



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

South Dakota Fact Sheet
October 2012

Helping People Help the Land NRCS and Conservation Technical Assistance

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps customers plan and implement conservation practices on private lands through technical assistance. Technical assistance is available to producers regardless of participation in a financial assistance program.

A variety of financial assistance programs are offered through the USDA to assist with or offset costs of conservation practices and activities for private landowners. In addition to addressing a broad range of environmental goals, the 2008 Farm Bill includes increased financial assistance for beginning, limited resource, and historically underserved participants.

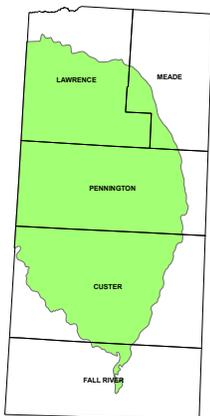
South Dakota USDA Service Centers located in the pine beetle area:

Belle Fourche
(605) 892-3368

Hot Springs
(605) 745-5716

Rapid City
(605) 342-0301

Sturgis
(605) 347-4952



or visit us on the Web at:
www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov.

Mountain Pine Beetles and Conservation Programs of the 2008 Farm Bill

Partnering for a Healthy Forest

Working together, the USDA NRCS and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (SDDA RC&F), are offering assistance for forestry conservation practices on private lands in SD's Black Hills region. Conservation practices can improve forest health and benefit fish and wildlife. Specifically, conservation can help with the mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus pandoerosae*) infestation that has brought devastation to the forests of the Black Hills.

About the Mountain Pine Beetle

The mountain pine beetle is a small insect that lives most of its life in the inner bark of pine trees. The adult beetles are blackish in color and about one-fourth inch in length. They fly from infested trees to new host trees in late July or August. Once they have located a favorable host, the adults tunnel beneath the bark to lay eggs. After the eggs hatch, the larvae feed within the tree until the following spring when they pupate (a resting stage) for several weeks before becoming adults. The adults emerge from the now dead host tree and seek a new tree to begin the cycle again.

The beetles can colonize trees in large numbers. The tunneling beneath the bark by the adult beetles and their larvae harms the tree by disrupting the movement of food, produced by the needles, to the roots. The adult beetles also carry a blue-stain fungus from tree to tree. This fungus stops the movement of water from the roots to the needles. The combination of these two factors results in the tree's death.



Images enlarged for ease of identification. Images courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Archive, the SDDA RC&F, and NRCS.



Getting Help for Your Land

If you are the owner or operator of private land in the Black Hills region, contact the NRCS office that serves your county. The NRCS personnel can provide you with information on financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). They will help you with the process of establishing eligibility through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) also located at the county USDA Service Center. You will need to bring the following information to the appointment as appropriate:

- Proof of Identity – you may be required to show a valid state driver's license, passport, or other personal identification, as well as provide your Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number (EIN), address, and other related information.
- Copy of the recorded deed or county tax notice.
- Copy of the articles of incorporation, by-laws, legal power of attorney, or partnership paper work, if applicable.

Other required forms will be available at the NRCS or FSA offices. If eligible, an application for financial assistance may be completed at the NRCS office.

Fiscal Year 2012 Results of the Pine Beetle Initiative Completed Under the EQIP in South Dakota

- Forest Stand Improvement (Thinning) - 438.3 acres
- Brush Management - 88.3 acres
- 1 Firebreak

Find more information on identification and biology of the mountain pine beetle, as well as, application information, contact the local NRCS staff or the SD Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry at:

3305 1/2 West South Street, Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 394-2395 or (800) 275-4954 (in state)
e-mail: SDRCF@state.sd.us or visit <http://sdda.sd.gov/forestry>
State of SD Web site: www.BeatTheBeetles.com

Forest Management Plan - To qualify for financial assistance through EQIP, a forest management plan is needed. To get started, contact the NRCS personnel at your local service center or the SD Department of Agriculture Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry staff, who, depending upon your situation, will work with you to develop a forest management plan.

The plan guides activities for decades and can be as general or as detailed as you desire. The first step is to determine your priorities, set goals, and identify the management activities to reach those goals. The short-term goals will be outlined with specific practices and a time schedule.

Conservation Practices for a Healthy Forest include timber stand improvement activities, such as thinning, brush management, and hardwood enhancement.

- **Forest Stand Improvement** – used to improve forest health through thinning reducing the potential of damage from pests and wildfire hazard.
- **Brush Management** – remove the undesirable plants to create the plant community consistent with the ecological site.
- **Firebreak** – a strip of land that will reduce the spread of wildfire and contain prescribed burns.
- **Critical Area Planting** – establish permanent vegetation to reduce expected high rates of soil erosion.
- **Integrated Pest Management** - implement strategy for pest monitoring and suppression.



The NRCS staff work with landowners to enhance their natural resources to control erosion and for better wildlife habitat. This photo shows the conservation practices of Forest Stand Improvement and Brush Management.