

2009 Accomplishment Report – Wisconsin

State Contact

Dick Rideout, State Urban Forestry Coordinator
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
101 S. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707
Phone: (608) 267-0843
Fax: (608) 266-8576
E-mail: richard.rideout@wisconsin.gov
Web site:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/index.htm>

State Forester

Paul DeLong
Wisconsin Division of Forestry
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
Phone: (608) 264-0224
Fax: (608) 266-6983
E-mail: paul.delong@wisconsin.gov

Introduction

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) urban forestry program is to encourage, enable, and enhance sound management of Wisconsin's urban forest ecosystems. The WDNR provides urban forestry technical, financial, and promotional assistance to local and tribal governments along with nonprofit organizations through its Urban Forestry Working Group (UFWG). Led by a State coordinator, a grant manager, six regional coordinators (one position is currently vacant), and six half-time specialists (one is currently vacant), statewide policy development and implementation are managed with a team approach in partnership with the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council (WUFC).

Critical Issues and Key Accomplishments

Emerald Ash Borer

During this reporting period the first emerald ash borer (EAB) find happened on July 29, 2008. Since that find six separate infestations have been discovered, resulting in 11 counties in three DNR Regions being quarantined. While the Urban Forestry Working Group was addressing EAB-related items prior to the finds, the emphasis and time commitment have been ratcheted up many fold. Examples of these efforts follow.

Two municipal forestry sessions were conducted in the Village of Newburg's Fireman's Park, the site of one of the first EAB finds. Ninety-one municipal foresters from throughout the State were able to view first hand the signs and symptoms of infested trees, ask questions of agency personnel, and roundtable with other foresters to ascertain how their communities have or will begin preparing. The sessions were so productive that several weeks later a commercial arborist's program was provided at the same site for over 40 arborists.

As a result of our Annual Urban Forestry Conference EAB Readiness Planning session and regional tree managers networking group meetings, WDNR staff recognized that community decisionmakers, e.g. mayors, administrators, and



A portion of the 90+ community foresters view EAB-infested ash at the site of the State's first infestation as part of the WDNR Urban Forestry Program-initiated awareness session.

public works directors, are struggling to grasp the magnitude of the challenges ahead. To meet that need, WDNR staff provided two very productive and receptive presentations. In May, staff addressed nearly 100 public works directors as the featured presentation for their annual Wisconsin Chapter of American Public Works Association Conference. In August, the Department of Agriculture Trade & Consumer Protection's (DATCP) EAB Program Coordinator and a DNR Regional Coordinator presented to over 80 mayors and village presidents regarding the realities of EAB and the challenges ahead, along with the tools and guidelines the WDNR urban forestry program has developed for their communities to proactively plan and act now.

Due to the upsurge in EAB planning efforts and to accommodate communities, urban forestry consultants and WDNR coordinators developed a set of EAB planning guidelines. The guidelines facilitate the creation of EAB plans, from basic to all encompassing, depending on the level of forestry operations and service a community provides. While there are a number of recommended elements listed in the guidelines, only four are mandatory if the plan is created as part of a WDNR grant project. The EAB planning guidelines can be viewed at http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry%5CUF%5Ceab%5Cpdf/GuidelinesForEABplansFinal_090504.pdf.

The guidelines also cross reference a number of the more than 100 documents in the EAB Toolkit. The EAB Toolkit was created by a consortium of stakeholders and was last updated in June 2009. The Toolkit is available online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/eab/>.

Each year the Wisconsin Arborist Association (WAA) has a day of service where many of their members volunteer time and equipment to complete worthy causes. This year the WAA conducted their *Day of Service* at the Village of Newberg's Fireman's Park to remove 18 EAB-infested trees. Forty-five volunteer arborists felled, bucked, chipped, and milled the trees. A local portable sawmill operator volunteered his time to make this resource compliant to the DATCP standards.



This is one of the logs from the 18 EAB-infested trees that was milled into compliance at the Wisconsin Arborist Association's *Day of Service* at Fireman's Park in Newburg, WI.

Urban Forestry Advocacy

With direction from the Wisconsin Council on Forestry and led by the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, an advisory committee of 21 representatives from the green industry, government agencies, municipalities, and nonprofit and trade organizations came together to develop *Wisconsin's Urban Forestry Best Management Practices for Preventing the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Species*. The final product was vetted by the public through an open comment period, which resulted in 33 changes being made. These BMPs identify effective and realistic practices that can be integrated into routine urban forestry activities and existing systems designed to limit the impact of invasives. This document is the first of its kind in the Nation dealing specifically with urban areas and will be used by other States as a template. The BMPs are available online at <http://council.wisconsinforestry.org/invasives/urban/>.

As a result of the Governor removing the State's \$529,900 annual urban forestry grant program from the proposed 2009/11 budget, the Urban Forestry Council made a call to arms. Council members contacted their legislators to share data on the positive impact of the grant program and encouraged their representative organizations do the same. Along with this effort the Council assigned members to speak at the six Joint Finance Committee hearings that occurred throughout the State. The Council also

encouraged community tree managers and industry representatives to either comment or provide written testimony regarding the importance of the grant program. Their work paid off as the grant funding was restored to 99 percent of its original level to \$524,600. Further information about the Urban Forestry Council is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/council/>.

WDNR Urban Forestry Grant Program

A primary goal of the Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Program is to help communities start and develop their own sustainable urban and community forest management programs. For 2009, a Start Up grant was offered for new or less-developed urban forestry programs. Five eligible project activities were offered (planting, pruning, removals, inventory/planning, and public outreach) with a maximum \$5,000 award for communities to advance their urban forestry program. Eight communities received funding and the average residential population was a little over 4,800. The Start Up grant will again be offered in the 2010 grant year. In total, the 2009 Urban Forestry Grant Program funded 41 projects, 33 of which encompassed EAB planning, field operations, tree inventories, or public awareness activities.

In 2007 Wisconsin Act 13 gave the WDNR statutory authority to expedite urban forestry grants to communities with catastrophic storm damage for which the Governor has declared a state of emergency. Rules to administer this program were sent for public comment and then approved by the State Natural Resources Board in October 2008. The permanent rule was adopted by the State Legislature in March 2009 and published June 1, 2009. Online information about the WDNR urban forestry catastrophic storm grant program is available at http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/grants/storm_grants.htm.

Leadership and Networking

The UFWG spent significant time developing the new Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI). Thirty-two municipal tree managers from across the State began CTMI courses in November 2009. The training is geared toward tree managers who have minimal to no formal training and includes 26 different sessions over 5 days, concluding with a forestry operations field trip. Each participant will also develop a small project that can be implemented within their community as a prerequisite to successfully completing the training in June 2010.

Statistical Highlights

Managing and Developing Communities:	279
Population of Participating Communities:	3,221,416
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	13,870