

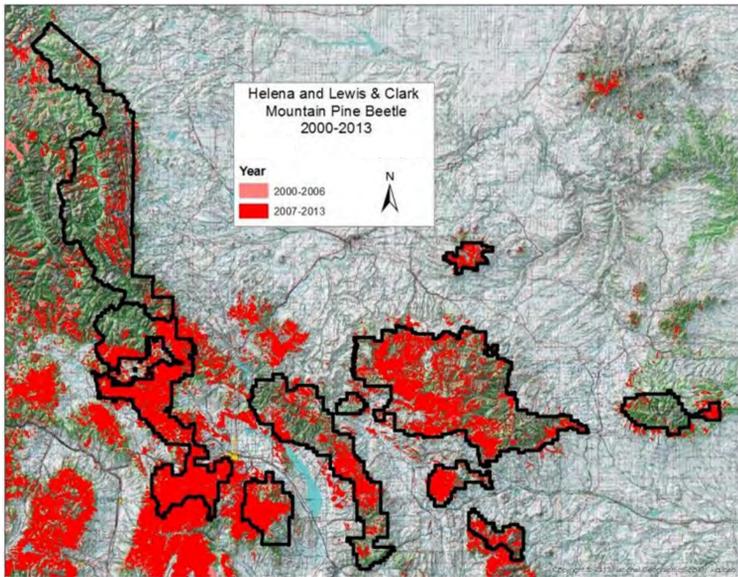


Vegetation Drivers & Stressors

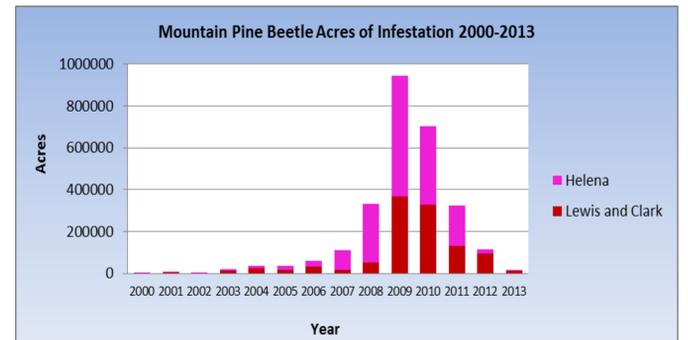
Vegetation is influenced by a variety of natural and human-induced changes. These are some of the most influential processes occurring in the Helena and Lewis & Clark plan area.



Insects & Disease

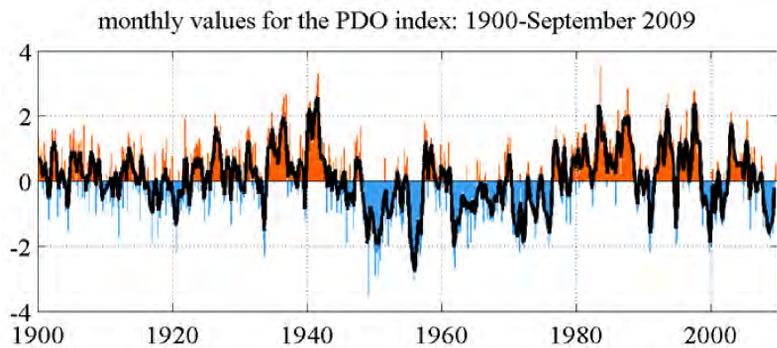


Insects and disease play an important role in shaping vegetation. The most active insect recently has been the mountain pine beetle. Other important agents include Douglas-fir beetle, western spruce budworm, root diseases, and the exotic disease white pine blister rust.



Climate

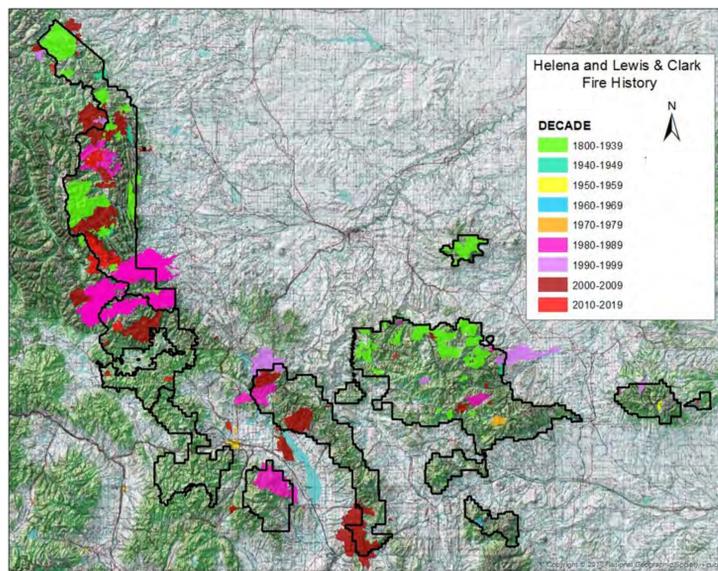
Climate drives vegetation and natural disturbances. Climate cycles are important considerations in the assessment. The current cycle is considered warm and dry.



Wildfire

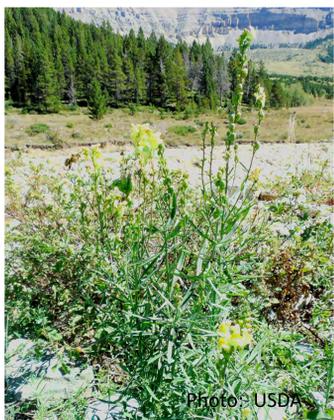


Wildfires have shaped vegetation for millennia. Fire suppression disrupted natural cycles.



Management

Noxious Weeds



Noxious weeds are a threat to native vegetation. About 79,000 acres are infested by noxious weeds in the plan area.

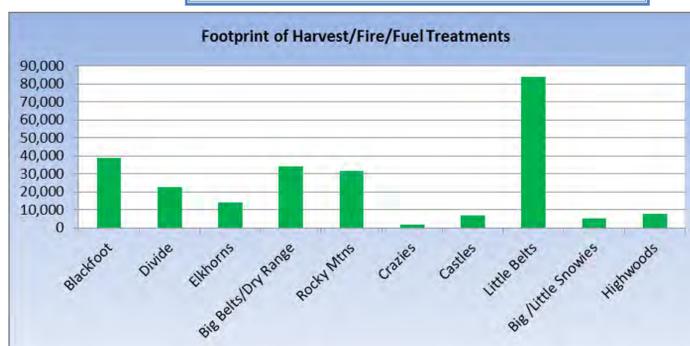


Grazing

Grazing impacts primarily non-forested habitats. Currently the plan area has 226 active allotments covering 1,167,355 acres. These allotments support 250 Permittees, 15,508 cattle, and 5,000 sheep.

Harvest & Fuel Treatments

Harvest and fuel reduction treatments directly impact vegetation composition and structure.



Examples of Management Impacts





Terrestrial Vegetation

Terrestrial vegetation refers to the plant communities that occur across the landscapes in the planning area. Terrestrial vegetation plays an important role in ecosystem diversity, habitat, and human values.



Vegetation Communities

Native Plants

Vegetation communities occur across the landscape and can be assessed with a coarse filter analysis. A wide diversity of communities occur in the planning area.

Native plants are components of vegetation communities. Certain plants of conservation concern or public interest may be assessed with a fine filter analysis.



Values & Services

Terrestrial vegetation provides for many ecosystem values and services. The pictures below depict common examples.

