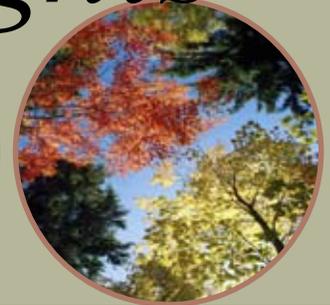


2009

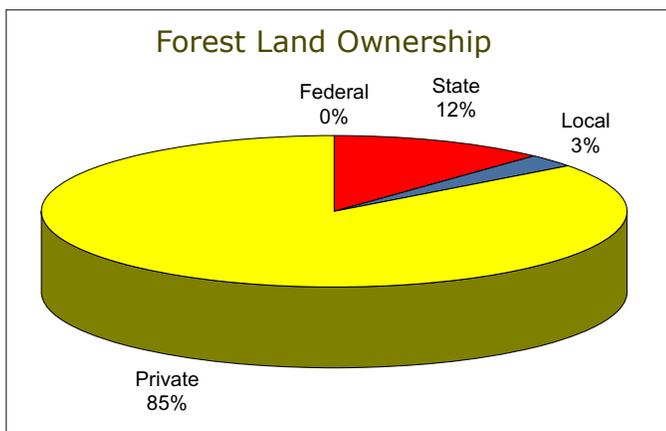
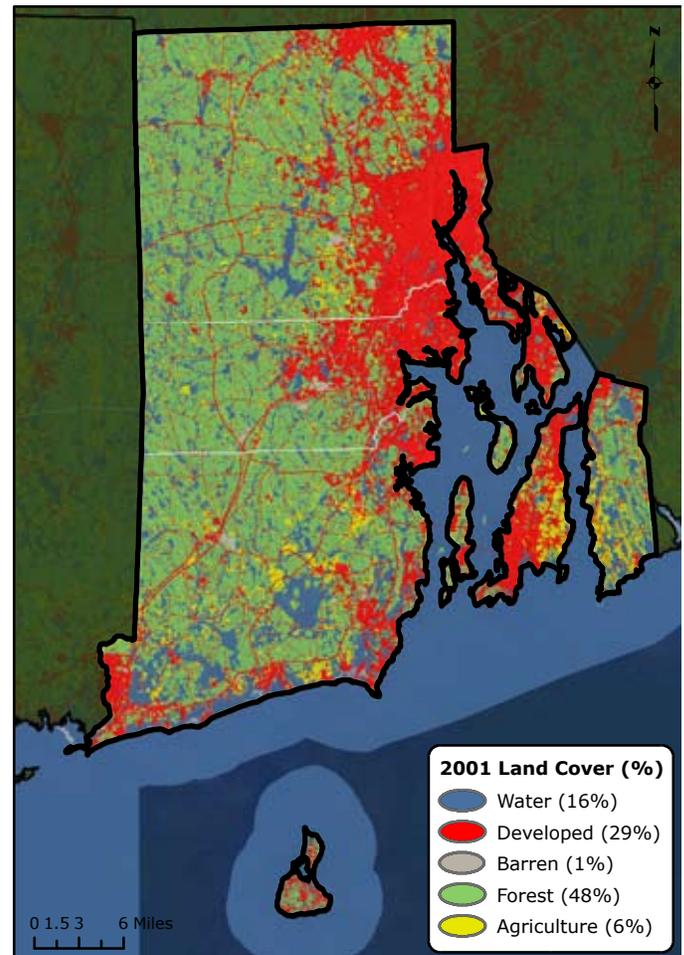
Forest Health

