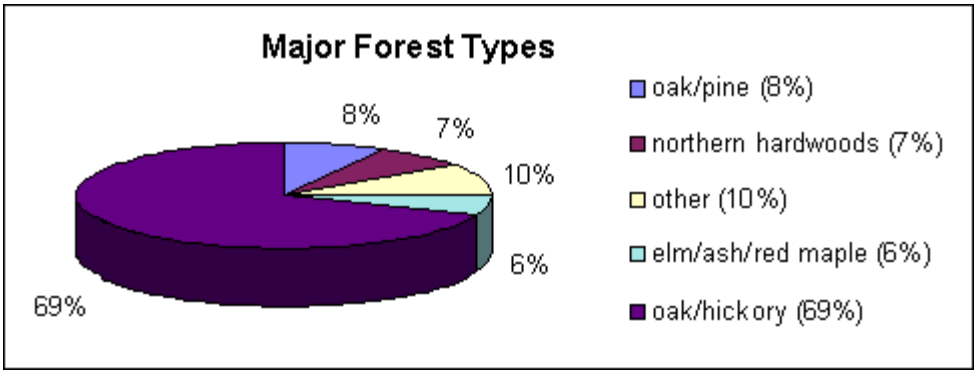
1994 Forest Health Highlights

Rhode Island

The Resource

Forestland in Rhode Island is owned primarily by individuals who view their land as a source of enjoyment and a resource to be protected. The existence of intense public debate related to any impact on undeveloped lands is indicative of citizen concerns for the amenities provided by these lands, whether privately or publicly held. Rhode Island's forests are valued as a source of cleaner air, protected ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, wood fiber, and recreational opportunities.

- 60% of the state is forested (371,800)
- Out of the forested area:
  - 91.8% timberland
  - 8.2% non commercial or reserved forestland



Special Issues

The **hemlock woolly adelgid** is present in enough numbers to affect forest management decisions and harvesting practices for some landowners in northwestern Rhode Island. Although hemlock stands are not vast or widespread they are often highly valued for their aesthetic appeal particularly in recreation areas.

Populations of **saddled prominent** are sustained and causing heavy defoliation of oaks in localized areas, primarily in southern Rhode Island.

Red pine scale infestations in southern Rhode Island have necessitated salvage harvests in red pine stands. One major and intensively used state recreation area has been devastated by this insect. Many sites are actively being converted to white pine. As yet red pine scale has not progressed to central or northern Rhode Island.

The **orange striped oak worm** has contributed to mortality in oak stands in central Rhode Island. This insect seems to have moved into stressed stands following the gypsy moth infestations of the 1980's. On some sites, salvage operations are ongoing as are management practices to establish diversity of species in the understory.

Gypsy moth egg mass survey data for Rhode Island indicates an increased population overall but at levels that should not result in severe defoliation in 1995. It is likely, however, that there will be isolated pockets showing higher degrees of defoliation than that occurring in most of the state.

There are reports of **turpentine beetle** damage on Japanese black pine in coastal areas and **larch case bearer** in larch plantations in central Rhode Island.

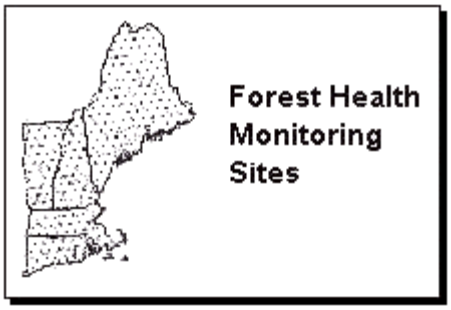
Butternut canker has been difficult to get a handle on because the trees are not predominant and are widely scattered.

Red pine adelgid maintains a presence in red pine stands, as do **pear thrips** in sugar maple stands, although neither account for any significant damage.

Regional Surveys

Interest in regional forest condition prompted the implementation of the National Forest Health Monitoring Program and the North American Maple Project.

FOREST HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM



The objective is to assess trend in tree condition and forest stressors. All of the New England States have been involved since the program was initiated in 1990. Results indicate that there has been minimal change in crown condition in the last 5 years. In 1994, 99 percent of trees greater than 5 inches diameter had normal crown fullness. About 96 percent of the trees had little or no crown dieback, and 78 percent showed no measurable signs of damage. The most common damage was decay indicators, which were more evident on hardwoods than softwoods. Additional surveys indicate there are concerns for individual species such as ash, butternut and hemlock due to various damage agents.

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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