



## **Southern Pine Beetle Program Accepting Applications** **from Private Landowners Now Thru July 18**



Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam announced that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Florida Forest Service is now accepting applications for the Southern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program. The sign-up period will run from June 6 through July 18 and is available for non-industrial private forest landowners.

"The southern pine beetle is one of the most destructive forest pests in the southeast," said Commissioner Putnam. "By taking preventative measures now, Florida's private landowners can greatly reduce their risk of timber loss during future outbreaks."

Periodic outbreaks can rapidly kill millions of pine trees and deplete tens of thousands of acres of timber resources. The most recent series of

major southern pine beetle outbreaks resulted in an estimated \$59 million in timber loss between 1999 and 2002.

The Southern Pine Beetle Assistance Program is offered for private lands in 44 northern Florida counties. (Map attached.)

The program provides incentive payments for the following:

- Conducting a first pulpwood thinning.
- Conducting prescribed burning operations.
- Conducting mechanical underbrush treatments.
- Planting longleaf or slash pine.

"Since 2005, we have assisted many private forest land owners through this program," said Jim Karels, Director of the Florida Forest Service. "More than 150,000 Florida acres have been treated for Southern Pine Beetle prevention."

The Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) is one of five common species of pine bark beetles that occur throughout the Southeastern United States. Pine bark beetles utilize stressed, dying, or recently-dead pines as hosts. All species tunnel, reproduce, and feed in the inner bark or phloem (located between the outer bark and the wood); this activity disables



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the transport of sugars through the tree. In addition, several bark beetle species (including the SPB) introduce a blue-stain fungus into the wood, plugging the tree's water transport system.



The Florida Forest Service manages more than 1 million acres of public forest land while protecting 26 million acres of homes, forestland and natural resources from the devastating effects of wildfire. For more information about the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, visit [www.FreshFromFlorida.com](http://www.FreshFromFlorida.com).

Typically, pines successfully colonized by SPB are functionally dead within one day after attack, despite the fact that the crown may retain green needles for several days or weeks.

To learn more about this program and obtain an application form, contact a local Florida Forest Service office or visit [www.freshfromflorida.com/SouthernPineBeetle/Prevention](http://www.freshfromflorida.com/SouthernPineBeetle/Prevention). Qualified landowners may apply for no more than two approved preventative practices per year. Funding requests may not exceed \$10,000 annually. All qualifying applications will be evaluated and ranked for approval. This program is supported through a grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

