

Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan Report 2009

Submitted by
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Introduction

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a highly destructive pest introduced from Asia, has been moving throughout Ohio since it was found in 2003. ODNR Division of Forestry has been attempting to prepare its client communities for the inevitable infestation through a number of educational and direct assistance programs. This survey and the resulting report assess existing EAB Management Plans to determine their effectiveness and how they can be improved.

Methods

An e-mail survey of one hundred (100) southwest Ohio communities was conducted in May 2009. Thirty-seven (37) of the 100 contacts were designated Tree City USA communities. Where possible, the survey was sent to the primary city forestry contact. Populations of those city, village, and township respondents ranged in size from 1,750 to 53,000.

Results

22 of the 100 (22%) communities responded to the survey.

21 of the 37 (56%) TCUSA communities responded to the survey.

11 of the 22 (50%) communities employed a city forester or city arborist.

21 of the 22 (95%) communities were Tree City USA in 2008.

EAB Plans

18 communities had passed formal EAB Management Plans.

1 community was working on a Plan.

3 communities did not have EAB Management Plans.

Of the 18 communities who have passed formal EAB Management Plans, 17 communities had implemented their plans.

The communities who have Plans found them helpful. The comments from communities included them finding benefit in giving staff and citizens a plan of action and direction, and a helpful educational tool. They were able to spread out the removals which limited the strain on their budget. A creation of the formal Plan forced an ash inventory to be done rather than using estimates from a previous public tree inventory. They found that it is a guideline to follow for the Public's sake, but there are still many calls made "in the field" as far as

removal and replacement and dealing with individual phone calls. Having a Plan focuses their resources on a set of tasks to be accomplished. Some communities have not used their Plan extensively to date because current EAB infestations are not nearby, but were glad to have it ready. Other communities are just starting the process and find it hard to keep the program at the forefront.

All the communities who had a Plan were assisted by ODNR one way or another. Some communities worked with Wendi Van Buren to create a Plan, while other communities found the Division’s website with other Ohio communities’ EAB Management Plans most helpful. All of them used the template and edited it to meet their needs. Below are the action elements in the DOF’s EAB Management Plan template with the number of survey respondents who used them in their community’s Plan.

Action Elements in their EAB Management Plan

Activity	Total
Title	14
Purpose	15
Applicability	8
Administration	16
Definitions	9
Ash Removal	15
Monitoring	11
Wood utilization and disposal	9
Communications	9
Education	11
Canopy replacement and care	11
Postponed work	3
Other departments	1
Private ash trees	7
City forester	5
Contact list	4
Hiring an arborist	3
Approved contractors’ list	2
Budget	7
Inventory	1
Treatment	1

Other agencies who assisted with EAB Management Plans included Hamilton County OSU Extension, Greene County OSU Extension, and Miami Valley Communications Council.

EAB Plan Evaluation

Of the 19 communities who had Plans (or working on their Plan), 9 communities had evaluated their Plan and 10 communities had not.

The 9 communities who have evaluated their Plans have not made any changes to their Plans. Most decisions are in the field deciding whether to treat or remove their ash tree populations. Some ash trees were removed early due to the September 14th Wind Storm.

Of the 10 communities who have not evaluated their Plans, 6 plan on evaluating their Plans in the future. Three communities do not plan on evaluating their Plans. The comments referred to putting their Plans into action and then making changes as necessary. "Really have not had time to look at what needs to be updated but that sounds like a good idea".

Sixteen of the 22 communities responded to the question "Would you recommend the process to other communities?" All 16 communities said that they would recommend the process of developing an EAB Management Plan to other communities. "The process of actually composing a Plan allowed for us to identify overlooked items/procedures to our conceptual EAB management program."

Community Action and Response

All 22 communities took action of some sort to prepare for EAB, with the highest employed actions being ash inventories, developing EAB Management Plans, training their staff, and informing elected officials.

Activity	Total
Public Information	17
Ash Inventory	18
Develop EAB Management Plan	18
Removed Ash Trees	11
Treated Ash Trees	7
Trained Your Staff	18
Remove Ash Trees with Utility Pruning Cycle	5
Informed City Council and/or Mayor	18
Detection Tree Program and/or EAB Monitoring	10
Grind all brush before April	1
Established policy restricting movement of firewood	1

All 21 of the 22 communities took action of some sort to prepare for EAB. The most influential cause to take action was proximity to a known infestation with support from ODNR as a close second.

Activity	Total
Proximity to Infestations	18
Support from Urban Forestry	17
Relation to the advancement of the UF Program	9
Ash Population	11
It was the right thing to do	1
Community Support for Proactive Program	1

Conclusion

The Division of Forestry's efforts to assist communities prepare for EAB have been spread across the State in many forms and shapes. However the message seems to have only found root in those communities who have made a dedicated commitment to their urban forest.

The communities, who have implemented their existing EAB Management Plans, find it effective to be proactive in preparing for a future EAB infestation. Since most communities are not infested yet, there is not a general consensus from this survey as to whether the Plans help them through a heavy infestation.

It clearly appears that creating an EAB Management Plan is an effective use of time and energy to proactively plan and budget for a future EAB infestation. The communities who already manage their urban forestry infrastructure are the most likely to create and use an EAB Management Plan.

The most effective influence on a community to take action is alerting them of nearby EAB infestations and for them to know that they have support from ODNR. Although ODA is not looking for EAB in a majority of southwest Ohio counties, the reporting of new EAB infestation sites will encourage communities to take action.