

Southern Pine Beetle in New Jersey

Southern Pine Beetle Infestation is Expanding

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry



Description: An estimated 440,000 forested acres cover southern New Jersey. Pine, primarily pitch pine, is the dominant forest type in this region known as the Pinelands. This region has also been a historically fire-prone ecosystem.

Since 2001, the southern pine beetle (SPB) has infested 32,800 acres of these southern New Jersey forests, or 6 percent of the existing pine forest type. More than half of this damage has occurred during the last 2 years—14,000 acres in 2010 and 6,800 acres in 2011.

The southern pine beetle continues to spread into the Pinelands Reserve, which is part of the Pinelands, and its globally rare plant communities. The SPB infestation is expected to continue spreading. The resulting impacts on affected communities include a higher risk of wildfires in the region's extensive areas where wildland and human dwellings meet.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is suppressing SPB on lands it administers. They are also using education and awareness programs to encourage private landowners to suppress this insect on private land. In 2011, the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry awarded a \$600,000 competitive grant to the New Jersey DEP to suppress SPB on public and private lands. The DEP is also using the grant money for community wildfire protection, outreach, and education activities. The DEP plans to launch a landowner cost-share program to help support SPB suppression on private land.

Key Issues:

- SPB infestations can persist and expand relatively quickly because this beetle has a limited number of predators and no competition from other wood-boring insects,
- Without SPB control, New Jersey is likely to see its SPB population spread significantly in 2012 because the existing population is large and this beetle can survive winters.
- The current infestation is so large that suppression activities need to be prioritized.
- The Pinelands permitting process, which is designed to help conserve the region's natural resources, affects suppression activities such as thinning and tree removal. It is vitally important to examine the time needed to comply with permitting requirements for analysis, documentation, communication, review, and approval.
- Scientists need to determine whether an effective product to protect individual trees should be suggested to individual homeowners. They also need to evaluate the effectiveness of commercially available products labeled for homeowner use.

Accomplishments:

- The New Jersey DEP created an SPB science advisory panel to help develop management strategies.
- Held 10 public educational meetings.
- The New Jersey State Forestry Service sent letters to 256 municipalities in Burlington, Monmouth, Camden, Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester, Cape May, and Atlantic Counties requesting an SPB liaison to coordinate SPB suppression in their towns. So far, 110 municipalities, 26 of which have SPB infestations, have provided a liaison.
- Created a Web site: www.southernpinebeetle.nj.gov.
- Created SPB action kits.
- The New Jersey DEP treated 50 acres of SPB-infested public lands using the cut and leave method.
- Developed a faster permitting process for 2011 suppression projects that treated up to 300 acres.

- Began a study to determine the effectiveness of pesticides that are available for homeowners to use.

Budget History:

New Jersey Southern Pine Beetle Control and Mitigation	
	FY 2012
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Forest Service/Forest Fire Service) Competitive Redesign Project	\$600,000

Future Direction:

- Continue collaboration between the New Jersey Forest Service and the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Morgantown Field Office to monitor the outbreak, assess what needs to be done, and communicate needs.
- Complete a study of pesticides that homeowners can use.
- Finalize a streamlined permit process with the Pinelands Commission.
- Continue to prioritize and treat SPB spots on DEP land.
- Begin a cost-share program for private landowners through the New Jersey Forestry Association.

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