

Utah Forest Health Highlights 2006



The Forest Resource

Utah forests are as diverse as the landscape itself. Forest visitors from around the world and those that live in the

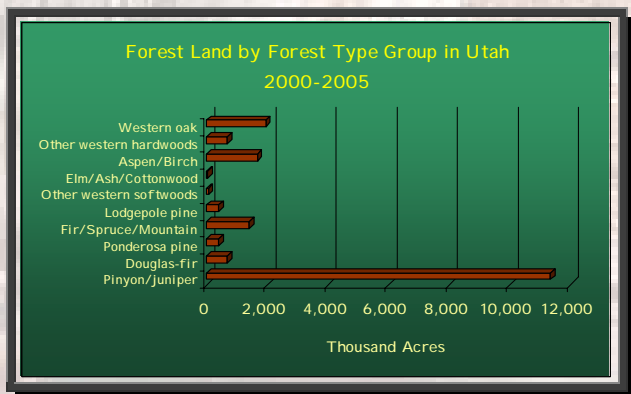
state, visit Utah's renowned canyon lands and alpine getaways. While Utah is only 29% forested, these forests have high scenic, recreation, wildlife and other forest use values, so it is important to track their condition.

The following graph presents a breakdown of forest cover, or forest type, on all land ownerships using the latest annualized FIA surveys from 2000 to 2005. The main forest types in the state are pinyon-juniper (57%), hardwoods such as aspen, birch and oaks (22%), and Douglas-fir (7%). Over 16.6 million acres of forests are administered by federal, state, and local agencies. Another 3.2 million acres are privately owned. Detailed information is available from the [Interior West FIA](#).

Components of Change

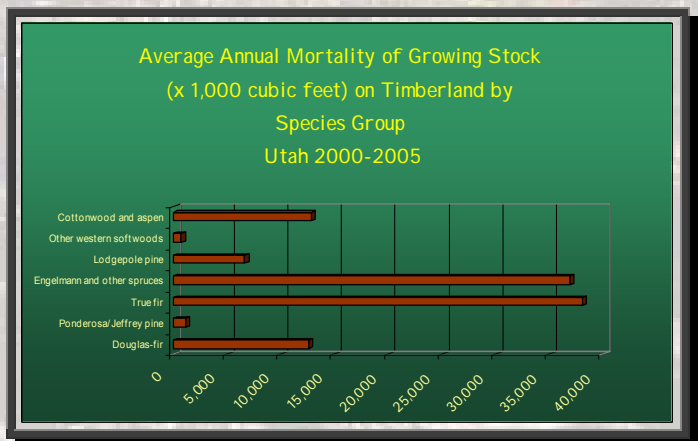
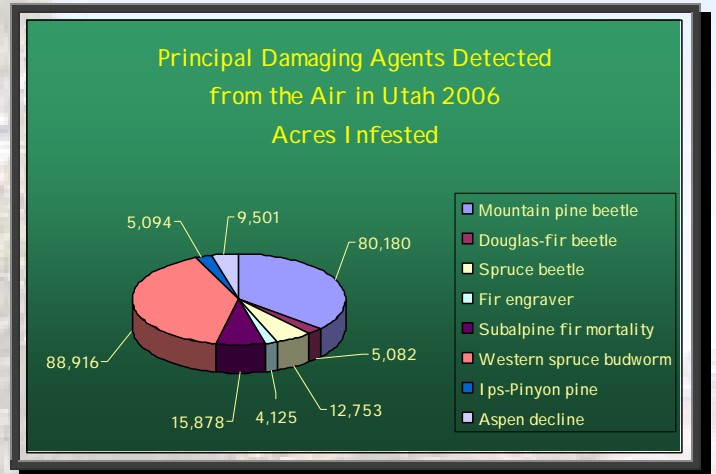
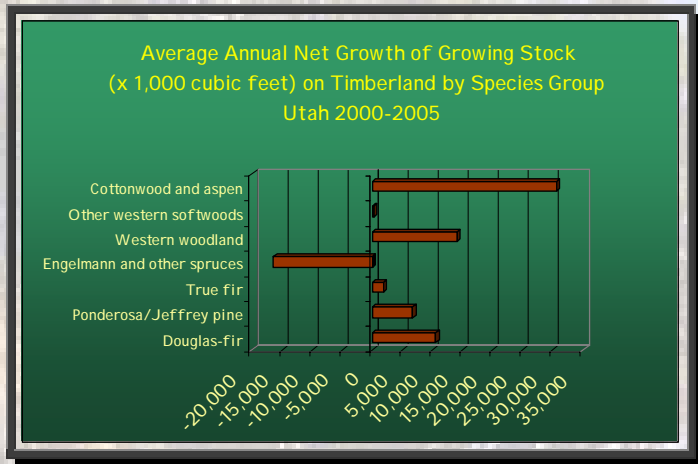
Several factors have contributed to the decline in forest health including previous logging practices, historical grazing patterns, and fire exclusion. Drought conditions can enhance the effects of these human-caused practices. Forest conditions throughout much of Utah are composed of dense stands that are uniform in age. As species composition changes, large amounts of woody debris accumulate. Because of these changes, most of Utah's forested landscapes are now at moderate to high risk from catastrophic wildfire. Fire activity increased in 2006 with over 340,000 acres burned compared with only 76,000 in 2004. Approximately 2.2 million acres of Utah's forests are rated moderate to highly susceptible to bark beetle attack.

Average annual net growth of all live trees on forested lands has averaged 100,841 thousand cubic feet per year. This figure includes the mortality which has averaged 91,530 thousand cubic feet per year. Net growth estimates are based on the most recent 5 years of FIA inventory. However, it is not a complete representation of the state and numbers will change as additional annual surveys are completed.

