Forest Vulnerability

Project Brief

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natural Resource Stewardship & Science
Climate Change Response Program

Climate, Trees, Pests, and Weeds: Change, Uncertainty, and Biotic Stressors at Ocmulgee National Monument

Background

Climate change and nonnative tree pests and plants affect forest composition, structure, and function, and the coming decades will likely bring accelerating changes due to these multiple global change factors. We investigated potential forest change in response to climate, differences in projections of change among climate scenarios (uncertainty), and levels of nonnative biotic stressor (tree pests and invasive plants) at 121 national park units in the eastern U.S. (see Fisichelli et al. 2014 for the full article and the project brief for a synthesis). For Ocmulgee National Monument, we provide here park-specific climate (Table 1) and tree habitat suitability projections (Table 2) for 2100 under two climate scenarios ("least change" and "major change"). These scenarios bracket a range of plausible future conditions based on greenhouse gas emissions and global climate model projections and facilitate assessment of uncertainty in future projections. We also report nonnative tree insects and diseases ("pests") with infestation areas that include the park (Table 3). Park-level nonnative vascular plant ("weeds") information is available from NPSpecies.

Adaptation to ongoing climate change requires revising existing strategies to meet traditional goals and will increasingly require revising goals and developing new strategies. Data presented here is intended to inform managers of potential future change (climate and forests) and exacerbating factors (nonnative species).

More Information

This project is part of ongoing work of the NPS Climate Change Response Program to support park adaptation to changing conditions (websites: for managers, for the public).

Source Publication

Fisichelli, N. A., S. R. Abella, M. P. Peters, and F. J. Krist Jr. 2014. Climate, trees, pests, and weeds: change, uncertainty, and biotic stressors in eastern U.S. national park forests. Forest Ecology and Management 327:31-39.

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Table 1. Baseline (1961-1990) and future (2070-2099) climates used in tree habitat suitability models for Ocmulgee National Monument. Future projections for the two climate scenarios ("Least Change" and "Major Change") illustrate a plausible range of future conditions and are shown as departures from baseline values. The Least Change scenario includes a major decrease in future greenhouse gas emissions while the Major Change scenario is a continuation of historical increases in emissions. Climate data are averaged across a roughly 6200 mi^2 (16000 km^2) area centered on the park.

Climate Variable	Baseline (1961-1990)	Least Change (2070-2099)	Major Change (2070-2099)
mean annual temperature	17.1 °C (62.7 °F)	+1.7 °C (+3 °F)	+6.3 °C (+11.4 °F)
mean January temperature	6.5 °C (43.7 °F)	+1.3 °C (+2.4 °F)	+4.9 °C (+8.8 °F)
mean July temperature	26.3 °C (79.3 °F)	+2.2 °C (+4 °F)	+7.7 °C (+13.8 °F)
seasonality (July-January temp.)	19.8 °C (35.6 °F)	+0.9 °C (+1.6 °F)	+2.8 °C (+5 °F)
mean May-September temp.	24.3 °C (75.7 °F)	+1.9 °C (+3.3 °F)	+7.1 °C (+12.8 °F)
annual precipitation	1198 mm (47.2 in)	+2.3 %	+9.9 %
May-September precipitation	488 mm (19.2 in)	+6.2 %	+10.6 %

Table 2. Potential changes in habitat suitability (2100 compared with 1990) for tree species in Ocmulgee National Monument. Species are grouped into decreasing, no change, increasing, mixed results, and new habitat groups based on change class designations for two future climate scenarios (the "least change" scenario represents strong cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and modest climatic changes and the "major change" scenario represents continued increasing greenhouse gas emissions and rapid warming). Change class designations are based on the ratio of future (2100) to baseline (1990) habitat suitability and baseline habitat values, e.g., for common species, large decrease is ≤ 0.5, small decrease is > 0.5 and ≤ 0.8, no change is > 0.8 and ≤ 1.2, small increase is > 1.2 and ≤ 2.0, and large increase is > 2.0. Note: table below uses finer change classes (n=8) than was used in the original article (n=3) to designate uncertainty in habitat projections. Habitat suitability models from the US Forest Service Climate Change Tree Atlas. Contact author for further details on change class definitions.

