

Region 5 Forest Health Protection Survey

Aerial Detection Survey – Update, August 23, 2013

Background: Annual aerial detection surveys for tree injury and mortality have been conducted in California since 1994. This is an update of survey status for the 2013 season.

Objective: Detect and map tree mortality and damage in California / USFS Region 5.

Surveyors: J. Moore, B. Noyes

Dates: Aug 22 and 23, 2013

Methodology: Recently dead or injured trees (trees still retaining dead foliage) were mapped visually by surveyors using digital aerial sketch-mapping systems flying in a light fixed-wing aircraft approximately 1,000 feet above ground level. Surveyors record the number and species of affected trees and type of damage (mortality, defoliation, branch flagging) at each mapped location.

Details:

- Most of the Sierra National Forest was flown. Figure 1.
- Most of the mortality appeared to be caused by mountain pine beetle activity in lodgepole pine. Similar to last year, this mortality was mapped as large areas with relatively low intensities. See Figure 2.
- Mortality due to western pine beetle was common at the lower elevations. See Figure 3.
- True fir mortality was observed throughout the Forest.
- The effects of the December 2011 wind event near Devil's Postpile was readily visible this year. See Figure 4.

Figure 1. Flown area and mapped tree mortality

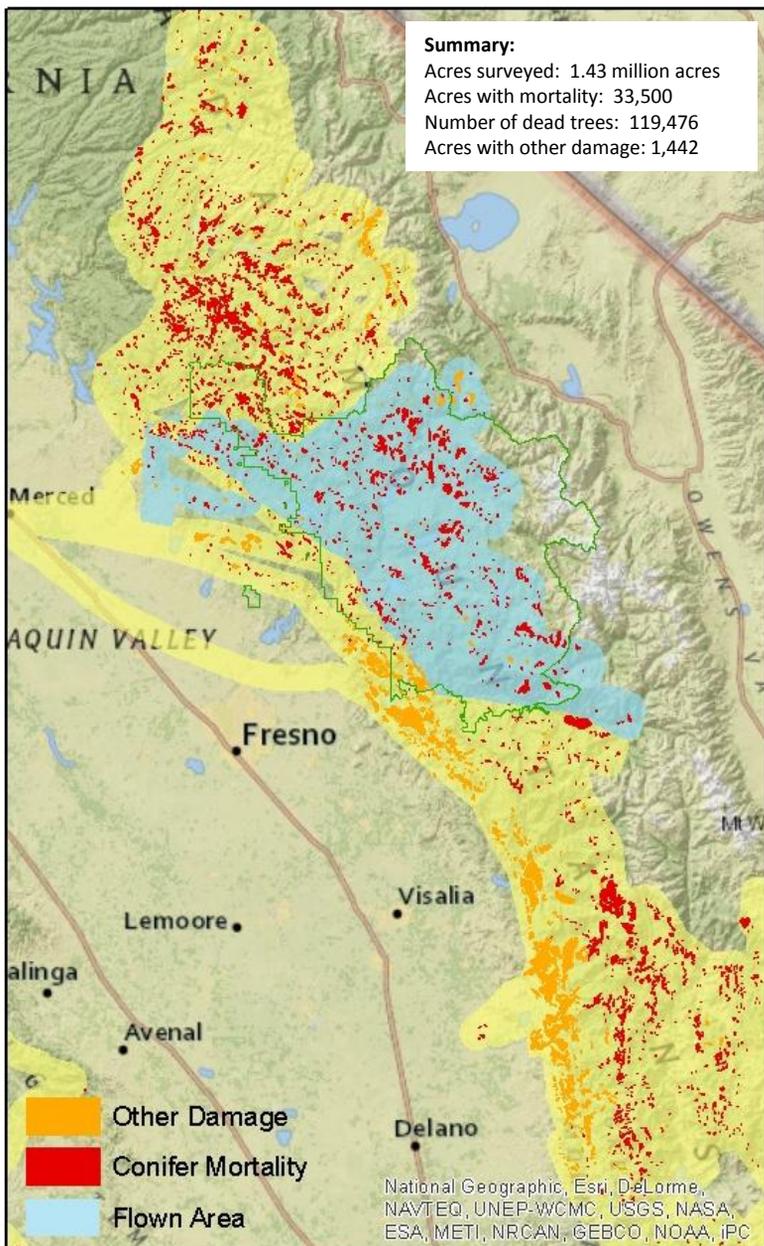


Figure 2. Lodgepole mortality in the Ansel Adams Wilderness.



Figure 3. Pockets of ponderosa pine mortality on the Bass Lake Ranger District.



Figure 4. Blowdown from the 2011 wind event near Devil's Postpile.

Direct questions pertaining to this report to Zachary Heath (email: zheath@fs.fed.us phone: 530-759- 1751). Report Date Aug 29, 2013.

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