



Ozone and Foliar Injury Summary, 2016

Overview

Ozone is a gas that occurs naturally in the lower levels of the earth's atmosphere. However, human-produced pollution can become an unnatural source of additional ozone that results in injury to humans and plants. The Cumberland Piedmont Network (CUPN) has been monitoring ozone and its injury to plants since 2008 to fulfill the National Park Service (NPS) mandate to protect its resources and preserve the enjoyment of these resources.

The CUPN Ozone and Foliar Injury Program is designed to provide a network-wide assessment of status and trends in ozone concentration and foliar injury levels. All 14 CUPN park units are sampled on a rotational schedule (which is outlined in CUPN's ozone concentration and foliar injury protocol).

This brief summarizes data collected from April 2016 to October 2016 at Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park (CHCH). Ozone and foliar injury reports are available upon request or at <http://go.nps.gov/cupn>.

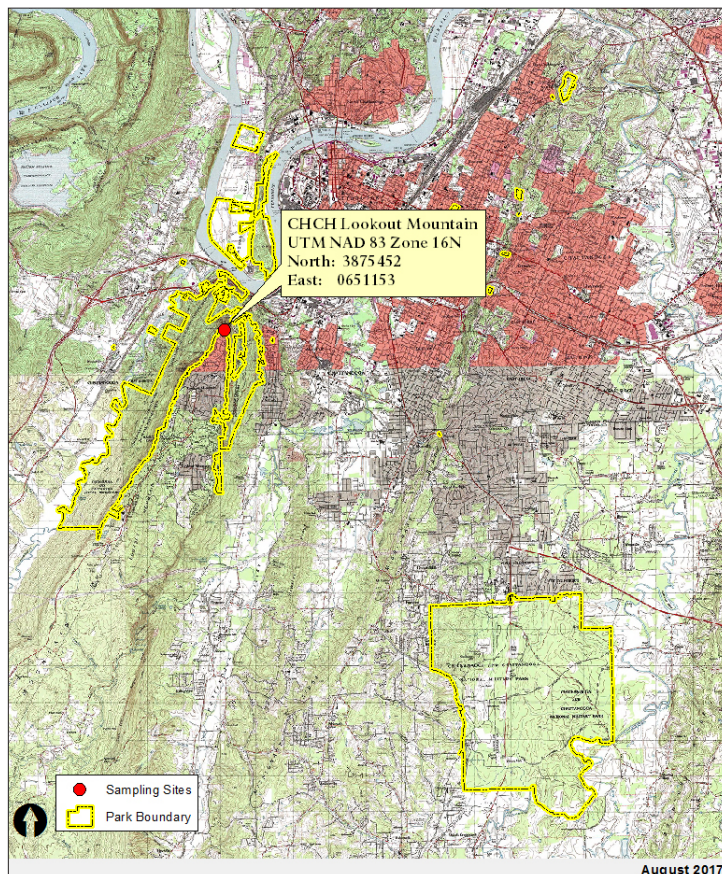


Figure 1. Map of ozone and foliar injury sites. NPS map by Lillian Scoggins.



Figure 2. Lookout Mountain POMS (left), and foliar injury site (right).

There was one data collection site at Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP in 2016. Ozone concentration and foliar injury data were collected at the portable ozone monitoring station (POMS) located on Lookout Mountain. The relatively high elevation of the site, 2,118 feet (ft) or 646 meters (m), could result in relatively stable ozone concentrations throughout the day.

A foliar injury survey was conducted at the Lookout Mountain site (Figure 1). Ozone sensitive plants were examined along the mown boundary of the park (Figure 2).

Significant Findings

Foliar injury

In 2016, 230 plants at three CUPN parks were inspected for foliar injury. Of the 38 plants examined at Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP, no plants were suspected to have foliar injury.

Foliar injury surveys were conducted at Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP on 19 August 2016. The results are found in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of foliar injury surveys at Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park in 2016.

Site Name	Species	Number Inspected	Number w/ Injury	Ozone-Caused?
Lookout Mountain	Blackberry	30	0	N/A
Lookout Mountain	Red bud	8	0	N/A

Significant Findings

Ozone Concentrations

The National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone is set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Two standards exist; the “primary standard” is designed to be protective of human health while the “secondary standard” is designed to be protective of human welfare.

