

EAB Task Forces in NY

Project(s): CCE and local EAB task forces (Whitmore; 2012 – 2015).

Researcher: [Mark Whitmore](#)

Need: Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive, non-native beetle that will likely kill all species of ash in New York. First detected near Detroit in 2002, it is currently found in 25 states and 2 provinces and is responsible for killing millions of trees despite tremendous management interventions. The greatest impact has been felt in the urban environment, where communities must deal with the safety hazards posed by dead trees, including maintenance of roads and electrical infrastructure. Counties, municipalities, and landowners must make management decisions to mitigate EAB impact, and local EAB task forces can provide vital assistance in this process.

Approach: This project was designed to build capacity in local EAB task forces by using Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to disseminate information about EAB impacts and provide a forum for science-based decision-making in local governments. Seven local task forces were established to discuss current EAB research, management tactics, and local resources necessary for planning. The groups initiated a number of exciting activities, including tree tagging events, first detector trainings, tree inventories, workshops with municipalities, and educational events for homeowners.

Results and Impact: EAB task forces brought members of the community together and fostered a space for collaboration and planning among local stakeholders in all of the urban areas in New York. Surveys of task force members revealed universal agreement that the task force increased their understanding of the ecological, social, and economic impacts of EAB infestations, as well as early treatment and removal options. The results have been encouraging, with groups working together to raise awareness, develop plans to combat EAB, and produce multiyear budgets to mitigate economic impacts. The last two years have seen crucial increases in management planning and reductions in the overall costs of managing EAB, impacts of the project that will be evident in the landscape for years to come.