

## **City of Rhinelander Response to the Emerald Ash Borer**

The City of Rhinelander received a DNR Grant in 2011 to perform an Urban Forestry Inventory and create an Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan. The scope of the work concentrated on City owned trees in the boulevards (basically the area between the sidewalk and the street curb). The tree inventory and Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) readiness plan marked a sincere commitment to Rhinelander's urban forestry program.

At that time nobody could have predicted when the emerald ash borer would arrive, it was assumed that the insect would arrive in Rhinelander at some point as it was gradually working its way throughout the State. As it turns out a borer was found in one of the purple traps at James Williams Middle School in 2014 well over 100 miles from any previous known infestation. Experience shows that the EAB is adept at hitching rides on firewood and other forest products. Infested trees were later discovered the following year on Pelham Street.

Oneida County was placed under quarantine in 2014 thus restricting/preventing transportation of forest products out of the County without a compliance agreement, which could possibly be obtained by working with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture personnel. The DNR, Oneida County and the City of Rhinelander held a community awareness program to outline what the quarantine entails as well as the history, life cycle and preventative measures associated with EAB. Numerous newspaper articles and television segments have appeared since EAB was found to help the citizenry cope with the insects.

The tree inventory compiled in 2011 documented 214 (12%) of the publicly owned trees in the boulevards in Rhinelander were ash. In 2015, landowners adjacent to each tree were informed that the City, in an effort to maintain a healthy urban forest, recommended preemptively removing the ash trees to better manage workloads and future urban forestry budgets. Homeowners were given the option of chemically treating the trees at their expense as well.

The City has been managing the EAB outbreak by chemically treating 56 of the best ash trees on City property. Also, City crews have been removing untreated less healthy ash trees as work schedules allow to help control the outbreak instead of it controlling us. Some tree replanting has been done with more to follow as time and resources allow.

The City received another DNR Urban Forestry Grant in 2016 to help defray some of the cost associated with EAB management, replacement of trees removed, as well as citizen education and development of a tree utilization plan.