

Southern Pine Beetle in New Jersey

The Spreading Infestation

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



Description: The southern pine beetle (SPB) kills pine trees, which creates hazards from dead and dying trees and increases the risk of wildfires. Pine, especially pitch pine, is the most common tree species on roughly 440,000 acres of southern New Jersey forest. SPB has infested 38,400 acres of these forests—over eight percent of the total—since 2001. Approximately 85 percent of this damage has happened during the last 4 years.

Acres Damaged by Southern Pine Beetle: 2010–2013

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Acres	14,000	6,800	6,261	5,646	Total = 32,707

Experts believe the infestation will continue to spread. If the beetle reaches the Pine Barrens (also known as the Pinelands) as expected, it is likely to affect globally rare plant communities.

Besides its ecological effects, SPB is also affecting communities with respect to both hazardous trees and heightened concerns about wildfires. New Jersey has many communities in the wildland-urban interface, areas where people and forests are in proximity. The Pinelands region is also an especially fire-prone ecosystem.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers 30 percent of the land affected by SPB so far. The agency is continuing to focus on suppressing SPB on lands under its jurisdiction. It is also using education and awareness programs to encourage private landowners and municipalities to treat infestations.

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

Key Issues:

- Unless weather conditions impair beetle reproduction, New Jersey can expect the affected areas to increase.
- SPB treatments must be prioritized because of limited funds.
- To help conserve the Pinelands, the Pinelands Commission has a permitting process for forest management activities. This process has a significant impact on activities such as thinning and salvage tree removal, among others, that may be part of SPB treatments. Extra time is needed to analyze, document, communicate about, review, and approve SPB projects.

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 develop management actions.
- DEP is holding meetings with affected municipalities to encourage them to apply for available grants and cost-share funds.
- The SPB Web site (www.southernpinebeetle.nj.gov) is regularly updated.

- DEP treated more than 208 acres for SPB in 2013.
- The New Jersey Forestry Association continues to administer a cost-share program to help private landowners with suppression. This program 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	FY 2014
Forest Service NA S&PF	\$600	\$340	-	TBD
Totals	\$600	\$340	-	TBD

Future Direction:

- The NA S&PF Morgantown Field Office and the New Jersey State Forestry Service will continue to jointly monitor the outbreak, assess needed actions, and communicate resource needs.
- Efforts to streamline the permitting process will continue in cooperation with the Pinelands Commission.
- DEP will continue to prioritize and treat SPB sites on State land.
- NA S&PF and the New Jersey State Forestry Service will continue to explore options for responding to new areas likely to be impacted.

Tony L. Ferguson, Director
 11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
 Newtown Square, PA 19073
 610-557-4103 (-4177 FAX)
tferguson@fs.fed.us

www.na.fs.fed.us

Ralph Crawford, Asst. Director,
 Forest Health
 11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
 Newtown Square, PA 19073
 610-557-4158 (-4177 FAX)
rcrawford01@fs.fed.us

Bob Lueckel, Field Rep.
 180 Canfield Street
 Morgantown, WV, 26505
 304-285-1540 (-1508 FAX)
rlueckel@fs.fed.us



Revised 1/6/2014