



## Urban Forest Management: EAB Action Plan

Lindsey Purcell, Urban Forestry Specialist, Purdue University

### Response to infestation of Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire

#### **ACTION PLAN:**

Adopting a plan of attack similar to our neighboring states, would include the following steps:

1. **Public Education and Outreach-** teaching citizens about EAB, via radio, local television, the print media, and the Internet. Utilize social media with links to the [IDNR website](#) page devoted to EAB.
2. **Training and Inspections-** prepare park personnel to assist with inspections and monitoring the health of ash trees on public property, such as our parks and right of ways. Training personnel and volunteers in identification of the pest may accomplish the best observation process. Any suspect trees would be validated by Certified Arborists and infested trees would be removed.
3. **Proximity surveys-** any tree inspection request coming from a citizen would result in an inspection of all Ash trees within the vicinity of the request, primarily on public property. After ownership determination, the mitigation strategy would be determined, based on the degree of hazard from the standard evaluation process.
4. **Mitigation-** Removing infested and dying ash trees confirmed to be infested with EAB from parks and other public property in an immediate and timely fashion for public safety.
5. **Debris Management-** All tree materials would be chipped and reduced according to state regulations. Improvement of capabilities for disposal of dead and dying trees by providing marshalling yards for infested debris.
6. **Replanting plan-** Tree plantings implemented using recommended and suggested ash tree replacements. To maintain a vital urban forest and continue to improve the environmental qualities for the community, replanting is important.
7. **Selective control measures-** approved pesticide applications may be utilized proactively in select areas or on select trees with significant value or contribution to the landscape. However, it is not economically feasible to make efforts to chemically eradicate the insect in most situations. Refer to the website for more information on control strategies.

**Summary:** The response to infestation presents a three-fold challenge:

Emerald Ash Borer is 100 percent fatal to an ash tree (*Fraxinus* sp.), and the best science to date indicates little can be done, if anything, to save ash trees once they have become infested. The only option is to remove the tree before dead or dying limbs and branches cause personal injury or property damage. Currently, there are no dollars to remove trees on private or public property. Tree removal is the responsibility of individual property owners and local government.

There are several Ash trees in the community, according to surveys and inventory. This would indicate a rather large expense to the community and property owners. Forecasting expenses for removal and debris management is difficult if not impossible. However, early indications shows costs could easily be approximately \$500 per tree. There were approximately 50 ash trees in the park alone which would equate to a \$25,000 expense. It is recommended that budgets reflect annual costs for removal each year.

Those citizens who need to have ash trees removed should hire a reputable tree care company with an ISA certified arborist, be wary of companies promising “cure alls,” and should not transport ash trees or woody debris. For more information on all aspects of EAB Management, check the website, <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/EAB/>

Secondly, woody debris management of infected Ash will be a costly and difficult challenge. Reduction of the wood debris and proper disposal and reutilization is a critical component of the eradication and must be an integral part of the plan.

Last, a reforestation plan must be implemented immediately to recover the loss of nearly 10% of the urban forest canopy. There will be a major need for public assistance and grant money for the removal, disposal and re-planting efforts. All plans are subject to funding assistance.