

BEC-Tree Species Description: ESSFwv

The ESSFwv is dominantly old forest (92% of the forested area is age class 7 to 9). Natural immature forests (mostly age class 4 to 6) comprise about 7% of the forested area and these have resulted mainly from wildfire, mostly at lower elevations adjacent to the ICHmc. There has been limited forest harvesting in the ESSFwv to date with just 1% of the forested area in immature managed forests, mostly younger than 20 years old. Old forests are dominantly subalpine fir (76%), often with a hemlock (both mountain and western) component (18%), and sometimes with hybrid spruce and lodgepole pine (3 and 2% respectively). Amabilis fir occurs as well with subalpine fir at the western extent of the ESSFwv. Natural immature forests are also subalpine fir-dominated but contain more lodgepole pine (13%) and aspen (13%; only at the lowest elevations).

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	92	0	6	0	1	1

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	Bl	S	H	Pl	Deciduous
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	76	3	18	2	0
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	65	3	5	13	13

Harvested stands are spruce-dominated (40 to 48%¹) with lesser amounts of lodgepole pine (18 to 20%), subalpine fir (23 to 34%) and hemlock (7%). There is a trend of shifting species composition in managed second growth compared with old natural forests, with spruce dominating over subalpine fir and lodgepole pine being more common than in natural forests. Impacts at the landscape level have been minimal thus far with only 1% of the subzone in managed second growth. The increased diversity of managed second growth forests is likely beneficial from an ecological perspective but future management intent should include a significant subalpine fir component and limit the use of lodgepole pine, especially at higher elevations.

% species composition of post-harvested stands [Source: RESULTS 1989-2002]

Species	S	Pl	Bl	H
% of harvested	40	18	34	7

¹ Range of values reflects differences between VRIMS and RESULTS data sources.

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Note: the above write-up does not account for TFL forest cover/regeneration information. This is not expected to impact significantly on the tree species and age class percentages described above.