



# RAPID ROADSIDE ASH SURVEY PLANNING WORKSHEET

A rapid roadside ash survey is designed to capture a tally of the quantity, condition, and diameter of ash trees in – or that affect - the town right-of way (ROW). This snapshot provides the basic information to inform your town officials about management needs and to develop a budget for ash removals.

The survey can be conducted by trained volunteers or municipal staff on foot or in a moving car. The inventory may include all public trees in the town ROW or a representative sample. We encourage communities to identify priority areas to inventory. Trees with hazardous defects and pest and disease concerns can be flagged for follow-up inspections by your tree warden or another qualified professional.

Your paper data form will be designed to reflect your survey goals and scope. Two sample forms are provided at the end of this document. The rapid roadside ash survey will **NOT** provide you with detailed information on individual trees. It will also **NOT** provide you with specific location data (GPS coordinates). If you are interested in collecting data on individual trees or in mapping the specific locations of your roadside ash trees, visit [go.uvm.edu/eab](http://go.uvm.edu/eab) for information on other types of ash tree inventories.

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET



This worksheet will help think through the process of planning your rapid roadside ash survey. In general, the process involves:



### Example goals of a rapid roadside ash survey:

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- Reduce public safety hazards posed by dead or dying trees by removing ash trees as they become infested with EAB.
- Identify large canopy and high value ash for preventive insecticide treatment.
- Estimate the total number of ash trees within the right-of-way on all (or priority) town roads.
- Catalogue ash trees on private property that may impact the public right-of-way and contact property owners to inform them of EAB.
- Preemptively remove prioritized ash trees not yet infested by EAB in priority order.
- Facilitate early detection of EAB.
- Identify trees or areas to use for sinks or trap trees once EAB is found in your area.
- Engage residents in EAB management efforts.
- Other:
- Other:

## STEP 3: Plan the Survey

Considering the goals identified above, plan the details of your rapid roadside ash survey. Depending on how many miles of roads your town is responsible for maintaining, getting started with a roadside tree survey may seem daunting. A 100% survey of all town roads may not be reasonable or necessary. In fact, before you get started, we recommend you prioritize roads or areas of town for surveying.

### 1. Determine where you will conduct the survey.

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To help prioritize where a rapid roadside ash survey should be conducted, we offer the following criteria:

Categories	Examples of Criteria
High Priority Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High use roads (i.e. Class 1 and 2 roads)</li><li>• Dense residential areas</li><li>• Emergency Access Routes (i.e., hospitals, emergency facilities)</li><li>• Schools and playgrounds</li><li>• Town greens</li></ul>
Medium Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secondary roads (Class 2 roads)</li><li>• Main or moderately used thoroughfares</li><li>• Residential areas</li></ul>
Low Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low use roads (Class 3 and 4 roads)</li><li>• Dispersed residences</li></ul>



### **Vermont Road Classifications**

**Class 1** highways are any State highways that are maintained by the town.

**Class 2** highways are well-traveled roads carrying traffic to or from Class 1 highways.

**Class 3** highways are all other regularly maintained town highways.

**Class 4** highways are not maintained by the state or town and may not be maintained by anyone.

Once you have decided which roads will be included in the survey, use printed town maps to highlight and assign specific roads to specific survey teams. This level of pre-planning will make the survey effort more efficient and will reduce the likelihood of any data replication (i.e. a road segment being surveyed by two different teams).

## **2. Determine the road ROW and what do include in the inventory**

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Most towns don't own the land under the road or alongside of it; the landowner does. The town owns an easement, which is a right to use the land for highway purposes. These easements are a public right-of-way (ROW), usually three rods (49.5 feet) wide, which includes the authority to manage the trees. If a tree is in the town's public ROW, its management is the town's responsibility. If the tree is in a state road ROW, it is the state's responsibility. If a tree falls outside the ROW, it is the landowner's responsibility. To determine the ROW width of your streets and roads, contact your public works officials, road crews, town planner, or the town clerk. When in doubt, go back to three rods – 49.5', or about 25' from the road center line.

To add another factor, if a tree or part of a tree is within 10' of a utility line or pole, it is most likely in the utility ROW and any management of the tree (i.e. pruning or removal) within this range needs to be conducted by tree care professionals with EHAP (Electrical Hazards Awareness Program) certification.

Trees outside of the ROW (on private property) also have the potential to fall in the road. Consider including all ash trees that could impact the ROW in your survey.

If knowing tree ownership and responsibility is essential for you to reach the goals of your rapid roadside ash survey, you may want to adapt the first sample data collection form at the end of this document, which categorizes ash trees into three categories:

**T**—Town—within the town ROW/town owned land

**U**—Utility—at least 10' on either side of overhead wires

**P**—Private

## **3. Determine what data to collect and design your data collection form.**

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In addition to tree ownership, what information do you need to collect? For a rapid roadside ash survey, we recommend only collecting road name or segment, diameter class, and/or condition. Two sample forms are included at the end of this document. If you decide that you need to collect more information to reach your goals, visit [go.uvm.edu/eab](http://go.uvm.edu/eab) and click on the 'Ash Tree Inventories' page to learn about the other types of tree inventories supported by the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program.

#### 4. Set a date and timeline for the survey

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Work with your team to coordinate dates and times for the survey. Will it be a group effort when everyone participates for a few long and focused days? Or can the survey occur over the course of several months by a few dedicated individuals? Manage these expectations upfront and make sure that everyone understands their involvement and commitment in data collection. From our experience, volunteers have found that the easiest time of year to identify ash trees from the road is when the leaves are off of the trees. The time it takes to complete the survey will depend on the density of ash along the road. For example, it took volunteers in Johnson about 10 minutes to inventory a mile of road with 16 ash trees versus 15-20 minutes to inventory a mile of road with 130-180 ash trees.

### **STEP 4: Hit the Road: Collecting the Data**

As you make final preparations for the rapid roadside ash survey, here are some tips:

- Provide each survey team with copies of the survey protocol, maps, and data forms.
- Make sure that the training needs of the survey participants are met, specifically regarding:
  - Ash tree identification. Common errors include identifying box elder and elm trees for ash.
  - Diameter or size class estimation. Volunteers may have trouble differentiating between the 13-18" and 19-24" diameter classes.
  - Designation of condition of trees.
  - ROW width and estimation of distance from the road center line (or edge).
- Go over the survey goals, protocol, and survey forms together as a group.
- Exchange cell phone numbers so that you can communicate as needed with other survey teams.

**For technical assistance with a rapid roadside ash inventory, contact:**

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**Learn more about municipal EAB management at [go.uvm.edu/eab](http://go.uvm.edu/eab)**



#### **Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program**

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in partnership with University of Vermont Extension

# Rapid Roadside Ash Assessment - Sample Form 1

Rd: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DBH	Good Condition			Fair Condition			Poor/Dead Condition		
	T	U	P	T	U	P	T	U	P
0-6"									
6-12"									
12-18"									
18-24"									
24-30"									
30-36"									
36-43"									
>43"									

T-Town  
U-Utility  
P-Private

# Rapid Roadside Ash Assessment - Sample Form 2

Rd name: \_\_\_\_\_ : From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DBH	Ash		
	Good	Fair	Dead
0-6"			
6-12"			
12-18"			
18-24"			
24-30"			
30-36"			
36-43"			
>43"			

Notes: