VERMONT FOREST PEST PLANNING

ROADSIDE ASH TREE INVENTORY

# Johnson

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.**

The college town of Johnson is heavily wooded and nestled in the Green Mountains. Sue Lovering, Forest Pest First Detector and Johnson Conservation Commission and Tree Board member, was influential in coordinating the ash tree survey for her town. As Sue reflects, "We have a lot of ash and the bottom line is the cost and effect this pest will have on our tax dollars. As I look down the road, I have a lot of land and this is going to affect me and it's going to affect a lot of people, so we need to do something about it… there were two core groups who got involved and made it an issue and it took about six months to get the Selectboard's attention."

Sue created the Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team (RIIPT), which consists of four Vermont towns: Johnson, Hyde Park, Cambridge, Morrisville, and representatives form the local utility and Lamoille County Planning Commission, who work together to prevent and mitigate the impacts of invasive species. The focus of the Johnson ash tree survey was to prepare the town for the financial burden of dealing with roadside EAB-infested ash trees that may become a public safety hazard when they die. The town was split into districts; the higher priority being roadways with known high ash densities and heavy human traffic. Volunteers surveyed the elementary school, the town green, and all back roads. Back roads were surveyed by car during the early winter months. This proved to be a good time to see the ash trees robust branching pattern. This information was used to create Johnson's EAB Preparedness Plan.

Johnson's recently appointed Tree Board, in collaboration with the Tree Warden, will work to implement the EAB plan and care for the street trees in the Village of Johnson. The Tree Board has been working to educate the public about how EAB is spread, ash tree identification, and general awareness about invasive species. An objective has also been included in the preparedness plan for working with the State on how to deal with trees along State Route 15 as well as identifying and mapping hazard trees and large stands of ash trees.

## FAST FACTS

**LOCATION:** The town of Johnson is located in Lamoille County in the center of northern Vermont.

**POPULATION:** 3,274

**LAND AREA:** 45.1 miles$^2$

**MILES OF TOWN-MAINTAINED ROADS:** 49.5

**MILES OF ROAD INVENTORIED:** 46

**ASH TREES INVENTORIED:** 2,470

**TIME:** 40 volunteer hours

**PROJECT PARTNERS:** Conservation Commission (1 member completed the First Detector training); Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team (RIIPT) - Johnson, Hyde Park, Morrisville, Cambridge, Vermont Electric Coop, Lamoille Co. Planning Commission; Johnson Tree Warden and Tree Board

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

**EQUIPMENT:** Survey sheets, clipboards, maps.

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


SUE HAS ENLISTED THE HELP OF THE CAST OF STAR TREK & JOHNSON'S EAB QUEEN TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT EAB.

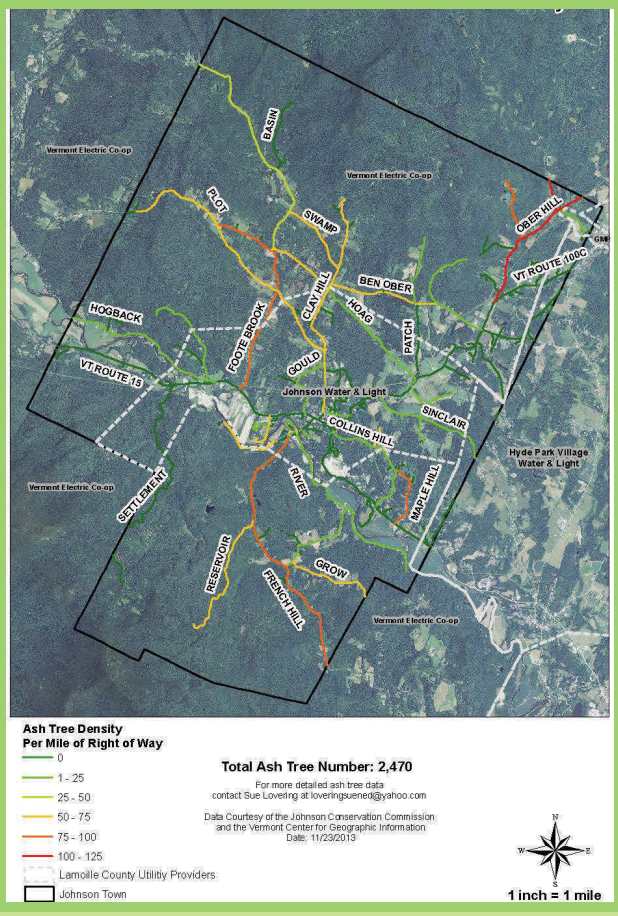
## HOW THEY DID IT

**Windshield survey of town roads**

1. Volunteer teams of 3 drove along 46 miles of roads (excluding state roads and Johnson State College) and inventoried trees on the town green and elementary school by foot.

2. Data was recorded for all ash within 75′ of the center line of the road, which is roughly 50′ beyond the public right-of-way.

3. Trees were documented on color coded map indicating ash tree densities.




**Parameters Collected**

***Diameter at breast height*** in increments: 6-12″, 12-18″, 18-24″, 24″+

***Location***—Specific locations of ash trees were not recorded. Ash were tallied by road to provide ash tree density/road.

*You can't be prepared without doing an inventory. You don't know how much this pest is going to cost your town unless you know how many trees there are.* -Sue Lovering, Johnson Conservation Commission

- Make it FUN! Sue had everyone back to her house for lunch with a big stuffed EAB to set the tone.
- Tree ID is difficult for volunteers and students. Therefore, it's important to conduct training on ash tree identification, EAB, and the survey protocol. Involve trained foresters/arborists, naturalists, or others comfortable with tree ID. In Johnson, there was at least one of these folks in each car.
- Your county planning commission is a really good source of maps. They will usually create and print maps for free.
- The basic windshield survey was adequate as it gave Sue and her town a general estimate and, with limited volunteers, needed to be an efficient use of limited time.

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.