



South Carolina Forestry Commission



FOREST HEALTH

2017 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS

The Resource

South Carolina's forest cover 12.9 million acres, which is 63% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land is in nonindustrial private ownership, covering about 11.4 million acres, with approximately 629,000 acres in national forests.

Forestry is the most important manufacturing industry in South Carolina, providing 84,000 jobs and a total economic impact of \$21 billion annually. \$1.3 billion in forest products are exported from South Carolina and forest products are the number one export commodity from the port of Charleston. Trees are South Carolina's number one harvested crop. South Carolina's forests are known for their scenic beauty, attracting tourism, outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Major forest types in South Carolina include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, once more widespread, now make

up four percent of South Carolina's forests, with other minor forest types accounting for an additional six percent.

Forest Issues and Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB)/Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.)

The most damaging pest of southern pine forests is the southern pine beetle (SPB). Surveys for SPB conducted in the spring of 2017 detected rising populations in Oconee, Pickens and Anderson Counties. A total of 2779 SPB were trapped from 32 counties.

Redbay mortality (laurel wilt disease)

Caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola* and vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) laurel wilt has killed many redbay trees along South Carolina's coast and continues to spread.

Cogongrass

As of 2017 a total of 13 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified. Of these, only four remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive.

Hurricane Irma

This October South Carolina was hit by Hurricane Irma, but cursory aerial surveys revealed light damage.

Drought and Hot Temperatures

Despite heavy rains in October of 2016, the summer of 2017 was extremely dry. A notable number of individual red oaks (southern red and water oaks) and individual pines died from Hampton County north to McCormick and Lexington Counties, largely as a result of drought stress. The pines that died often showed signs of being stressed for many (10 or more) years and were infested with *Ips* beetles and southern pine sawyers. The upstate also experienced a prolonged drought this summer. The La Niña event in the Pacific is predicted to result in a warmer and drier than usual year for South Carolina in 2018.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For more information or assistance, please contact:

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