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EMERALD ASH BORER DETECTED IN BUFFALO
Collaborative Control Efforts Underway to Contain First Infestation Found in Erie County

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced an infestation of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was found in the City of Buffalo's South Park. This is the first EAB infestation to be detected in Erie County. EAB is a small but destructive beetle that infests and kills North American ash tree species, including green, white, black and blue ash.

"The discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer in Buffalo is extremely unfortunate but not surprising," DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said. "Despite multi-state efforts to curtail its expansion, EAB has spread across the northeastern United States over the last decade. DEC is coordinating with federal and local government partners across the state to prevent the further spread of this destructive insect, especially outside of the quarantine areas. Awareness and preparedness are our best defenses, both of which are emphasized in DEC's strategic Slow Ash Mortality (SLAM) program."

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine said, "EAB is a destructive pest that is unfortunately taking foothold here in New York State. The economic impact of such a pest is tremendous on our forest products industries, and our parks and tourism industries, and is causing challenges for municipalities. As a state, we are dedicated to combating EAB and will continue to offer "train the trainer" workshops, funded by USDA APHIS, that enlist citizens and volunteers to survey for this beetle, and which led to this detection."

"Emerald Ash Borer is a serious threat to the region and the City of Buffalo has been preparing for its arrival for some time," said Deputy Commissioner Andrew Rabb of the City of Buffalo's Department of Public Works, Parks and Streets. "An effort to reduce the number of ash on city property was put in place after the first outbreaks occurred in Michigan. Ash now makes up less than 2% of Buffalo's street tree population and roughly 10% of trees in city parks. The city is working closely with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to develop and implement a treatment plan for historic landscape trees."

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Executive Director Thomas Herrera-Mishler said, "We have been partnering with the City of Buffalo and DEC for over a year to prepare for this outbreak, raising funds and public awareness to try to minimize the impact of EAB on the historic Olmsted Parks and Parkways."

DEC, Cornell University, the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy began collaborative response efforts to address the infestation at South Park immediately after the discovery last week. Initial surveying suggests that less than a dozen trees in South Park show signs of infestation; the trees are located along the park's perimeter in a natural wooded area.

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An intensified delimitation survey at the site and surrounding area is being conducted to determine the extent of infestation. Information from the survey will be used to establish “Management Response Areas” around the delimited core area. In accordance with DEC’s SLAM strategy, management actions appropriate to each defined area will be taken.

Earlier this week, forestry staff placed a purple EAB trap in a girdled ash tree to attract and limit the dispersion of emerging insects. In addition, park staff have started cutting and chipping infested trees.

Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy staff and volunteers discovered the infestation within days of completing an EAB awareness training. Cornell University Laboratory analysis of larval, pupal and adult beetles collected at South Park verified the infestation was EAB. Located in South Buffalo, South Park is a 155-acre public park and arboretum that is part of Buffalo’s historic Olmsted Parks system.

DEC Regional Director Abby Snyder was joined today by the City of Buffalo Public Works Deputy Commissioner Andrew Rabb and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Executive Director Thomas Herrera-Mishler to discuss efforts underway to contain the infestation and prevent further spread of EAB in the area.

EAB was first detected in New York State in Cattaraugus County in 2009. Since then, infestations have been confirmed in seven other counties including Genesee, Monroe, Livingston, Steuben, Greene, Ulster and now Erie. Sixteen counties in western New York and Greene and Ulster counties remain quarantined.

The Emerald Ash Borer

The EAB has metallic green wing covers and a coppery red or purple abdomen; it is small enough to fit easily on a penny. (Photos are available on DEC’s website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>.)

Damage is caused by the larvae, which feed in tunnels just below the ash tree’s bark. These tunnels disrupt water and nutrient transport, causing branches, and eventually the entire tree, to die. Adult beetles leave distinctive D-shaped exit holes in the outer bark of the branches and the trunk. Other signs of infestation include tree canopy dieback, yellowing, extensive sprouting from the roots and trunk. Infested trees may also exhibit woodpecker damage from larvae extraction.

Since its discovery in southeastern Michigan in 2002, the EAB is responsible for the death and decline of tens of millions of ash trees in the United States. The beetle has been detected in 14 states and two neighboring Canadian provinces. This insect primarily spreads when firewood and wood products are moved from one place to another. Many of New York State’s forests and parklands are high-risk areas due to firewood movement. New York has more than 900 million ash trees, representing about seven percent of all trees in the state; all are at risk should EAB become established across the state.

What is Being Done in NYS to address EAB

New York State has actively surveyed for EAB since 2003, inspecting declining ash trees and setting detection tools statewide in cooperation with Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS), US Forest Service, Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension and SUNY

ESF. After more than three years of outreach and education efforts about the risks of moving firewood and the state's regulation, DEC is increasing its enforcement efforts to prevent the movement of untreated firewood into and around New York.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets is responsible for managing the quarantine, restricting the movement of ash nursery stock, logs and firewood. Currently, 16 New York counties are under quarantine and NYSDAM Horticultural Inspectors are administering compliance agreements to facilitate movement of regulated materials, while reducing risk of EAB movement.

In 2008, New York adopted regulations that ban untreated firewood from entering the state and restricts intrastate movement of untreated firewood to no more than a 50-mile radius from its source. This was done as a precaution against the introduction and spread of EAB and other invasive species because of the documented risk of transmission by moving firewood.

More recently, DEC adopted a strategy known as Slow Ash Mortality (SLAM). SLAM encompasses a variety of approaches to address EAB infestations, including removing infested trees, more precisely defining infestation boundaries, and researching insecticides and biocontrols (organisms that kill pests). The hope is that current research will lead to new ways to suppress EAB populations, minimize their spread and delay the death of ash trees. It is also hoped that SLAM will buy time for communities and forest owners to prepare for EAB's threat and potential financial impacts.

What People Can Do:

New Yorkers are urged to take the following steps to keep EAB from spreading to other areas of the state:

- Leave all firewood at home - please do not bring it to campgrounds or parks. Movement of firewood is one of the primary pathways for spreading this insect.
- Get your firewood at the campground or from a local vendor - ask for a receipt or label that has the firewood's local source.
- Watch for signs of infestation in your ash trees. If damage is consistent with the known symptoms of EAB infestation, report suspected damage to the state by calling 1-866-640-0652 for appropriate action as time and resources allow.

For more information on EAB, please visit DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>.

About Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy in partnership with the city of Buffalo, is a not-for-profit, independent, community organization that promotes, preserves, restores, enhances, and ensures maintenance of Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks and parkways in the Greater Buffalo area now and for future generations. In 2008, the Conservancy released its Plan for the 21st Century, a blueprint for the management and restoration of the entire park system. Listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places, the Olmsted system in Buffalo is the first of its kind in the nation designed by America's greatest landscape architect. The major Olmsted Parks in Buffalo are Cazenovia, Delaware, Front, Martin Luther King, Jr., Riverside and South Parks. Visit www.BFLOParks.org for more details.