

The Nature Conservancy requests \$5 million for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Emerging Plant Pest program to expand a new program to contain and suppress the Sirex woodwasp. The Administration has requested \$2.6 million in the FY09 budget for this activity.

What is the Sirex woodwasp?

The Sirex woodwasp (*Sirex noctilio*) is a wood-boring insect native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It almost certainly entered the United States inside infested wooden crates and pallets.

Where is the Sirex woodwasp established?

It has been introduced to South Africa, South America, Australia and New Zealand. The woodwasp has invaded more than 27 counties in northern and western New York State, four border counties in northern Pennsylvania, two counties in Michigan, one county in Vermont, and a significant area in southern Ontario.



Sirex Woodwasp (*Sirex noctilio*) © Cornell University

Ecological Threat from the Sirex woodwasp

The Sirex woodwasp vectors a fungus, *Amylostereum areolatum*. Together, the wasp and fungus can kill a wide variety of pine trees. Among the most vulnerable pines is loblolly pine - the backbone of the softwood timber and pulp industry in the Southeast. Other pines that are highly vulnerable to the Sirex woodwasp are other species in the Southeast (shortleaf, slash, and Virginia pines), midwest (Jack pine), and across the West (lodgepole, ponderosa, and Jeffrey). Longleaf pine is considered of medium vulnerability. See the map for areas occupied by these and other at-risk pine species.

Vulnerable forests protect water quality and many rare species and natural communities.

Economic Consequences of the Sirex woodwasp

- **Severe threats to the Southeastern timber industry** - All important softwood timber trees of the region are vulnerable to the woodwasp. According to the USDA Forest Service, if no action is taken to contain the woodwasp, it could spread across the entire southern pine region in 55 years or less. The resulting damage could range from \$2 billion to \$11 billion.
- **Damage the timber industry in other regions** - The same study showed that damage to the pine timber industry in other parts of the country could range from \$900,000 to \$6 billion.
- **Threat to high-value natural systems** - Jack pine forests of Michigan provide crucial habitat to the endangered Kirtland's warbler; Jack pine is highly vulnerable to the woodwasp. Federal and state agencies spend about \$2.5 million annually to manage Jack pine stands for the benefit of the Kirtland's warbler. Moderately vulnerable longleaf pines are keystone species in unique and globally rare ecosystems found across the Southeast that have been the focus of decades of conservation effort by government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Based on its native range in Europe and Asia, the Sirex woodwasp could establish in any climate zone of North America where pine occurs.

What is being done to protect our forest resources from the Sirex woodwasp?

While the wasp is now found only in the northeast, it is likely that it will spread to areas with more important pine resources. The natural dispersal rate has been estimated at up to 15 miles per year. More important is the ease with which the larvae can be transported inside wood - especially telephone poles and logs for log homes, crates and pallets, firewood, and small items.

From early CY2006 through FY2008, APHIS has lacked appropriated funds to address the Sirex woodwasp. The agency has nevertheless funded detection surveys in both the East and several states in the West; begun testing of treatment measures that would allow continued shipment of pine wood products that would no longer threaten to spread the insect; and begun laboratory and limited field testing of a biological control agent used successfully in infested pine plantations in the Southern Hemisphere (the parasitic nematode *Deladenus siricidicola*).

Benefits of the Requested New Funding

Funding at the \$5 million level in FY09 will allow APHIS to issue and enforce regulations requiring treatment of potentially infested wood products; launch an outreach and public education program to encourage compliance with the regulations; continue studies of control methods, including the biocontrol nematode; and continue surveys to detect additional outbreaks or spread of the woodwasp.

