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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Joe Martens, Commissioner

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## **DEC ANNOUNCES FOURTH ANNUAL EMERALD ASH BORER AWARENESS WEEK**

### **Residents Urged to Become Aware of Emerald Ash Borer and Report Infestations to DEC**

The fourth annual Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Awareness Week will be held from May 18 - May 24, 2014, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced today. In observance of EAB Awareness Week, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued a proclamation urging all New Yorkers to exercise environmental stewardship to protect trees from infestation that can be devastating to landscapes, habitats and forest product industries. State residents and visitors are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the emerald ash borer and the destruction it causes to trees.

“DEC’s Forest Health program protects publicly and privately held forests from forest pests, and the public is an important partner in the constant battle to keep New York’s trees healthy,” said Commissioner Joe Martens. “EAB Awareness Week is an opportunity to highlight and encourage New Yorkers to look for and report signs of infestations in an effort to mitigate the negative impacts of this destructive beetle.”

“The beginning of the camping season is quickly approaching and it is important to remind travelers in New York State to use only local firewood. The spread of these insects, and other forest pests, have been dramatically increased through human transport. By keeping firewood local and discovering infestations early, we have a greater chance in keeping these agents from changing the face of our forests, Commissioner Martens added.”

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, “Communities of all sizes are encouraged to participate in EAB Awareness Week activities since the borer negatively affects both rural and urban forests. There are 900 million ash trees in NYS and unless we continue to take action against this invasive pest, we will see a devastating impact both ecologically and economically.”

As part of EAB Awareness Week, DEC, the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and volunteers will post signs and tie ribbons on more than 6,000 ash trees along select streets and in parks around the state that are populated with ash trees. DEC will attach the signs to several ash trees in Albany’s riverfront park, the Corning Preserve, on May 19<sup>th</sup>. These signs will be among the hundreds that will be placed around Albany to inform citizens that those ash trees, and all of New York State’s 900 million ash trees, could be killed by the emerald ash borer.

**(MORE)**

The emerald ash borer, first discovered in New York in 2009, is an invasive insect that kills all types of ash trees. Twenty-two counties in New York currently have infestations and state agencies are working diligently to stop the movement of beetles out of these areas in firewood and other wood products. Tens of millions of ash trees have been killed in the United States by the emerald ash borer and all of the hundreds of millions of ash trees in New York are at risk.

To help slow the spread of EAB, all citizens are asked not to move firewood and to look for and report the signs of the beetle on ash trees. Citizens should be aware of New York State's firewood regulations (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/4079.html>), which restrict the movement of untreated firewood to 50 miles, and EAB quarantines, which prevent the spread of potentially infested materials.

DEC is continuing to pursue and promote a strategy called Slow Ash Mortality (SLAM) to slow the spread of EAB within the state and mitigate its devastating economic and environmental impacts. DEC's SLAM strategy encompasses a variety of approaches including removing infested trees, defining and monitoring infestation boundaries more precisely, and researching insecticides and organisms that will kill the insect.

DEC Land and Forests staff will be placing approximately 700 purple panel traps in high risk locations located near densely populated areas throughout the state. These traps have been used for the past several years, and have been instrumental in identifying EAB infestations across the state.

DEC forest health crews are attacking the infestations in all affected counties and the USDA Forest Service is actively participating in the efforts to slow the spread of this insect in the lower Hudson Valley. DEC conducts surveys to determine the extent of existing and new infestations and works with local communities to devise appropriate management responses. In some areas, these crews are also preparing special trap trees in the infested area so the beetles are enticed to stay nearby, where they can easily be destroyed next year. This technique dramatically reduces the rate of spread of the infestation and keeps it in a location where the trees with beetles in them can be identified.

To report possible infestations, fill out the Emerald Ash Borer Survey Form at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/72136.html> or for more information, visit the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov> and search "emerald ash borer," or call DEC's toll-free hotline at 1-866-640-0652.

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