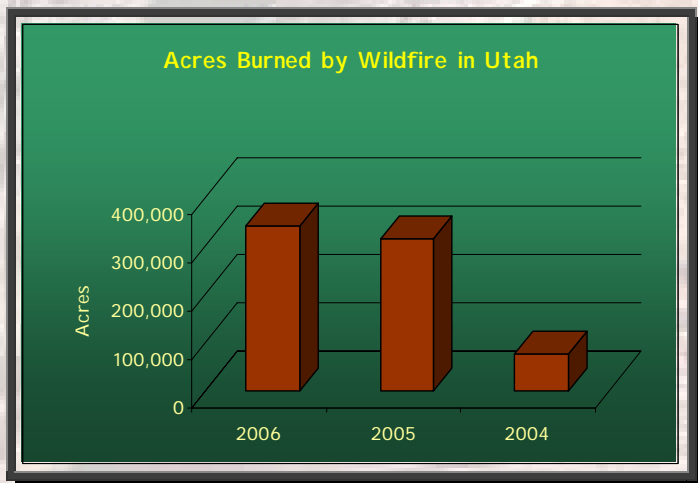


Forest Health Issues

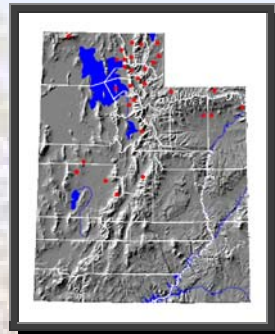
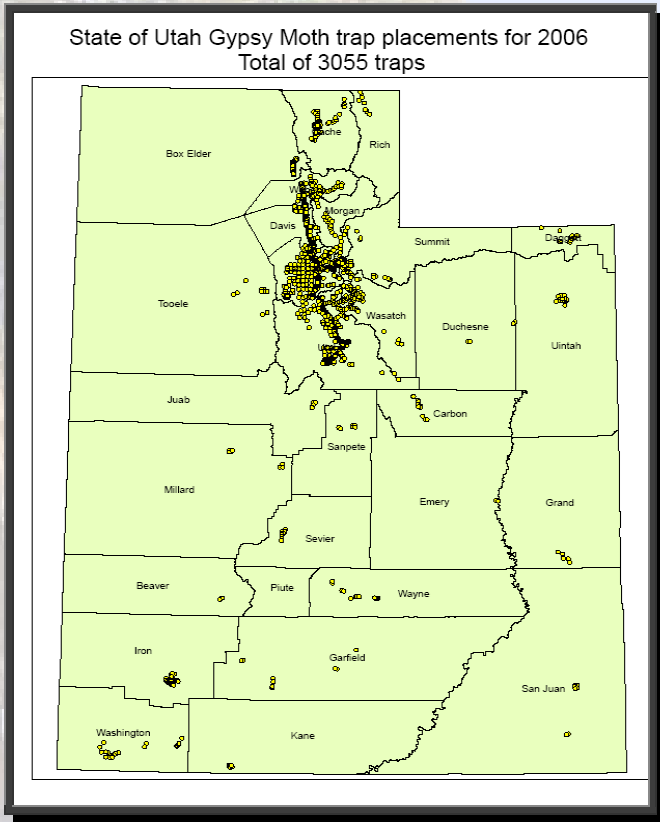
The following chart provides data on the principle insect and disease agents causing tree mortality or decline in Utah's forests summarized from aerial observations conducted in 2006.



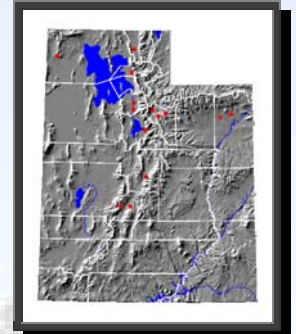
The area affected by many of the damaging agents has declined since 2005. In some cases, such as **spruce beetle**, that is the result of the decline in susceptible host material. In other situations, such as **Douglas-fir beetle**, **pinyon Ips**, and **fir engraver**, improvement in precipitation in 2005 has somewhat reduced the susceptibility of forests. The **gypsy moth** is a non-native insect defoliator that, if established, would alter our hardwood forest landscapes affecting our high-value watersheds. Utah continues an aggressive monitoring program to delineate potential infestations before they become established in Utah's forested landscape.



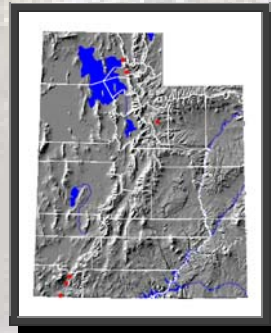
throughout the state. The state has 15 cooperative weed management areas established working together to make an impact on noxious weeds.



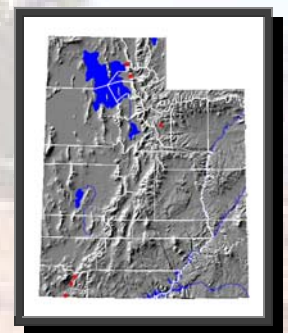
Dyer's Woad



Leafy Spurge



Yellow Starthistle



Russian Knapweed

(From Utah State University, Remote Sensing Laboratory
<http://extension.usu.edu/weedweb/nweeds/NW.htm>)

Non-native invasive plants are increasing in Utah's forests and rangelands. Nineteen plants are currently identified by the state as noxious weeds. The distribution of several of these impacting forest and range land is pictured on the right. Others, such as spotted knapweed and Canada thistle, are found

For More Information:

[Forest Health Protection](#)

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[Interior West Forest Inventory & Analysis](#)

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[Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands](#)

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