



EMERALD ASH BORER PLAN

The City of South Sioux City

Purpose:

Implementing the provisions in this management plan requires the City of South Sioux City to take a proactive approach and spread the costs associated with the outbreak of Emerald Ash Borer over the next ten to twelve years. The loss of every ash tree in South Sioux will happen and will have a devastating effect on home values, quality of life, and our environment. Our goal is to buffer that impact in advance by implementing current arboricultural management techniques.

Introduction:

Emerald ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis* (Fairmaire), or EAB, is a non-native wood-boring pest of North America ash trees. The devastating pest was first found in 2002 in North America where it was discovered in southeastern Michigan and adjacent areas in Ontario, Canada. It is thought to have been introduced in the 1990s on solid wood packing materials originating in Asia. The extremely destructive beetle poses an enormous threat to all North America's rural and urban ash resources.

Unlike many other wood boring beetles, EAB aggressively kills stressed and healthy ash trees; most dying within two or three years of becoming infested. Currently, EAB has no known natural enemies in North America, no effective control options over the forested landscape, and few, expensive options for protecting individual, high-value specimen trees. If EAB is not contained or its population growth and spread are not slowed this pest will continue to infest and kill all species of trees in the genus *Fraxinus* (*ash*). The impact on ash in North America has been compared to the effects of chestnut blight and Dutch Elm Disease, which devastated rural and urban forests in the 20th century.

Since its initial North American discovery in Michigan, EAB has spread across the upper Midwest and by 2009, had been found in 12 states and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, Canada. Forestry experts and stakeholders in New York have been keeping a keen eye on the progression of EAB eastward and been cooperating with USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) on extensive detection surveys and trapping efforts to try to detect any infestations in our State as early as possible. As of August 2010, 15 states and 2 Canadian provinces (Ontario and Quebec) have confirmed EAB discoveries.

According to the APHIS National EAB Program Manual (2009), “The Emerald Ash Borer Program has transitioned from an eradication program to a management program. Effective and cost efficient control technologies are not currently available to apply area-wide to effect pest eradication. In the future additional tools may become available to suppress the dispersal of the pest.

Local Situations:

According to the Nebraska Forestry Department, EAB has been found in Omaha. The current evidence from Michigan and Ohio show that once EAB becomes established it takes about five to ten years to infest and kill the majority of ash trees in the city.

(datcservices.wisconsin.gov/eab/index.jsp) EAB is an introduced pest that is currently killing all species of ash trees (*Fraxinus* species). The City of South Sioux must prepare and manage for the arrival of EAB on two fronts - street or boulevard trees, and trees on other public properties such as parks. With the Emerald Ash Borer so close to Nebraska we may already have it and are not aware of it.

Disposal and Utilization:

Ash trees killed by EAB or those taken as part of management plan may result in a significant number of trees. As a result, one of the largest challenges in EAB management will be disposal and utilization of ash material. Because quarantine regulations restrict the movement of ash material out of quarantined areas (with some exceptions), wood utilization becomes even more difficult. These restrictions may limit the ability to use this material as commercial landscape mulch, wood pulp chips and solid wood products (lumber, railroad ties).

Given the potentially large volume of resulting wood debris, wood utilization issues are of primary concern. The state EAB task force is currently gathering information regarding the location of potential utilization assets, such as biomass fuel users, firewood processors, tree care firms, sawmills, pulp mills, mulch manufacturers, and landfills.

Because of the restrictions on the disposition of infested ash wood require a much greater expense than dealing in a “pro-active” measure....removing the trees prior to their infestation, and, recognizing the experience of numerous municipalities in Michigan and other states (the sheer volume of dead and dying trees and having them removed prior to numerous liability issues) the City of South Sioux will commence dealing with this inevitable infestation in a pro-active approach. Reference the attached: “Resolution authorizing the Park Department and Park Board to remove ash trees from City owned parks and facilities”. This resolution will be “short circuited” and acted upon at the regularly scheduled common council December cycle. The precedent that this resolution will display to the public will be extremely important in the City of South Sioux City “leading by example” rather than dealing as a “reaction” to a situation.

Administration:

The Director of the Parks, Recreation, Building Inspection and Tree Board will be responsible for implementing and follow up on the provisions of this plan.

Communication:

The Mayor, City Council, Board of Public Works, Board of Parks will receive periodic updates through normal channels. All media relations will follow normal city protocol.

Boulevard Tree Strategy:

1. The City has adopted a policy of NOT planting any ash trees on public property or boulevards.
2. The city will recommend that citizens and businesses discontinue the use of ash in new plantings.
3. The City will remove boulevard ash trees at citizens' request using the procedure we have in place of splitting the cost 50% home owner and 50% city.
4. The City crew, in conjunction with private contractors, will remove poor quality trees or trees with major defects. Communication with the property owner will occur prior to removal.
5. Initial concentration of boulevard ash tree removal will focus on the highest density area of that species. To help our citizens with identification of Ash trees, the city will split the town up then mark street Ash trees along the streets.
6. Removed ash trees will be replaced on a 1:1 ratio. Species diversity is a planting objective that will better protect our community's urban forest. All replacement trees varieties will need to be chosen from The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum list.
7. Plantings will occur in the spring and fall per the department operating procedures and as funds are available.
8. Citizens are allowed to re-plant boulevard trees at their expense if they do not want to wait for the city to plant..
9. Citizens are "invited" via the local media to participate in "adopt a tree program" to treat their respective boulevard ash trees at their expense. Additionally the public will be asked to notify this department if they are participating in a treatment program. This department will keep a database of these trees/addresses.
10. \$20,000 is budgeted in the City of South Sioux City Capital Project 2017 budget specifically for the removal of ash trees.
11. City of South Sioux City street reconstruction projects commencing in the 2017 construction season and later dates, will make provision for the automatic removal (following communication with property owners) of adjacent ash trees (with the exception of those currently being treated by property owners). Additionally, funds will be provided for the replacement trees in each respective contract in the future.

Ash Trees Located On Private Property:

The City of South Sioux will not remove ash trees on private property. In the event that property owners do not remove dead trees, thereby eliminating potential liability issues for both themselves and others, current city codes provide for the “order to correct” and will be strictly enforced.

Objective:

1. Stay ahead of the EAB infestation to avoid a sudden impact to resources
2. Educate the public and act as a referral service to disseminate information
3. Remove trees that will cause safety issues
4. Replace trees on a ratio of 1:1
5. Spread out the removal and replacement program over a 7 year period for city park