RHODE ISLAND *highlights*



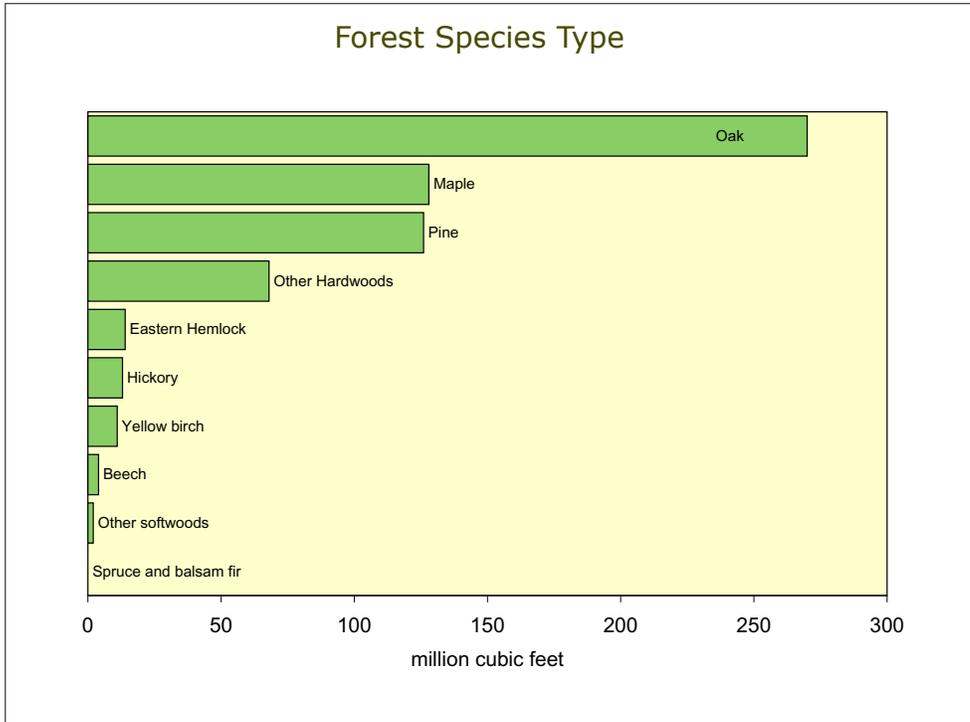
Forest Resource Summary

Rhode Island's forests are 85 percent privately owned, primarily by individuals who view their land as a source of enjoyment and a resource to be protected. The remainder of the forest land is in State or local town ownership. These forests are valued for clean air, protection of ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, wood fiber, and recreational opportunities. The latest forest inventory estimates that 48 percent of Rhode Island is forested, encompassing about 356,000 acres, with about a third of the State in development. The existence of intense public debate related to any impact on undeveloped lands is indicative of citizen concerns for the amenities provided by forest lands, whether privately or publicly held. The forest resource is made up of a variety of forest types, mostly oak, maples, and pine, along with other hardwoods.



