

# MONTROSE DAILY PRESS

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## Survey shows bark beetle outbreaks on the rise in 2018

• **Warm temperatures with low precipitation levels cited**

• **27,000 acres affected in state**

• **Gunnison County has higher infected numbers**

By Andrew Kiser

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With record-warm temperatures and record-low precipitation, Colorado had increasing numbers of bark, pine, spruce and native bark beetle outbreaks in 2018, according to a new survey.

An aerial forest health survey was conducted by the Colorado State Forest Service and U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. It showed 27,000 acres were affected last year, compared to 2017's 11,000 acres. Primary areas hit include forestlands in and around Rocky Mountain National Park, and parts of the San Juan Mountains, West Elk Mountains and the Sawatch Range.

"The real driver of why now, is (previous) precipitation and temperature levels that we have had over the last year, year and a half," said CSFS entomologist Dan West. "... We've been dry, dry, dry and fairly warm."

Tree defenses are closely connected to precipitation, as they use water as a shield and create resins to protect themselves from bark beetles, West said. If water is in short supply, trees lack a strong defense against the insects, he added.

He said another reason for the increased outbreak comes down to the "explosion of wildland fire" for extended periods.

"It makes it prime susceptibility for bark beetles," West said.

Due to those rising concerns, areas around Montrose were some affected the most.

Montrose's neighboring county to the east, Gunnison, was one of those infected spots. West explained Gunnison County had

20,000 acres infested with spruce beetles. Meanwhile, 6,000 acres in the county that were new or previously unaffected had been attacked by the insects.

"It's on the move there in Gunnison County," West said, adding the county had the second-most newly affected acres in the state.

He noted that spruce beetles attacked 6,000 acres in San Juan County. In addition, the county had 2,000 acres new or previously unaffected.

Other impacts included in the survey were:

- Around 178,000 acres of high-elevation Engelmann spruce were affected by spruce beetles in 2018.

- Since the year 2000, spruce beetle outbreaks have caused tree mortality on more than 1.8 million acres in Colorado, and approximately 40 percent of the spruce-fir forests in the state have now been affected.

- Roundheaded pine beetles, along with associated native bark beetles, have continued to affect ponderosa pine forests in southwest Colorado.

- Douglas-fir beetle populations continued to impact low-elevation forests in the central and southern portions of the state, at levels similar to what was observed statewide in 2017.

- Outbreaks of western spruce budworm declined in 2018, compared to the prior year,

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Mayfly President David Drago (Photo courtesy Colorado Biz)

## Dragoo named a top influencer under 40 in Colorado

• **ColoradoBiz listed Drago in top 5**

• **Mayfly president hopes award shows off Montrose entrepreneurs**

• **Mayor praises Drago's work**

By Andrew Kiser

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Mayfly President David Drago said he hopes his recent recognition as one of the top young professionals in the state helps shed light on many residents' innovative works in Montrose.

Dragoo, 32, was listed recently in the top five of most influential young professionals in the state by ColoradoBiz Magazine. He was the only Western Slope professional to be acknowledged.

"The key thing is that it (the award) brings recognition to the Western Slope and entrepreneurs that are doing great things over here," Drago said. "... I like how they're starting to look outside of the big cities and look at these nice communities doing some great things."

The publication published an article about young professionals under 40 years old in Colorado. After naming the top 25, an awards ceremony was held Jan. 17 at the Denver Broncos' Mile High Stadium, where the magazine named the top five, Drago said.

He added he couldn't make the event, but a representative went in his place, adding he learned it was well-attended, as over 300 people were there.

According to

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Bark beetles were a growing problem in 2018. (Submitted photo)



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## DRAGOO

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ColoradoBiz, this year's winners were chosen by a panel of editors, business leaders and former winners, who trimmed the list to 50 finalists after looking through hundreds of nominations. The top 25 was based on the "virtue of achievements – both in and outside of work – as well as their potential for even greater success," per the publication.

The magazine wrote of Drago: "(He) has reinvented his manufacturing practices to achieve lower production costs and faster time-to-market for new products."

The magazine also singled out the company's "introduction of product platforming to utilize similar components across multiple brands ... product development cycles to streamline the new product development process and ... new machine tools bringing 'lights-out, one-touch' manufacturing to the factory."

ColoradoBiz went on to praise him for the Colorado Outdoors project, a 164-acre revitalization of the northern end of Montrose encompassing 1.5 miles of the Uncompahgre River.

The Colorado Outdoors Project is slated to open later this year. The area would include river restoration and high-end commercial, residential and industrial development. Mayfly Outdoors, the parent company of Ross Reels and Abel

Reels, will anchor the project with its 41,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, as previously reported.

