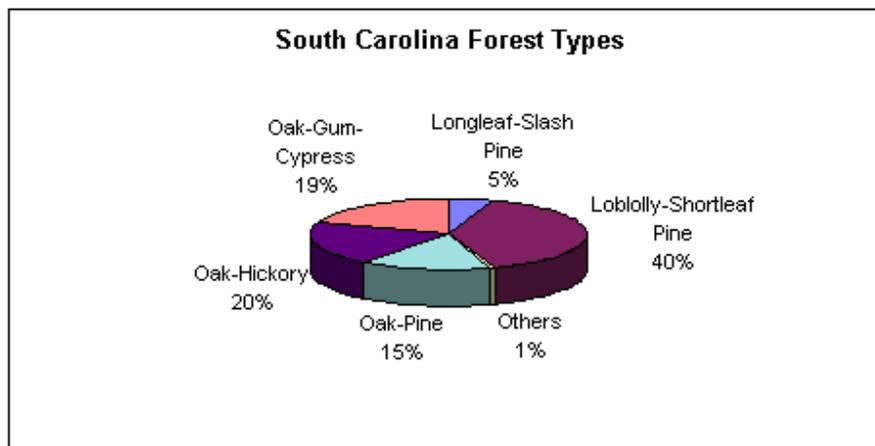


# Forest Health Highlights 2002

## South Carolina

### The Resource

South Carolina's forests cover 12.6 million acres, more than 66% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land, some 11.4 million acres, is in nonindustrial private ownership, while approximately 560,000 acres are in national forests. Forestry is the third most important industry in South Carolina, providing 50,000 jobs and producing \$5.6 billion in annual revenue. South Carolina's forests are also prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the lowcountry of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Major forest types in the state include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, historically much more wide-ranging, now comprise 5% of the state's forests, while other minor types account for an additional 1%.



Forest health monitoring (FHM) activities are cooperative efforts between the USDA Forest Service and the SC Forestry Commission. The FHM program in South Carolina 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 South Carolina's most significant forest insect pest. In 2002, SPB activity was the most severe recorded in the state, with 23 counties in outbreak status and \$250 million in documented losses. Activity was greatest in the Appalachian foothills and Piedmont, although four counties in the southern Coastal Plain were also affected.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.) displayed heavy activity in the Piedmont in 2002. 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.

Hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) was first detected in Oconee County in 2001. It has since spread in the upstate, infesting both of the native hemlock species. 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.

Fusiform rust is the state's most destructive forest disease. The fungus causes serious infections on an estimated 1.4 million acres of pine forest.

Annosum root rot killed an estimated 53,850 acres of timber in South Carolina in 2002. Losses from this disease were estimated at \$1,938,600.

Dogwood anthracnose is a disease of cool, moist areas in the higher elevation forests of northwestern S.C. It is currently causing significant mortality to native dogwoods. No new areas of infection were reported in 2002.

Beavers are an increasingly serious problem in the states riparian forests. Beaver activity killed 80.500 acres of timber in 2002, valued at \$1,449,900.

Weather continued to impact South Carolina's forests in 2002. The fifth year of a protracted drought ended with heavy rains in October, November and December, but the wet weather arrived too late to affect the growing season, and dry weather contributed to a host of other forest health problems statewide.

Fire, exacerbated by the drought, burned 232,110 acres in the state in 2002. A total of \$4,177,980 in timber losses were reported as a result of wildland fires in 2002.

## **Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina**

**For further information or assistance, contact:**

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