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Landowners in Five-County Area May be at Risk of Ips Beetle Outbreak

LITTLE ROCK, AR – During two aerial surveys, 102 Ips beetle spots were identified in areas of Clark, Pike, Dallas, Hot Spring, and Ouachita Counties by the Agriculture Department’s Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC). The Ips beetle is a native bark beetle that is known to damage pine trees, especially those that are weakened by drought conditions or disease.

Ips beetles often kill only a few trees in a given spot, but under certain conditions – like drought – beetles may quickly spread to many trees. Arkansas has three species of Ips beetle that simultaneously infest pine trees. Landowners are encouraged to survey property and check for the presence of active infestations. The needles of infested trees will usually be noticeable by various shades of yellow and red (when they should be green), depending on what stage of mortality they are in. Developing beetles will also be found under the bark. Infested trees also usually have numerous white to reddish brown pitch tubes, about the size of a wad of gum, on the bark.

AFC Forest Health Specialist Chandler Barton points to drought and overstocked stands as the likely cause of an Ips beetle outbreak in the area. “We advise landowners to survey their property, especially if they have a large presence of pine trees,” says Barton. “In some cases, a forester may recommend a salvage clearcut of the infested trees. However, some infestations may not impact enough trees to warrant a harvest. Most of the problematic spots we identified included 6-15 trees.”

Ips beetles are considered less severe than the devastating southern pine beetle. While Ips beetles are labeled as secondary invaders, southern pine beetle can attack otherwise healthy trees. The current drought conditions, however, could lead to more widespread Ips damage.

Landowners can learn more about identifying the three species of the Ips beetle, [here](#). Landowners should contact an AFC County Forester for assistance with identifying and controlling an Ips beetle infestation, find county contact information for county foresters, [here](#).

The Arkansas Forestry Commission is an agency of the Arkansas Agriculture Department. The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Learn more at aad.arkansas.gov.

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