

BEC-Tree Species Description: SWBmk

Historically the forests of the Moist Cool Spruce – Willow – Birch biogeoclimatic unit (SWBmk) were dominated by older fire-origin forests. Hybrid white spruce stands with a subalpine-fir understory or subalpine fir stands were widespread on upland sites. Black spruce dominated stands were common on poorer sites especially on cool aspects and in wetlands. Lodgepole pine dominated stands were common in areas with a recent fire history. Cold air ponding in valley bottoms have created extensive shrub fields and moist meadows almost devoid of trees.

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	82	N/A	12	N.A	6	0

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	At	Bl	Pl	Sx
% of total natural old/mature (age class 7-9) forest cover	1	32	13	54
% of total natural immature (age class 4-6) forest cover	11	20	35	32

Very little harvesting has occurred in this biogeoclimatic unit. The main impact of management is related to wide scale prescribed burns conducted to enhance habitat for big game (e.g., elk, bighorn sheep). This has converted many slopes, especially on warm aspects, to grassland or young aspen stands from mature forest.

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