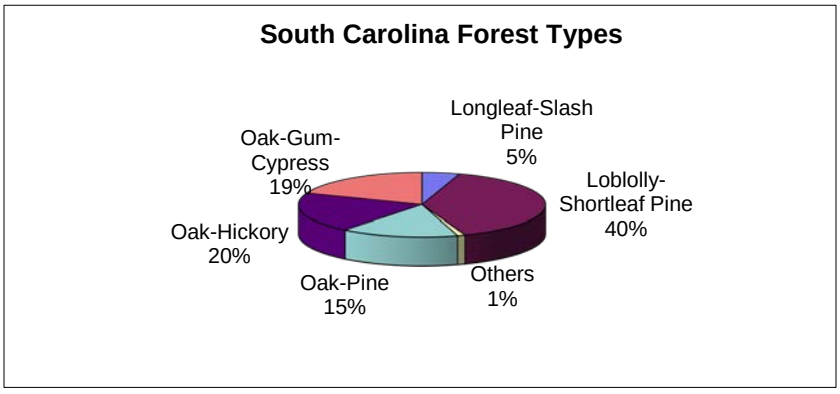
South Carolina

Forest Health Highlights 2006

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 which 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 2006, SPB activity continued, although at lower levels than in previous years. Two counties remained in outbreak status and 3,090 spots were reported in 32 counties, four of

them in epidemic status. The state has developed a landowner cost-share incentive program to encourage thinning and pine restoration as part of a SPB Prevention Program.
Pine engraver beetles (*Ips spp.*) displayed continued moderate activity in the Piedmont in 2006. 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 wooly 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.
Forest tent caterpillar defoliation was reported on 371,000 acres in 13 counties in 2006.
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 51,820 acres of timber in 29 South Carolina counties in 2006. Losses from this disease continue to be significant, and were estimated at $1.86 million.
Dogwood anthracnose is a disease of cool, moist areas in the higher elevation forests of 6 northwestern S.C. counties. It is currently causing significant mortality to native dogwoods. No new areas of infection were reported in 2006.
Beavers are an increasingly serious problem in the states riparian forests. New mortality due to beaver impoundments continued to increase, due largely to increased precipitation.
Sudden Oak Death surveys were continued in 2006. 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 to be at high risk. No infected sites were found.
Redbay wilt caused by a fungus vectored by the exotic redbay ambrosia beetle was first reported in 2004 and continued to spread in 2006. A vegetative survey is being conducted to delineate the range of redbay wilt and its effects on redbay and other potential hosts.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina
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