



# OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

## MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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[www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Southern Pine Beetle Activity: Privately Owned Forestland**

*JACKSON, Miss.* - To monitor forest health issues, such as the southern pine beetle, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) completes aerial monitoring flights statewide each year in the spring and fall. Due to increased activity noted during the spring flight, additional flights were carried out in July to gather further information on private and publicly owned forestland in 15 counties that comprise and border Mississippi's National Forests.

242 suspected southern pine beetle spots were identified on privately owned forestland during those flights. According to the U.S. Forest Service, more than 3,500 southern pine beetle infestation spots were found in the Homochitto, Bienville, Tombigbee and Holly Springs National Forests. The southern pine beetle outbreak has been fueled by two summers of drought followed by two winters of unusually high temperatures. The southern pine beetle is said to be the most destructive forest insect in the South.

“We encourage landowners to be proactive in their forest management. In fact, the MFC has a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program, which provides cost-share funds to encourage private forest landowners to thin their dense pine stand before the next southern pine beetle outbreak,” said Todd Matthews, Urban Forestry & Forest Health Coordinator for the Mississippi Forestry Commission. “Much of our current strategy for managing southern yellow pine timber is based on past experience with southern pine beetle outbreaks. Healthy stands of timber that have been properly thinned and managed are less susceptible to southern pine beetle damage.”

The interactive map linked below represents suspected southern pine beetle spots identified on privately owned forestland as of July 2017. Not all data has been verified from the ground at this time. To view the interactive map visit: <http://bit.ly/SPBActivityMapMS>

Private forest landowners who are concerned about possible southern pine beetle activity on their property are encouraged to contact their MFC Area Forester. To find the Area Forester for each county, visit the “Local Contacts” drop-down list on the MFC's homepage: [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

More information on how to identify the southern pine beetle and signs of attack may be found by visiting: [www.mfc.ms.gov/forest-health/southern-pine-beetle-biology](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/forest-health/southern-pine-beetle-biology)

Mississippi has 19.8 million forested acres - 77 percent of that acreage is privately owned. The State of Mississippi benefits from forestry, which contributes \$12.79 billion to the state's economy, over \$20 million (on average) toward education through School Trust Land timber sale revenue, and employs almost 70,000 people.

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## About the Mississippi Forestry Commission

*Established in 1926, the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) protects the state's valuable forest resources from wildfire, manages approximately 480,000 acres of forested School Trust Land, and delivers quality forest management services and assistance to both rural and urban landowners. Our mission is to provide active leadership in forest protection, forest management, forest inventory, and effective forest information distribution, necessary for Mississippi's sustainable forest-based economy.*

*The MFC looks forward to the continued privilege of caring for Mississippi's trees, forests, and natural resources.*

MFC website - [www.mfc.ms.gov](http://www.mfc.ms.gov)

MFC on Facebook - [facebook.com/MSForestryCommission](https://facebook.com/MSForestryCommission)

MFC on Twitter - [twitter.com/MSForestryComm](https://twitter.com/MSForestryComm)

### Resources:

Southern Pine Beetle Activity Map: [www.mfc.ms.gov/southern-pine-beetle-activity-map](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/southern-pine-beetle-activity-map)

Southern Pine Beetle Biology: [www.mfc.ms.gov/forest-health/southern-pine-beetle-biology](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/forest-health/southern-pine-beetle-biology)

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program: [www.mfc.ms.gov/SPB-Prevention](http://www.mfc.ms.gov/SPB-Prevention)

