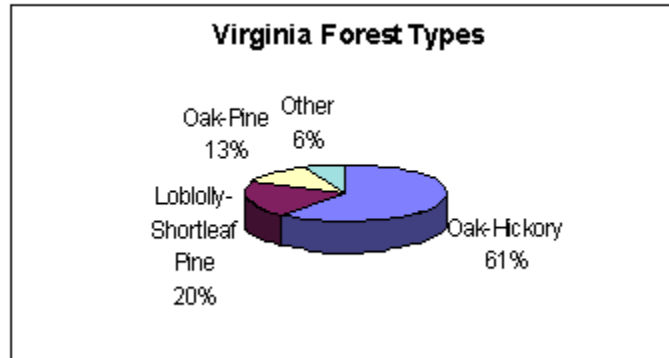


# Forest Health Highlights 1998

## Virginia

The Virginia Department of Forestry provides forest health protection assistance to state and private land managers within the Commonwealth. This program is funded cooperatively by Virginia and the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection unit.



### Virginia Forest Facts

- Over **66%** of Virginia is **forested** (more than 16 million acres).
- Almost **85%** of forested acreage in Virginia is **privately owned**.
- The **George Washington** and **Jefferson National Forests** (1.4 million acres) provide recreational and wildlife benefits as well as timber products and jobs for thousands of people.
- **Gypsy moth** defoliation started to affect Virginia's hardwood forests in 1984 and became an increasingly serious problem over the next decade. However, since 1996 an introduced fungal disease decimated gypsy moth caterpillars and defoliation has been so light that it could not be mapped.
- Since 1993, Virginia has participated with the USDA Forest Service in a pilot project to demonstrate that the rate at which the gypsy moth spreads into new areas could be reduced in a cost effective manner using current technology. Several intervention projects have taken place within the state over the past 4 years and the results indicate that the **rate of spread of the gypsy moth can be slowed by 60%**.
- **Southern pine beetle** (SPB) infestations were at very low levels in 1998. Cooperative state-federal monitoring programs help ensure that personnel and budgets are prepared to deal with predicted outbreaks. The outlook for 1999 is for relatively low populations.
- Severe, late season **drought** contributed to increasing pine mortality from infestations of engraver and turpentine beetles, and to the decline of mountain hardwoods.
- **Oak decline** is impacting Virginia's upland hardwood forests. Casual factors are stressors such as tree age, drought, frost, and defoliation by insects, and root disease. Oak decline and gypsy moth defoliation often overlap and that leads to higher levels of oak mortality.
- The **hemlock woolly adelgid** was first reported in Virginia in 1950. This insect has now spread across most of the State infesting and killing eastern hemlock.

- Virginia is actively participating in a national **Forest Health Monitoring program**. Through a network of 100 forested plots and regularly scheduled surveys, the Department of Forestry annually collects and interprets a wide variety of data to assess forest health conditions.

## The Virginia Department of Forestry and USDA Forest Service

In spite of the relatively good health of Virginia's forests, a variety of insects and diseases (both native and introduced), and human-caused impacts such as air pollution, continue to threaten the State's resources. To deal with this constantly changing mix of challenges, the Virginia Department of Forestry and the Forest Health Protection unit of the USDA Forest Service cooperate to prevent, detect, suppress and manage this multitude of threats. This partnership has worked for more than 30 years to maintain and improve the health of Virginia's forests.

***Forest Health Protection contributions (dollars) to the Virginia Department of Forestry Cooperative Forest Health Program, cooperative pest suppression projects and National Forests in Virginia pest suppression projects, 1996-99.***

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>Cooperative Forest Health Program</b>	68,607	68,607	68,607	68,607
<b>Forest Health Monitoring</b>	62,000	62,000	62,000	62,000
<b>Cooperative Suppression</b>				
southern pine beetle	10,000	10,000	8,000	8,000
gypsy moth suppression	651,949	292,300	267,000	105,000
gypsy moth eradication	0	52,000	0	0
Slow-the-Spread (gypsy moth)	584,484	590,686	552,000	570,799
<b>George Washington/Jefferson National Forests</b>				
gypsy moth suppression	100,963	131,500	126,500	0
Slow- the-Spread (gypsy moth)	293,570	55,197	48,500	48,500
hemlock woolly adelgid	40,200	40,000	30,000	46,000

**For additional information, contact:**

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