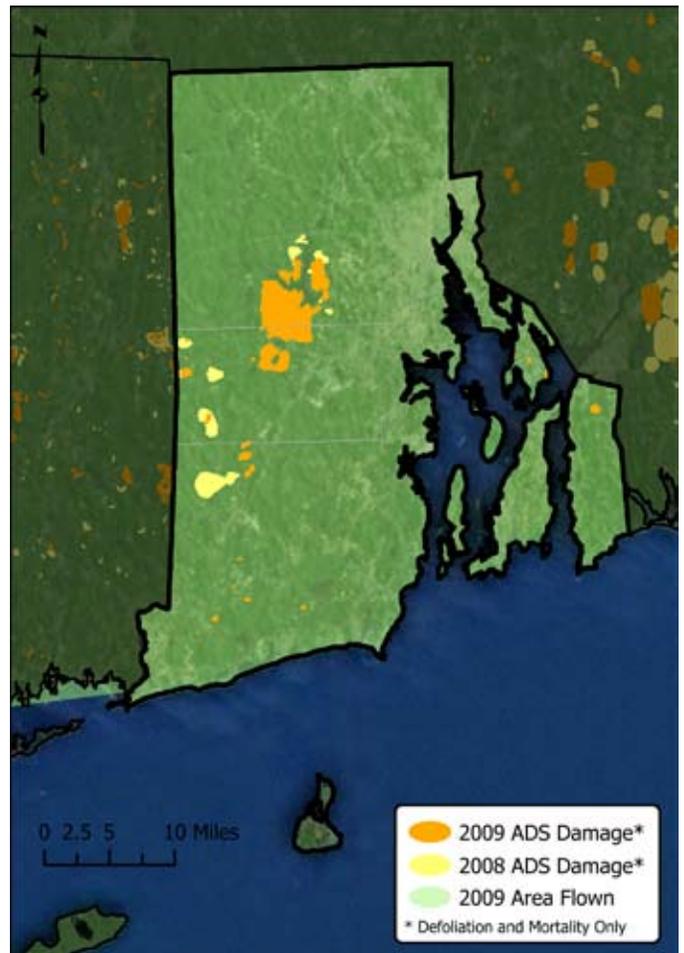
Forest Health Programs in the Northeast

State forestry agencies work in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to monitor forest conditions and trends in their State and respond to pest outbreaks to protect the forest resource.



Aerial Surveys

In Rhode Island, 15,800 acres of damage were mapped. The majority of damage, 13,770 acres, was from defoliation caused by orange-striped oakworm, and approximately 1,114 acres of defoliation resulted from the forest tent caterpillar. There were also about 150 acres of defoliation from the winter moth and a little over 200 acres of gypsy moth defoliation.



This map delineates aerial detection survey (ADS) results for Rhode Island in 2008 and 2009.

Forest Damage

Aerial surveys covering more than 670,000 acres were flown in July and September 2009 to document forest damage. All defoliation areas were subsequently visited on the ground to confirm the cause of the damage. As a result, defoliation from orange-striped oakworm and forest tent caterpillar were observed, as well as mortality due to repeated gypsy moth defoliation.

Concerns in Bristol County about repeated defoliation by the invasive winter moth may bring about a special project for an infested area. This year, 139 acres were affected in addition to defoliation detected in Warwick in Providence County, based on a report from homeowner calls.

White pine tip dieback was reported in 2008 on about 600 acres through observations on the ground. This year, damage showed up during the aerial survey. White pine tip dieback was also observed in the ground check with hundreds of dead white pine saplings in the understory. There was heavy white pine cone production this year.

Through special U.S. Forest Service funding, critical forest health projects were carried out in Rhode Island in 2009.

Firewood Insect Vector Survey: A post office zip code search of registered guests to Rhode Island's campgrounds over the last 2 to 3 years identified 678 camper visits to the State's 28 campgrounds from areas of known Asian longhorned beetle infestations. A survey of these campgrounds during the summer, and again after leaf off, showed no introduction of this forest pest. Most of these visitors, 386, came from infested areas in Worcester, MA; 291 came from the southern New York infestation area; and only 1 visitor came from the northern New Jersey infestation area.

In addition, a Rhode Island seasonal home survey was begun in fall 2009. Letters were sent to community tax assessors asking for assistance in identifying landowners from zip codes in the Worcester infested area. Within the 39 communities that were contacted, 34 communities responded that there were 127 seasonal homeowners from the Worcester infested area. Several followup surveys have taken place to contact homeowners about bringing firewood from home to their seasonal homes in Rhode Island. Additional contacts will take place pending future funding to continue the project.

Cerceris fumipennis Biosurveillance Survey for Emerald Ash Borer: *Cerceris fumipennis* wasps are known to collect Buprestid beetles, including the emerald ash borer. Therefore, these wasps can be used as a biosurveillance tool for this invasive pest. Forty-two sites were visited throughout Rhode Island to look for *Cerceris fumipennis*, and 23 sites were found to have active colonies. Most sites were baseball fields with much of the activity occurring along the third-base line.

The number of colonies was down from the 29 sites found in 2008. There was also a noticeable decrease in activity, which may have been due to the increased amount of rainfall occurring in 2009. This method of surveying for emerald ash borer is far less destructive than girdling and sacrificing healthy ash trees. Due to these factors, biosurveillance may be a viable way for volunteers to survey for this pest in the future, an effort that is conducted by trained Rhode Island Tree Stewards.



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