

Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan

Wyalusing State Park

January 2015

Background

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB, *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire) is a beetle that is native to China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and the Russian Far East. Emerald Ash Borer probably arrived in the United States on solid wood packaging material carried in cargo ships or airplanes originating in its native Asia. It was first identified in the Detroit, Michigan area in 2002, and, to date, EAB has been confirmed in 24 states and two Canadian provinces.

As of October, 2014, there are 37 counties in Wisconsin quarantined for EAB, including Grant County. Residents and businesses in quarantined counties are restricted from moving any hardwood firewood, ash nursery stock or ash logs, or timber out of the quarantined area without a government-issued Compliance Agreement.

In North America, EAB has only been found in ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) trees and recently in white fringe trees (*Chionanthus virginicus*). Ash trees generally die within five years of being infested. There appears to be very little natural resistance of North American ash species to EAB.

The canopy of infested trees begins to thin above infested portions of the trunk and major branches because the borer larvae destroy the water and nutrient conducting tissue under the bark. Heavily infested trees exhibit canopy die back usually starting at the top of the tree. One-third to one-half of the branches may die in one year. Most of the canopy will be dead within 2-3 years of when symptoms are first observed. Sometimes ash trees push out sprouts from the trunk after the upper portions of the trees die. Although difficult to see, the adult beetles leave a “D”-shaped exit hole in the bark, roughly 1/8 inch in diameter, when they emerge.

Adult beetles nibble on ash leaves but cause little damage by this minor feeding.

The EAB beetle can have a one or two-year life cycle. Adults begin to emerge early in June in southeastern Wisconsin with peak emergence in late June. Females usually begin to lay eggs about 2 weeks after emergence. Eggs hatch in 1-2 weeks, and the tiny larvae bore through the bark and into the cambium which is the area between the bark and wood where nutrient levels are high. The larvae typically pass through four instars (stages), eventually reaching a size of roughly 1 to 1.25 inches long. Most EAB larvae overwinter in a small chamber in the outer bark or in the outer inch of wood. Pupation occurs in spring and the new generation of adults will emerge in early June to begin the cycle again.

EAB adults are capable of flying several miles from the tree where they emerge, although most beetles are likely to travel less than ¼ mile if host material is present. Many infestations, however, were started when people moved infested ash nursery trees, logs, or firewood into non-infested areas.

Key Concerns for Wyalusing State Park

The main concerns regarding EAB and ash mortality at Wyalusing State Park are public safety, resource protection, and aesthetics. Wyalusing State Park offers many recreational opportunities including two family campgrounds, one outdoor group campground, one indoor group campground, five major picnic areas, hiking and off-road biking trails, winter recreational activities, hunting and trapping. Ash trees are present in some of the designated use areas.

Stressed trees are more attractive to EAB females for depositing eggs. Trees in heavily used areas such as campgrounds and picnic areas are typically under greater stress than forest trees due to soil compaction and bark and limb injuries. The values of older trees, such as shade trees, are difficult to replace when they die. Tree mortality resulting from EAB in the park may be aesthetically unappealing and potentially a hazard to park visitors. Ash that are killed by EAB tend to dry out rapidly and become brittle, causing them to break up easily. Areas of heavy use by the public will be the first sites assessed for hazard tree identification and removal and new tree planting.

Current Situation

As of a January 2015 EAB is not known to occur at Wyalusing State Park. EAB traps have been placed in strategic locations in the park. However, EAB was discovered at Nelson Dewey State Park and Stonefield Historic Village in Grant County in July 2014 resulting in the addition of the county to the state's EAB quarantine list. EAB has been discovered in La Crosse 60 miles to the north of Wyalusing State Park.

In addition to EAB, ash trees are affected by a number of insect pests and diseases. Some of the ash trees in the park are infected by "ash yellows" which is a disease that causes slow growth, branch die-back, and eventually mortality of ash. It is caused by a special type of bacteria, a bacterium without cell walls, called a phytoplasma. There is no known way to prevent or cure ash yellows. Ash yellows is a chronic, systemic disease that affects ash trees of all ages. Leafhoppers are thought to be the primary means by which this pathogen is moved from tree to tree.

Some of the ash trees in the park are affected by a native insect called red-headed ash borer (*Neoclytus acuminatus*). Red-headed ash borer larvae feed on the sapwood of dead and dying ash trees and other hardwood trees.

Park use areas have been evaluated to identify existing and potentially hazardous ash trees. Ash yellows has been found to be the main cause of dead and dying ash trees in the outdoor group campground and the indoor group campground. Some of the dead and dying ash trees at the indoor group campground were initially identified with ash yellows disease and later became infested with red-headed ash borer.

High Priority Areas

1. Campgrounds: a. Wisconsin Ridge, b. Outdoor Group, c. Homestead, and d. Indoor Group.
2. Major Picnic Areas: a. Central, b. Point Lookout, c. Green Cloud, d. Homestead, and e. Henneger Point.

3. Hiking Trails

Low-priority Areas

Low priority areas are those where there is no ash, no compelling ecological need to remove ash, or no public hazards posed by dead or dying ash trees.

