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June 1989

## Resource Review

# Not if, when?

The dead forest



*A massive infestation of the spruce bark beetle has killed millions of trees in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. Once beautiful forests are now being transformed into forest slums and graveyards.*

The beautiful spruce forests of Southcentral and Western Alaska are vanishing. Millions of trees across lazy river valleys and scenic ridges are dying in epidemic numbers. The toll is so staggering that there may not be much of a forest to pass on to the next generation.

The shocking decline of the spruce forest across the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska's favorite playground, drives home the realities of a fatal plague that is sweeping through other areas of Southcentral and Western Alaska. According to state and federal officials, the forest is now in irreversible decline, victim of a relentless and massive insect infestation that is rapidly transforming lush green areas into dead, brown graveyards.

Dead trees that are falling across the forests do not promote moose or deer populations. Dead spruce also do not produce an annual crop of seed cones so necessary for birds and small mammals such as squirrels or mice. This in turn effects larger animals in the food chain such as martin and other fur bearers.

All told, over 10 billion board feet of timber has recently been ravaged and killed by insects and diseases running wild and unchecked through the forests. To put this into perspective, **the morbid toll far exceeds all of the timber cut by man on state land since the first day of statehood in 1959.** It also exceeds the volume of commercial timber lost due to the ravages of wild fires in the Alaska wilderness.

Even this estimate is conservative since it is based only on epidemic areas spotted

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## Message from the Executive Director

by  
Becky L. Gay

### Re-education begins with you

**"As the circle of light increases, so does the circumference of darkness."** Albert Einstein

As we move into summer, Alaskans have a chance to undo much of what was done to us as a result of the oil spill.

Now, perhaps more than any other time, fellow citizens are curious to know about Alaska. Part of the interest is generated by the spill itself, but much of the curiosity is a direct result of the major hoopla media, government and non-development interests provided on the oil spill.

Alaskans now must seize this opportunity to help educate other Americans about our great state. Not only can we help correct the image that Alaska has somehow been ruined, but we can be

gracious in letting people "eat their words" in the aftermath, letting the public know that although we cannot forget, we can forgive.

For instance, Admiral Yost has already apologized to the merchant marines for his flip statement that a "10-year old" could pilot the tanker through the channel.

Even the Governor, who earlier could only speak in horrific terms about the damage, is now touring the Lower 48 letting America know that Alaska is still beautiful and a wonderful place to visit. Better late than never, my mother always says.

Teaching people about the positive role resource development plays in Alaska will be more difficult due to the oil spill. Although there was rampant ignorance about Alaska before the spill, armed now with a little knowledge, the general public has become dangerously "expert" on our state and our future.

Of course, there are many sides to any given story and Alaska "after the spill" is no different. Now is the time for each of us to begin on the long road to repairing Alaska's credibility.

Don't wait until you see the non-development fliers, fundraising to save Alaska from all resource developers, before you begin your counter-attack. Let your friends and family know about all the good things in Alaska. Let them know that Alaskans are producers, not just consumers, of resources. Let them know Alaska still produces 25% of the nation's oil. Let them know how much Alaska contributes to the fishing industry, the critical minerals inventory and the strategic role Alaska plays in defense and energy security. Let them know there is plenty to see and do in Alaska, in all seasons.

And while you are at it, invite them up to see for themselves.

## Exxon cleanup effort shifts into high gear

It is a messy, exhausting job that looks daunting, but progress is being made in cleaning up beaches tainted by oil from the grounding of the Exxon Valdez.

