

Mississippi



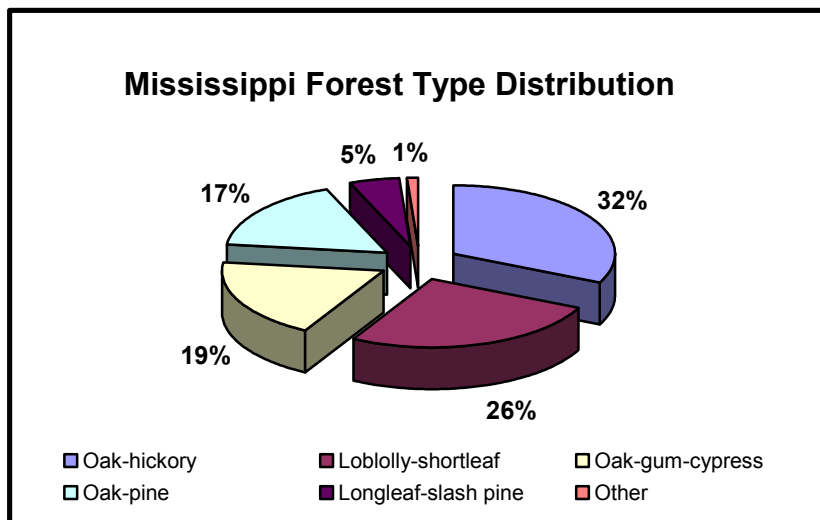
Forest Health Highlights 2007

The Resource

Mississippi's forests cover 19.9 million acres, more than 65% of the state's land area. Some 13.1 million acres of the state's forested land is in non-federal ownership, while approximately 1.1 million acres are in national forests. Mississippi's forests are valued for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and providing wildlife habitat. Major forest types in the state include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, longleaf pine, and oak-gum-cypress.



Some 13.1 million acres of the state's forested land is in industrial private ownership, 1.1 million acres are in national forests. These forests are prized for their scenic and outdoor recreation and are distributed throughout the state. Major forest types include oak-hickory, loblolly and slash pine, mixed oak-



Forest Influences and Programs

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is Mississippi's most significant forest insect pest. Populations statewide have been very low for a number of years. In 2007, activity picked up a little, although most spots occurred on federal national forest lands. A total of 208 spots were detected in 10 counties; none of the counties were considered in epidemic status. The state has developed a comprehensive [SPB prevention/education program](#) to teach landowners about the benefits of thinning in reducing SPB hazard and to cost-share with them to get the thinning done.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.) continued to display fairly heavy activity in 2007, especially in areas affected by 2005 storms. The effects of the hurricane were compounded by drought stress to create an abundance of susceptible pine host trees. Thousands of individual trees and small groups were attacked. It was not uncommon to have reports of more than 500 trees being attacked on an ownership.

Drought stress as probably contributed to the success of other insects attacking trees; one report of hickory bark beetle mortality on some 20 acres was noted.

***Sirex* spp. trapping** to detect the potentially invasive, exotic woodwasp—*Sirex noctilio*, was carried out in Mississippi in 2007; Four species of woodwasps were collected with one being a new record for the state. The exotic *S. noctilio* remains absent.

Sudden Oak Death surveys were conducted again in 2007 by pathologists from Mississippi State University. The surveys focused on baiting water courses with susceptible leaves to detect the presence of the pathogen (*Phytophthora ramorum*) downstream from potential sources. If established in or outside of horticultural nurseries that had received potentially infected stock from shippers in California, the pathogen can show up in drainage water. A positive stream-baiting site in late 2007 outside a nursery in the Jackson area has caused concern and further sampling was conducted in 2007 and continuing into 2008 to determine the source and extent of the pathogen. Even so, the pathogen is not considered to be established in the natural environment or a threat to oaks at this time.

Cogon grass is a non-native, invasive plant that has been spreading aggressively in Mississippi in recent years. It takes over native grasses and vegetation and is a fire hazard under pine plantations. The severity and extent of infestations are increasing considerably in the disturbed forests following hurricane Katrina in 2005. The state has a Cogon Grass Task Force that is coordinating efforts to assist landowners and agencies with control/management of this species.



J.R. Meeker, Florida Division of Forestry, Bugwood.org

Forest Health Assistance in Mississippi

Mississippi Forestry Commission
301 N. Lamar Street
Suite 300
Jackson, MS 39201
601-359-1386
mlee@mfc.state.ms.us
<http://www.mfc.state.ms.us/>

USDA Forest Service
Southern Region, State & Private Forestry
Forest Health Protection
2500 Shreveport Hwy.
Pineville, LA 71360
318-473-7286
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/>