

Southern Pine Beetle

Southern pine beetle (SPB) activity is at outbreak levels on the Bond Swamp NWR and neighboring Piedmont NWR and Oconee Ranger District of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. The tree mortality associated with the current SPB spots increases public safety risks with the presence of standing snags and greatly increases the potential for damaging fires. Impacts can also be devastating to administrative sites such as recreation areas where southern pines are the primary species.

At Bond Swamp, approximately 74 acres of the upland forest have been impacted by the southern pine beetle. We expect further attacks from the SPB in 2008. SPB attacks all species of southern pines and usually lasts from two to four years. The most effective control measure is the cut-and-remove method. This method removes the beetle from the site thus removing the threat.

The refuge is proposing to allow logging crews, operating under a special use permit to conduct suppression/salvage operations, to cut and remove beetle infested timber and an appropriate amount timber within a buffer zone located at the advancing front of each infestation.

Additional information can be found in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Forest Insect & Disease Leaflet 49 found at:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/so_pine_beetle/so_pine.htm.