



CAL FIRE

Pest Management Program

CAL FIRE's Forest Pest Management (FPM) program promotes and protects the health of forest trees on state and private lands. Insects and diseases, both native and introduced, are the top killers of trees in California. Sudden oak death and bark beetles attacking drought-stressed trees have been the leading causes of tree mortality in recent years, but many other pests have impacted and/or will impact California's forests. Impacts include increased wildfire risk and changes in forest diversity and structure.

FPM staff evaluate pest outbreaks, recommend preventative measures and treatment alternatives, assist landowners with the management of dead and dying timber, evaluate fire-damaged trees for survival and hazard, provide training, produce publications, conduct surveys and applied research, and provide leadership for stakeholder groups. They also work with Forest Practice staff on forest health issues related to timber harvest activities.

In 1923, the Forest Insect Eradication Law was enacted, authorizing the State Forester, with Board of Forestry and Fire Protection approval, to establish Zones of Infestation for insect control. In subsequent years, the law was amended and expanded. Zones are declared when large-scale pest infestations require a coordinated, area-wide response. They provide CAL FIRE greater latitude in conducting pest management activities and require commercial timber harvests to use appropriate mitigation measures. Zone establishment authorizes CAL FIRE participation in multiple-landowner pest control projects; without CAL FIRE assistance, private landowners would not have the technical expertise or resources needed to conduct projects on their own. About 25 million acres are currently in Zones across California.



Bark Beetle Infestation



In 1986, the exotic tree disease pitch canker was discovered in California and in 1997 the Coastal Pitch Canker Zone was established, the first Zone for a forest disease. A new and similarly devastating disease dubbed sudden oak death was discovered in 1995.

CAL FIRE pest management staff are actively involved in the ongoing Southern California Bark Beetle Control Program. Specially trained Conservation Camp Crews in Southern California have contributed greatly to insect control and fire hazard reduction by removing thousands of beetle-infested trees within bark beetle Zones of Infestation.



Sudden Oak Death