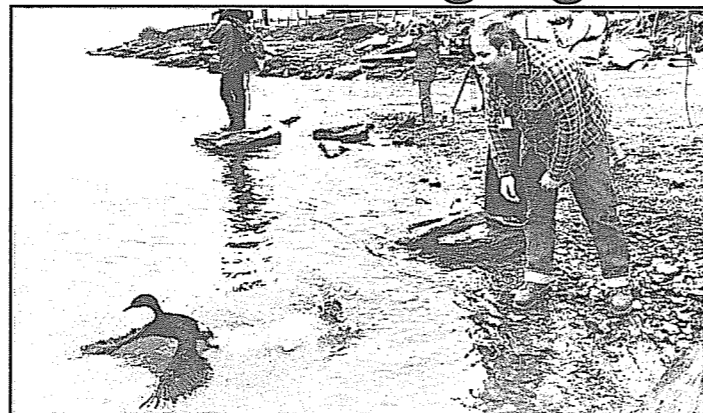
The massive Exxon clean up effort can best be compared to recruiting, training, deploying and coordinating the operations of a small army in wilderness. More than 7,000 people are involved in the overall Exxon effort with some 5,000 people deployed directly on the shoreline, including 2,500 workers on the beach at any one time.

There are over 130 environmental experts in aquatic biology and toxicology on site. Over 500 vessels and dozens of aircraft are involved in the overall cleanup operations.

Fifty landing craft will be active in the cleanup program by mid-summer and 20 large barges equipped for warm-water shoreline washing will be on location, according to Otto Harrison of Exxon. Offshore housing vessels will accommodate more than 4,200 workers this summer, Harrison said.

The cleaning of the shoreline is a slow process involving the use of large landing crafts equipped with hoses, pumps, heaters, booms and skimmers. The vessels are brought close to shore and the hoses are deployed to flush oil from the beach. Booms and skimmers contain and recover the oil.

Exxon has targeted over 364 miles of beaches in Prince William Sound for cleaning. In addition, shoreline cleanup and nearshore operations have been initiated in the Kenai Peninsula and Shelikof Strait areas.



Exxon has employed over 70 boats, several airplanes and a number of helicopters in the animal rescue effort. There are bird rescue shelters in Valdez, Seward and Kodiak. Over 200 animal experts and workers are on site. The bird pictured above was released back into its wild environment after being cleaned by workers.

(Frank Flavin photo)

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the Sound's shoreline, including its many islands, covers 3,495 miles. About ten percent of the total shoreline of the Sound was affected by the spill. Of that amount, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

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The Resource Development Council (RDC) is Alaska's largest privately funded nonprofit economic development organization working to develop Alaska's natural resources in an orderly manner and to create a broad-based, diversified economy while protecting and enhancing the environment.

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**Resource Review** is the official monthly publication of the Resource Development Council, Box 100516, Anchorage, Alaska 99510 - (907) 276-0700. RDC is located at 807 G Street, Suite 200, Anchorage.

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**Writer & Editor**  
Carl Portman

## Exxon launches full-scale assault

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says 191 miles were lightly oiled, 85 miles were moderately oiled and 88 miles were heavily oiled.

The bulk of the oil spilled from the tanker Valdez has now evaporated or biodegraded, leaving comparatively small amounts on the water, according to overflight reports by the Coast Guard.

Fortunately, the impact on fish has been far less serious than feared. There is no evidence of major fish mortalities and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is optimistic that salmon will avoid the oil.

Popular fishing districts in Prince William Sound and off Kodiak Island are expected to remain closed this summer because of oil floating on the surface, but millions of salmon normally caught in these areas will be harvested in other areas, state biologists claim. The closures are intended to prevent the fish from becoming contaminated by nets that pick up oil floating on the surface. If fish are left alone as they swim below an oil-tainted surface, they should escape exposure. They can then be safely harvested in oil-free waters.

Exxon is working toward a mid-September deadline for cleaning the beaches. It has promised to return to the job if necessary in the spring, employing all the necessary resources. In the meantime, the oil industry in Alaska has implemented a number of steps aimed at preventing another major oil spill off the Alaska coast. The new procedures and plans have enhanced tanker safety and immediate response to emergencies.



Fairbanks school children visit Prince William Sound shortly after the oil spill. The visit was coordinated by Exxon and VECO.

(Frank Flavin photo)

## Valdez mayor urges industry to move forward

(continued from page 3)

depots will be set up in areas of the state determined to be potential sites of releases or threatened releases of oil or hazardous substances. The depots are to be equipped and staffed in a manner that insures prompt response when containment and clean up actions are necessary.

