

BEC-Tree Species Description: SBPSdc

The SBPSdc represents a landscape where fires of varying intensity and size were relatively common. Prior to the recent catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak, mature and near mature (> 60 year old) forests dominated this landscape. Younger natural immature forests (<60 years old) only covered a small part of the SBPSdc. Prior to the beetle outbreak, lodgepole pine made up most of the mature forest cover and interior spruce made up a substantially smaller proportion. Aspen made up about 5% while black spruce was less than 1% of the mature forest cover. It is important to note that as a result of the mountain pine beetle epidemic most of the mature lodgepole pine and the larger diameter immature pine trees in the SBPSdc have been killed. Depending on stand age, beetle-killed stands often have live sub-canopy layer of immature spruce and less frequently lodgepole pine. In addition to the beetle epidemic, recent wildfires have killed stands of all age classes over very large areas 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	42	<1	42	<1	4	11

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	Fd	At
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	79	16	1	5
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	82	10	<1	8

RESULTS data for the period 1988 to 2004 indicates that lodgepole pine comprises most of the regeneration on harvested sites while hardwoods and spruce comprise a much smaller proportion of the regeneration. Species suitability is currently limited in the SBPSdc with pine, spruce and aspen being the principal species. With climate change it is predicted that Douglas fir will also be suitable on many sites in the SBPSdc and that spruce may be less suitable on a greater range of sites.

% species composition of post-harvested stands [Source: RESULTS 1988-2004]

	PI	S	Fd	Hardwoods
% of harvested area	80	6	<1	13

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Notes:

- Growing season frost is and will continue to be a significant concern on many sites in the SBPSdc.
- Black spruce is geographically limited to the northern half of the subzone (north of Tzenzaicut Lake). Black spruce occurs on both very wet sites and upland sites with fine-textured, cold soils

As a result of recent catastrophic events in the SBPSdc landscape, the current forest cover inventory is not up to date in terms of stand mortality, area harvested and regeneration status, so it is not possible to properly characterize species composition over much of this subzone.