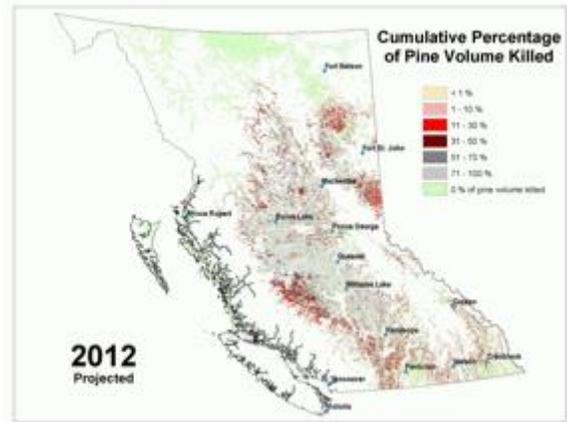
- the amount of available habitat has diminished, as the beetle has already destroyed most of the mature lodgepole pine in the Central Plateau region; and,
- the rate of spread in other areas of the Interior has been somewhat varied, due to diverse terrain and forests with greater diversity of timber species.

By 2012, 53 per cent of merchantable pine had been killed, and the B.C. Government was seeking new opportunities to utilize dead pine stands and preserve mid-term timber supply.



Action

The 2006-2011 Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan guided provincial responses and helped coordinate all those working to mitigate the beetle's devastation — government, communities, industries and stakeholders. It addressed forestry and environmental issues as well as economic, social and cultural sustainability.



Stages of Attack

1. *Green Attack* – Adult beetles have tunneled underneath the bark to lay their eggs. The needles stay green for several months.
2. *Red Attack* – As the beetles mine the layers between the bark and the wood, they cut off the tree's supply of nutrients, causing the needles of the now-dead tree to turn red.
3. *Grey Attack* – The needles have fallen off the tree, leaving only the bare branches. The decaying tree is more susceptible to falling or being blown down.