Criteria for Participating in SPB Prevention Cost Share Program in FY 2014

Assuming federal funds are forthcoming, the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) is offering federal cost share incentives in fiscal year 2014 to encourage small private forest landowners to initiate preventive measures against future infestations of the southern pine beetle (SPB). Forest management practices eligible for cost shares are limited to first thinning of overcrowded pulpwood-sized stands within specified areas of East Texas known to be susceptible to SPB outbreaks. Specific criteria for participating in the SPB Prevention Program and current cost-share rates (as of October 1, 2013) are outlined below.

Eligibility:

- Minimum of 10 acres of loblolly, shortleaf or slash pine in need of thinning.
- Pine stand to be thinned must be located wholly or partially within one of the following 21 East Texas counties currently rated as moderate or high hazard for SPB: Angelina, Cass, Cherokee, Hardin, Harrison, Houston, Jasper, Marion, Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Panola, Polk, Rusk, Sabine, San Jacinto, San Augustine, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler, and Walker counties.

Criteria:

- Pulpwood stand must be at least 70% pine and rate as high hazard to SPB.

Procedure:

- TFS District Forester or consulting forester submits SPB application and SPB treatment plan (signed by landowner, consulting forester and TFS forester), tract and general location map, and W-9 tax form (signed by landowner) to TFS headquarters in College Station (Dr. Ronald Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service, 200 Technology Way, Suite 1281, College Station, TX 77845) for approval by Project Director.
- Following treatment, TFS forester revisits stand to verify treatment. TFS forester submits completion summary with date of completion and tons of pulpwood removed, including landowner’s signature. A copy of the mill receipts should be submitted to validate the harvest tonnage. A receipt showing the amount paid to a consulting forester, if one is involved, also is included with the completion summary.
- Check for cost shares for thinning and 50% of consulting forester services (if involved) is sent to landowner.

Cost Share Rates:

- Cost shares are $50/acre.
- Cost-shares for services of a private consulting forester will be up to 50% of costs, not to exceed $5/acre.
- The maximum cost share amount allowed per federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30) will be $5,000 for individual landowners and tracts held by a partnership or trust.
If you have any questions, contact the Texas A&M Forest Service office nearest you or one of the following: Mike Murphrey, SPB Prevention Forester in Lufkin (Phone: 936-639-8170; e-mail mmurphrey@tfs.tamu.edu) or Dr. Ronald Billings, Project Manager in College Station (Phone: 979-458-6650; e-mail rbillings@tfs.tamu.edu).