

Forester's Report 2-27-2013

No burning permits were issued since the last Forester's Report.

Two times per week I drove by 6 Acorn Drive during usual business hours. No firewood harvesting activity was noted.

I attended the Emerald Ash Borer Symposium in Hopkins on February 12. Please see the write-up included with the Forester's Report.

I have met with a Boy Scout and one of his parents regarding a possible service project within the city. We discussed a possible reforestation project along the side of Angell Road in Harmon Park.

Several buckthorn trees that had been cut by someone fell onto Salem Church Road and were moved off the street. Several dead elms along Angell Road and Charlton Road were removed.

I met with Valerie Price with the Minnesota Tree Care Advisors regarding assistance they may provide with regard to developing a tree inventory for Sunfish Lake.

Jim Naves
City Forester

EAB Symposium

February 12, 2013, Hopkins, Minnesota

Attending the EAB Symposium reinforced the information I have already presented as well as focusing attention on experiences of other cities dealing with a current EAB onslaught or legacy. The City of Sunfish Lake has been preparing for the arrival of emerald ash borer for more than three years. We have a plan in place and we have been moving forward with the plan since its adoption in April 2010.

The plan includes:

1. Discouraging the planting of ash trees.
2. Completing a city tree inventory.
3. Education for residents regarding EAB infestation status and appropriate actions.
4. Encouraging residents to remove damaged, dead, dying and infested ash trees.
5. Removal of city owned ash trees larger than 10" before the end of 2015 and replacing these trees, where appropriate, with other tree species.
6. Encouraging resident reporting of any declining ash trees.
7. Encouraging reforestation and tree planting that emphasizes diversity and use of native species.
8. Encouraging residents to follow state guidelines for preventative insecticide treatments of healthy trees.
9. Encouraging residents to follow state guidelines for disposal of ash tree wood and branches.

This continues to be a reasonable plan for a city like Sunfish Lake with a rural character and a relatively small population of ash trees on both public and private properties. That being said, there are issues that are coming in the not too distant future (2013-2015)

Saving beautiful or legacy ash trees

It is not feasible to treat all the ash trees in a forest. Individual special, beautiful or legacy ash trees in a landscape setting can be preventatively treated with insecticide to control EAB and the treatment works better if it is done prior to infestation. Once a tree is infested and has 25-30% canopy thinning, it is probably too late and would be a waste of money and effort to attempt a curative insecticide program.

In most cases, EAB treatments must be done by a certified pesticide applicator due to the higher insecticide rates required or type of insecticide used. Depending on the type of insecticide used the treatment will provide control from one to two years and will then require another treatment. It is expected (hoped) that once the tidal wave of EAB passes over us that the EAB population will decrease to a low level that will allow longer times between pesticide reapplication.

The Emerald Ash Borer Exponential Death Curve

Emerald ash borer multiplies fast even though it is at first invisible within a community. About three years after it arrives in a community a few trees die as the beetle population expands. Then the beetle population explodes exponentially and the rate of ash tree death increases. Experience by other cities already overrun by EAB shows us that once we get into the exponential phase of the EAB population boom **80% of the remaining ash trees will die within four years.** For many communities in Minnesota this will be devastating. Due to the preparation we have done to date and the relatively low numbers of ash trees on Sunfish Lake public property we will not experience the budget busting costs that some communities will soon be experiencing.

There will be some significant and perhaps important financial issues for some private property owners in Sunfish Lake.

Standing dead ash tree issues

Removing clean, non-infested ash trees during the coming infestation will not slow down the rate of new infestations and ash tree death.

All age classes of ash trees are attacked by EAB from sapling size to the largest ash trees. Once an ash is killed by EAB it will begin shedding significant branches starting as soon as 10 months after it has died. This means that significant numbers of ash trees on private property will become high-risk trees **when they become standing dead trees and they are within falling distance from public streets. These trees will be marked for removal and the property owners will be required to remove them within one month.** Requiring removal of high-risk, diseased or infested trees is covered within the city codes.

There are many ash trees growing on private property that will be affected by EAB and it is important that these owners realize how quickly a standing dead ash tree can become a high-risk tree. This will become especially important for those with long driveways and those that share common driveways.

Ash trees away from roads and driveways will die and eventually fall, but these will not generally be considered high-risk trees requiring risk mitigation. It is possible that these groups of forest trees may be important from a fire safety perspective if they all die at roughly the same time. The closer groups of dead trees are to homes or other structures the greater wildfire fuel concern they present. In most cases they should not cause greater concern than the groups of dead elm trees that still stand in various sections of the city.

It is probably in the best interest of the city for the City Forester to make general recommendations on any of the above matters if contacted by city residents.

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