



## KELLY OTEN

Forest Health Monitoring Coordinator  
North Carolina Forest Service

## SCHOOL

BS Entomology  
Texas A&M University  
MS Entomology  
University of Tennessee  
Ph.D. Forest Entomology  
North Carolina State University

## FAVORITE PART OF THE JOB

"I like that every day is different. This career challenges me both physically and mentally. One day I may be collecting data on a large defoliation event in a plane, and the next day I am writing press releases and using GIS to create maps."

## WHY FORESTRY?

"I grew up hiking, camping and was in 4-h in high school. I have always liked insects. In forestry, I can work in a subject I love and make a difference."

## ADVICE

"Try to make contacts in the field. Your network can open doors and steer you toward job opportunities."



# FOREST HEALTH SPECIALIST

**FOREST HEALTH SPECIALISTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING HEALTHY FORESTS AND PROTECTING, MANAGING, AND PROMOTING FOREST RESOURCES.**

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Offer diagnostics and support to forestry professionals and landowners related to tree health
- Educate professionals and the general public on the management of abiotic and biotic stressors; specifically insects, diseases, and invasive plants
- Research threats posed by insects and disease-causing organisms
- Survey invasive species, monitor populations, and take action when forest resources are threatened

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Graduation from a four year school in a preferred field
  - Advanced degree in forestry is beneficial
- Experience needed will vary based on position

## AVERAGE SALARY

- NC average \$56,941 (reported by state of North Carolina )

## SKILLS NEEDED

- Curious about the natural world
- Enjoys working outdoors
- Approachable and relatable with the ability to connect with landowners and the general public



photos by K. Oten