

Chicago Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program

The Challenge

Illinois can claim one of the few victories in the war against invasive insects. Since the discovery of Asian Longhorned Beetle in Chicago in 1998, collaboration between the Forest Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the state of Illinois and city of Chicago has accomplished an exciting achievement. The Chicago ALB Eradication Program is ready to declare the beetle eradicated from the city. All of the quarantine areas were deregulated in the spring of 2005, and during 2006 the Forest Service continued to work with the other cooperators to promote the successful completion of the two years of negative surveys required for a declaration of eradication.

The Solution

The U.S. Forest Service assumed a partnership role with APHIS in their “Beetle Busters” campaign to reach out to the public and the media in publicizing this effort. Outreach tools such as the ALB Identification card were designed and distributed, featuring a punched hole the size of actual ALB exit holes. A USDA Forest Service grant to Rutgers University funded the production of an ALB video DVD and a CD which has educational tools for teachers and presentations that can be used to educate the public and the green industry about ALB. The Chicago ALB program case study (Chicago vs. the Asian Longhorned Beetle: A Portrait of Success), which was originally released nationally in 2004, was reprinted and is again available as part of the “Beetle Busters” campaign. Partners met regularly with APHIS to strategize and assist during the final stages of the program.

Benefits

Volunteers from DePaul University used the ALB ID cards in surveys of selected areas of the city while other

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As part of the “Beetlebusters” campaign, Chicago schoolchildren learn to recognize ALB damage and the insect itself. Above, a US Forest Service smokejumper who is doubling as an ALB tree climber in Chicago, is preparing to show a group of school children how trained tree climbers look for ALB in the upper reaches of trees.

groups of volunteers used the cards in other area surveys. The “Beetle Busters” is now part of the standard Chicago public school curriculum, and includes products created by the Forest Service. Thousands of school children learn to survey their neighborhoods for signs of ALB. These products and the volunteer efforts generated positive media stories which further informed the public about the eradication efforts and enlist their support in the program.

Sharing Successes

The end of the 2007 ALB flight season marked two years of negative surveys in formerly quarantined areas, which makes the Chicago ALB Eradication Program eligible for a declaration of eradication. An eradication ceremony is planned in mid April of 2008 in the Ravenswood neighborhood that was most impacted by the beetle. The Forest Service is partnering with APHIS in planning this event, which will recognize the many local, state and federal partners that were instrumental in bringing this project to a successful conclusion.



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