SB 264 envisions a response mechanism similar to what exists in Norway. Norway has one major oil spill response facility in Horten, the hub of oil shipping activity. At that facility, 20 people are employed and a substantial volume of oil spill response equipment is stored.

Complementing the facility in Horten are 12 additional oil spill response depots located along the coast. Each is manned by ten employees and warehouses smaller amounts of spill equipment. Each depot maintains contracts with individual boat owners in its surrounding area.

In addition to the establishment of an independent containment and cleanup capability, Devens is also calling for an oil spill response training network that utilizes a well-trained statewide pool of specialists thoroughly familiar with spill response duties and equipment. The personnel pool could be similar to that of the Bureau of Land Management fire-fighting teams called upon to assist in controlling fires in other areas of the U.S. Similarly, "Alaskan oil spill response crews could be utilized for national and/or international oil spill response needs," Devens said. "Alaska should be the moving force behind the establishment of a world-scale capability."

In addition, Alaska's response capabilities should not be limited to coastal areas, Devens said. "Inland depot sites between Valdez and Prudhoe Bay where an oil spill could occur through pipeline ruptures should also be established."

The oil spill policy paper also called for the establishment of an administrative commission composed of members from industry and the local, state and federal governments to coordinate future inter-agency/industry preparedness and response efforts.

Devens also cited the need for the establishment of an economic reparations fund that would assist individual communities, the state and impacted industries when economies are debilitated by an oil spill. The funding of this account, as well as the cost of implementing other measures envisioned by SB 264 and several other "spill bills," should be borne by the oil industry through increased taxes, Devens said.

To address oil spill dangers, as well as air, water and other environmental concerns, Devens also recommended the establishment of an independent environmental service area. The response facility, with separate manpower and equipment located away from the terminal site and the dangers that inhere at that site from pumping, storing and loading oil, should be located in Valdez, Devens said. Service Area 3, established in Valdez three years ago, is intended to provide this capability.

Service Area 3 provides priority berthing for disabled tankers and will eventually provide for cross-training of the city's emergency personnel and volunteers to increase the pool of trained oil spill workers. Containment and cleanup equipment at the service area would augment Alyeska's resources for oil spill response activity.

Devens said a sanctioned independent facility is needed in the event of a major earthquake. He said a devastating quake could take out the Alyeska terminal along with its oil spill response resources.

To fund the existing service area at Valdez, the city taxed Alyeska property an additional three mills, but quickly became embroiled in a legal battle with the State's Assessor's Office. Because of the litigation, Valdez has not been able to fully implement the services programmed in its five-year plan for the site. Devens said the matter is now before the Alaska Supreme Court awaiting a decision on the validity of the service area and the higher mill levy. If the service area is validated, Devens hopes to "utilize it in conjunction with the plan envisioned under Senate Bill 264 as an integral part of a statewide response network."

# Tongass reforms spell economic chaos

## Turn off the lights

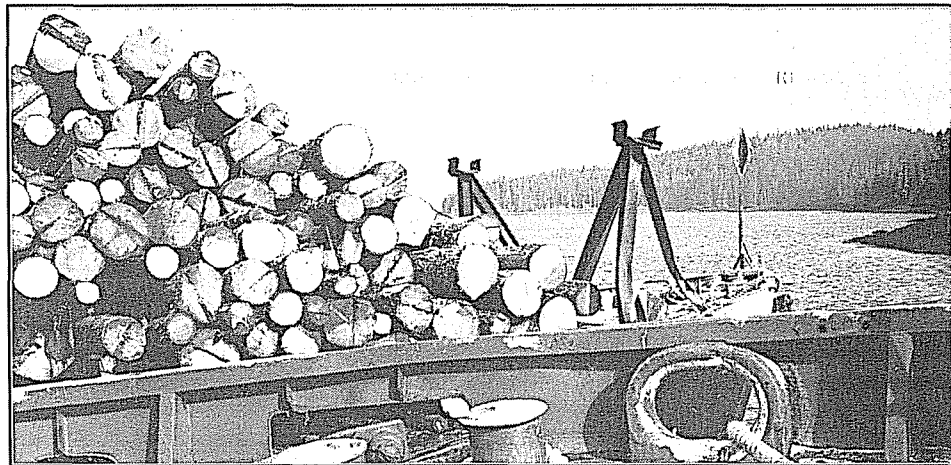
The U.S. House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee has approved legislation that would bring radical changes to logging operations in the Tongass National Forest.

