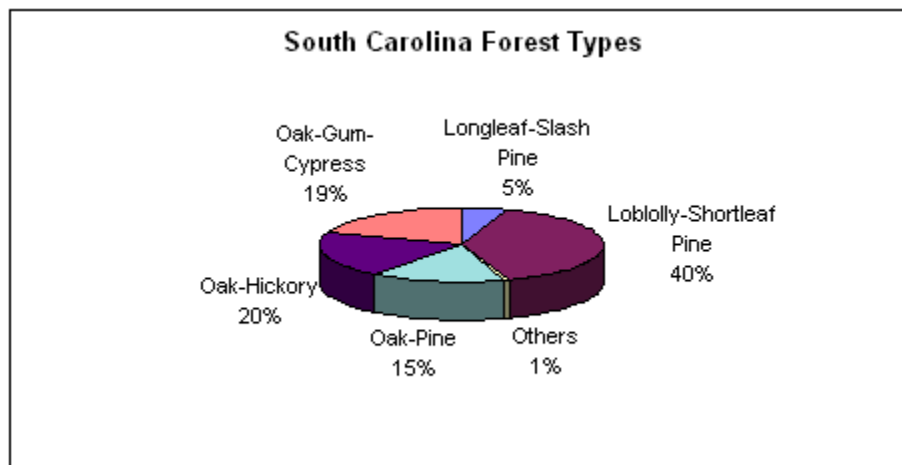


Forest Health Highlights 2004

South Carolina

The Resource

South Carolina's forests cover 12.6 million acres, more than 66% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 11.4 million acres, is in nonindustrial private ownership, while approximately 560,000 acres are in national forests. Forestry is the third most important industry in South Carolina, providing 50,000 jobs and producing \$5.6 billion in annual revenue. South Carolina's forests are also prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the lowcountry of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Major forest types in the state include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, historically much more wide-ranging, now comprise 5% of the state's forests, while other minor types account for an additional 1%.



Forest health monitoring (FHM) activities are cooperative efforts between the USDA Forest Service and the SC Forestry Commission. The FHM program in South Carolina includes periodic measurement of fixed plots as well as regular aerial and ground surveys to detect forest damage.

Special Issues

Key issues that State and federal programs are addressing cooperatively include:

- Urban area expansion and related impacts on forest land acreage and forest health
- Water quality protection through greater use of best management practices
- Sustaining forest resources through wise private landowner stewardship

Forest Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is South Carolina's most significant forest insect pest. In 2004, SPB activity continued, although at lower levels than in the previous four years. Five counties remained in outbreak status and 3279 spots were reported statewide.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.) displayed continued moderate activity in the Piedmont in 2004. Because *Ips* infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may approach those caused by SPB.

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) was first detected in Oconee County in 2001. It has since spread in the upstate, infesting both of the native hemlock species. Current suppression activities involve a cooperative effort to rear and release predators in hope of achieving biological control of the adelgid, but the prognosis for hemlocks is not good. Except on individual trees in landscape settings, chemical control of HWA is not practical, and major losses of these ecologically valuable trees are probable within a few years.

Fusiform rust is the state's most destructive forest disease. The fungus causes serious infections on an estimated 1.4 million acres of pine forest.

Annosum root rot affected an estimated 36,740 acres of timber in 31 South Carolina counties in 2004. Losses from this disease continue to be significant, and were estimated at just under \$1 million in 2004.

Dogwood anthracnose is a disease of cool, moist areas in the higher elevation forests of northwestern S.C. It is currently causing significant mortality to native dogwoods. No new areas of infection were reported in 2004.

Beavers are an increasingly serious problem in the states riparian forests. Beaver activity killed 17,255 acres of timber, valued at \$5.6 million. New mortality due to beaver impoundments nearly doubled in 2004, due largely to increased precipitation.

Fire mortality was reported on 15,455 acres in 2004. Timber losses were valued at \$5 million.

Weather damage from wind and flooding caused by hurricane Ivan was a problem in coastal areas.

Sudden Oak Death surveys were initiated in South Carolina in 2003 and continued in 2004. The surveys focused on the perimeters of horticultural nurseries that had received potentially infected stock from shippers in California and Oregon, but also sampled general forest areas considered at high risk. One infected camellia was found in a landscape setting by the SC Forestry Commission; the plant was removed and the site sanitized.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For further information or assistance, contact:

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