

Forest Health Highlights

New York



July 1999

The Resource

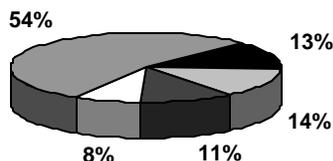
New York's forests provide a recreational base for millions of New Yorkers and others visiting the state's scenic regions. Forests are also productive in timber, providing employment to 2 percent of the workforce. The manufacture of wood products provides \$2.4 billion to the state's economy annually.

•62% of the state is forested
(18,641,300 acres)

Out of the forested area:

- 82.6 % timberland
- 17.4 % non commercial or reserved forestland
(data unpublished)

Major Forest Types:



- white/red pine/hemlock (13%)
- oak/hickory (14%)
- other (11%)
- elm/ash/red maple (8%)
- northern hardwoods (54%)

Special Issues

The forests of New York continue to be impacted most significantly by **weather**. In 1998, winds associated with a strong line of thunderstorms caused extensive damage in the Syracuse area. Many urban trees were destroyed and plans are in place to replant. Impacts from the January 1998 ice storm, which affected over 3 million acres, are still very noticeable in Lewis, Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex Counties. A regional assessment was conducted to assess the impact of the ice storm on the forest resource and the maple sugar industry in northern New England and New York. The species most affected by the storm were aspen, black cherry, red maple and American beech. White ash, birch, basswood, oak and sugar maples also lost substantial portions of their crowns in many areas. A Federal appropriation provided for technical and financial assistance to many impacted areas. Assistance has been provided for communities, private non-industrial landowners, and sugar maple producers to recover from the damage caused by the ice storm.

Exotic pests are still a major concern within the state. The most recent introduction is the **Asian longhorn beetle**, which was discovered in Brooklyn and on Long Island during the summer of 1996. Another infestation was recently discovered in Queens. The trees in Queens have been infested for several years, before the quarantine was implemented. Hardwoods are the preferred hosts of this insect, especially maples. Through quarantines and removal of infested trees, along with extensive community outreach, the number of standing affected trees has been greatly reduced. In a continued effort to eradicate the insect, surveys continue around the perimeter of the known infestation to identify newly infected trees for removal. Tree planting has been initiated in an attempt to provide greenery in neighborhoods as the infested trees are cut down. Unfortunately, a new infestation was recently discovered in the city of Chicago, thought also to have originated on packing material from China. The US Department of Agriculture has put restrictions on the use of untreated wood as packing material or dunnage, in an attempt to curtail further introductions of the beetle.



Special Issues cont.

Another introduced pest, the **hemlock woolly adelgid**, continues to cause damage to native forest and ornamental eastern hemlock trees, from Virginia up into southern New England. In New York, the northward spread of the adelgid has halted at the southern Columbia County border, south of Albany, due to winter kill. Damage to long-term infested hemlocks is increasing. More than half of the hemlock trees in heavily infested areas are dead. The USDA forest Service is cooperating with New York to introduce a predatory ladybug at the Castle Rock Unique Area in Putnam County to control the adelgid population.

The **European common pine shoot beetle** was discovered infesting pine plantations around the Great Lakes. First found in western New York in 1993, the insect now occurs in 29 counties in the state. The shoot beetle is primarily a problem in pine Christmas tree plantations. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of a counties known to be infested, and it appears that the insect may be spreading eastward. The areas where the insect has been found are under a Federal Quarantine in an attempt to reduce its' spread. The State forestry staff is addressing issues raised by timber shippers affected by the quarantine.

The **pine false webworm**, first reported in the United States in Pennsylvania in the early 1900's, has been causing significant defoliation in northern New York since 1991. The insect is particularly destructive in eastern white pine plantations. The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the New York DEC are continuing a research study of the insect. The research focus is on finding management techniques to protect trees.

Overall the incidence of the **European gypsy moth** is very low. Populations have been at low levels in New York recently due to a fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*, which attacks the insect larvae. The Lake George region is being monitored for evidence of defoliation. Egg mass counts, used to assess the population, vary widely. The outbreak in 1998 ended with massive mortality of the insect larvae due to fungal infections.

Stewardship

Among the several NY DEC programs that contribute to forest health improvement, the **stewardship program** has the potential to reach a large number of forest landowners. All forest management plans prepared under the stewardship program include a forest protection component. The planning process helps alert forest landowners to potential and existing forest health conditions and procedures to protect forest resources. This program is also helping landowners recover from the ice storm.

Regional Surveys

The **North American Maple Project** was initiated with Canada in 1988 to look at change in sugar maple tree condition. There are several states in the Northeast involved including New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. Overall, sugar maple located within the sample sites are in good condition.

New York is joining the **National Forest Health Monitoring Program** which began in New England in 1990. Permanent plots are currently being established that will be visited annually to assess the condition of the forest resource.

For More Information

NY Dept. of Environmental
Conservation
Division of Lands and Forests
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12233

(518) 457-7370



Forest Health Protection
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 640
Durham, NH 03824

(603) 868-7709



State and Private
Forestry