

EMERALD ASH BORER PREPAREDNESS PLAN

RUTLAND CITY, VERMONT

OCTOBER, 2013

Introduction

Identified in Michigan in 2002, the exotic, invasive insect known as the Emerald Ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) has been steadily becoming established in the eastern forests of the United States. It appears the main vector of new introductions has been through the transportation of firewood used in camping vacations, where the introduced beetle becomes established and spreads. Currently, Vermont does not have any identified infestations, but is surrounded by infestations in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Quebec province. Early on it became apparent to APHIS that the efforts to quarantine infestations were ineffective, thereby rendering control of this insect as “impossible.” State Forestry departments have since been directed to provide assistance to forest product industries and communities to begin planning strategies to cope with the impacts of losing this very valuable group of tree species. This insect infestation will impact the City of Rutland in our watershed forest landholdings as well as our community or urban forest.

Impacts on Rutland City Forest in Mendon

The major loss of a valuable timber species will be of great concern to future timber management and timber sale revenues. White ash is an early/intermediate seral stage species naturally occurring in most forest types and sites, often composing a significant percentage of sawtimber in past timber sales. The lumber is of high value, commonly used in the manufacture of fine furniture, tool handle stock, and baseball bats. Markets for ash logs are found locally; the loss of this tree species will directly impact our local economy in Rutland County as well as the revenue flow to the City through timber management in the watershed. Forest management prescriptions on State and Federal lands are not encouraging: harvest what is ready (12” DBH and up) with little expectation or effort to be made in managing Ash for the next harvesting rotation, typically 20 years or more.

Impacts on Urban and Community Forestry

Rutland’s urban forest poses significant management challenges in addressing the impending infestation. The street tree inventory contains approximately 400 ash trees, mostly Green ash, that were planted widely throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s. A moratorium on ash tree plantings was initiated in 2007 in response to the nationwide infestation. The vast majority of Ash trees in the street tree inventory are entering maturity (12”+ DBH) which will necessitate expensive, contracted resources for removal of infested trees. Leaving dead trees throughout the community forest is not an

management option. Therefore, it is recommended that the City follow these management guidelines:

- Maintain the current inventory of Ash trees in a healthy state, providing in-house intermediate treatments of pruning for form, sidewalk and street clearance until infested.
- Continue the moratorium on new Ash plantings.
- Limit expenditures on contracted services to removals only.
- Identify highest value specimens and begin inoculation with systemic pesticide applications with contracted service providers.
- Provide for additional funds within the annual budget to be earmarked for the sole purpose of funding the increased expenditures resulting from contracted services in removal of infested trees. Continue annual appropriations until the infestation has run its course. The recommendation is to allocate \$40,000 per year, anticipating it will be five years (2018) before the infestation reaches our location. The accumulated contributions to this fund should offer a buffering effect to the present annual budget (line item 100-7-30-20-430.031) for tree planting and maintenance during the initial response to the infestation.
- Continue to identify and add new tree species to the inventory as replacement species to continue diversification efforts.
- Complete re-inventory of street trees during winter of 2013-2014 utilizing GIS. Identify privately owned Ash trees that have potential conflicts with public right-of-ways. Updating the inventory will also allow identification of those tree locations where removals may be accomplished in-house.
- Discuss options and develop plans to coordinate removal efforts of contracted tree services to reduce costs of material removal. Identify possible markets for removed materials, ie. firewood, chipwood, etc. to further reduce financial impact to the City.

Attached: Pest Alert, USDA Forest Service publication NA-PR-07-02, revised 9-2002