



# California Forest Pest Council

Fostering education on the pests of California's forests since 1951

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## Upcoming Events - Save the Date!

**June 22-24, 2022** - APS Pacific Division Meeting - Virtual

<https://www.apsnet.org/members/community/divisions/pac/meetings/Pages/default.aspx>

**June 28 - 29, 2022** - 2022 CFPC Weed Tour, Mt. Shasta, CA

**June 30, 2022** - 2022 CFPC Insect and Disease Tour, Mt. Shasta, CA

**July 2, 2022** - Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park: Old Growth Redwood Tour, Santa Cruz, CA.

## Conifer Mortality on the Rise in Northern California



Douglas-fir mortality near Ukiah in Mendocino County. Credit: C. Lee, CALFIRE



Mortality of several conifer species has increased significantly in the first half of 2022 in many northern California locations, giving rise to new concerns about increased wildfire risk, hazards to homes and infrastructure, and vegetation community change.

The mortality, first noticed in early 2021 as mass knobcone pine die-off on Mount Diablo in the East San Francisco Bay Area, has subsequently appeared in many areas in the north of the state, including Napa, Lake, Sonoma, and Mendocino Counties in the northwest, Siskiyou County in the north-central part of the state, and parts of the northern Sierra Nevada. The primary tree species affected include ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, knobcone pine, and to a lesser extent incense-cedar and gray pine. Helicopter flights over Napa and Lake Counties in December 2021 and May 2022 revealed quick and large-scale progression of the outbreaks.

The organisms mainly responsible for the mortality are taking advantages of tree stress caused by drought conditions and sites unsuitable for conifer growth over the long term. They include the following:

- Ponderosa pine: western pine beetle
- Douglas-fir: flatheaded fir borer
- Knobcone pine: *Ips* bark beetles, including *Ips paraconfusus*
- Gray pine: *Orthotomicus spinifer* (a bark beetle formerly known as *Ips spinifer*)
- Incense-cedar: a complex of stress-related fungal pathogens

Since available soil water throughout the state will decrease for many months from this point forward, the extent of this mortality is projected to increase greatly over the summer. People living in affected counties should be vigilant, as trees may die quickly near power lines, roads, homes, and infrastructure. A short list of resources to consult (not exhaustive) includes local government officials (contacts available at <https://www.counties.org/>); in the the [Forestland Steward newsletter](#), which includes specialists from CAL FIRE, the University of California, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the USDA Forest Service; and your local [Resource Conservation District](#) (<https://carcd.org/>).



Ponderosa pine mortality near Clear Lake in Lake County. Credit: C. Lee, CALFIRE

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Newsletter feedback and ideas are welcome. Please submit comments to [caforestpestcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:caforestpestcouncil@gmail.com).

When buying firewood for camping or home heating this fall, remember to buy wood sourced local to where you will be using it, helping to minimize the spread of pests and diseases - **Buy It Where You Burn It** For a list of local firewood dealers, go to [firewoodscout.org](http://firewoodscout.org).

Sincerely,

The California Forest Pest Council



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