

Forest Health

FOREST HEALTH - BEETLEBUSTERS COMMITTEE

Forest in Pine Brook Hills is predominantly Ponderosa Pine with Douglas-fir mixed in on north facing slopes. Tree density is too high because since pioneers arrived we have disturbed the natural order. The original forest was diverse in age and species. Low-intensity fire caused by lightning cleared dead clutter and small trees from the forest floor every 15 years or so, and created a continuously changing mosaic of forest and meadow. Today we have good reasons to suppress all wildfire, but consequently we own an overgrown forest that is vulnerable to epidemic bugs, crud (other biological agents), and catastrophic fire. We can work to restore the natural order by thinning our forest, quickly treating infested trees, and removing invasive plants. Forest Health - BeetleBusters is happy to offer a free assessment of your part of the forest, provide specific treatment information, and recommend contractors. Please join our effort to restore and maintain a forest that is healthy, beautiful, and safe.

Density A resilient Pine and Doug-fir forest has less than 40 mature trees per acre. Individual trees must compete for water, nutrients, and sunlight. Other plants and the critters they support need room on the forest floor. None will thrive with too many trees, but bugs and crud will. Our fire department surrounded the entire subdivision with shaded fuel breaks (well thinned forest, not clear cut) that provide a defense from catastrophic fire. Similarly, thinning trees on our lots creates a defensible space around our homes.

Bugs Several years ago a Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic devastated forests from here to the west coast. BeetleBusters organized to inform us to watch for trees turning yellow and pitch tubes (looks like popcorn on the bark) that indicate an MPB brood tree. Quick removal of diseased trees prevented infestation of surrounding trees. A Doug-fir Tussock Moth epidemic killed acres of trees west of PBH.

Crud Blue Stain Fungus is carried under the bark by burrowing beetles. It can kill a tree in one year. Dwarf Mistletoe is a slow-growing parasite that spreads by shooting seeds to nearby trees, and animals carry seeds far and wide. It grows under the bark giving branches a swollen appearance. Protruding orange fruiting bodies confirm its presence. Trees with established DMT are handicapped and will not survive through a normal life span. Removing infested trees will impede this crud's proliferation.

Plants Myrtle Spurge and Cheatgrass are noxious invasive plants that we can and should remove.

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Ips Beetle attacks pine tree tops.



Mountain Pine Beetle on her pitch tube. (Size ~ rice grain)



Myrtle Spurge warrior at work.