The legislation, introduced by Congressman George Miller, would repeal the \$40 million Timber Supply Fund and designate additional Wilderness in the forest. The bill would also terminate the two fifty-year timber contracts and repeal the 4.5 billion board feet per decade in timber inventory requirements.

If approved by the full House and Senate, Alaska congressman Don Young said he would work to sustain a Presidential veto. "A bill that would do nothing more than take jobs away from working Alaskans deserves to be vetoed," Young said.

"As bad as this is, I can get 139 votes to sustain a veto by the President," Young added.

Don Finney, Executive Director of the Alaska Loggers Association and RDC board



Radical reforms of logging operations in the Tongass National Forest could deal a deadly blow to the forest industry and the local economies of Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell and other communities throughout Southeast Alaska.

member, agreed that the bill is so bad that it will most likely lose the support of some of those who would vote for more moderate legislation.

The bill as passed would add 1.8 million acres of Wilderness to the Tongass, increasing the existing Wilderness block of

5 million acres by some 30%. The bill would leave 43% of the forest in Wilderness.

The Miller legislation clearly sets aside an additional area larger than the 1.7 million acres presently available for timber harvest. Overall, two-thirds of commercial forest lands in the Tongass are already closed to logging.

The proponents of the Miller legislation claim it only withdraws 50 million board feet of commercially operable timber, leaving 400 million a year available for harvesting.

"What they didn't explain is that the bill also repeals section 705(d) of ANILCA without which the Forest Service cannot spend money on submarginal timber stands," said Finney. "What this means is that instead of 450 million board feet per year prior to this withdrawal, there are only 338 million board feet. Subtracting the 50 million from 338 million reduces the largest possible cut to 288 million board feet."

The "real hooker" in the legislation is the requirement that mandates the Forest Service to maintain non-logging buffer zones of a minimum of 100 feet on each side of all salmon streams and their tributaries. Finney estimates that the 100 foot buffers would remove as much as 50% of the merchantable timber available for logging.

Fifty percent of 288 million acres leaves 144 million for harvest in a forest capable of producing 1.2 billion board feet annually on a sustained yield basis.

"These reductions, of course, are why the preservationists need to cancel the long-term timber sales," Finney said. "There would not be enough timber available to meet the contractual requirements of even one pulpmill and there could be no independent timber sale program.

"Somebody turn off the lights."

## Quotes from people of the Tongass

This spring the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests held public hearings in Ketchikan and Sitka on legislation to reform timber operations in the Tongass National Forest of Southeast Alaska. Thousands of jobs in Southeast Alaska are directly tied to the annual timber harvests and the economies of Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell and other major communities are highly dependent on a strong Tongass timber industry.

Hundreds of citizens, including loggers, city and state officials, native representatives, local business persons and others came out to the hearings in defense of the timber industry. Here are some notable quotes from those presenting testimony. (reprinted from Alaska Women in Timber)

"After the 1980 agreement, we thought a lasting compromise had been reached and we could go to work with a secure timber base and harvest levels. This was an agreement which put two-thirds of the commercial forest land in Wilderness or other nonharvest designation. Now you are back and want even more of the small timber base upon which our livelihoods, families, and communities depend. We're tired of being told we have to sacrifice our productive lifestyle by other people with more wealth and sophistication who will bear no part of the costs they impose on us. The men and women in the timber industry contribute to this country by working hard and paying taxes and then they find that their sustenance isn't as important as that of an over-mature forest. It's now apparent there's no effective counterbalance to the environmental movement. Senator, I wish you would consider people to be at least as important as fish and deer."