Decreases in Potential Habitat

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Acer barbatum	Florida maple	small decrease	extirpated
Acer negundo	boxelder	large decrease	small decrease
Betula lenta	sweet birch	large decrease	extirpated
Liriodendron tulipifera	yellow-poplar	small decrease	small decrease
Magnolia grandiflora	southern magnolia	large decrease	extirpated
Morus rubra	red mulberry	large decrease	large decrease
Nyssa aquatica	water tupelo	extirpated	extirpated
Oxydendrum arboreum	sourwood	large decrease	large decrease
Quercus coccinea	scarlet oak	extirpated	extirpated
Quercus lyrata	overcup oak	extirpated	extirpated
Quercus michauxii	swamp chestnut oak	extirpated	large decrease
Quercus rubra	northern red oak	small decrease	small decrease
Taxodium distichum	baldcypress	extirpated	extirpated

No Change in Potential Habitat

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Acer rubrum	red maple	no change	no change
Carya glabra	pignut hickory	no change	no change
Carya tomentosa	mockernut hickory	no change	no change
Cornus florida	flowering dogwood	no change	no change
Diospyros virginiana	common persimmon	no change	no change
Fraxinus americana	white ash	no change	no change
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	green ash	no change	no change
Magnolia virginiana	sweetbay	no change	no change
Nyssa sylvatica var. biflora	swamp tupelo	no change	no change
Persea borbonia	redbay	no change	no change
Pinus taeda	loblolly pine	no change	no change
Prunus serotina	black cherry	no change	no change
Quercus alba	white oak	no change	no change
Quercus falcata var.falcata	southern red oak	no change	no change
Quercus falcata var.pagodifolia	cherrybark oak	no change	no change
Quercus laurifolia	laurel oak	no change	no change

Increases in Potential Habitat

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Carya texana	black hickory	large increase	large increase
Juniperus virginiana	eastern redcedar	small increase	small increase
Ostrya virginiana	eastern hophornbeam	large increase	large increase

Increases in Potential Habitat (continued)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Pinus echinata	shortleaf pine	small increase	small increase
Pinus elliottii	slash pine	small increase	large increase
Quercus marilandica	blackjack oak	large increase	large increase
Quercus stellata	post oak	large increase	large increase
Sassafras albidum	sassafras	large increase	large increase
Taxodium distichum var. nutans	pondcypress	large increase	large increase
Ulmus alata	winged elm	large increase	large increase

Mixed Results

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Carpinus caroliniana	American hornbeam	no change	small increase
Cercis canadensis	eastern redbud	no change	large decrease
Fagus grandifolia	American beech	no change	small increase
Ilex opaca	American holly	no change	small increase
Liquidambar styraciflua	sweetgum	no change	small decrease
Nyssa sylvatica	blackgum	no change	small increase
Pinus palustris	longleaf pine	no change	small increase
Platanus occidentalis	sycamore	extirpated	small increase
Quercus incana	bluejack oak	small decrease	no change
Quercus laevis	turkey oak	no change	small increase
Quercus nigra	water oak	no change	small decrease
Quercus phellos	willow oak	no change	small decrease
Quercus velutina	black oak	small decrease	no change

New Potential Habitat

Scientific Name	Common Name	Least Change	Major Change
Celtis laevigata	sugarberry	new entry	new entry
Quercus virginiana	live oak	new entry	new entry
Ulmus americana	American elm	--	new entry

Table 3. Nonnative tree insects and diseases ("tree pests") with infestation areas that include Ocmulgee National Monument. Detection scale is the finest spatial scale at which infestation data were available for the park area. Data derived from the US Forest Service Alien Forest Pest Explorer (AFPE) Database.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Detection Scale
Anarsia lineatella	peach twig borer	state
Caliroa cerasi	pear sawfly	state
Carulaspis juniperi	juniper scale	state
Coleophora serratella	birch casebearer	state
Cryphonectria parasitica	chestnut blight	state
Cyrtepistomus castaneus	Asiatic oak weevil	state
Diaspidiotus perniciosus	San Jose scale	state
Dryocosmus kuriphilus	chestnut gall wasp	county
Eulecanium cerasorum	calico scale	state
Homadaula anisocentra	mimosa webworm	state

Table 3 (continued). Nonnative tree insects and diseases ("tree pests") with infestation areas that include Ocmulgee National Monument.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Detection Scale
Icerya purchasi	cottony cushion scale	state
Kaliofenusa ulmi	elm leafminer	state
Lepidosaphes ulmi	oystershell scale	state
Ophiostoma novo-ulmi	Dutch elm disease	state
Periphyllus lyropictus	Norway maple aphid	state
Phytophthora cinnamomi	littleleaf disease / phytophthora root rot	state
Plagiodera versicolora	imported willow leaf beetle	state
Popillia japonica	Japanese beetle	county
Pseudaonidia duplex	camphor scale	state
Scolytus multistriatus	smaller European elm bark beetle	state
Xanthogaleruca luteola	elm leafbeetle	state