



VERMONT FOREST PEST PLANNING ROADSIDE ASH TREE INVENTORY

Fairfax



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.

Doug Reaves is a retired science teacher from BFA Fairfax High School. Through the Forest Pest First Detector Program, he became aware of the steady movement of the emerald ash borer (EAB) from the Midwest towards Vermont and the devastation this tiny insect had left in its wake. He was encouraged by the work being done on prevention at the state level and decided to approach his town's Selectboard. Fairfax Selectboard member David Shea supported Doug's initiative to apply for the \$500 EAB incentive to conduct an ash tree survey and create a preparedness plan for the town.

Doug, with the help of a **local Boy Scout troop and two students in one of UVM's service learning classes, surveyed 38.5 miles of roadways**; two thirds of the total town roads. With the guidance of their Selectboard and road crew, they focused their inventory efforts on high use through roads and excluded many dead end roads.

The town used the incentive to purchase supplies, such as a view finder and spray paint. The view finder was used to measure whether or not the trees were in the town right-of-way (ROW)—25 feet from the center of the road. The latitude and longitude coordinates, diameter class, as well as notes on tree health or hazardous trees were recorded for all ash trees greater than 8 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) within the town ROW. Each ash tree was then marked with an orange dot so that the road crew could easily identify them. Doug noted that some trees were probably the responsibility of the utility company.

The inventory took place during early winter after all of the leaves had fallen, which made identification easier. They initially started with a walking inventory but soon realized that, because of the length of time it was taking and the limited number of volunteers, driving was much for efficient and just as effective.

FAST FACTS

LOCATION: The town of Fairfax is located in the middle of Franklin County.

POPULATION: 3,765

LAND AREA: 40.5 miles²

MILES OF TOWN-MAINTAINED ROADS: 61.5

MILES OF ROAD INVENTORIED: 38.5

ASH TREES INVENTORIED: 446

TIME: 1 hr/mile walking; 1/2 hr or less/mile driving

PROJECT PARTNERS: First Detector, Selectboard, two UVM students, Fairfax Boy Scouts, Road Crew, Franklin County Forester

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

EQUIPMENT: Survey sheets, Garmin GPS unit, clipboards, maps, orange spray paint, view finder, and orange safety vests.

PLANNING RESOURCES: EAB planning templates and resources on VTinvasives.org and planning information from Enosburgh, Bakersfield and Richford EAB planning teams.



DOUG REAVES INSPECTS AN EAB DAMAGED WOOD SAMPLE AT THE FOREST PEST FIRST DETECTOR TRAINING.



HOW THEY DID IT

Roadside walking/driving survey

1. Student teams of 2 started with a walking survey but soon switched to a windshield survey to inventory 38.5 miles of road.
2. Data was recorded for all ash within the town right-of-way. (The ROW is 3 rods, which is 24.9' from the road center line.)
3. GPS waypoint was collected for each tree and then mapped using Google Earth.
4. Each tree was marked with an orange dot.

Parameters Collected

General notes (woodpecker activity, hazardous trees, coppiced growth, within utility right-of-way)

Diameter at breast height in increments of 8-20", 20"+

Location—GPS waypoint marked for each tree

Fairfax Road Name	8"<DBH<20"	DBH>20"	Total Trees
Shepardson Hollow	2	0	2
Goose Pond	22	4	26
River	7	0	7
McNall	27	15	42
Richards	22	8	30
Sand Hill	1	0	1
Meade	47	2	49
Berthiaume	32	0	32
Nichols	42	2	44
Woodward	11	0	11
King	17	0	17
Swamp	2	0	2
Sam Webb	49	0	49
Wilkins	64	5	69
Tabor Hill	4	0	4
Huntsville	20	1	21
Carroll Hill	15	1	16
Cherrierville	19	5	24
Totals			446

The more people that are aware of invasives, whether they are insects or plants, the better prepared we will be for all of them. -Doug Reaves, Fairfax Forest Pest First Detector

LESSONS LEARNED

- The best time to survey is the winter; when the trees are dormant and have no leaves and it's easier to see their form.
- Windshield surveys are more efficient and just as effective as a walking survey. Wear orange safety vests or use hazard lights on vehicles while working along the roadways.
- It's important to get buy-in from the Selectboard. In Fairfax, Doug's argument was so compelling that the Selectboard took responsibility for coordinating the development of the EAB preparedness plan.
- If a town doesn't have a tree ordinance, then that is an important component to consider as part of the EAB planning process. A tree ordinance is a municipal regulatory tool that can establish the process for managing public and private trees when they constitute a hazard to public safety or are infected by a tree pest.