VERMONT FOREST PEST PLANNING

ROADSIDE ASH TREE INVENTORY

Enosburgh

PLANT LIVE GROW

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Vermont Forest Pest Planning Case Studies were developed to share the process that nine Vermont communities undertook to inventory their town's ash trees and develop an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan. These towns varied widely in population, size, and resources, which makes each town's experience and lessons learned unique.

Nancy Patch, Franklin County Forester and Enosburgh Conservation Commission member, is well aware of the threat the emerald ash borer (EAB) poses to Vermont's ash trees and volunteered to assist her town and the bordering towns of Richford, Bakersfield, and Fairfax with ash inventories. "The introduction of EAB to our area is a major concern and in fact unprecedented with an insect pest. The inventory of our ash trees is a huge step in preparing how to deal with this potential threat."

The towns came together to create a multi-town EAB planning committee to support each other during the planning and implementation of their respective tree inventories. While the group originally considered developing one EAB preparedness plan for all four communities, according to Nancy "it turned out that we all had different ways of doing things and the road crews don't work together. So, it didn't make a lot of sense for them to have one plan."

The goal of Enosburg's inventory was to document the location of ash trees along 18 miles of high use back roads, which were identified by the town's road foreman. Trees on the village green and along state roads were excluded. Nancy and another volunteer spent a day collecting GPS waypoints on all ash trees 6" in diameter at breast height (DBH) and larger within the town right-of-way (ROW). The decision to only collect location "was a time and manpower issue. Limiting the inventory to GPS points allowed us to get the job done in just one day with two volunteers. With this information we now have detailed maps that the town road crew can use. We feel that this information is sufficient to take the next steps."

They used the $500 EAB incentive to hire Charlie Hancock, forestry consultant, to create maps. They then developed an EAB preparedness plan and drafted a tree ordinance (pending approval) that establishes a procedure for addressing the threat of invasive pests, specifically the emerald ash borer (EAB), and to guide management decisions regarding public trees within the Town of Enosburgh.

FAST FACTS

LOCATION: The town of Enosburgh is located in north central Franklin Co.

POPULATION: 4,977

LAND AREA: 48.7 miles^2

MILES OF TOWN-MAINTAINED ROADS: 63.3

MILES OF ROAD INVENTORIED: 18

ASH TREES INVENTORIED: 639

TIME: 16 total volunteer hours

PROJECT PARTNERS: Enosburgh Conservation Commission (1 member was also the Franklin County Forester and completed the First Detector training); Multi-town planning commission (Richford, Enosburg, Bakersfield); Road Crew; Selectboard

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: Urban & Community Forestry Program $500 EAB Incentive

EQUIPMENT: Garmin GPS unit, clipboards, maps, and orange safety vests.

PLANNING RESOURCES: EAB planning templates and resources on VTinvasives.org

THE ENOSBURGH CONSERVATION COMMISSION HOSTED A DISPLAY AT TOWN MEETING TO SHARE THE RESULTS OF THEIR ASH INVENTORY AND PREPAREDNESS PLANNING.

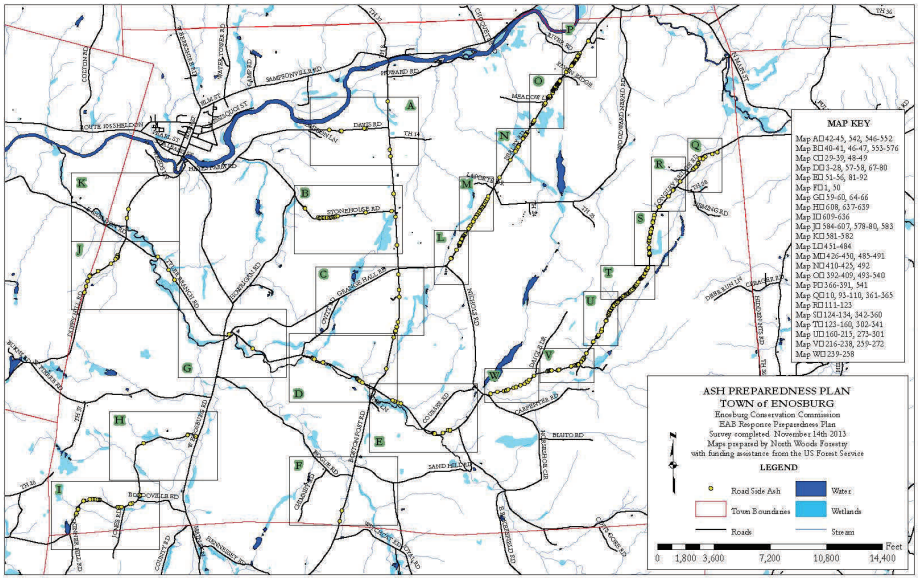
HOW THEY DID IT

Roadside windshield survey

1. Two volunteers drove 18 miles of back roads identified by the road foreman one side at a time.
2. Location was recorded using GPS for all ash greater than 6" diameter at breast height (DBH) within the road right-of-way. (The ROW is 3 rods on all roads, which is 24.9' from the road center line.)
3. GPS coordinates were downloaded and mapped using GIS on a town road layer with orthophoto, surface water and wetland layers.

Parameters Collected

Location—GPS waypoint



The process of forming committees raised several issues including whether to cut ash trees preemptively or not. Several people joined the committee thinking the efforts were to save the trees. However this particular project to inventory roadside trees could allow towns to budget funding over time to preemptively cut trees for public safety reasons. Waiting until the trees died all at once could be a severe financial blow to some towns. A plan to cut healthy trees before infestation is the opposite of saving the trees. Having these larger discussions is really valuable to understanding and implementation of an Emerald Ash Borer plan. -Nancy Patch

LESSONS LEARNED

- It's important to collect the minimum information needed and prioritize on what roads to focus. In Enosburgh, Nancy noted that trees on back roads don't provide as many benefits, such as increases in property values, shade, and stormwater mitigation, as individual trees on the town green, streets or around homes. "If there was a different objective, for instance if it was street trees or a park, I would want to take more specific data."

- While each town developed their own EAB plan, the multi-town planning group found that collaborating with adjoining towns was advantageous for sharing resources and information and coordinating education.

- VTinvasives.org, provides a lot of resources. As Nancy noted, "Our [EAB] plan that we have in progress really was taking information directly off of the website, cutting and pasting, then putting our own things together." Professional help from your county forester, other forestry staff and volunteers is invaluable. Just ask.

Case study prepared by the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program, a joint initiative between UVM Extension and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, using a template created by the Vermont Green Infrastructure Initiative.