

WEST VIRGINIA - 2014

Forest Health Highlights

The Resource

The West Virginia landscape is dominated by more than 11.8 million acres of forest. Due in large part to its varied topography, the forest is a rich diversity of oaks, hickories, spruce, pines, and the WV State Tree—sugar maple. Ninety percent of all forests in West Virginia are privately owned, but there are 9 state forests, 36 state parks, and 56 wildlife management areas that provide public enjoyment.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

The Forest Management Program is administered by the West Virginia Division of Forestry. The intent of the program is to help private, nonindustrial forest landowners improve their forests by managing them in a sound, scientific manner. Within this program, the Forest Stewardship Program offers a forest management plan written by a professional forester based on the landowner's objectives. Other programs, EQIP and CREP, provide financial assistance for recreation, forest improvement, soil and water protection, wetlands protection, fisheries habitat enhancement, wildlife habitat enhancement, tree planting, and improvement of forest roads. In FY 2014, 105 stewardship plans were completed for a total of 10,685 acres. Currently 203,810 acres are managed under stewardship plans.

Special Issues

Gypsy Moth Programs

The objectives of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) Gypsy Moth Program are to continue to minimize the adverse impact on forest resources, preserve aesthetic values, protect people from the annoyance and health problems that can occur when in contact with large numbers of gypsy moth caterpillars, and slow the spread of gypsy moth by reducing populations on the advancing front.

GYPSY MOTH QUARANTINE

West Virginia currently has 44 counties regulated and considered generally infested by gypsy moth. The WVDA regulates the movement of articles out of these counties into non quarantined counties or states. There were no new counties quarantined in 2014.

GYPSY MOTH POPULATION

West Virginia's gypsy moth population in 2014 is low in most areas of the State. The population is increasing in the East and Central areas. The fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga* caused a moderate collapse in the building gypsy moth population of West Virginia, in some areas, but population densities above treatment thresholds have been observed in Grant, Hardy, Nicholas, Pendleton, and Pocahontas Counties. Gypsy Moth defoliated a total of 12,111 acres in 2014. Potential defoliating populations for 2015 are expected in the eastern portion of the state.

GYPSY MOTH COOPERATIVE STATE COUNTY LANDOWNER PROGRAM (CSCL)

WVDA Staff are currently responding to landowner requests and completing surveys on forested lands in West Virginia to determine areas at risk for gypsy moth defoliation and/or mortality in the spring of 2015. Staff is currently using 1/40 acre plot surveys to determine areas at risk and plan to have surveys completed by late December.

Larval Insecticide treatments were conducted on 974 Acres in the Cooperative State County Landowner (CSCL) Program in 2014. Mimic and BTK were used to treat the blocks in Hardy County. A significant increase in qualifying acres has been determined for 2015 treatments.

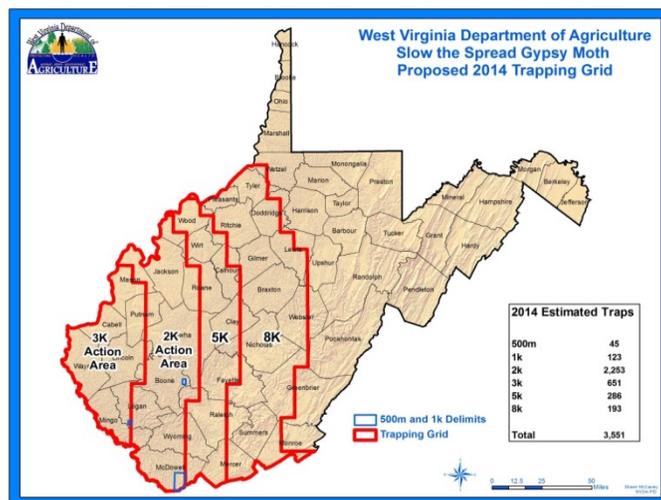
GYPSY MOTH REGULATORY

There were no regulatory insecticide treatments in West Virginia in 2014.

Staff visited 168 sites to investigate the movement of articles capable of transporting the gypsy moth into uninfested areas. Areas visited included Christmas tree sales lots, plant nurseries, mobile home dealers, campgrounds, log yards and sawmills.

GYPSY MOTH SLOW THE SPREAD (STS)

There were on treatments within the STS area for 2014 and no planned treatments for 2015. Gypsy moth populations are stagnated and are low in the western portion of the STS program area of West Virginia. The WVDA trapped 29,149 male gypsy moths in 2014 compared to 57,062 male moths in 2013. This decrease in population was observed not only in West Virginia but across the STS project area and some theorize it could have been due to the colder winter of 2014. Also note that this decrease in trap catch occurred with 781 additional trap placements in 2014.