### Steve Connelly, former RDC intern

"I was raised to believe that logging is an honorable and worthwhile profession. I deeply resent the portrayal of the logger as an 'assassin of the forest' when I know from personal experience that modern forest management practices not only provide wood for today's forest products, but will also provide for tomorrow's on a perpetual basis."

### Sean Harbour

"It's unrealistic to stamp 'case closed' on our logging, jeopardizing our economy by adding Wilderness to a vast established area. I prefer to stay off the government handout rolls and earn my living. Yes, I believe in preservation, but 'PEOPLE PRESERVATION' first."

### Pauline Green



## Thoughts from the President

by  
Shelby Stastny

## A retrospective look

It is certainly with mixed emotions that I come to the end of my term as president of Resource Development Council. It has been a most enjoyable year and a great opportunity to work with terrific people, both on the board and the staff of RDC. It seems that when a person gets to the end of almost any path in life, we have an opportunity to take a retrospective look at where we've been. Often, it is a painful experience to compare what we had intended to accomplish with what we actually did accomplish. I guess it is normal to have lofty goals, however, such goals can lead to lofty falls. Looking on the bright side, I have left plenty of challenges for the new president!

While our victories may have seemed few and far between, progress was made in the last year, particularly when you consider the well-financed and powerful forces arguing against development in our state. Consider the following:

1. A dialogue was started with other land use groups throughout the country who are similarly interested in the "wise use" of land, rather than the indiscriminate "lock up" of our land.
2. A major conference which brought together some of the "wise use" leaders, along with government, business and labor leaders to discuss how Alaska's resources can be sensibly developed.
3. A major conference which brought world leaders in the forest products industries and professional foresters together to outline the possibilities which lie in the Boreal Forests of Southcentral and Interior Alaska.
4. An informational brochure was produced which explains the cost of Wilderness designations to the economy and lifestyle of Alaska and its residents.
5. A new brochure was produced outlining the activities of RDC to be given to prospective members or others interested in further information about our organization.
6. A productive board meeting in Juneau where we had an opportunity to discuss our legislative priorities with the Governor and

## Valdez mayor releases oil spill policy

In the wake of the Prince William, Sound oil spill, Valdez Mayor John Devens is calling for Alaska and the nation to pick up the pieces and "move constructively to assure that the Exxon Valdez is a one-time only event."

While urging the nation and the oil industry to move forward, Devens believes "a working relationship between the oil industry and all levels of government must develop with the shared goal of building ample safeguards to protect against future calamities."

In his oil spill policy paper released last month to the Resource Development Council, Devens said the oil industry cannot and should not be the sole mechanism for response to major spills. He cited the need for supplemental and back up programs to complement industry efforts.

Devens' report noted that "one reason for the delayed response (in the early hours of the oil spill) was the industry's immediate concern with the hazards posed by the grounded tanker itself. The precarious status of the tanker required

many members of the Legislature. Our sense was that our issues would receive more favorable attention than in the past. However, the accident on Bligh Reef gave that perception a considerable setback.

While much remains to be done, there were definitely some highlights of the year. Unfortunately, you have to take the bad with the good, and this was a bad year in some respects for pro-development organizations. Among the disappointments of the year:

1. Amendments to the Economic Limit Factor passed by the Alaska Legislature.
2. Failure to make any significant movement toward a meaningful forest management plan.
3. Failure of Congress to approve exploration in ANWR.

At RDC, we believe many of the anti-development strategies can be mitigated, provided Alaskans work together and think sensibly. As we look forward to steps that need to be taken in the future, I would suggest at least two areas that may not yield immediate results, but which are important in turning the tide of public sentiment from the no-growth mentality to the reasonable development approach.

First, we need to develop an intense education program. For the adult population, this program needs to be presented in a manner that makes resource development easy for them to understand, and drives the personal benefits of resource development home.

I believe that this must be done on television and radio through short spots that point out the fallacies of non-development arguments in a manner the citizen can understand quickly and clearly. Another educational program needs to be developed for young people still in school. These are the leaders of the future. We can partially attribute the anti-development mode to the fact that a generation or two of our children have not been taught the full story about resource development. While we were proceeding with economic development, we allowed those with a non-development bias to teach our young children.

