

## **Hurricane Katrina and Evolution of Adaptive Traits in Slash Pine (*Pinus elliottii*)**

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Hurricane Katrina was the most devastating storm ever recorded in the United States. While wind velocities were not as great as Hurricane Camille in 1969, the tidal surge was much higher and covered a much wider area.

Slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) and live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) are common on the beach and on the barrier islands, and appear to be well-adapted to hurricanes. This storm, with its 30 foot tidal surge of brackish water has almost eliminated slash pine on the islands and within 500 yards of the beach. Preliminary estimates indicate that only one in a hundred slash pine survived on the islands. This will surely create a genetic bottleneck if they do in fact survive. Possible effects on evolution of the populations are discussed.