



Forest Health Concerns and Management among Resort & Campground Owners in Minnesota

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Background

Minnesota's tourism industry generates \$13 billion in gross sales, which equated to **\$35 million a day** in 2014. Visitors identify the importance of Minnesota's natural environment and the opportunity to be in nature as primary motivations for visits. As 17 million acres of forests are found in Minnesota, threats to forest health are also potential tourism threats.

As of 2015, little information on the types of forest health issues and concerns among resort & campground owners exists. Therefore, the **purpose** of this project was to collect baseline data on these concerns to inform educational and outreach efforts to ultimately improve forest health.

Methods

An online questionnaire was administered in Fall 2015 to Minnesota resort and campground owners using the Explore Minnesota Tourism database.

A total of **174 responses**, an 18% response rate, completed a 27 question survey determining resort and campground owners concerns and forest management practices.



Results: Forest health knowledge

The majority of respondents have considerable knowledge about emerald ash borer, forest tent caterpillar, and gypsy moth across MN (Fig. 3).

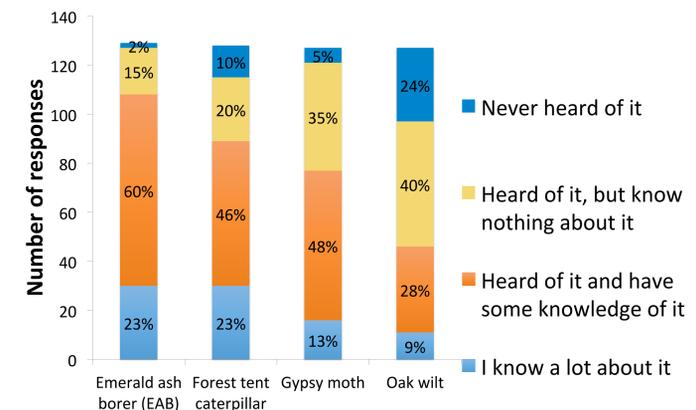


Fig. 3. Level of forest health knowledge.

Results: Forest health concerns

Emerald ash borer, forest tent caterpillar, gypsy moth, and oak wilt were the top four forest health concerns identified (Fig. 4). Sixty-four percent of respondents were concerned or greatly concerned about emerald ash borer.

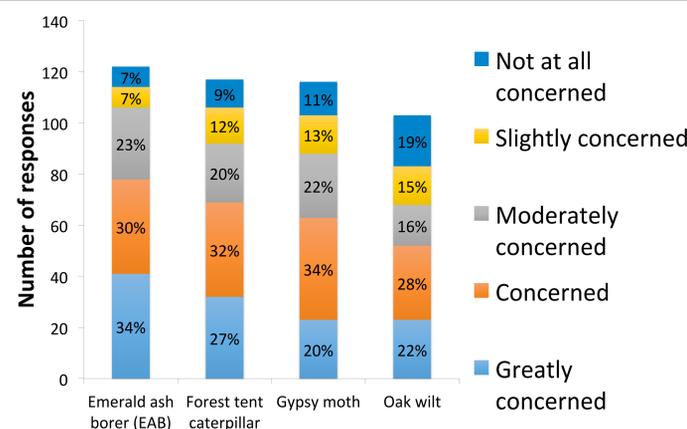


Fig. 4. Level of forest health concern.

Results: Future forest management

The majority of respondents felt that they were "Likely" or "Undecided" on whether or not they will take actions on their land to eliminate or reduce unwanted insects, diseases, and invasive plants (Fig. 5).

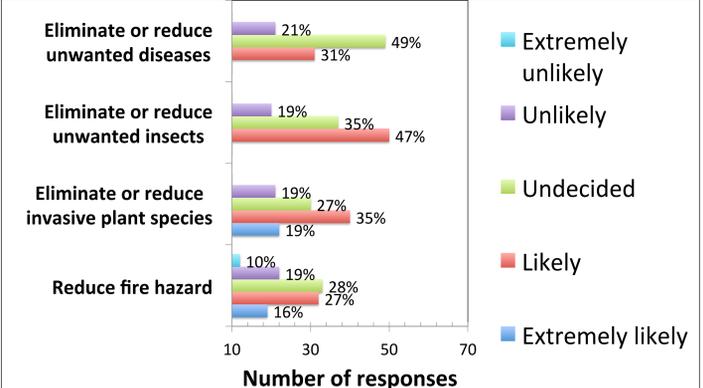


Fig. 5. Likelihood to implement management in the next 5 years.

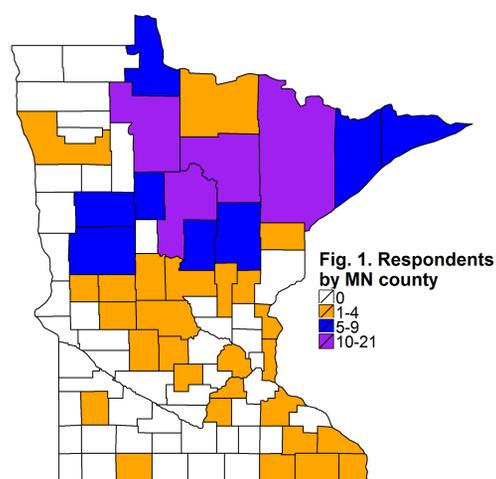
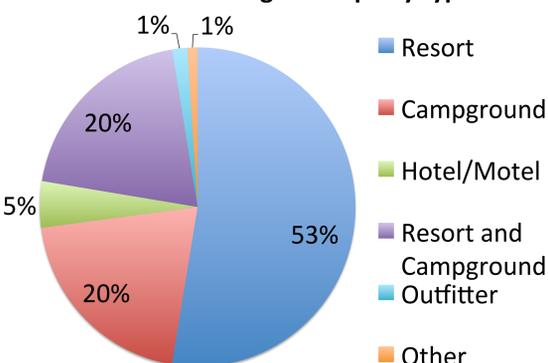


Fig. 1. Respondents by MN county

Respondents

- Most respondents were from MN's northern counties (Fig. 1).
- Over 50% of respondents were resort owners (Fig. 2)
- Responses varied with the amount of forested acres from responses varying from 0 to 7000 acres.
- 75% of the respondents own between 1 and 50 acres of forest.
- 6% of respondents have a land manager or forester that makes management decisions on their property
- 90% of respondents do not have a forest management plan on their property
- Reasons for not having a forest management plan included they don't want/need one (63%) or they don't understand how to get one (19%)

Fig. 2. Property types



Discussion and Future Research

Results show a disconnect between resort and campground owners concern and knowledge about forest health issues in Minnesota. This lack of similarity reflects their knowledge and concern directly. A gap exists between level of concern and level of knowledge.

Future analyses will examine:

- concern & knowledge of forest health issues within and across the geographic regions of Minnesota,
- differences by ownership type, and
- differences by amount of forest owned.

Results will inform Extension and outreach programs for Minnesota's resort and campground owners to help sustain the state's forests amidst the threat of a number forest health issues.

Acknowledgements

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