The second thing we can do that will pay long range dividends is to cement our relationships with other members of the "wise use" movement. This is going to require some time and money to be spent on land use issues outside Alaska. This national movement is gaining momentum. It is going to be a force for the governments and environmentalists to reckon with. If we are part of it, we will have national representation on our issues. People from all over the country will be talking to their delegations about their Alaskan votes. It will no longer be a "cheap environmental vote" as we have heard so many times before.

prompt attention to safely and immediately lighter the remaining crude oil on the vessel onto another tanker.

"It was during the successful portion of that aspect of the emergency response that precious time was lost that could have been focused on the containment and cleanup of the oil escaping from the tanker into the Sound," Devens said. He said more could have been done in the first critical hours, but "neither the industry or any other entity was prepared to respond to a spill of this magnitude."

"Alaska must learn from what was done and not done in response to the Exxon Valdez tragedy," Devens said. "While it is easy to point fingers at this juncture, it is more productive to focus on corrective, preventive measures that will insure that the Exxon Valdez history will not repeat itself."

In his oil spill policy paper, Devens called for the establishment of an independent spill containment and cleanup capability as envisioned in the Senate Bill 264, passed this spring by the Alaska Legislature. Under this bill, emergency response

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# Forest is a time bomb waiting to explode into a raging inferno

## Plague could pose next major crisis

(continued from page 1)

from the air between 1982 and 1988. David Orr, an insect and disease specialist with the state Division of Forestry, cautions that there are large expanses of forested lands for which nothing is known from the standpoint of insect and disease activity.

"Our estimates address only known problem areas," Orr noted. He said the facts and figures applying to the massive insect infestations represent minimum rather than maximum statewide impact.

In addition, because it takes from one to two years for insect-killed trees to turn their reddish-brown color so that they can be spotted from the air, the most recent aerial surveys actually depict mortality during 1986. "We are up to two years behind in estimating current mortality at a time when some of these epidemic areas were exploding in size and impact," Orr said.

Contrary to popular belief, "the conditions which are now promoting disastrous forest pests such as spruce bark beetles are not a result of natural phenomena," Orr said. "We are finally getting an answer to our deliberate decisions to eliminate the

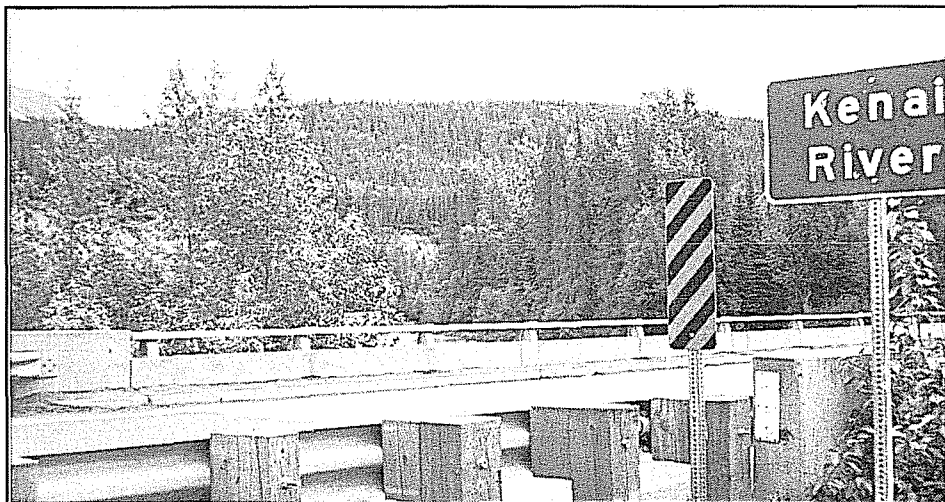
role of fire or to prevent forest management."

Orr explained that the spruce bark beetle infestation sweeping state forests is only a symptom of what is really wrong. "Areas being devastated by insects and diseases are simply an indicator of the sad state of affairs in our once beautiful forests."

