
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Forestry Health Management

Purpose and History

The Forestry Health Management Program is managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Iowa has approximately 3.1 million acres of forests, which support wildlife and recreation and provide other environmental benefits. This program is dedicated to monitoring, managing, and reducing insects and diseases that damage and harm Iowa's forests. Appropriated dollars allow the DNR flexibility to allocate money as needed to a variety of forestry health uses.

Top Threats to Iowa's Forests as Identified by the DNR

- **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB):** The EAB is a small beetle that attacks and kills ash trees. Beetle larvae tunnel under tree bark, eventually killing the ash tree, while the adults feed on tree leaves during summer months. According to the DNR, the EAB may potentially kill 100.0% of Iowa's 3.1 million ash trees. Infested trees die within two years.
- **Thousand Cankers:** This disease has not been found in Iowa, but the DNR is actively monitoring for it. The disease is caused by a small twig beetle that carries a fungus that spreads throughout black walnut trees as the beetle tunnels through trees. Black walnut trees are important to Iowa's wood products business. According to the DNR, Iowa has the third-largest volume (1.000 billion board feet) of sawlog-size black walnut in the U.S.
- **Asian Long-Horned Beetle (ALB):** This insect has not been discovered in Iowa, but the DNR is engaged in monitoring activities. The ALB primarily attacks maple trees, which are common in urban settings. The beetle's larvae tunnel through the tree, eventually killing the tree.
- **Gypsy Moth:** Larvae feed on leaves of over 300 species of trees during summer months, potentially defoliating the tree. Recurring defoliation may result in the decline of impacted trees and forests. Oak trees are a preferred food source. The gypsy moth has been identified in 10 northeastern counties.
- **Burr Oak Blight:** This is a newly discovered fungus that damages the leaves of burr oaks, potentially leading to defoliation. Infection, which tends to intensify in previously infected trees, may result in tree mortality. The disease has been found in most Iowa counties. Burr oaks are relied upon by wildlife for food and habitat and are a major wood product in Iowa.
- **Invasive Plants:** The DNR maintains a list of invasive plant species that impact forest health.

Monitoring and Management Programs Funded

- **Emerald Ash Borer Sentinel Trees:** These trees are double-girdled (bark removed near the base of the tree) and allowed to decline over a growing season in order to stress them intentionally. The

More Information

Department of Natural Resources Forest Health: iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Forest-Health
LSA Staff Contact: Debra Kozel (515.281.6767) deb.kozel@legis.iowa.gov

stressed trees lure nearby boring beetles away from other, healthy trees. At the end of the season, trees are removed and inspected for signs of beetle larvae.

- **Monitoring:** The DNR sets traps to monitor the spread of both twig beetles (thousand cankers) and the gypsy moth.
- **Visual Surveys:** The DNR conducts visual monitoring for signs of the ALB in eastern Iowa.
- **Community Tree Inventories:** The DNR recommends communities develop tree inventories and plans to manage insects and diseases that threaten trees. The DNR assists communities conducting tree inventories, which are important for future management and planning.

Funding History

The General Assembly first provided an appropriation for this program in FY 2012 from the Environment First Fund. Since then, the amount appropriated has varied over the years, and the Program has also been funded with General Fund money.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Administrative Code [571—34](#)

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