

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Planning Department – Land Management Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

THRU: Charlie Pierce, Mayor *AK for CP*
Melanie Aeschliman, Planning Director *MA*
Marcus A Mueller, Land Management Officer *[Signature]*

FROM: Dakota Truitt, Land Management Agent *[Signature]*

DATE: April 21, 2022

RE: Ordinance 2022-11, Authorizing Emergency Harvest of Spruce Bark Beetle Impacted Forestlands Including Spruce which are Dying, or Susceptible to Dying, and Establishing a Framework to Guide Forest Treatments (Mayor)

KPB Land Management has been working to develop management framework for a coordinated Spruce Bark Beetle (SBB) mitigation response in light of the progressing SBB outbreak that began in 2016. The estimated 195,000 acres severely impacted on the Kenai Peninsula are closely monitored and surveyed by the AK Division of Forestry Forest Health Program. These forests are experiencing high rates of spruce mortality averaging 60-70%, and up to 90% mortality, in highly impacted areas.

Implementing a KPB SBB mitigation response will depend upon authorization of necessary measures for emergency harvest on affected parcels of land, regardless of land classification. Framework for guidance would account for existing classifications, adjacent landowner notification, community meetings, and management best practices, through a defined process to guide forest treatments that incorporate public input.

The proposed program outlines forest management sale reports as the central format that include treatment prescriptions and harvest practices to reduce wildland fire hazard and encourage utilization of economically viable forest product values. Environmental protections and practices are enumerated in KPB 17.08, 17.10, 17.50, 21.18, and the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act. Practices will be adapted and applied for site-specific conditions for harvest and post-harvest treatments that include site preparation, reforestation practices, and harvesting infrastructure retainment or closure methods.

The project timeline includes hiring a temporary Forester position by July 2022 to produce SBB mitigation projects, analysis of forest inventory and prioritization of

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initial forest management units, with the goal of releasing SBB timber sales at the beginning of 2023.

The ordinance includes a proposed sunset date of June 2025, with an annual comprehensive review. The ordinance sunset could be extended by future action of the assembly.

A project page has been developed online at www.kpb.us/forestmanagement.

Your consideration is appreciated.