

State of Alaska
Western Bark Beetle Initiative
Large Acreage Non-Federal Landowners
Cost-Share Program Guidelines

Competitive Grant Application Period:
August 24 to September 29, 2023

Introduction

Alaska is home to a variety of bark beetles, though the vast majority are of little consequence. There are a few exceptions, including two of our most devastating spruce-killing bark beetles: the spruce beetle (*Dendroctonus rufipennis* - SB) and the northern spruce engraver (*Ips perturbatus* - IPS). The spruce beetle can be especially damaging when outbreaks occur, such as is presently occurring in much of Southcentral Alaska and famously occurred on the Kenai Peninsula and in the Copper River Valley in the 1990s.

In 2018, U.S. Forest Service – Forest Health Protection transferred administrative responsibilities for their long-running Western Bark Beetle Initiative (WBBI) to the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) – Forest Health Program. The WBBI program provides cost-share assistance for approved bark beetle prevention, suppression, or restoration practices.

Eligibility and Limitations

The funding for this cost-share program is directed towards large non-federal landowners (500 acres or greater owned), such as state and local government agencies and Alaska native corporations.

Large non-federal landowners including non-federal public landowners such as state agencies, boroughs, and municipalities; large private landowners such as native corporations; and tribal entities may be eligible for this funding. Eligible landowners must own a minimum of 500 acres, though the proposed project may occur on a subset of the overall acreage of the property. Some large landowners may manage property across several smaller individually managed administrative units. In these cases, individual administrative units may be eligible to submit individual project proposals.

This cost-share program requires a **1 to 1 non-federal funding match**. Matching funds may include soft match (including in-kind labor, in-kind materials, and equivalent costs associated with use of in-kind equipment) and/or hard match (which is actual dollars spent for a service, materials, and/or equipment).

This funding is not authorized for projects consisting solely of removing hazard trees, which are beetle-killed trees that are no longer actively infested. Hazard trees may be removed during approved project operations only to allow for the safety of project personnel. No trees felled using this funding may be sold for monetary gain. No federal funding may be used to match this funding.

Approval for funding requires verification by a DOF Forest Health Program representative or their designee of the need for bark beetle prevention, suppression, or restoration on the requested property. Typically, this need would be determined via a visit by a DOF representative to the property. The DOF may, at its discretion, approve projects in remote areas without conducting an on-site inspection if suitable supporting information is available to determine eligibility.

Upon determination of eligibility, DOF staff will provide the landowner a brief Bark Beetle Management Notice, listed as the Management Notice herein and described in more detail elsewhere in this document. The Management Notice will contain the landowner's objectives or goals with the property, a brief description of the forest type, current bark beetle activity (if present), and recommended management practices.

The approved practices for cost-share reimbursement will be listed under "Practice Approval" on the "Approval and Completion Report." The requirements for implementing the practices will be listed on the "Practice Requirements" worksheet. **If the landowner does not follow the Practice Requirements, the landowner may not receive reimbursement.** Landowners who accept WBBF funding agree to allow periodic inspection of recommended practices by DOF staff. Other than the initial inspection, final inspection and possible interim inspections, **no work will be undertaken by the State on non-State lands** within this grant.

Forest land approved for funding through the WBBF must not be converted to non-forest for a period of five years. If converted to non-forest within five years of project completion, WBBF funds must be returned to DOF.

Approved projects must follow all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. It is the responsibility of the landowner to obtain any necessary permits or authorizations, including but not limited to those required by the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection under the Forest Resources & Practices Act, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game habitat permits for activities in fish-bearing streams, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Clean Water Act Section 404 compliance. Landowners must utilize forest practices that protect fish habitat and water quality as well as promote forest regeneration.

Any chemicals used in the recommended practices must be:

- Federally and State registered,
- Applied in accordance with all applicable labeling and local regulations,
- Applied as recommended in the Management Notice,

- And applied by a licensed pesticide applicator.

