



# South Carolina Forestry Commission



## **FOREST HEALTH**

### **2015 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **The Resource**

South Carolina's forest cover 13 million acres, which is 67% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land is in nonindustrial private ownership, covering about 11.4 million acres, with a approximately 629,000 acres in national forests.

Forestry is the most important manufacturing industry in South Carolina, providing 90,320 jobs and a total economic impact of \$18.6 billion annually. \$1.5 billion in forest products are exported from South Carolina and forest products are the number one export commodity from the port of Charleston. Trees are South Carolina's number one harvested crop, totaling \$759 million. South Carolina's forests are known for their scenic beauty, attracting tourism, outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Major forest types in South Carolina include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, once more widespread, now make up four percent of South Carolina's forests, with other minor forest types accounting for an additional six percent.

## **Forest Issues and Influences**

### **Southern pine beetle (SPB)/Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.)**

The most damaging pest of southern pine forests is the southern pine beetle (SPB). Surveys for SPB conducted in the spring of 2015 recorded the lowest number of beetles since monitoring in the state began. A total of 90 SPB were trapped from 32 counties.

### **Redbay mortality (laurel wilt disease)**

Caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola* and vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) laurel wilt has killed many redbay trees along South Carolina's coast and continues to spread. A new record was reported this year for Richland County.

### **Cogongrass**

As of 2015 a total of 13 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified. Of these, only five remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive.

### **Flooding**

The most significant event affecting South Carolina's forests in 2015 was the unprecedented flood of October 2015. Multiple feet of precipitation fell in many areas and large parts of South Carolina were submerged. Immediate impacts on South Carolina's forests are not expected, but they will be monitored for insect and disease outbreaks that may appear a year or two down the road.



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

For more information or assistance, please contact:

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