What is the Emerald Ash Borer?
The Emerald Ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) is native to eastern Asia. It almost certainly entered the United States inside infested wooden crates, pallets, and other forms of wood packaging.

Where is the Emerald Ash Borer established?
The main Emerald Ash Borer infestation is found throughout much of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and in neighboring Ohio, Indiana, and Ontario, Canada. Smaller outbreaks have been found on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, in Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Ecological Threats from the Emerald Ash Borer
The Emerald Ash Borer threatens forests and neighborhoods throughout forested areas of North America.

The Emerald Ash Borer kills the trees it infests. Seven billion ash trees across the United States are at risk. Throughout the East and Midwest, and in portions of the West, ash trees are important street and shade trees in our cities and towns. In the wild, ash trees are most common in wetter sites, especially floodplains. Black ash swamps harbor significant biological diversity and would be profoundly impacted by Emerald Ash Borer. Ash trees also grow in parts of the West, including the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Pacific Coast states and along washes and springs in the desert southwest. The wetland and riparian trees protect water quality and many rare species and natural communities found within the forests.

Economic Consequences of Emerald Ash Borer

- Tree removal and replacement in rural, urban and suburban communities. Infested street and yard trees must be removed before they fall. At costs of $400 or more per tree, removal places a great expense on affected communities and homeowners. Hundreds of thousands to tens of millions of trees are at risk in towns from the Great Plains to the Atlantic, and potentially throughout California, Arizona and Nevada. A study by the USDA Forest Service determined that if the Emerald Ash Borer became established across the country, it could cause estimated losses to city trees of $20 to $60 billion. The city of Ann Arbor, Michigan alone has lost 10,000 trees at a direct cost of nearly $4 million.

- Threats to the timber industry in the Northeast. Ash wood is used for a variety of applications that require a strong, hard wood with less rigidity than maple. These uses include tool handles, containers, railroad cars and ties, canoe paddles, boats, doors and cabinets, furniture, and - most famously - baseball bats. Ash is also used for pulp and paper requiring hardwood fibers. If the Emerald Ash Borer spread further East, monetary losses in Eastern states might reach $25 billion, based on stumpage value. The estimated compensatory value of the nation’s 7 billion ash nationwide is $282 billion.
What is being done to prevent spread of the Emerald Ash Borer?

While the Emerald Ash Borer already infests a large area (see map), the vast majority of ashes is still outside areas known to be infested by the insect. Officials have adjusted their strategy to reflect these facts. Detection efforts will focus on a band 150 miles wide around known infestations. This will be supplemented by surveys at targeted high-risk sites - campgrounds, sawmills, recently landscaped properties, and rest areas along major transportation corridors, etc. - in willing states beyond that 150-mile wide detection zone. Most of the detection effort will now rely on baited traps instead of the more expensive trap trees used earlier. APHIS will fund eradication efforts only of outbreaks outside the 150-mile buffer, and then only if the outbreak is the result of a single, clearly defined human movement of the Emerald Ash Borer and is sufficiently recent to make eradication feasible. APHIS will continue enforcement of quarantines and other regulatory measures, assisted by outreach and public awareness campaigns. Research is showing promising results with both chemicals and biocontrol.

All these components of the plan must be funded adequately if containment is to succeed.

Benefits of Significantly Increased Funding

It is essential that APHIS and affected states carry out a comprehensive program over many years to counter the beetles’ spread by either natural movement from established populations or human movement of infested material. APHIS has quarantined nursery stock, firewood, and other potential vectors of the Emerald Ash Borer from the entire states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, as well as the lower peninsula of Michigan and the affected county of Maryland. APHIS is in the process of expanding the regulations to cover affected counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Funding History

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Cooperative Emerald Ash Borer Project
EAB locations in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and southwest Ontario, Canada
January 2, 2008
Ash Tree Distribution in the Lower 48 States
Species mapped are White, Green, Black, Blue, Pumpkin, Velvet, Carolina, and Oregon Ash

Map produced by ECI-ERO, 2007
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