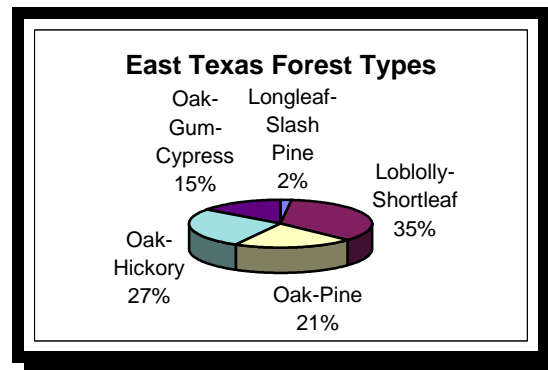


The Resource

Texas' forests cover 14.6 million acres, more than half of the eastern section of the state where the climate supports trees. The majority of the state's forested land, some 10.7 million acres, is in nonindustrial private ownership, while approximately 576,000 acres are in national forests. Texas' forests are prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat throughout eastern Texas.

Major forest types in Texas include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine account for only 2% of the forest.



Forest health monitoring (FHM) activities are cooperative efforts between the USDA Forest Service and the Texas Forest Service. The FHM program in Texas 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:

- Sustainable management of private forest lands
- Protection and development of urban and community forest resources
- Increasing participation by underserved citizens in forestry programs

Forest Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is the most important forest insect pest in Texas. Historically, the most severe SPB problems in the South have occurred in Texas. However, since 1994 SPB populations in the state have been very low. A trapping survey developed by the Texas Forest Service is now used in 12 southern states to forecast annual SPB population trends. No SPB infestations were reported in the state in 2005.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips spp.*) displayed moderate activity in 2005. Because *Ips* infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may exceed those caused by SPB.

The Texas leaf-cutting ant continues to defoliate young pines in East Texas. Baiting with Volcano® has reduced overall impacts from the ant.

The Texas Forest Service developed detection survey methodologies for exotic Formosan termites in 2003, and these were continued in 2005. Two types of traps were distributed in eastern and central parts of the state during May.

In late summer 2004, the Asian wooly hackberry aphid (*Shivaphis celti*) was at outbreak levels on sugarberry and hackberry trees from east Texas west to Austin and north to the Dallas area, as well as along the middle Texas coast. This exotic aphid was first reported in the state in 2002, and infestations have been severe enough completely defoliate the trees.

Oak wilt continues to devastate more than 66 counties in Texas, mostly between Dallas and San Antonio. Urban, suburban and rural oaks are affected. Live oak is a premier shade tree species in the region that is highly valued for its beauty, shade, and wildlife benefits; many prized live oaks have been killed by the disease. In 2005, the Texas Forest Service completed its eighteenth year of cooperative suppression of the disease, assisting local landowners and providing public information.

Sudden Oak Death surveys were initiated in Texas in 2004 and continued in 2005. The surveys focused on the perimeters of horticultural nurseries that received potentially infected stock from shippers in California. No infected sites were found in the state.

Wind damage from Hurricane Rita affected an estimated 771,000 acres in eastern Texas, with timber losses estimated at \$833 million.

Fire produced extensive damage to forests and rangeland in northeastern and north central Texas in late 2005, continuing into 2006.

Forest Health Assistance in Texas

For further information or assistance, contact:

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