

Introduced by:	Mayor
Date:	03/21/00
Hearing:	04/04/00 & 04/18/00
Amended:	04/04/00
Action:	Enacted
Vote:	9 Yes, 0 No

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE 2000-13**

**AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING AND APPROPRIATING A GRANT FROM THE U.S.
FOREST SERVICE IN AN AMOUNT OF \$2,000,000 TO ADDRESS THE SPRUCE
BARK BEETLE INFESTATION PROBLEMS**

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough convened the Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force in January 1998 to prepare an action plan for managing the spruce bark beetle infestations in Alaska and rehabilitating the infested areas; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,000,000 acres within the Kenai Peninsula Borough have been infested with spruce bark beetles during the past ten years; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the Alaska Congressional delegation are very concerned about the potential for fire hazards caused by the spruce bark beetle infestation; and

WHEREAS, a congressional appropriation of \$2,000,000 has been made available in the form of a direct lump sum payment to the Kenai Peninsula Borough for hazardous tree removal and the acquisition of equipment to dispense of surplus wood fiber; and

WHEREAS, Congress directed the borough to contract with Cook Inlet Tribal Council with respect to tree removal on Native lands to provide jobs for at-risk youth;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the mayor is authorized to accept the direct lump sum appropriation in the amount of \$2,000,000 from the U.S. Forest Service to address the Spruce bark beetle infestation.

SECTION 2. That these grant funds are appropriated to Account No. 262.21320.43011.

SECTION 3. That a Forest Fire Science Technical Committee consisting of seven members shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the assembly, and shall evaluate

individual projects proposed for this grant. Members of the technical committee shall be knowledgeable in the areas of forestry, logging, landscaping, fire safety, or other related fields. The technical committee shall develop a plan, including criteria and guidelines, for spending the \$1,200,000 in hazard tree removal funds and for prioritizing proposals, in a manner consistent with the attached Spruce Bark Beetle Hazard Reduction Program and Congressional intent, and in accordance with applicable state and local law. On or before June 6, 2000, the technical committee shall present the proposed plan to the mayor for final project prioritization and the assembly for its approval by resolution.

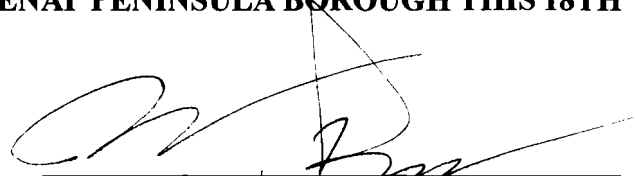
SECTION 4. That a copy of the approved plan shall be provided to the United States Forest Service and other interested agencies.

SECTION 5. That the Spruce Bark Beetle Hazard Reduction Program dated March 21, 2000, attached to this ordinance, is approved and shall guide the technical committee efforts. The mayor shall spend the remaining \$800,000 in accordance with the approach set forth in the Program, including \$300,000 for hazard material disposal, \$300,000 for hazard tree removal and forest regeneration through Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and \$200,000 for technical and management resources.

SECTION 6. That the mayor is authorized to execute all documents deemed necessary to complete this project in accordance with this ordinance.

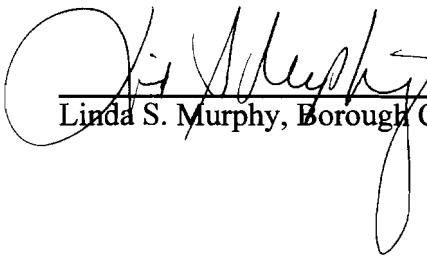
SECTION 7. That this ordinance takes effect immediately upon enactment.

ENACTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 18TH DAY OF APRIL, 2000.

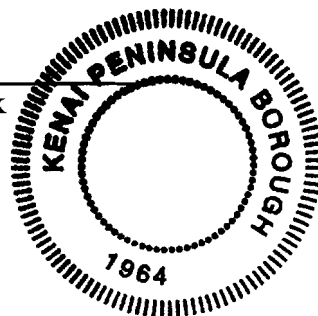


William R. Popp, Assembly President

ATTEST:



Linda S. Murphy, Borough Clerk



Spruce Bark Beetle Hazard Reduction Program March 21, 2000

Background

In 1998, the Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force was formed to prepare an action plan to manage beetle kill impacts and to rehabilitate the infested areas. Public safety and fire protection were the priorities of this group, which met in the spring of 1998 to address these areas. The task force produced a consensus report in June, 1998 which provided a broad strategy for dealing with Spruce Bark Beetle impact issues. The task force identified projects to mitigate spruce bark beetle hazard and damage with a total price tag of \$12 million. In February 2000 the Borough received a \$2 million appropriation from Congress for the purpose of spruce bark beetle impact mitigation.

Project Approach

The basic proposed approach is to apply the \$2 million to three key areas identified by the Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force. These areas and proposed funding levels are:

1. Direct hazard mitigation. \$1.5 million, or 75% of the available funding, for direct mitigation of public safety and fire protection threats.

- A. Hazard tree removal, \$1.2 million. These projects would include the removal of hazard trees from around public buildings such as schools, projects to reduce fuel loads around peninsula communities, and projects to protect escape routes out of isolated residential areas and to protect utility and other vital infrastructure.
- B. Hazard material disposal, \$300,000. The removal of trees and brush will result in large quantities of slash and other fine fuel being stored in areas, creating a hazard in itself. Also, small property owners will need assistance in disposing of slash materials. This is to be remedied by providing a chipper and chip disposal program which will move from area to area on an as needed basis, to provide a viable means of removing this hazardous material.

2. Hazard Tree Removal and Forest Regeneration through Cook Inlet Tribal Council. \$300,000 is being directed towards the removal of hazard trees and regeneration of forests.

3. Technical and management resources. \$200,000 is provided for enhancing technical and management resources required to effectively evaluate forest fire hazard and to efficiently

direct future resources.

- A. Provide Technical Resources, \$100,000. This is to include providing technical resources to land managers, technical advice on fire hazard mitigation and cooperative projects to create FireWise Peninsula communities.
- B. Develop Forest Fire Management Tools, \$100,000. This effort will help in providing basic information to make effective decisions involving wildfire behavior and post beetle vegetation succession (long term wildfire risks). Will assist in developing wildfire predictive models.

Project Identification: The \$2 million in first year funding represents about 16% of the total need identified by the Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force. This constraint presents a challenge in using the funding to reducing hazards most effectively. Individual hazard reduction projects to be considered for funding will likely greatly exceed the initial \$2 million available.

Projects must be related to the Spruce Bark Beetle Task Force 1998 report recommendations.

A forest fire science technical committee composed of individuals with a forest fire science background will review each funding proposal. The mayor will appoint the following individuals to this committee subject to assembly confirmation:

John LeClair, Alaska Division of Forestry Kenai Peninsula Fire Management Officer.

John See, Alaska Division of Forestry Urban and Community Forester, also the previous State Fire Management Officer.

Wade Wahrenbrock, Alaska Division of Forestry Fire Behavior Specialist.

Al Murphy, USFS State and Private Forestry Fire Program Manager.

Mike Stubbs, USFS Chugach National Forest Fire Management Officer

Robert Bright, Planning Director

Mike Fastabend, Borough Spruce Bark Beetle Coordinator, will provide staff and resource support to the committee.

This committee will develop criteria and a scoring mechanism to review and evaluate projects based on forest fire science principles, public safety, infrastructure protection criteria.

The forest fire science technical committee will evaluate and provide a scoring of individual projects. This evaluation will be provided to the Borough Mayor for final project prioritizing.