Mayor Roy Anderson applauded Drago's commitment to the community, saying he and the company have a vision for developing the land near the Uncompahgre River. He added Mayfly has also risen Montrose's notability across the U.S.

"They're advertising nationwide and that's kind of free advertising for Montrose," Anderson said. "They have been marketing the area and are attracting desirable companies to relocate."

The mayor noted a number of businesses are interested but nothing has been currently "made public" or "confirmed."

Dragoo said there are other young professionals who are creating novel ideas in Montrose, praising David Fishing's work at Stormking Distillery.

"I think it's key that more attention (is coming) to the Western Slope and Montrose entrepreneurs here or who are moving here," the Mayfly president said. "... Maybe it spurs a few others to do the same and help our community."

For more information about the ColoradoBiz feature, visit [cobizmag.com/People/Young-Pro-David-Dragoo-Takes-Something-Good-and-Makes-it-Better/](http://cobizmag.com/People/Young-Pro-David-Dragoo-Takes-Something-Good-and-Makes-it-Better/).

*Andrew Kiser is the Montrose Daily Press' sports/business writer. Follow him on Twitter @andrew\_kpress.*

### Mayfly Outdoors gifts city acreage

Mayfly Outdoors and the City of Montrose finalized a land exchange agreement at the end of last year to preserve over 41 acres along the Uncompahgre River.

The land is next to the Colorado Outdoors Project, which is in proximity to the City of Montrose and Montrose Recreation District's "Connecting the People to their Parks and Recreation" project. The project, which was funded with a \$2 million GOCO grant, will create 2.25 miles of new trails, with underpasses, on both ends of town to connect more of the public with parks and recreational opportunities.

Mayfly President David Drago said the company committed to giving the river corridor and wetlands back to the city help to preserve and protect it along with helping with the construction of trails, he added.

The acreage will be used for the trail and to provide more open space, Drago said.

"Basically, the entire length of the river from the south end of the city to the extreme north end is all going to be free, public access," Mayor Roy Anderson said. "Fishermen, kayakers and everybody don't have to worry about any private land bordering the river."

## Around the state

*Editor's note: The following is being re-published with permission from The Denver Post. Read the full stories on [denverpost.com](http://denverpost.com).*

### Attorneys in Martinez oil and gas case say Colorado Supreme Court decision tainted by alleged impropriety of since-resigned judge

Attorneys on the losing side of the recent Colorado Supreme Court decision that handed a victory to the oil and gas industry want the court to vacate its ruling, citing the involvement of an appeals court judge who resigned under pressure over ethical lapses.

The attorneys for seven youths in the Martinez versus Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission case say Judge Laurie Booras tainted the ruling by discussing her decision-making outside of court in an email to her ex-lover. Booras was also accused of referring to a colleague as "the little Mexican" and to a Native American woman as a "squaw" in emails that she has argued were private.

The Colorado Supreme Court reversed a 2-1 Colorado Court of Appeals decision on the Martinez case earlier this month, siding with Booras' dissent, and ruling that the COGCC should not prioritize public health, safety and the environment over oil and gas development.

"The Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and the oil and gas industry relied heavily on Booras' dissenting opinion in their arguments to the Supreme Court and ultimately, the Supreme Court also cited her dissent and used it to find ambiguity in the law

they were interpreting," Julia Olson, chief legal counsel of Our Children's Trust, said in a statement.

### Denver Zoo bear keeper's finger bitten by grizzly Friday afternoon

An employee at the Denver Zoo was injured Friday when a grizzly bear bit the man's finger.

The incident happened about 4 p.m., and the victim was taken to a hospital, Jake Kubié, a zoo spokesman said.

The man who was bitten works as a "bear keeper," Kubié said.

The bear was in a secure and enclosed area when the incident happened, Kubié said. The public was not in danger at any time.

### Greeley woman sentenced for role in brother's murder

A Greeley woman was sentenced Friday to 30 years in prison for her role in the murder of her brother.

Carol Baker, 65, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit murder in the first degree in September for the death of Randy Baker, according to the district attorney's office.

Randy Baker was shot dead on Aug. 16, 2017, inside his Greeley home. His nephew, 38-year-old Kelly Raisely, is serving a life sentence after pleading guilty to first-degree murder in May. Raisely is Carol Baker's son.

"If anyone should have put this plan to a stop, it should have been you," Weld District Judge Shannon Lyons told Carol Baker at Friday's sentencing. "Instead, you were the glue that held this conspiracy together."

## Thank You

We wish to acknowledge the many expressions of love, concern and compassion from friends and loved ones in our recent loss of our Mother Hazel V. Hughes. Words cannot express the strength you have given us during these most difficult times. Special thanks to Heidi's Chateau and Hope West for their loving care and attention. May Hazels bright spirit live on in us all.

God bless all of you,

The Ray Hughes Family and Barbara Atwood Family