RAPID CITY URBAN FORESTRY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
26 July 2012

The purpose of this meeting was to review the and comment on the final draft of the Pine Beatle Report.

Present: Jean Van Alstyne, Ken Vahle, Josh White, Paul Ruder, Gary Garner, Lon Van Deusen, and Jay Powell.

7:30 AM: Meeting called to order by Cathy Druckrey

Cathy welcomed, and thanked the members for attending today's meeting to discuss and comment on the report Gary has prepared on the fight against Pine Beatles in the Rapid City area over the past seven (7) months.

Gary explained that he was looking for input and recommendations concerning the report and the future of the program.

Cathy opened the floor to comments, and Paul began the conversation with questions concerning the reference of trees being cut according to standards, however didn't fully understand the standard. Members discussed, and Gary further explained the standards for identification as well as "cut and chunk" and disposal of the infested timber. The conversation lead to another reference within the document, "pitch tubes". Paul explained his experience within a forest environment and that the natural defense by the tree to excrete pitch and expel the beetle and eggs is not a guarantee nor is it a very predictable event. Paul further explained that even experienced foresters have a limited success rate when evaluating a tree that will or will not survive. Due to the complexity and changing environments it is extremely difficult to convey best practices to a novice.

Paul referenced page 4 of the report and cautioned Gary about trying to predict what the future may or may not be in regard to trees being infested during the next growing season. Members also discussed preventive measures such as thinning and spraying.

"Buffer Thinning" was referenced within page 5 and Gary explained that the reference was in regard to the City limits and how adjacent land owners could be encouraged to thin stands. Members discussed the positive aspects of thinning and Ken explained that even this action tends to cause some stress to the remaining stand and it is usually 2-3 years before there is a noticeable improvement in tree health. Ken also explained that the prevailing winds and wind strengths can and does enable infestations to fly considerable distances before landing and causing issues again.

Gary asked the Board for recommendation to improve the program. Members discussed cost share programs that were available and suggested education, public service announcements, inspection services, and code enforcement may be the best focus for the program. Members generally agreed that this issue is not going away and that the limited resources should be focused on the education, administration, and enforcement of the program.

Cathy suggested that someone from the Urban Forestry Board attend the next meeting of the Incident Command Team which generally meets at 10:00a.m. Thursdays. The purpose of attending the meeting is to provide input into the future of the program. Having no other volunteers Cathy stated that she would attend and represent the UFB.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 AM. The next meeting will be held 9 August 2012 at 7:30 AM in the meeting room at the Parks Department Offices located on West Boulevard.

Submitted by Jay R. Powell