Wildlife Concerns

Ash species, especially white ash, can be important sources of habitat and browse for wildlife. The samaras (fruit) are good forage for many birds and small mammals. White ash's ability to readily form trunk cavities if the top is broken and its large size (24-48 inches in diameter) at maturity make it highly valuable for primary cavity nesters such as woodpeckers. Once the primary nest excavators have opened up the trunk of the tree, it is excellent habitat for secondary nesters such as wood ducks, owls, nuthatches, and gray squirrels. Dead standing ash trees that are not hazards should be left for wildlife habitat.

Endangered Resources and State Natural Area Concerns

There are many rare species known to occur at Wyalusing State Park which are either endangered, threatened or of special concern.

Taxon group	<i>Total species</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Bird	11	2	7	2
Butterfly	2	0	0	2
Herptile	8	0	1	7
Plant	18	1	0	17

Wyalusing State Park is located at the confluence of Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. The rivers that border the park are home to 34 rare aquatic species including fish, mussels, frogs, mammals and dragonflies; of these 34 species, 11 are listed as endangered, 13 as threatened, and 10 are of special concern.

Park staff will consult the NHC district ecologist to avoid negative impacts to rare species; avoidance may be accomplished by timing and/or by determining the lack of suitable habitat for one or more of the rare species.

There are two State Natural Areas in the park: Wyalusing Hardwood Forest and Wyalusing Walnut Forest. The SNA program will be consulted for management of EAB within State Natural Areas.

There are good quality examples of 6 different natural community types in the park: cedar glade, moist cliff, southern dry-mesic forest, southern dry forest, southern mesic forest, and floodplain forest.

Archaeological Feature Concerns

Archaeological and historical sites are known to occur in the park. All state and federal statutes will be followed regarding any EAB management at these sites. The department archaeologist will be consulted as needed.

Management of EAB

Monitoring

Park staff will monitor for EAB symptoms in trees in the designated use areas, especially in the campgrounds and major picnic areas.

Ash Tree Removal

Potential hazard trees have been identified within the park's priority areas. These trees were felled in the fall of 2014. Priority areas will continue to be monitored for signs of EAB and ash yellows. Additional hazard trees will be removed as they are identified in priority areas. Stumps in mowed areas will be ground so that they do not create a safety hazard. In the event that EAB is found in the park all infested trees in priority areas will be removed and stockpiled for two years, at which time they may be cut up for firewood for use in the park.

Ash trees along trails will be managed using hazard tree standards.

In low-priority areas dead ash trees will be left standing for wildlife as long as the trees are not safety hazards.

Cultural Management

In areas where natural regeneration is not sufficient, tree planting will be needed to replace hazard trees that are removed from priority areas. Replacement trees will be a diverse mix of native, ecologically appropriate species, with a balance of fast-growing and slow-growing species. Fast-growing tree species will more quickly replace shade trees while allowing slower growing species to become established and reach maturity. Proper maintenance after the trees have been planted, such as watering as needed and reducing competition from other vegetation, may be needed to increase survival of saplings.

Biological Controls

Several small, non-native parasitic wasp species have been identified and authorized for release by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as biological control agents. These stingless wasp species are highly specific to EAB and harmless to humans. Although the wasps will not eliminate the population of EAB, they can help extend the life of trees, giving the park more years to spread out removals of dead/dying trees once EAB arrives. Wyalusing State Park could be assessed as a suitable release site for the wasps once EAB is found in the park.

Pesticides

Insecticides can be used to protect any high value trees (for example, a large shade tree in a high priority area). Depending on the chemical used, pesticide treatments would need to be applied at one or two year intervals. Trees in the priority areas will be evaluated for potential pesticide treatment.

Stumps of ash trees that are felled should be treated with herbicides to prevent stumps from re-sprouting.

Public Education and Communication

EAB posters and other information will be posted in the kiosks in the use areas. Flyers and EAB information will be handed out at the park office. A public outreach campaign about EAB management within Wyalusing State Park should be developed and implemented with the Office of Communication. When possible, on-site interpretive programs would be encouraged with area schools.

Funding

Educational literature is available through the DNR at no charge. The park will be able to purchase materials for physical controls and labor with Sustainable Forestry Funding Grant money. Hazard trees will be felled by park staff and a Department of Corrections crew. Tree planting will be done by a Department of Corrections crew, park staff, and local volunteers such as school groups, boy scouts, and “Friends” members.

EAB will initially be funded with money from a Sustainable Forestry Funding Grant. In successive years alternative funding sources will have to be identified and pursued in order to provide continuous funding for EAB management.

Plan developed by (Date): Lisa M. Pitzer, January 2015

Plan Reviewed by:

Park Superintendent (Date): Chad Breuer, February 19, 2015

Regional Forest Health Specialist (Date): Mark Guthmiller, February 6, 2015

State Parks Ecologist (Date): Craig Anderson, February 16, 2015

Parks District Manager (Date): Paul Zajackowski, February 5, 2015

Revisions:

Revised by (Date):

Revision Comments:

Attachments: EAB high priority area map

Wyalusing State Park EAB high priority areas. Note that the trail network (priority area 3) is not shown.