The primary standard uses a metric defined by the EPA as the “annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over 3 years.” In 2016, the value for the primary standard was 0.070 parts per million (ppm). The 8-hour average exceeded 0.070 ppm a few times in 2016, but due to the nature of the rules regarding what constitutes an exceedance, there was only one official exceedance in 2016.

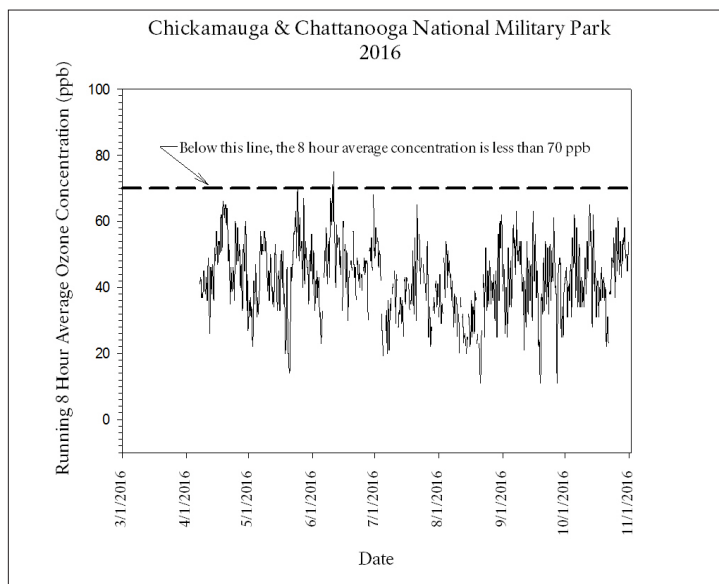


Figure 3. Running 8-hour average ozone concentration at CHCH.

Research suggests that many plant species are more sensitive to ozone than humans. Exposure to ozone is also cumulative in plants; the more the plant is exposed to ozone, the greater the injury to the plant. EPA’s secondary standard is set to be protective of human welfare, part of which is our need for and enjoyment of plants. Currently, that standard uses the same metric as the primary standard. Many scientists, however, argue that the W126 would be a better metric. The W126 metric is a biologically relevant measure that focuses on plant response to ozone exposure. This measure is a better predictor of vegetation response than the metric used for the human health standard. The W126 preferentially weighs the higher ozone concentrations most likely to affect plants and sums all of the weighted concentrations during daylight hours. The highest 3-month period that occurs during the growing season is reported in “parts per million-hours” (ppm-hrs). NPS-ARD recommends a W126 of less than 7 ppm-hrs to protect most sensitive trees and vegetation. At Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP in 2016, the W126 was 7.3 ppm-hrs.

Future Monitoring

Ozone-induced foliar injury will be monitored by the Cumberland Piedmont Network per its one-year-on/five-year-off panel design.

About the Cumberland Piedmont Network

In 1999, the National Park Service initiated a long-term ecological monitoring program, known as “Vital Signs Monitoring,” to provide the minimum infrastructure to allow more than 270 national park system units to identify and implement long-term monitoring of their highest-priority measurements of resource condition. The overarching purpose of natural resource monitoring in parks is to develop scientifically sound information on the current status and long-term trends in the composition, structure, and function of park ecosystems, and to determine how well current management practices are sustaining those ecosystems.

The NPS Vital Signs Monitoring Program addresses five goals for all parks with significant natural resources:

- Determine the status and trends in selected indicators of the condition of park ecosystem,
- Provide early warning of abnormal conditions,
- Provide data to better understand the dynamic nature and condition of park ecosystems,
- Provide data to meet certain legal and Congressional mandates, and
- Provide a means of measuring progress towards performance goals.

Effective long-term management and stewardship of natural resources in the Cumberland Piedmont Network begins with baseline knowledge of these resources. To acquire this knowledge, an inventory program was established by the National Park Service with the goals of acquiring baseline information for a variety of resources, from bibliographic information to species occurrence and distribution.

For More Information

CUPN Home Page:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/cupn/index.cfm>

CUPN Reports & Publications:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/CUPN/publications.cfm>

About the NPS Inventory & Monitoring Division:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/index.cfm>

Data Downloads via the Natural Resource Information Portal:

<http://irma.nps.gov>