

**BEC-Tree Species Description: SBSmw**

Historically, the SBSmw landscape was characterized by frequent stand-initiating wildfires that produced a mosaic of even-aged stands of different ages. This subzone has undergone high levels of harvesting in the last 30+ years. Prior to the recent catastrophic mountain pine beetle outbreak, the SBSmw landscape was dominated by near mature and mature (age class 5-7) mixed species stands of pine, Douglas-fir and spruce. Old stands tended to be dominated by fire resistant Douglas-fir on drier sites and spruce on wet, fire resistant sites. Aspen is the dominant hardwood species but both cottonwood and paper birch are commonly present in low amounts on many sites. 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 (including age class 3 managed stands) in the SBmw have been killed. Depending on stand age, beetle-killed stands often have a live subcanopy 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]

	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	30	1	37	1	5	28

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	Bl	Ep	Act	At
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	43	29	14	2	2	2	9
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	40	21	10	1	7	1	21

RESULTS data for the period 1988 to 2006 indicates that lodgepole pine is the dominant species being regenerated in harvested stands but both spruce and Douglas-fir form a significant amount of the regeneration on these sites. These data also indicate that hardwoods, principally aspen with lesser amounts of birch and cottonwood are common. These are naturally regenerated through seeding in and coppicing.

% species composition of post-harvested stands [Source: RESULTS 1988-2006]

	Pl	S	Fd	Bl	Hardwoods
% of harvested area	43	23	8	5	19

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Notes:

- Black spruce is common in wetlands and on some upland cold air accumulation sites
- Western redcedar is occasionally present in the understory and as scattered mature stems on wet sites
- There are large cold air basins in the SBSmw where regeneration options are limited. In these areas high mortality of planted Douglas-fir is likely to occur.

The very high mortality of pine as a result of the most recent MPB outbreak in SBSmw 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.

The above write-up does not account for TFL 52 forest cover/regeneration information. This may impact the tree species percentages and age class described above.