Spruce bark beetles inhabit all of Alaska's forests, but for the most part, beetle populations occur in relatively low numbers. When climatic conditions and other factors are favorable for the development of beetle broods, the population in certain areas will explode into an epidemic, capable of causing incredible damage.

"The real problem begins when a once healthy and vigorous forest finally reaches maturity and begins to slow down," Orr explained. "Our once healthy forests have long since declined into a state that is optimum for any variety of insect and disease problems."

As a result, Orr pointed out that Alaska's forests are being depleted by spruce bark beetles "at a rate which almost defies comprehension."



Trees throughout much of the popular Kenai Peninsula are dying from the massive infestation. The ridge behind the Kenai River bridge is covered with dead standing trees. The infestation is spreading north to heavy forests in the Portage-Girdwood area. Look for the red tree limbs on your next drive south of Girdwood. Those trees don't have long to live.

Spruce bark beetles have lived in the Alaska forest for generations, but in the past natural and man-caused fires often eliminated any traces of insect and disease activity. In the aftermath of these fires, a young, healthy and strong vigorous forest emerged from the ash, leaving virtually no opportunity for beetles to take hold in epidemic portions.

The success of the state's fire suppression program over the past 40 years has resulted in older forests that once might have been swept by fire and then renewed. Some forest mosaics which escaped fire activity in the relatively recent past have grown up to 400 years old. The trees are now rapidly deteriorating.

"Just like elderly and sick people in the absence of professional care, the trees of Alaska's forests are becoming more susceptible to disease and other predations," Orr said.

Insects and diseases are most likely to attack forest stands which are fairly uniform in species and age. This is why the spruce bark beetle epidemic has spread so rapidly over vast areas of the forest.

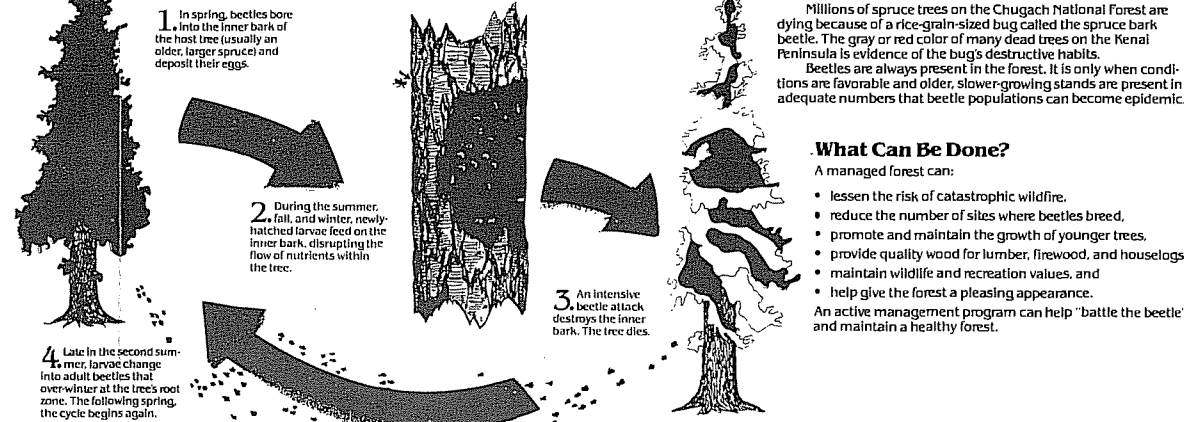
The Kenai Peninsula and the westside of Cook Inlet between the Beluga River and Mt. Susitna are classic examples of this phenomena.

The first and greatest danger resulting from the epidemic is fire. Once the trees have been killed, they will eventually fall to produce an accumulation of fuel which is readily consumed by fire.

"Depending on the density of fuel accumulations, the potential fuel buildup can

## The Beetle and the Forest

### How the beetle kills...



Millions of spruce trees on the Chugach National Forest are dying because of a rice-grain-sized bug called the spruce bark beetle. The gray or red color of many dead trees on the Kenai Peninsula is evidence of the bug's destructive habits. Beetles are always present in the forest. It is only when conditions are favorable and older, slower-growing stands are present in adequate numbers that beetle populations can become epidemic.

