

STORM DAMAGE



State Forester Forum

The winter storms of January 2021 caused extensive damage by breaking or tipping over many trees. These down trees and broken tops created a potential problem for the remaining, undamaged trees by providing a breeding site for many bark beetles. These small beetles, smaller than a match head, are known for their ability to attack and kill standing green trees, sometimes killing hundreds of trees in a localized area. The beetles of concern are the pine engraver (also known as "Ips beetles"), and the Douglas-fir beetle. The pine engraver primarily attacks ponderosa pine and to a lesser degree, lodgepole pine. The Douglas-fir beetle attacks Douglas-fir, and windthrown western larch.

When windthrown trees, broken tops, or slash are present, the beetles attack the down wood and build up very large populations. When the new generations of beetles emerge, they will seek out more down material if it is available, but if it is not, they will search for susceptible standing green trees to attack. Many bark beetle epidemics are started in this manner, and once started, they can kill hundreds, even thousands, of trees before coming to an end.

With this potential threat, it is important that landowners act quickly to salvage down and broken timber.

Pine: All windthrown trees and broken tops larger than 3 inches in diameter should be removed from the woods. If the trees and tops

cannot be sold, they should be piled and burned or trampled with logging equipment so as to dislodge the bark. This should be done by late March or early April to prevent beetle attack. If the work cannot be done by then, beetles will attack but can still be dealt with by the same actions finished by early June.

Standing broken ponderosa pine are not usually a threat. Trees with up to twenty feet of the top broken out will continue to grow,



sometimes developing new tops. However, these trees often have poor form and do not make good lumber trees, so cutting and salvage while equipment is on site may be the best option. Broken trees lacking branches are not a threat from the pine engraver either. They are typically attacked by other beetles that are not tree killers. These broken trees can be left for wildlife if desired.

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Insect and Disease
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FOREST PROTECTION ACTION NEEDED

Douglas-fir: Douglas-fir beetle populations typically build up in windthrown and broken Douglas-fir. Attacks are made in late April to early and mid May. Since these beetles are good flyers, they can disperse several miles to make their attacks. The next generation emerges the following year. This provides more time for dealing with this problem. It is best to remove the down trees and broken tops in the spring, but if this can not be accomplished, the work can be done anytime during the summer or fall.

As with the pines, the standing portion of Douglas-fir trees broken and left without limbs do not usually pose a threat from bark beetles. These too could be left for wildlife habitat. However, standing broken trees left with some branches may be attacked and should be removed.

In lieu of removal, at-risk trees and logs can be protected from Douglas-fir beetle attack with MCH, a repellent pheromone specific to Douglas-fir beetle. Proper application of MCH is critical for its efficacy. For more information, see: [Using MCH to Protect Trees and Stands from Douglas-fir Beetle Infestation](#). MCH is only effective when applied to trees prior to attack in spring.

Bark beetles do not recognize property boundaries. Landowners should inform their neighbors of the risk of bark beetle problems that can result from untreated, down trees. This reduces the hazard to their trees and neighbors properties. Working together with neighbors may also provide enough logs to make a salvage sale economically feasible or profitable where it might not otherwise be so.