Funding History

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09 Budget
Total	\$705,000	\$3,600,000	\$0	\$2,566,000
Contingency Funds	\$705,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Appropriated Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,566,000
Reprogrammed Funds		\$3,600,000		

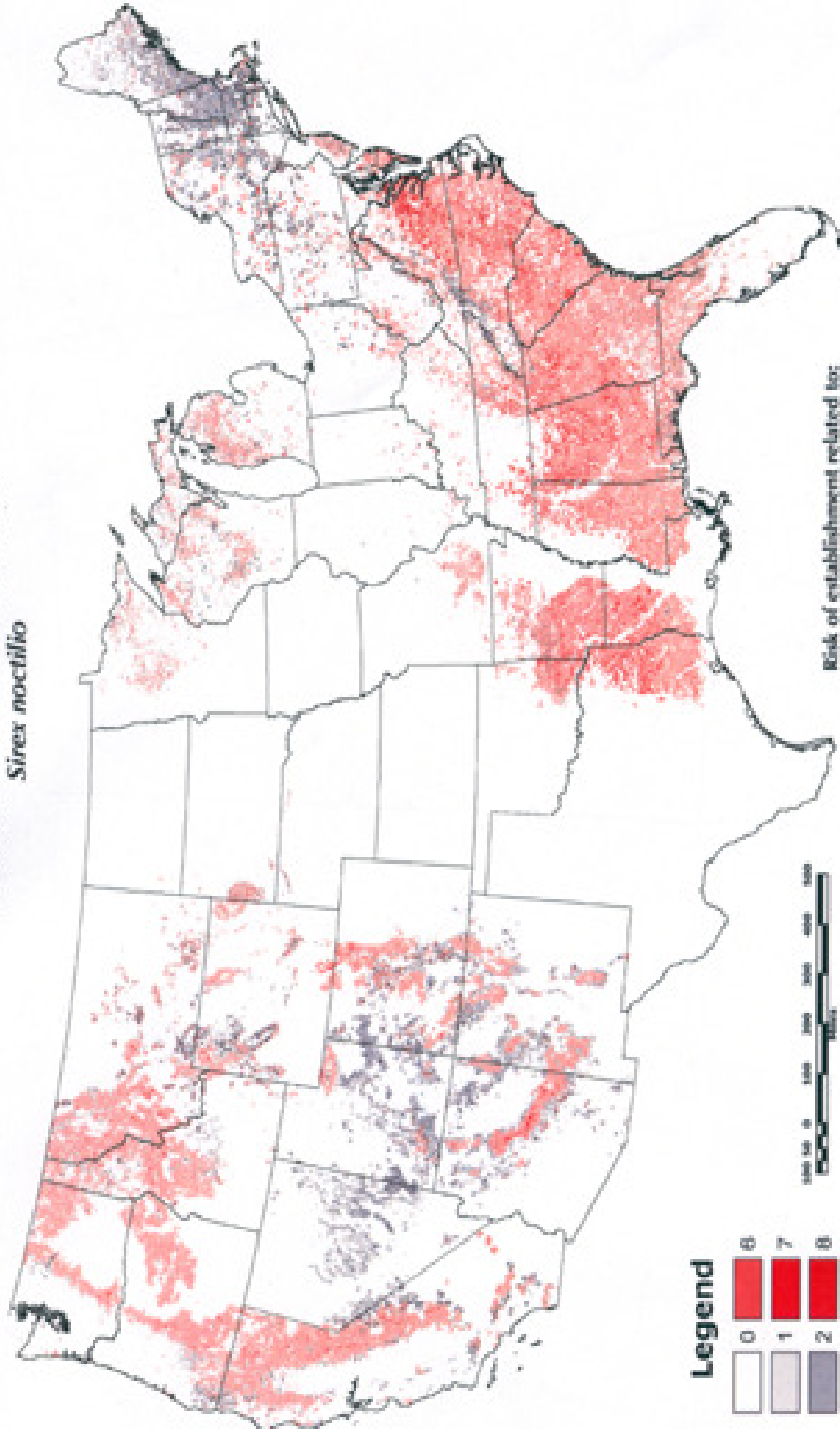
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Establishment Risk Surface

Sirex noctilio

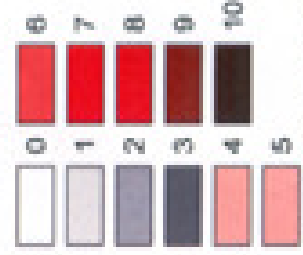


0 100 200 300 400 500 Miles

Albers Equal Area Conic Projection

- Risk of establishment related to:
1. Pine basal area
 2. Presence of susceptible hosts
 3. Proximity to forest edge
 4. Proximity to roads

Legend



A value of 0 is no risk and a value of 10 is high risk of establishment.