Pesticide treatments on mass-attacked trees, with unapproved chemicals, or applied to lower tree heights than recommended will not receive reimbursement.

Landowners must understand that actions taken pursuant to this grant do not eliminate the potential for future bark beetle issues on the treated property.

Grant Application

Funding guidelines and application materials are available on the DOF website at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/insects/grants>. The application period is **August 24 to September 29, 2023**.

Application materials may be submitted by mail to:

Division of Forestry & Fire Protection – Forest Health Program
550 West 7th Ave, Suite 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501

Or emailed to: WBB@alaska.gov

Applicants must describe their proposed project on the Grant Application (include attachments as necessary). Please note that this is a competitive grant opportunity; your application needs to be complete and sufficiently detailed for DOF to understand how your proposed project meets the funding criteria described in the next section. In addition to the information requested on the Grant Application, the following information is required:

- Project goal(s)
- Proposed practices (from the eligible practices list)
- Treatment acreages and locations for each practice
- Aerial image with outlined locations for each practice
- Description of how you proposed to accomplish the project, including what resources you will use and estimated timeframes for each practice
- Estimated total project cost including both WBB grant reimbursement amount and match
- Description and breakdown of intended match (i.e., how much will be hard match vs. soft match)

Allocation of WBB Funds

This is a competitive grant opportunity. DOF will evaluate the grant proposals received within the application period and determine allocations for funding using the following criteria:

- Project feasibility
- Likelihood of effectiveness
- Location within an area of priority interest to the State

For each proposal, each criterion will be ranked on a scale of 1 (low), 2 (moderate), to 3 (high) and a cumulative score will be assigned. Proposals will be funded in decreasing order from the highest cumulative scores down until an overall funding cutoff level has been reached. This overall cutoff level will be determined by the date of funding availability and may be adjusted to a higher overall funding level if warranted. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by October 16, 2023.

Project work begun before official funding approval will not be eligible for cost-share reimbursement, nor will projects completed outside of the recommended seasonal timing. Funding approval will be provided via email or mailed letter.

Revision or Cancellation of Approved Projects

Unforeseen circumstances may necessitate landowner-requested changes to approved projects or project cancellation. Requests for changing or cancelling approved projects should be submitted to DOF Forest Health for approval and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Eligible Practices

The following practices are eligible for cost-share when done in accordance with the Practice Requirements. Practices will be approved on a site-specific basis based on the forest health needs and likelihood of effectiveness. Other practices for mitigating spruce beetle, northern spruce engraver beetle (Ips), or other bark beetles may be approved for cost-share on a case by case basis at the discretion of DOF Forest Health staff.

Practice*	Practice Type	Bark Beetle Targeted
Carbaryl-based pesticide spray	Prevention	Spruce beetle/Ips
Pruning of lower branches of susceptible spruce	Prevention	Spruce beetle only
Thinning of overstocked spruce forests	Prevention	Spruce beetle/Ips
Harvest and processing of infested spruce AND/OR recently down or damaged spruce	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Chipping	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Debarking	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Burning (in accordance with regulations)	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Milling & Destruction of bark slabs	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Split & Stack for firewood, Maximize Airflow	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Bait and burn of log piles	Suppression	Spruce beetle/Ips
Buck into manageable bolts, tightly stacked	Suppression	Ips only

Site preparation and planting of native spruce	Restoration	Spruce beetle/lps
Release of established spruce seedlings and saplings	Restoration	Spruce beetle/lps

* Note that the cost-share eligibility of some practices may vary based on localized beetle populations or geographic location.

