

## **Forest Health Highlights in Texas 2016**

- The threat of invasive insect pests dominates the forest health scene in Texas in 2016. Emerald ash borer was detected and confirmed in northeast Texas. On April 6, 2016 four adult EAB beetles were found in a trap just south of Karnack, Texas in Harrison County. Since the initial detection no other beetle have been detected. Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) in cooperation with USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will monitor for any new detections or activity in 2017. Laurel wilt and its vector the redbay ambrosia beetle were first reported in Hardin and Jasper counties of southeast Texas in 2015. Since the original detection laurel wilt has been confirmed in Tyler County as well.
- In cooperation with USDA-APHIS, TFS installed and monitored 420 detection traps for emerald ash borer in 2016. To successfully conduct this survey, TFS staff deployed large, purple tri-panel traps on ash trees in 77 counties during the spring and routinely checked each trap for EAB through the end of August. Due to the positive detection in Harrison County, a limited number of traps were left in the vicinity throughout the fall and winter months. Typically winter months are not active months for EAB movement but due warmer than normal winter temperatures all precautions are taken to detect any movement of the invasive pest.
- As predicted using spring-deployed pheromone traps, no southern pine beetle (SPB) infestations were detected in Texas in 2016, making this the 20<sup>th</sup> year with no SPB activity. Predictions for 2017 indicate another year with no SPB activity.
- Oak wilt, caused by the fungal pathogen *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, continues to be the major tree disease problem in live oak and red oak woodlands of Central Texas in both urban and rural areas. The Cooperative Oak Wilt Suppression Project, funded by the USFS Forest Health Protection, and delivered by TFS continues to promote public awareness and provide financial assistance for the control options to affected landowners throughout Central Texas.
- TFS continues to administer the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program in East Texas. During 2016, through funding from USFS Forest Health Protection, TFS provided over \$150,000 to 54 landowners to assist in the thinning of overly dense pine forests reducing their risk of an SPB attack. Since the inception of the program in 2003, \$6.1 million has been awarded to 1,733 landowners for the thinning of high hazard pine stands on more than 110,000 acres.