The mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) is a species of bark beetle that is native to Oregon. It inhabits a number of species of pine trees, including ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*).

This beetle is a part of the pine tree’s normal lifecycle. By attacking, and eventually killing, old and weakened trees, the beetle improves the overall health of the forest, and helps to generate fuel for the low-intensity forest fires that allow the pine cones to open and new seedlings to germinate. However, when trees become stressed, because of drought or other causes, the beetles proliferate, attacking otherwise healthy trees, and the pine tree population is depleted at a rate greater than the rate at which it can replenish itself.

If drought frequency or duration increase in Oregon, conditions may allow the pine beetle to thrive.