Approved Practice Timing

The bark beetle mitigation/restoration practices recommended require strict adherence to seasonal timing in order to maximize effectiveness. For example, a rough estimation of the spruce beetle life cycle timing by month is shown in the table below. Treatments that create fresh green spruce slash, wood chips, whole logs, or other fresh spruce material during or immediately preceding the spruce beetle flight period are likely to be highly attractive to emerging spruce beetles in May (“Adult Flight”, in the table below), which could exacerbate spruce beetle issues on the property. As such, treatments involving the cutting of green-attacked or recently damaged spruce should be completed well outside of the spruce beetle flight period. Conversely, preventive Carbaryl-based pesticide sprays should be conducted closely preceding the spruce beetle flight period. Landowners receiving WBBI cost-share assistance must adhere to required timing for project operations.

Approximate spruce beetle life cycle timing in Southcentral Alaska provided for reference

		Year 1												Year 2												
Life Stage/ Treatment		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
Life Cycle Timing in Southcentral Alaska ¹	2-year	Adult flight					■	■	■																	
		Egg						■	■	■																
		Larva						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
		Pupa																	■	■	■	■	■			
		Adult*																	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	1-year	Adult flight					■	■	■										■	■	■					
		Egg						■	■	■																
		Larva						■	■	■																
		Pupa									■	■														
		Adult									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

¹ Estimated from Werner, R. A., & Holsten, E. H. (1985). Factors influencing generation times of spruce beetles in Alaska. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*, 15(2), 438-443.

Bark Beetle Management Notice

Each Grantee will be sent a short Management Notice following the site assessment by DOF staff that describes the recommended practices. The practices will also be discussed with the Grantee. The Management Notice is intended to provide information to help the Grantee meet their objectives and goals for the property and may go beyond the Grantee's project description on their Grant Application. The Management Notice may recommend practices that are not eligible for cost-share reimbursement under the WBBP Program at this time. At a minimum, the Management Notice will contain:

- Landowner name & contact information
- Date of site assessment
- Description of property location
- Landowner's objectives or goals for the property
- Description of the forest type
- Description of current bark beetle activity (if present)
- Recommended management practices & timing of practices

Grant Agreement and Practice Requirements

Following the site assessment, in addition to the Management Notice, DOF Forest Health will also send a Grant Agreement and Practice Requirements worksheet to be signed by the landowner and returned to DOF. The Grant Agreement will specify the approved practices for cost-share reimbursement and the maximum allowable reimbursement. The Practice Requirements must be followed in order to qualify for reimbursement.

Completion of Projects

All project work must be completed by the **Funding Expiration Date specified in the Grant Agreement**. Projects not completed by the Funding Expiration Date will be canceled and a cancellation letter will be provided to the landowner.

The landowner must notify DOF Forest Health of completion and request reimbursement as specified by the Grant Agreement. DOF staff may inspect the project site to confirm the practices have been completed satisfactorily and are responsible for certifying the work as complete. Inspections will be completed as quickly as schedules allow. Where applicable, acreage of completed projects will be rounded up to the nearest whole acre.

After DOF staff have confirmed the practices have been completed satisfactorily and the landowner has supplied the request for reimbursement and any necessary receipts and documentation, DOF will pay the reimbursement.

Reimbursement payments made pursuant to this agreement are reported to the Internal Revenue Service as income to the landowner and must be reported on tax filings. The State will issue an IRS 1099 Statement of Earnings reporting form to the landowner.

Requesting Cost-share Reimbursement

Reimbursement must be requested by the landowner within 30 days of project completion. Please use the following checklist of required information that must be submitted in order to receive reimbursement:

____ Completed Expenses Worksheet

____ Invoices/receipts for:

 Purchases

 Payments to contractors for the work completed.

____ Itemized documentation of:

 In-kind/volunteer hours

 In-kind/donated materials

 Value associated with use of donated/in-kind equipment

____ A complete Substitute Form W-9, if not already on file with the State

Substitute Form W-9 is available here:

http://doa.alaska.gov/dof/forms/resource/sub_form_w9.pdf or can be printed and mailed to the landowner by request.

Payment

Full reimbursement will be made once DOF has verified the work is complete and the required documentation has been received according to the terms of the Grant Agreement.