



EAB Stories and Lessons Learned...

Learning and sharing how communities are responding to Emerald Ash Borer

Part VI: Utilization

“It takes four full-time employees, working year-around, just to run the mulching operation for Toledo's 8,000 public ash trees.” Toledo’s wood utilization program involves sending their infested ash trees through “The Beast”. This horizontal grinder can handle logs up to four feet in diameter and uses screens and interchangeable teeth to

determine the size and shape of the wood chips. The result is landscape-quality mulch which Toledo uses for their trees, planting beds and playgrounds. The mulch is also available to the public for a small fee. Toledo soon added a delivery service to help move the vast supply of wood chips. The mulch and delivery fees were originally low, but landscape companies were getting angry that the city was taking away their business so the city had to increase its price. Toledo is not making a profit - although they grossed around \$100,000 last year - they are simply saving money by not having to pay for transportation and disposal costs.

Monroe, Michigan created a unique partnership that became the foundation of their wood utilization program. They partnered with a portable sawmill operator to make the best use of their infested trees. All logs are brought to Monroe’s fenced-in wood waste yard. The sawmill operator mills the wood once a week to custom sizes specified by the city and for his personal pallet business. Monroe uses the wood to make tables, benches, truck side boards, and other items needed by the Park and Recreation Department. They keep about ¼ of the wood and the sawmill operator keeps the other ¾. No money exchanges hands and no paperwork is required except for a liability waiver the sawyer needs to sign. If Monroe actually hired a sawmill operator to come in, it would have cost them upwards of \$100/hr. This partnership saved Monroe \$30,000 they would have otherwise spent on wood waste removal; plus, they get free, custom-sized wood whenever they need it.

- Plan in advance to utilize wood locally before EAB arrives.
- Making a profit is unlikely, but utilization will help offset your disposal costs.
- Transportation is an issue that can hinder your utilization options.
- Partner with neighboring communities to make utilization more feasible.

Visit Wisconsin’s Primary and Secondary Wood Using Industry Databases to search for sawmills in your area. <http://www.woodindustry.forest.wisc.edu/>

Communities in the Southeast area of the state can contact Kim Sebastian, Regional Urban Forestry Coordinator, for a listing of their area’s portable sawmill operators. kim.sebastian@wisconsin.gov or 414-263-8602.

Visit the Ash Utilization Options Project of Southeast Michigan for utilization ideas and information. <http://semircd.org/ash/index.php>

Furniture makers are raising awareness of EAB through an art show of fine furniture pieces made from reclaimed ash wood. <http://www.risingfromashes.org> A local man from Waukesha County utilizes salvaged wood and features a piece in the show. <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=785955>

For a resource to help your community and residents plan for wood utilization options, visit the Emerald Ash Borer Toolkit link at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/eab/> (Chapter 8 - Removals & Utilization).

For a more detailed version of this story as well as other community’s removal stories, visit [Lesson’s Shared - Journal Entries 2, 8 & 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 sixth 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.