



It is hard to watch pockets of timber on your property. But all is not necessarily lost. There are ways to provide a way to secure income from timber that has been damaged by insects, disease, ice, or other factors.

How long can you wait before a tree loses value? When bark beetles invade a tree, they bring in a fungus called blue stain. Blue stain does not damage the structure of the wood, but most mills still discount the value of the wood. Therefore, landowners of timberland often find that they have to salvage trees before they lose their value. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer as to which wood “blues” seems to be most resistant, depending on moisture or other factors. Basically, if you want to salvage timber for blue-stain, get beetle-attacked trees cut as soon as possible.

Beyond blue stain, pouch fungus is another fungus brought in by bark beetles. Pouch fungus is more destructive because it decays the structural wood. The decay from pouch fungus and other fungi is why you should salvage beetle-killed trees in late summer or early fall.

have larch or pine seed sources nearby, if the salvaged site is relatively shaded (say 1 acre or smaller openings), Douglas-fir and grand fir (shade tolerants) will out-compete pine seedlings there. After natural and/or planted regeneration is started, early, aggressive, precommercial thinning in these openings to favor pines and larch may partially compensate for the competitive edge that shade tolerant trees have in small openings.

Should I take every dead tree? Assuming they no longer harbor insects that will attack living trees, and they are not crowded enough to present a fire hazard, leaving dead trees (especially low-value trees with defects) can be a good thing.

Dead standing trees (snags) provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Logs on the ground (sometimes called “coarse woody debris” or “large organic debris”) are also beneficial to a variety of forest flora and fauna. They also help improve soil structure and nutrition as they decay.

Salvage: an opportunity to accomplish other objectives. Recent Forest Service discussions on salvaging Douglas-fir beetle killed trees in northern Idaho have focused on using income from salvaged timber to pay for riparian restoration and other efforts. Private landowners can do the same thing! Try to take advantage of equipment, expertise, or income associated with a timber sale to address your other values for the property. For example, if you already have a cat coming out to skid logs, consider taking advantage of that equipment to accomplish other objectives, such as building or maintaining roads and trails, or establishing a pond. You are already paying the cost to get the equipment out there, you might as well take care of some other tasks as well.

Do you have a forest management plan for your property? Be sure to carry out the salvage in concert with that plan, so roads and harvests are consistent with your long-range goals. Design new roads and skid trails to be useful for future harvests and other activities on you property as well.

Assistance. To help you plan and contract a salvage sale, it is wise to seek assistance from a professional

forester. This is particularly true if you are making decisions about trees which appear to have some insect or disease symptoms but which may or may not

This information first appeared in Woodland NOTES, Vol. 11, No. 1.

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