

BEC-Tree Species Description: SBSmc1

Historically, the SBSmc1 landscape was characterized by frequent stand-initiating wildfires that produced a mosaic of even-aged stands of different ages. Prior to the recent catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak, the SBSmc1 landscape was dominated mostly by near mature and mature (age class 5-7) stands of lodgepole and spruce. Douglas-fir is restricted to steep warm aspects and subalpine fir was a significant canopy species, mostly on wet sites. Aspen is the dominant hardwood species. As a result the mountain pine beetle epidemic most of the mature lodgepole pine and the larger diameter immature pine trees (including age class 3 managed stands) in the SBmc1 have been killed. Depending on stand age, beetle-killed stands often have a live sub-canopy layer of immature spruce and subalpine 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	50	<1	25	<1	2	24

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	Bl	Act	At
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	58	26	9	3	<1	4
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	60	19	6	2	<1	11

This subzone has undergone high levels of harvesting in the last 20+ years. RESULTS data for the period 1988 to 2004 indicates that lodgepole pine is by far the most dominant species being regenerated in harvested stands followed by spruce as the next most significant species of regeneration on these sites. These data also show that there is a significant amount of understory subalpine fir in mature stands that contributes to the regeneration of harvested stands. Data show that about 19% of regeneration in recently harvested stands is comprised of subalpine fir, this being entirely natural regeneration.

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

	PI	S	Fd	Bl	Hardwoods
% of harvested area	58	16	1	19	6

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Notes:

- Unlike the other SBSmc variants there is little or no black spruce in the SBSmc1

The very high mortality of pine as a result of the most recent MPB outbreak in SBSmc1 landscape means that the current forest cover inventory is not up to date and no longer accurately reflects the area harvested and regeneration status. It is not possible at this time to properly characterize species composition over much of this subzone.