



EAB Stories and Lessons Learned...

Learning and sharing how communities are responding to Emerald Ash Borer

Part IX: Funding

“Communities need to compare the cost of doing the work against the costs of not doing the work. The cost of going out for individual fallen branches is high. The cost of branches falling on vehicles is high.” Tom Wilson, from the City of Westland, Michigan, shares this advice to address the realities of EAB. Westland used a combination of federal, state and local funding for their removals. They used \$300,000 in city tree fund money received from developers who are charged a fee if they remove a tree greater than 4” DBH. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) were used for emergency tree removals in depressed areas. A federal grant paid for the marshalling yard. Road funds (MI Act 51) were available to remove the community’s right-of-way trees. The reality is that little funding is available for planting trees. EAB will also require deferring other expenditures. For Westland, “There was no tree pruning for 5 years. Equipment purchases from other departments (including a fire truck) were put off. There was also no tree planting for 5 years.”

Craig Schar, Toledo, Ohio’s Assistant City Forester offers additional advice to overcome funding challenges. He says, “People also want to donate money in this time of need. I recommend you make arrangements in advance. Set up a trust fund. That way no other city program can take money from it. To protect any left-over money, make sure the trust fund is set up as ‘ongoing’ (non-lapsing).” In their case, the city’s Urban Forestry Commission decides how the trust fund money is spent. Toledo also uses funds from the sale of mulch. This money is set up to go directly into the city’s urban forestry program rather than the general fund.

- The costs incurred by EAB effects are enormous.
- Communities may need to defer other expenditures to pay for the work involved.
- Don’t do it alone - use existing partnerships!
- Make plans to accept donations but specify what and who can use that money.

Michigan set up a pilot program titled ROOT (Restoration Of Our Trees). This partnership initiative between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, DTE Energy Foundation, USDA Forest Service, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Michigan’s Governor’s Office was modeled after Iowa’s Trees Forever Program. ROOT provided homeowners who had lost ash to EAB, with reduced cost replacement trees.

<http://www.michigandnr.com/publications/pdfs/ForestsLandWater/UrbanAndCommunity/ROOTprogram/ROOT-LP-Presentation.pdf>

The 2008 Farm Bill includes authorization for an Emerald Ash Borer Revolving Loan Fund designed to help municipalities defray the costs of invasive species management activities such as surveying trees, removing infested trees and replacing removed trees. The bill creates a low-interest revolving loan fund for local governments with a 20-year window to repay any loans. However, the fund does not yet have money allocated to it. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have yet to establish a budget for the loan fund. Contact your congressional representatives to support the need for appropriations. Visit <http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>.

For a resource to help your community address funding options, visit the Emerald Ash Borer Toolkit link at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/eab/> (Chapter 10 - Funding).

For a more detailed version of this story visit [Lesson’s Shared - Journal Entries 1, 4 & 10](#).

Please share what your community is doing to prepare for EAB with others. Send ideas to Olivia Witthun, Urban Forestry Assistant olivia.witthun@wi.gov .

The ninth entry of EAB Stories and Lessons Learned was compiled by Northeast Region Urban Forestry Assistant Olivia Witthun and South Central Urban Forestry Assistant Kathy Gonzalez.