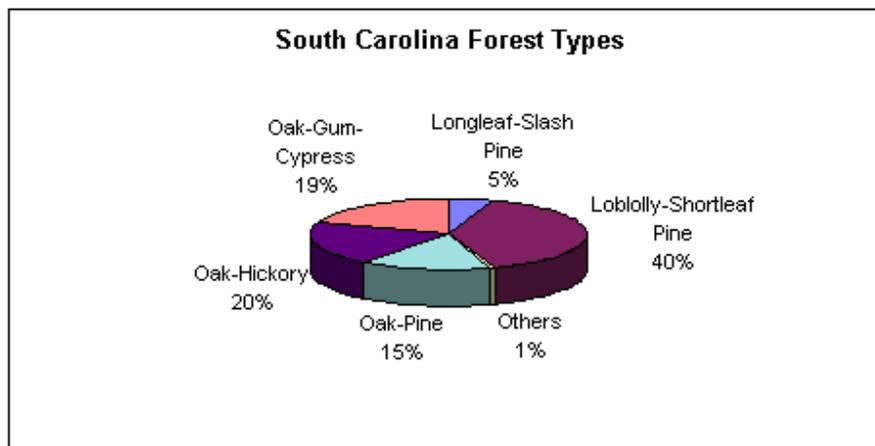


Forest Health Highlights 2003

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 2003, SPB activity continued, although at much lower levels than in the previous three years; nine counties remained in outbreak status.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips spp.*) displayed moderate activity in the Piedmont in 2003. 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 affected an estimated 50,040 acres of timber in 31 South Carolina counties in 2003. Losses from this disease were estimated at \$1,351,080.

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 2003.

Beavers are an increasingly serious problem in the states riparian forests. Beaver activity killed 10.795 acres of timber in 2003, valued at \$3.5 million.

Weather continued to impact South Carolina's forests in 200. Heavy rains inundated lowland forests in coastal areas, producing premature defoliation. An estimated 589,120 acres were affected.

Fire mortality was reported on 6,910 acres in 36 counties in 2003. A total of \$2,238,840 in timber losses were reported as a result of wildland fires.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For further information or assistance, contact:

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