

Saving the Hemlocks

Boy Scouts Protect Hemlocks on Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation

The Challenge

The Baltimore Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America owns and operates the 1,700-acre Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation, one of the largest tracts of nonindustrial private forest land in central Maryland. The Scout camp includes a 60-acre old-growth hemlock forest that is located on both the camp property and the neighboring Conowingo Dam property owned by Exelon Corporation.

This forest is the eastern-most substantial hemlock forest in Maryland. This forest is also home to at least one species of special concern—the smokey shrew—and until recently contained the eastern hemlock National Champion Tree. These ecologically significant Broad Creek hemlocks are being threatened by the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid.

The Solution

In 2006, the Boy Scouts worked with the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division to secure a grant through its Landowner Incentives Program. They used the initial funding to perform a baseline study to assess the HWA population. They also purchased equipment and the insecticide imidacloprid to control hemlock woolly adelgid through soil injections.

The Boy Scouts then worked with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Forest Pest Management Division to train adult volunteers to make soil injections. Since treatments began in 2007, the entire 60-acre forest has been treated twice. Roughly 20 acres are treated each year to ensure that all treatable trees receive injections at least once every 3 years. Youth Boy Scout and Venture volunteers record data, carry water jugs, and mark treated trees while trained adults handle the imidacloprid.

The MDA, with the support of the U.S. Forest Service Forest Health Management staff from the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, contributed substantially to



Boy Scout adult volunteers inject imidacloprid into the soil to protect the hemlock trees at Broad Creek. (Photo: Mike Huneke)

the effort. Since 2005, MDA staff members have injected insecticide into the trunks of those hemlock trees that are too close to streams and wetlands to receive soil injections. Additionally, the MDA and U.S. Forest Service released over 2,300 *Laricobius* beetles to establish a biocontrol remedy, representing the largest effort to release and establish this species on private property in Maryland.

Resulting Benefits

The *Laricobius* beetles are spreading, the hemlock woolly adelgid is less prevalent, and the condition of the hemlock forest has noticeably improved. Volunteer advocacy, corporate sponsorships, State and Federal grants and technical assistance, conservation cost-share programs, Forest Stewardship planning, conservation education, Tree Farm certification, and conservation easements have all converged on this property and collectively contribute to this extremely successful project.

Sharing Success

Each summer, hikes are led to the hemlock grove where Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and their parents can learn about a successful pest management project. The volunteers of the Boy Scout Conservation Committee will continue to treat hemlocks under the guidance of the MDA to ensure that the hemlock forest remains a part of the camp's natural heritage.

For more than 100 years, the Boy Scouts of America has prided itself in being a conservation-minded organization, and the staff and volunteers at Broad Creek are true leaders in conservation.



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