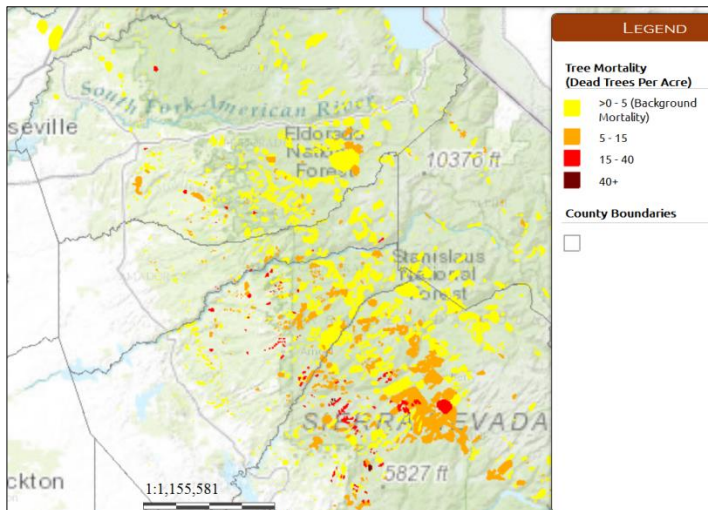


What to do about dead and dying trees?



Recent headlines proclaimed that 29 million trees died in California in 2015 as a result of drought and bark beetles. In the Central Sierra area, CalFire and the US Forest Service maps show 2015 brought widespread mortality particularly in Tuolumne County.

Ponderosa pines are the primary victims, most of which have been killed by western pine beetles, though mortality is also occurring in firs and cedars due to a suite of beetles attacking in concert. Conifers such as pine and fir that are turning red are already dead, since they cannot resprout once their needles are lost.

Dead and dying trees near a home or important infrastructure should be removed quickly.

Tree removal should be done promptly and remaining slash and debris should be treated to prevent colonization by pine engraver beetles. Unlike other species of beetles which feed only on live trees, pine engravers, which kill trees from the top down, can breed in dead or dying trees for up to 5 weeks after they have been felled. Therefore it's important to avoid letting slash or green logs accumulate near living trees. Instead, logging debris should be chipped, cut into smaller pieces (> 4" in diameter and 3' long) and scattered (lop and scatter), piled and burned, crushed and mashed into the soil, removed from site, or wrapped in clear plastic for up to 5 weeks. Any work done should be careful not to wound nearby trees since wounds provide a new site of attack for bark beetles.

Financial assistance is not available for individual homeowners to remove dead and dying trees at this time. However, the Governor's emergency proclamation and Tree Mortality task force has allocated funds to local jurisdictions to remove trees near important public infrastructure. Utilities are also actively removing dead trees near power lines on private land. A permit may be needed to remove dead trees in some cases. Landowners should consult CalFire's excellent web resource <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/bark-beetles-dead-trees/> for more information.:

For those with larger acreages, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can assist qualified owners to remove small under 14 inch trees more than 200 feet from a home through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Landowners of non-industrial private conifer forestlands in Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne should contact the local county NRCS service center at (209) 223-6535.

For an overview of bark beetle effects and strategies in the state see <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/bark-beetles-dead-trees/>. In the Central Sierra see: http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Forestry/Forest_health_and_mortality/ and