



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Forest Service Awards Three Grants to Minnesota in Fight Against Emerald Ash Borer

ST PAUL, MINN— The U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry has provided funding to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their battle against emerald ash borer (EAB). Three grants totaling \$533,000 will help these State agencies work to reduce EAB populations and to prepare communities for the eventual arrival of this serious ash tree pest.

Ash trees make up a major component of the State's urban forests. Many cities and towns have ash inventories that exceed 15 percent, and it is not unusual for communities to have 20 to 25 percent of their urban forest in ash trees.

In reference to the funding, St. Paul Field Representative Barb Tormoehlen remarked, "These grants support two key goals in managing the emerald ash borer. First, they will delay the buildup of the existing emerald ash borer population in the Twin Cities. The second goal is to take advantage of that delay to help communities throughout Minnesota determine their risk to EAB and to develop community plans to diversify the tree species –in the communities, important for the health of all urban forests-."

The MDA grant will focus on reducing the known populations of EAB in the Twin Cities metro area. This work will include improving surveys in the area surrounding the known infestation, removing confirmed infested trees before EAB adults emerge, and strategically creating trap trees in infested areas. This project should buy additional time for other Minnesota communities to prepare and take action to react to EAB.

MDA EAB Program Coordinator Mark Abrahamson noted, "These funds will help continue the important work communities with EAB infestations have already begun in the Twin Cities. We believe we are already reaping some dividends from EAB suppression efforts and look forward to continuing this work."

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Two grants were awarded to DNR to help communities prepare for the arrival of EAB and begin to reduce some of the risk that exists in Minnesota. One grant is going to the DNR's Urban Forestry program, and the other is going through the DNR to the University of Minnesota's Forest Resources Department to extend an ongoing effort.

The DNR Urban Forestry program grant focuses on creating and implementing preparedness plans for communities. DNR will hold a series of community preparedness summits to bring new information to communities and encourage interaction between community leaders and agency staff. The summits will be held in geographically distinct regions, including Thief Rivers Falls, Grand Rapids, Alexandria, Marshall, Rochester, and Roseville.

Commenting on the second DNR grant, University of Minnesota Urban Forestry Professor Gary Johnson said, "This grant not only allows our outreach team to continue our community engagement and preparedness projects, it allows us to maintain the momentum, work more efficiently around the State, and hopefully expand the regional resource centers and directories to the point where eventually the entire State will have been inventoried and assessed. Quite honestly, without this funding the project would have stalled for an indefinite period."

Eight communities representing six ecological regions of the State and six population levels were selected for the program—Houston, Grand Marais, Mora, East Grand Forks, Worthington, Bemidji, Northfield, and Mankato. Alternative communities include Roseau, Montevideo, Grand Rapids, Cloquet, Brainerd, and St. Cloud.

EAB was first detected in Minnesota in 2009 in the Twin Cities metro area. EAB is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan near Detroit in the summer of 2002. The larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees, which disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients, and results in its death.

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