

Introduced by: Mayor
Date: 06/06/00
Action: Adopted as Amended
Vote: 8 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2000-042**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPROVE THE KENAI
PENINSULA BOROUGH FOREST SCIENCE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE PROJECT
PRIORITIZING PLAN**

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 was 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, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly adopted an ordinance on April 18, 2000 accepting the \$2,000,000.00 appropriation and established a Forest Fire Science Technical Committee to develop a plan, including criteria and guidelines, for spending \$1,200,000 in hazard tree removal funds. The technical committee was also tasked with 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; and

WHEREAS the ordinance adopted by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly on April 18, 2000 called for the technical committee to present the proposed plan to the mayor for final project prioritization and the assembly for its approval by resolution on or before June 6, 2000; and

WHEREAS the Forest Science Technical Committee has developed criteria for prioritizing project proposals, identified initial projects for immediate funding, and established the attached Project Prioritizing Plan for funding future hazard reduction proposals;

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

SECTION 1. That the mayor is authorized to implement and fund the attached Project Prioritizing Plan.

SECTION 2. That these grant funds are available in Account No. 262.21320.43011

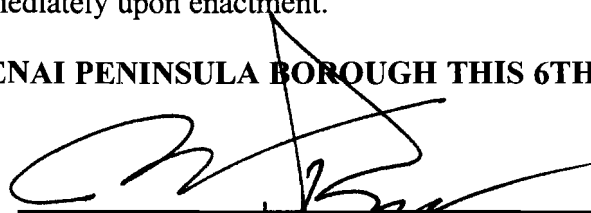
SECTION 3. That a copy of the approved plan shall be provided to the United States Forest Service and other interested agencies.

SECTION 4. That the Spruce Bark Beetle Hazard Reduction Program dated March 21, 2000, and adopted by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly on April 18, 2000 shall guide the technical committee efforts in evaluating future hazard reduction proposals.

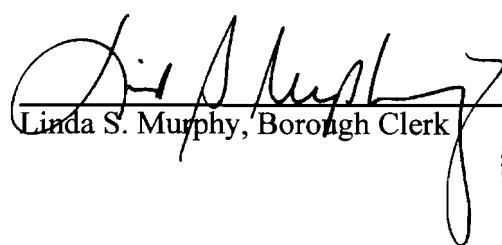
SECTION 5. That the mayor is authorized to execute all documents deemed necessary to complete this project in accordance with this resolution.

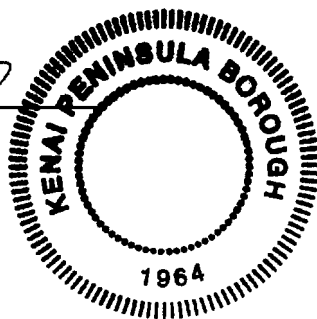
SECTION 6. That this resolution takes effect immediately upon enactment.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 6TH DAY OF JUNE, 2000.


William Popp, Assembly President

ATTEST:


Linda S. Murphy, Borough Clerk



Kenai Peninsula Borough Forest Science Technical Committee Project Prioritizing Plan

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 that 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.

On April 18, 2000, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly enacted Ordinance 2000-13 which allocated \$1,200,000 towards hazard tree removal projects. 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. Ordinance 2000-13 also established the forest science technical committee to develop a plan, including criteria and guidelines, for spending the \$1,200,000 in hazard tree removal funds. The technical committee was also charged with evaluating and 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. Ordinance 2000-13 called for the forest science technical committee to present the proposed plan to the mayor for final project prioritization and the assembly for its approval by resolution on or before June 6, 2000.

Project Approach

The forest science technical committee met through teleconferences and working meetings in April and May, 2000, to develop the attached wildfire hazard reduction Decision Matrix Model for evaluating and prioritizing hazard tree mitigation proposals. Hazard tree removal mitigation project proposals were solicited from the Kenai Peninsula Borough maintenance and road departments, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska State Parks, Homer Electric Association, Chugach Electric Association, and City of Seward Power. As detailed projects are received from qualified applicants, the technical committee will review and prioritize the projects using the Decision Matrix Model and the completed Kenai Peninsula Wildfire Hazard/Risk Assessment.

Projects identified and recommended for funding

1. Removal of Hazard Trees around Public Buildings: **\$268,000**

The Kenai Peninsula Borough maintenance department conducted a preliminary hazard tree assessment of borough facilities and submitted the mitigation proposal included in the Proposed Projects Attachment. Assessment of borough facilities continues and the technical committee is awaiting future proposed projects. The borough maintenance department using temporary

employees will administer this project in compliance with the recommendations of the forest science technical committee.

2. Removal of Out-Of-Easement Hazard Trees along Utility Corridors: **\$132,000**

Chugach Electric and City of Seward Power have submitted five projects for out-of-easement hazard tree removal projects. These projects, included in the proposed projects attachments, will partner with scheduled utility easement clearing by Chugach Electric and Seward Power near the communities of Cooper Landing, Hope, and Moose Pass. All work will be performed by Chugach Electric's long-term easement clearing contractor due to legal requirements and the economic advantage of Chugach Electric's long term contract. All projects will be administered in compliance with the recommendations of the forest science technical committee.

3. Removal of hazard trees on Kenai Peninsula Borough road right of ways. **Projected Costs: \$250,000**

The Borough maintenance department has undertaken an assessment of Borough maintained roads that require hazard tree reduction projects to improve fire escape routes, and have currently identified over twenty projects on the southern peninsula. When a complete list of roads are identified the technical committee will prioritize the hazard tree removal projects using the Decision Matrix and the Kenai Peninsula Wildfire Hazard/Risk Assessment. These projects will focus on removing dead spruce from borough right-of-ways. These projects will be put to competitive bid and administered in compliance with the recommendations of the forest science technical committee.

4. Removal of out-of-easement hazard trees along utility corridors. **Projected Costs: \$200,000**

Homer Electric Association has submitted eight proposed scheduled projects for out-of-easement hazard tree removal that are included in the proposed projects attachments. These preliminary proposals total \$772,000. As detailed proposals are submitted, the technical committee will evaluate and prioritize the hazard tree removal projects using the Decision Matrix and the Kenai Peninsula Wildfire Hazard/Risk Assessment. These projects will be put to competitive bid and administered in compliance with the recommendations of the forest science technical committee.

5. Removal of fuel loads from the urban/wildland interface. **Projected Costs: \$250,000**

The borough staff and the forest science technical committee have received several inquiries from peninsula cities and local communities for assistance in removing hazard trees from around established neighborhoods and subdivisions. The Spruce Bark Beetle Coordinator will solicit project proposals from all peninsula cities and communities for partnered projects designed to reduce fuel loading and hazard trees around communities. As detailed proposals are submitted, the technical committee will evaluate the hazard tree removal projects using the Decision Matrix and the Kenai Peninsula Wildfire Hazard/Risk Assessment. These projects are envisioned to promote partnered

responses to hazard tree removal projects, such as the Firewise Community programs developed by the Alaska Inter-Agency Wildfire Coordination Committee. The River Hills Demonstration Project is attached.

6. Contingency Funds. **\$100,000**

Recognizing that the wildfire hazard/risk assessment of the Kenai Peninsula Borough is ongoing, the technical committee advises the creation of a contingency fund account to respond to yet-to-be-identified projects. These projects may or may not be identified with the above funded projects.