



NEWS RELEASE

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Date: March 22, 2012

Release No. DFO-04-12

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Forest Invasive Species Group Nationally Recognized

DURHAM, N.H.—A Northeast-based forest health group's efforts to reduce the spread of invasive species received recognition from the National Invasive Species Council recently.

The Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Project targets accidental pathways which could spread invasive species, including the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) and emerald ash borer (EAB).

The cooperative interagency group is made up primarily of state and federal forest health and agricultural resource managers, initially based in the Northeast. They work with non-governmental partners to help provide a comprehensive, coordinated regional forest pest outreach and detection program.

"This project really demonstrates the importance of partnerships in dealing with forest pests," said Maine State Horticulturalist Ann Gibbs.

"Most new detections of invasive forest pests including ALB and EAB have been made by members of the public. It is very important that government agencies work together with members of the public as we try to manage these pests. A project like this has provided this opportunity for networking across a large region of the country," she added.

Some of the group's accomplishments include:

- Organizing governor proclamations promoting invasive species awareness week
- Conducting 105 invasive pest survey train-the-trainer sessions with nearly 4,000 volunteers in 11 states in 2010
- Using trained volunteers to conduct invasive insect detection surveys in at least two high-risk areas in each participating state
- Setting up and running "Don't Move Firewood" public outreach surveys along major highways and at popular campgrounds
- Using costumes at events and developing a children's book to raise awareness of invasive insects
- Targeted surveys of campgrounds with history of campers from known ALB infested areas
- A variety of outreach initiatives reaching more than a million people in 2010 alone

“Efforts of this magnitude can only succeed when we all work together and are vigilant in helping to report and stop the spread of invasive insects,” said Patricia M. Douglass, USDA APHIS State Plant Health Director for Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

“This project helped leverage resources from many different agencies to focus outreach and survey in areas considered high-risk for invasive pest introductions,” said Michael Bohne, Forest Health Group Leader with the U.S. Forest Service. “Thankfully, the results of the surveys have been negative to this point.”

The project began in 2009 with nine states in the Northeast. It has since expanded to 15 states, with some as far away as Minnesota.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and US Forest Service funded the project.

Neither ALB nor EAB have been found to date in Northern New England.

The National Invasive Species Council presented the Outstanding Achievement in Invasive Species Outreach and Education award to the group at an event in Washington, D.C. March 1.

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