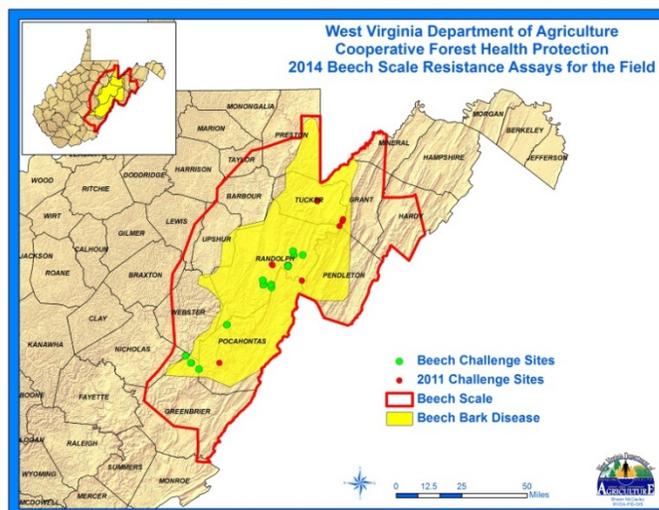
2014 Traps by Trapping Grid			
<u>Grid</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Omits</u>	<u>Set</u>
500m	45		45
1k	123	1	122
2k	2253	1	2252
3k	651	0	651
5k	286	0	286
8k	193	0	193
Totals	3351	1	3349
<u>Project Boundary</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Omits</u>	<u>Set</u>
STS Action Area	2872	2	2870
STS Monitoring	479	0	479
Random	0	0	0
Totals	3351	2	3349
<u>Trap type</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Omits</u>	<u>Set</u>
Delta Traps	2915	2	2913
Milk Cartons	638	0	638
Random	0	0	0
Totals	3351	2	3349

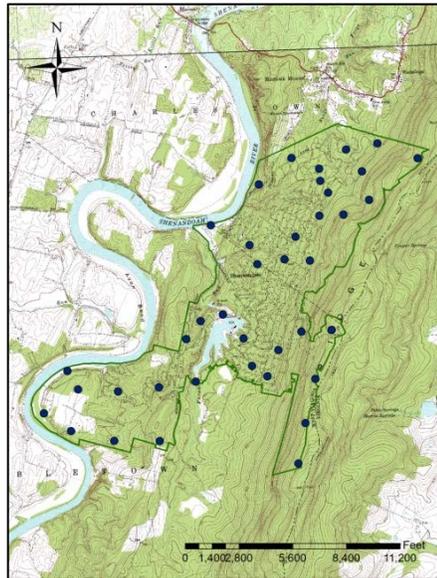
FOREST HEALTH PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Diseases

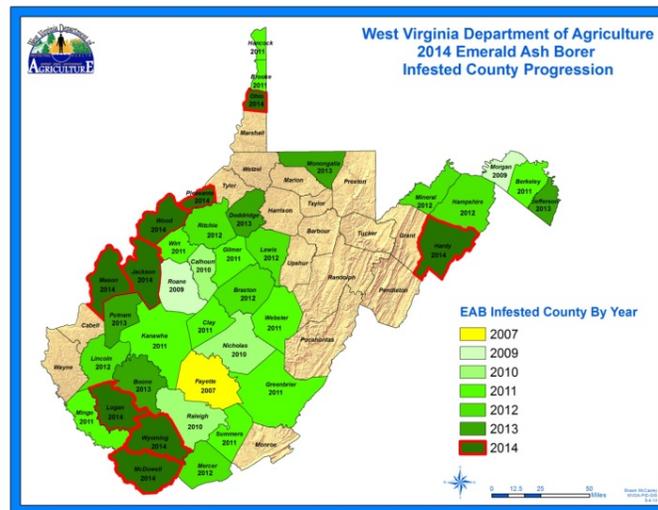
Beech Scale Resistant Assays on the Monongahela National Forest In the summer of 2012 Monongahela National Forest (MNF) personnel located putatively resistant American beech trees across the Forest in areas where either the scale and disease are currently causing decline and mortality (killing zone) or have passed through (aftermath zone). In order to focus the search for resistant trees, stand data maps were created showing the stands with the highest beech basal areas. As many of these stands with a high beech component as possible were surveyed. Beech trees that were greater than nine inches dbh and had no beech scale present were considered fully resistant and permanently located using GPS coordinates and flagging. Approximately 120 resistant beech trees have been identified thus far on the MNF. A shapefile and maps were created to help locate the trees in the future.

In 2014, WVDA staff located approximately half of the 120 trees and conducted 61 scale challenges of the putatively resistant trees plus susceptible control trees.





Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) — With new detections in Hardy, Jackson, Logan, Mason, McDowell, Ohio, Pleasants, Wood and Wyoming Counties, EAB is found in 37 counties in West Virginia. In 2014, parasitoid releases were continued by APHIS. Results of previous releases are still pending.



FOREST DISTURBANCE MONITOR

In 2014, the WVDA began using Forest Disturbance Monitor (FDM) to identify, survey, collect, and report forest disturbances across the state. The Forest Disturbance Monitor replaced traditional aerial surveys for finding defoliation. The WVDA was able to ground survey 194,770 acres statewide and map 163,466 acres of disturbance. All of the areas identified by the FDM were ground truthed. This was a considerable increase when compared to an average of 5-10 % ground truthed when using aerial survey methods. Use of the FDM resulted in the most comprehensive reporting of all season, statewide disturbance data in the agency’s history. The WVDA plans to continue the use of the FDM for forest disturbance surveys in 2015.

FOREST FIRE

Wildfire suppression is one of the most important activities of the WV DOF. In FY2014, WV DOF personnel and volunteers fought 944 wildfires that burned 15,988 acres. These fires caused \$4.8 million in damages to the natural resources of West Virginia and over \$176,700 in personal property loss. The number of fires and acreage burned was about equivalent to the 10 year average. The leading cause of wildfires continues to be debris burning which resulted in 401 wildfires which burned 3,159 acres. This was 42% of the total number of wildfires. Arson was the second leading cause of wildfires and burned the most acreage. There were 206 wildfires caused by arson (22% of total number) which burned 8,201 acres (51% of the total).