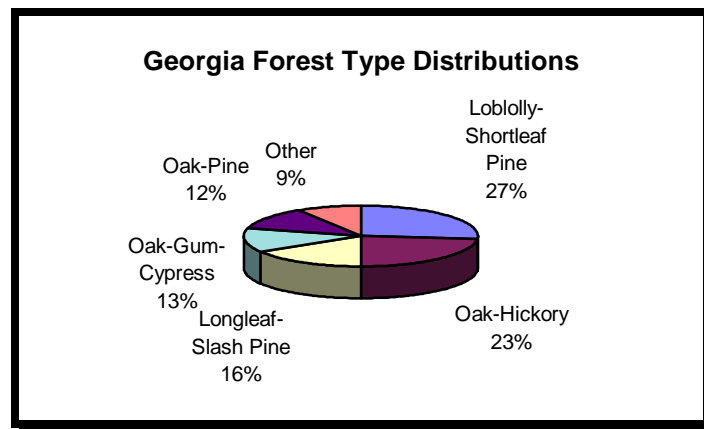


The Resource

Georgia's forests cover 24.4 million acres, nearly two thirds of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 17.1 million acres, is in nonindustrial private ownership, while approximately 752,000 acres are in national forests. Forestry is the most important industry in Georgia, providing 169,400 jobs and producing \$25.3 billion in annual revenue. Georgia's forests are also prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the north to the Coastal Plain in the south and east. Major forest types in the state include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, longleaf and slash pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Other types account for 9% of the state's forests.



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

- Urban area expansion and related impacts on forest land acreage and forest health
- Water quality protection through greater use of best management practices
- Sustaining forest resources through wise private landowner stewardship

Forest Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is Georgia's most significant forest insect pest. In 2006, SPB activity remained at low levels, with no counties reported in outbreak status. The Georgia Forestry Commission is offering cost-share incentives to landowners for thinning and restoration work as part of their comprehensive SPB Prevention Program. The state is

also making special efforts to educate landowners about the benefits of preventing SPB and healthy forest management.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips spp.*) displayed intense activity in the lower Piedmont and upper Coastal Plain in 2006. Activity is often associated with thinning and *Annosum* root disease, but recent drought has also been a contributing factor. Because *Ips* infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may approach those caused by SPB.

Black turpentine beetle activity remained problematic in 2006, primarily in association with stand thinnings and *annosum* root disease. Thinnings utilizing rotary saw-type harvesting equipment apparently invite BTB attack due to their tendency to produce free resin flow.

Pine sawflies displayed only limited activity in the upper Coastal Plain in 2006, with one- and two-year-old plantations being hardest hit. Damage was generally light to moderate.

Hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) was first detected in Rabun County in 2002. It has continued to spread westward across northern Georgia, infesting native hemlock stands across the species' range in the state. Current suppression activities involve a cooperative effort to rear and release predators in hope of achieving biological control of the adelgid, but the prognosis for hemlocks is not good. Except on individual trees in landscape settings, chemical control of HWA is not practical, and major losses of these ecologically valuable trees are probable within a few years.

Gypsy moth suppression activity was limited to trapping in 2006. The Georgia Forestry Commission utilized the services of six interns to install more than 3,500 traps in 16 northern counties, while APHIS employees deployed traps in Rockdale and Henry Counties and at the ports of Savannah and Brunswick. Male moths were captured in Glynn, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale Counties, but no active infestations were reported.

Diplodia tip blight was detected in loblolly pine plantations in eight south-central Georgia counties in 2006.

Fusiform rust is one of the state's most destructive forest diseases. The fungus causes serious infections on extensive areas of pine forest.

Annosum root rot remains a problem on high hazard sites throughout the state. Losses from this disease are especially serious in older CRP plantations that have been thinned.

Dogwood anthracnose is a disease of cool, moist areas in the higher elevation forests of northern Georgia. It is currently causing significant mortality to native dogwoods in 38 counties. No new areas of infection were reported in 2006.

Pitch canker damage increased significantly in six counties in southern Georgia in 2006.

Sudden Oak Death surveys were initiated in Georgia in 2003 and continued in 2006 with increased emphasis on stream baiting to detect the pathogen. The surveys focused on the perimeters of horticultural nurseries that had received potentially infected stock from shippers in California and Oregon and on watersheds considered to be at elevated risk.

Redbay wilt caused by a fungus vectored by the exotic redbay ambrosia beetle was first reported in 2004 and continued to spread in 2006. Eradication efforts were instituted on Jekyll Island, but appear to be ineffective. Effects on red bay and other potential host species are being studied.

Forest Health Assistance in Georgia

For further information or assistance, contact:

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