

Southern Pine Beetle in New Jersey

The infestation is expanding

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



Description Pine, especially pitch pine, is the most common tree species on roughly 440,000 acres of forest in southern New Jersey. The southern pine beetle (SPB) has infested 32,800 acres of these forests—seven percent of the total—since 2001. More than half of this damage has occurred during the last 3 years: 14,000 acres in 2010, 6,800 acres in 2011, and 6,261 acres in 2012.

Experts believe that the SPB infestation will continue to spread in the State, including the Pinelands Reserve where the beetle is likely to affect globally rare plant communities. SPB kills pine trees, which creates hazardous trees and increases the risk of wildfires. SPB is also affecting communities and heightening concerns about wildfires in the wildland-urban interface, areas where people and forests are in proximity. The pinelands region is an especially fire-prone ecosystem.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) oversees 30 percent of the lands affected by the SPB. The DEP continues to focus on suppressing SPB on lands under its jurisdiction. Through education and awareness programs, they are also encouraging private landowners to conduct suppression activities.

In 2011, the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA S&PF) awarded a \$600,000 competitive grant to the New Jersey DEP to help with SPB suppression on both public and private lands, help boost community wildfire protection, and for outreach and education. In 2012, NA S&PF granted an additional \$340,000 to the DEP to strengthen SPB suppression and wildfire mitigation efforts on State lands located in the Pinelands. With assistance from NA S&PF Redesign funds, the DEP has created a cost-share program to help private landowners with suppression.

Key Issues:

- Because there are few, if any, other wood-boring insects or SPB predators, SPB outbreaks typically last longer and expand more quickly than they would otherwise.
- Without actions to control SPB, New Jersey can expect another increase in affected acreage in 2013 due to the large existing population and likely low winter mortality of the SPB.
- The current infestation is so large that suppression activities must be prioritized.
- The permitting process that is in place to help conserve the Pinelands is an important factor in carrying out forest management actions such as thinning and salvage tree removal, among other options. The time needed for analysis, documentation, communication, review, and approval of forest management actions must be considered during planning.

Accomplishments:

- The New Jersey DEP is continuing to use the SPB science advisory panel, a group of State and Federal experts convened by the State Forester, to help determine management actions.
- The DEP is holding informational meetings for the public.
- New Jersey State Forestry Services sent letters to 256 municipalities in Burlington, Monmouth, Camden, Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester, Cape May, and Atlantic Counties requesting a SPB liaison to coordinate suppression in their towns. To date, 110 municipalities, 26 of which already have SPB infestations, have named a liaison.
- The DEP created a Web site: www.southernpinebeetle.nj.gov.

- The DEP completed SPB action kits.
- The DEP treated nearly 206 acres for SPB in 2012.
- A cost-share program to help private landowners with suppression, administered by the New Jersey Forestry Association, was established with NA S&PF Redesign funds.

Budget History:

Southern Pine Beetle Program			
<i>(Dollars in thousands)</i>			
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Forest Service NA S&PF	\$600	\$340	TBD
Totals	\$600	\$340	TBD

Future Direction:

- Determine whether a product to protect individual trees should be suggested to homeowners. An evaluation is needed to see if commercially available imidacloprid products are effective when used at the maximum rate given on the label.
- The NA S&PF Morgantown Field Office and the New Jersey Forest Service will continue their collaboration to monitor the outbreak, assess needed actions, and communicate resource needs.
- Continue efforts to streamline the forest management permitting process in cooperation with the Pinelands Commission.
- Continue to prioritize and treat SPB sites on DEP land.

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