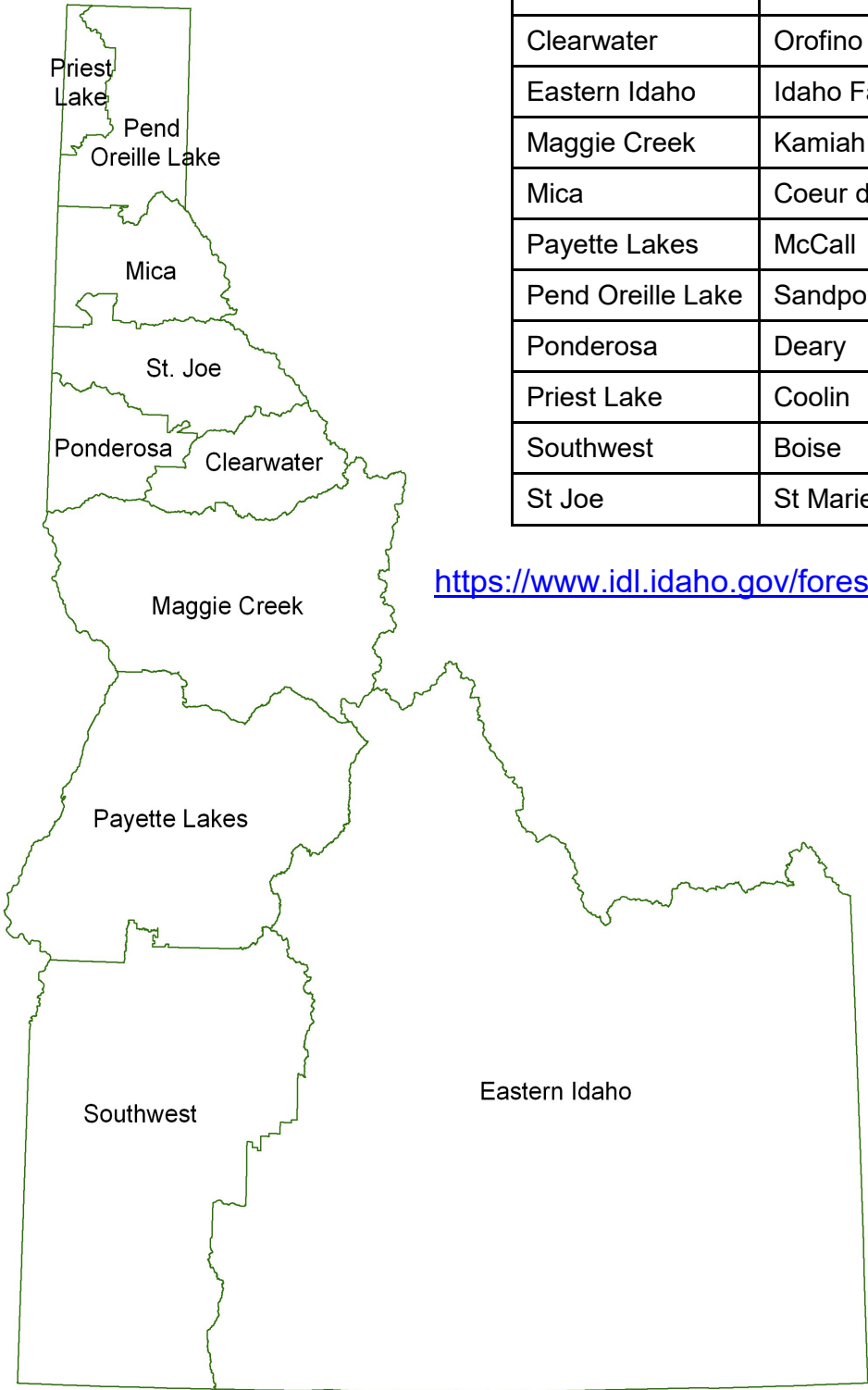
For more information concerning salvage of windthrown and broken trees, the threat from bark beetles, other forest health/forest management concerns, or for a list of consulting foresters who can also help, contact a Private Forestry Specialist with the Idaho Department of Lands or the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System.



Douglas-fir beetle galleries



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
ANY IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS
PRIVATE FORESTRY SPECIALIST**



Area	Office Location	Phone
Clearwater	Orofino	(208) 476-4587
Eastern Idaho	Idaho Falls	(208) 525-7167
Maggie Creek	Kamiah	(208) 935-2141
Mica	Coeur d'Alene	(208) 769-1577
Payette Lakes	McCall	(208) 634-7125
Pend Oreille Lake	Sandpoint	(208) 263-5104
Ponderosa	Deary	(208) 877-1121
Priest Lake	Coolin	(208) 443-2516
Southwest	Boise	(208) 334-3488
St Joe	St Maries	(208) 245-4551

<https://www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/insects-and-disease/>