

# **Louisiana Forest Health Highlights 2016**

## **The Resource**

Louisiana's forests cover 13.8 million acres, nearly half of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 10 million acres, is in non-industrial private ownership, while approximately 603,500 acres are in national forests. Louisiana's forests are prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat throughout the state. Major forest types in Louisiana include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, longleaf and slash pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Other minor types account for approximately 3% of the forest.

## **Forest Influences and Programs**

**Southern pine beetle (SPB)** is Louisiana's most significant forest insect pest. However, SPB activity in the state has been insignificant in recent years, a trend that has lasted for about 17 years. No serious population buildup is in sight.

**Pine engraver beetles (Ips spp.)** and black turpentine beetle remain at relatively normal levels. Because Ips infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may exceed those caused by SPB.

**Forest tent caterpillar** caused defoliation this spring on about 550,600 acres of tupelo gum wetlands in South Louisiana. Much of the defoliated area was also affected by defoliation due to baldcypress leafroller (see Figure 1).

**Baldcypress leafroller** also caused defoliation on about 158,600 acres of mixed baldcypress stands in southeastern Parishes, mostly associated with forest tent caterpillar defoliated areas.

**Gypsy Moth** survey was conducted using 191 traps across the state and no gypsy moths were captured.

**Emerald Ash borer** was first confirmed in Webster Parish in February of 2015. It has since been confirmed in Bossier, Claiborne, Union, and Lincoln Parishes. An official quarantine is in effect for these five parishes. We have continued to inform

landowners of this pest and have distributed information through press releases and handouts. We continue to coordinate with other agencies to monitor and implement our EAB response plan.

**Laurel Wilt Disease and the Redbay Ambrosia Beetle** made its introduction into Union Parish, Louisiana in September 2014. The beetle has also been confirmed in Claiborne and Lincoln Parishes. We've not received any calls outside of the known infested parishes this past year. Our foresters continue to observe for declining sassafras and redbay trees caused by laurel wilt.

**Severe Flooding** occurred in March and August of 2016 in Louisiana. Most of the flood waters receded fairly quickly and we do not expect to see any significant effects on forestlands in Louisiana.

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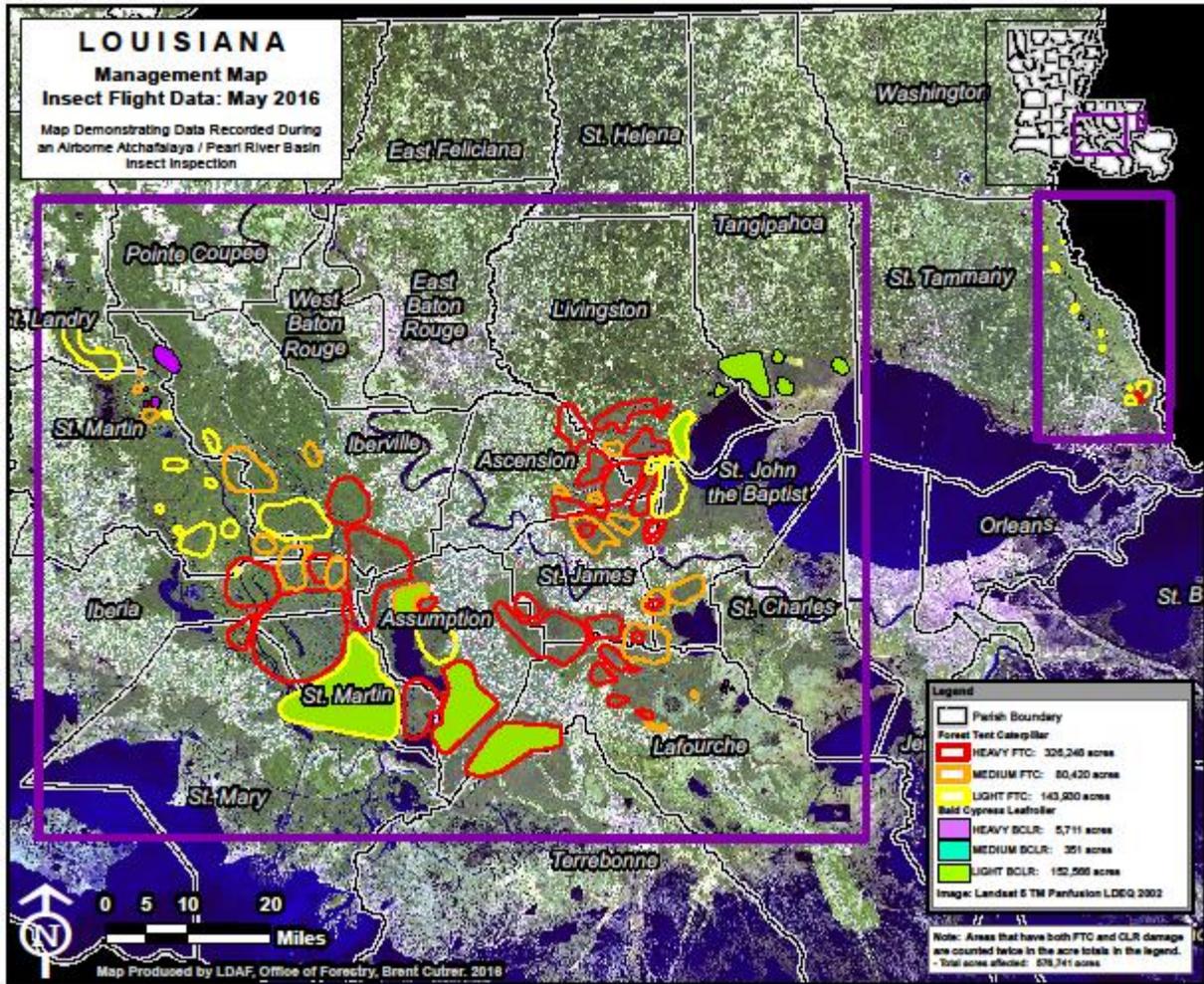


Figure 1. Balcypress Leafroller and Forest Tent Caterpillar Defoliation in Southeast LA, Spring 2015. Damage mapped using Digital Aerial Sketchmapping System.