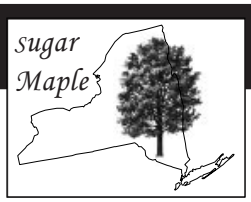
Forest Health Highlights

New York



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The Resource

New York's forests provide a recreational base for millions of New Yorkers and others visiting the state's scenic regions. Forests are also productive in timber, providing employment to 2 percent of the workforce. The manufacture of wood products provides $2.4 billion to the state's economy annually.

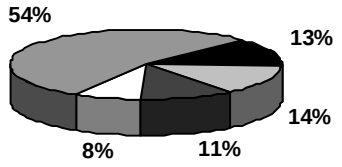
•62% of the state is forested (18,641,300 acres)

Out of the forested area:

- **82.6 % timberland**
- **17.4 % non commercial or reserved forestland**

(data unpublished)

Major Forest Types:



- white/red pine/hemlock (13%)
- oak/hickory (14%)
- other (11%)
- elm/ash/red maple (8%)
- northern hardwoods (54%)

Special Issues

The forests of New York have been impacted most significantly in the past few years by weather. In 1995, winds associated with a strong line of thunderstorms caused extensive blowdown in the Adirondack Park. Then in January 1998, a devastating **ice storm** affected 4.6 million acres. This storm spread across New England and into Canada. In New York, six counties were declared disaster areas, including Lewis, Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex. Over 3 million acres of the affected area were severely damaged. Efforts are underway to assess the impact of the ice storm on the forest resource and the maple sugar industry. In addition to aerial surveys and ground checks, permanent Forest Inventory and Analysis plots are being visited to determine the species and age classes most affected. It appears that hardwoods were most impacted. It was initially estimated that over 400,000 sugar maple taps were lost to the ice storm in 1998, which amounts to about 20 percent of the total number of taps. The losses were the result of several factors, damaged tubing, blocked access to sugarbushes by debris, and extensive breakage of tree crowns. To help restore the northern forests, Congress appropriated funds to provide resources for communities, private non-industrial landowners, and sugar maple producers to recover from the damage caused by the storm.

Exotic pests are still a major concern within the state. The most recent introduction is the **Asian longhorn beetle**, which was discovered in Brooklyn and on Long Island during the summer of 1996. Hardwoods are the preferred hosts of this insect, especially maples. Through quarantines and removal of infested trees, along with extensive community outreach, the number of standing affected trees has been greatly reduced. In a continued effort to eradicate the insect, surveys continue around the perimeter of the known infestation to identify newly infected trees for removal. Tree planting has been initiated in an attempt to provide greenery that is sorely missed in the neighborhoods as the infested trees are cut down. Unfortunately, a new infestation was recently discovered in the city of Chicago, thought also to have originated on packing material from China. The Federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is working on recommendations to curtail these types of introductions of the beetle on untreated green woody packing material and dunnage.

Special Issues cont.

Another introduced pest, the **hemlock woolly adelgid,** continues to cause damage to native forest and ornamental eastern hemlock trees. The insect can be found from Virginia up into southern New England. In New York, the affected area is still confined to the southeastern portion of the state, along the Hudson River Valley south of Albany to north of New York City. From year to year, some infestations have decreased while others have intensified. Biological controls are currently being tested. Recently a beetle, which is a natural predator of the adelgid in Japan, was placed onto adelgid infested trees in Connecticut and the adelgid populations were significantly reduced.

The **common pine shoot beetle** is also an introduced insect. It was discovered infesting pine plantations around the Great Lakes. This insect was first found in western New York in 1993. Currently 22 counties are affected. The shoot beetle is primarily a problem in pine Christmas tree plantations. Plantations are monitored each year to determine the extent of the infested areas. The areas where the insect has been found are under a Federal Quarantine in an attempt to reduce its' spread. Infested plant material is not allowed to be shipped to locations outside of the quarantined area.

The **pine false webworm** has been causing defoliation for the past few years in northern New York. Mortality of sawtimber sized white pine has occurred in stands that have been heavily defoliated for 5 to 7 years. Many of the white pine stands in St. Lawrence County are being salvaged. SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry researchers are developing a hazard rating system to identify vulnerable stands. They are also trying to develop a pheromone, which attracts the male webworm, and can be used to monitor insect populations. The Canadian Forest Service is examining possible biological control measures to control this forest pest.

Overall the incidence of **hardwood defoliators** is very low. Gypsy moth populations have been at low levels in New York recently due to a fungus, *Entomaphaga maimaiga*, which attacks the insect larvae. Recently, there were only two small outbreaks of defoliation around Lake George and in the Catskills. Forest tent caterpillar and pear thrips have also been causing light defoliation in a few areas.

Stewardship

Among the several NY DEC programs that contribute to forest health improvement, the **stewardship program** has the potential to reach a large number of forest landowners. All forest management plans prepared under the stewardship program include a forest protection component. The planning process helps alert forest landowners to potential and existing forest health conditions and procedures to protect forest resources. This program is also helping landowners receover from the ice storm.

Regional Surveys

NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE PROJECT

This cooperative project with Canada was initiated in 1988 to look at change in sugar maple tree condition. There are several states in the Northeast involved including New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. Overall, sugar maple located within the sample sites are in good condition. Periodically, insect defoliation has affected crown condition in some areas. There was little difference found between sugarbush and non sugarbush stands.

For More Information

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