

TOPIC: Emerald Ash Borer

Trend / Issue

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a highly destructive forest insect pest that attacks and kills all species of ash trees within North America. The EAB has been declared a hazardous species by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and therefore subject to quarantine and extraordinary measures through the federal Plant Protection Act.

Background

Introduced from Asia, this invasive pest was brought into Canada in 2002 via packing crates that had been shipped to Michigan in the early 90's. In December 2007, the CFIA confirmed the presence of EAB in Toronto. In 2008, EAB was discovered in Mississauga, Ottawa, Brampton, Oakville and Quebec. The insect poses a threat to all ash trees within the province and across Canada and additional expense to Forests and Parks budgets will be incurred as municipalities deal with infestations. EAB has also previously been confirmed in Chatham-Kent, Essex, Elgin, Lambton, Middlesex and Norfolk where it has decimated the ash tree population within these rural areas.

Impact

The Emerald Ash Borer poses a great threat to urban and rural forested areas in Ontario. Already, millions of ash trees in southern Ontario have been destroyed. Treatment options are still in experimental stages. Presently, the only available option is to quarantine areas where the EAB has been identified and then remove and destroy infected or dead trees. Quarantined areas are subject to Ministerial Order (Federal Department of Agriculture), which prevents the movement of trees, nursery stock, logs, lumber, wood packaging or dunnage, wood or bark, wood chips or bark chips of the genus *Fraxinus* (commonly known as Ash), as well as firewood of all species.

As well, there is a financial impact for municipalities and those who maintain wooded areas. The removal and disposal of EAB infected trees is expensive. Also, at present, the Public Sector Account Bureau (PSAB) requirements do not recognize trees as an asset and therefore municipalities have been slow to inventory and evaluate their current value. Without a proper assessment of forestry inventory, some managers of woodlots and municipalities have undervalued stock and not provided an adequate maintenance budget. This can easily become a critical budget shortfall in areas affected by the EAB. Areas affected by the EAB could face serious deficits if urban and rural forests are to be maintained and re-planted.

Recommendations

- Adhere to all CFIA reporting and quarantine procedures
- Assess the value of all woodlot and forestry assets in order to determine capital depreciation and EBA disposal costs
- Prepare EAB contingency plans with financial projections
- Develop partnerships with surrounding municipalities allowing for a concerted effort in order to slow the spread EAB

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