### What Can Be Done?

A managed forest can:

- lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfire.
- reduce the number of sites where beetles breed.
- promote and maintain the growth of younger trees.
- provide quality wood for lumber, firewood, and houselogs.
- maintain wildlife and recreation values, and
- help give the forest a pleasing appearance.

An active management program can help "battle the beetle" and maintain a healthy forest.

U.S. Forest Service, Source: Chugach National Forest

approach situations very similar to those found at Yellowstone National Park just before the spectacular fires of 1989," Orr said. "Such conditions can lead to very severe burns irrespective of people habitation."

In the case of the Kenai River area where jackstrawed spruce trees are already 15 feet deep in some areas, "a fire would be devastating to the forest and also to private homes and recreation property," Orr cautioned. "Because so many people frequent the hiking trails or reside along narrow subdivision roads, a fast-moving forest fire in this area could easily result in numerous civilian casualties simply because they could not get out of the way in time." The tracks of previous large fires in the area are simply a warning that such an event will happen, Orr said. "It is not a matter of 'if,' but 'when.'"

Orr said a "let burn" fire policy is not an option in controlling the infestation on the Kenai Peninsula. "I shudder to contemplate what a future major fire around Kenai Lake, Cooper Landing or the Russian River might cost in suppression dollars, much less property damage and casualty claims."

"The irony is that most of the areas currently plagued by spruce bark beetles could be cleaned up before a major fire gets started," Orr added. "A major new wood products industry could be developed by simply utilizing some of the millions of dead trees which now abound in many of our forests."

Even in far-remote areas where a "let burn" policy is an option, it would be far better to utilize the trees for local and world

markets and encourage several billion dollars of investment capital to be injected into our state, rather than watching a valuable resource go up in smoke, Orr said.

Orr stressed that in the absence of fire, silvicultural options are the only other method available for rejuvenating a forest. However, it takes heavy machinery to implement a silvicultural prescription to clear away dead trees and to churn the moss so that the soil can be exposed and warmed to a point where new seedlings can once again grow.

But environmentalists don't like logging and the roads required to get the trees to market. They have objected to past efforts to introduce larger-scale logging to stop the infestations. However, Orr claims that removing the wood is the cheapest and most effective way to deal with the crisis.

Without a silviculture program that targets the dead trees for harvesting, the entire forest is in jeopardy, along with its wildlife and those residents and visitors who may lie in the path of what may be an imminent inferno. Meanwhile, the beetles spread to adjacent lands, regardless of ownership.

Besides saving what may be left of the forest, a major harvesting effort on the Kenai Peninsula would create lots of jobs and bring in large quantities of money to buy equipment necessary to salvage the wood. If support services are factored into the equation, Orr estimates that a one dollar direct investment in the wood products industry easily stimulates four additional dollars of economic activity.

"If we did nothing more with some of our dead spruce trees than grind them up into

chips and make locally produced pulp, the finished product could easily exceed six billion dollars at this time," Orr estimated. "If we did something more creative, such as produce particle board, veneer lumber or any number of other value added products, the end result could be considerably more valuable than what I just quoted for pulp."

However, with each passing day, the dead trees of the forest continue to deteriorate, becoming more dangerous and less valuable from a product recovery point of view. "Not only are the beetles devastating the forest, they are also ruining any economic potential which may be realized from this land," Orr said. "At the same time, these forest slums and graveyards can no longer support the wildlife on which our tourism, subsistence and trapping industries depend."

Orr complained that for too long the owners and custodians of the forested lands in Alaska have been allowed to foster conditions which enable insect and disease epidemics to spread. The time has come, he says, to where Alaskans should insist on a responsible good neighbor policy that limits the impact and spread of forest pest problems.

"The longer we wait, the more difficult and expensive this task will become, and the greater is the chance that this state will soon be paying exorbitant costs to suppress the forest fires which most surely will come."