



Hurricane Laura

Timber Damage Assessment

Hurricane Laura made landfall near Cameron, Louisiana on Thursday, August 27, 2020, around 1 a.m. CDT as a Category-4 storm with maximum sustained winds of 150 mph. However, only a very limited portion of extreme East Texas sustained hurricane-force winds and only at Category 1. Laura was a fast-moving storm as it headed north through Louisiana and into Arkansas and was downgraded to a tropical storm by the end of the morning.



Texas A&M Forest Service responded by performing a timber damage assessment based on data obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA). Approximately 210,000 acres of timberland in small portions of eastern Newton and Orange counties experienced Category-1 (74 to 95 mph) winds. Damage in this zone was light with an estimated 2.8 million cubic feet of timber potentially damaged and roughly equal proportions of hardwood and softwood trees.

An additional 850,000 acres of East Texas timberland experienced tropical storm-force (39 to 73 mph) winds with the edge of this zone running from the southeastern portion of Hardin County and extending through Jasper and Newton counties into Sabine County. Damage in this zone was very light and scattered with 4.8 million cubic feet of softwood and 1.8 million cubic feet of hardwood timber potentially damaged.

For perspective, the combined 9.4 million cubic feet of timber potentially damaged by Hurricane Laura is less than half of the volume of timber typically lost to weather and other mortality agents in this region annually.

Though the overall impact to East Texas timber was small, individuals who lost timber may have been significantly affected. If you lost timber due to Hurricane Laura and need assistance, please visit tfsweb.tamu.edu/laura.

Data sources: Texas A&M Forest Service, Forest Inventory & Analysis, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Esri

