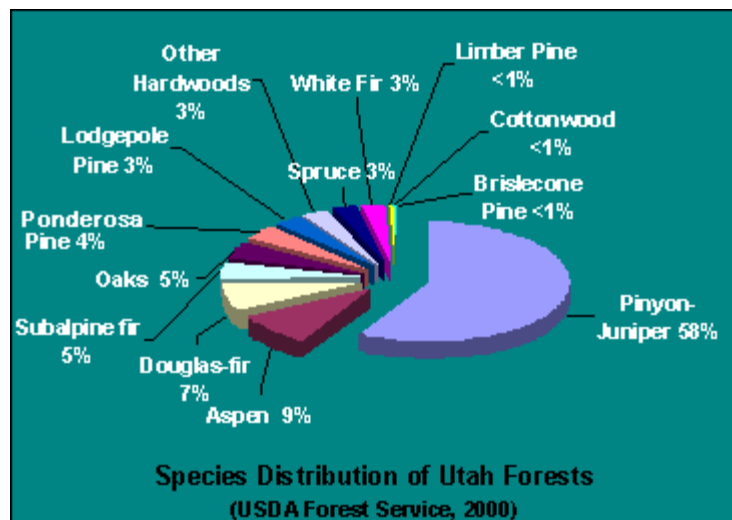


2000 Forest Health Highlights Utah

The Resource

"*Utah Forest Health*" will be available in the spring of 2001. This report describes the current conditions, changes and health of the forests of Utah. It will provide information for a dialogue on how to manage the health of Utah Forests.

Forests cover 15.7 million acres of Utah (O'Brien, 1999). Of the several forest types highlighted in this report, two are more abundant. Pinyon-juniper forests cover over 9 million acres. Aspen forests cover nearly 1.5 million acres. Both forest types have undergone major coverage changes over the decades.



Special Issues

In Utah, Pinyon-juniper forests have increased in area and density within the last 150 years. This is due in part to a recent more favorable climate, a period of livestock grazing and a decrease in the wildland fire (Monsen and Stevens, 1997).

Aspen have responded much differently. Although many populations of aspen are stable across the landscape, many more have undergone major declines in coverage, and density. Climate, and the absence of disturbance such as fire have allowed conifers and in some cases shrubs and grasslands to overcome and replace aspen.

The dynamics in Utah forests may cause significant variation in the abundance of some insects, pathogens, and wildlife using particular forest cover types. This change may also produce an increase in the potential size and intensity of future wildland fires.

Literature Cited

Monsen, Stephen B. and Richard Stevens. 1997. *Proceedings: Ecology and Management of Pinyon-Juniper Communities within the Interior West*. September 15-18, 1997, Provo, UT. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, RMRS-P-9.

O'Brien, Renee A. 1999, *Comprehensive Inventory of Utah's Forest Resources*, 1993.

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USDA Forest Service. 2000. *Forest Inventory and Analysis, Westwide Data* located on the internet at www.srsfia.usfs.msstate.edu

The "Utah Forest Health" report will address these major topics listed below.

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