

## Coping with the Costs

### Conference Convened for Communities Coping with Invasive Insects

#### The Challenge

Communities in many States within the Northeastern Area are struggling with the threat or reality of substantial tree loss because of invasive insects such as the emerald ash borer and Asian longhorned beetle. Federal and State dollars are no longer available to remove these trees, and some communities are dealing with costs that may nearly equal or exceed their annual budgets.

Leaving dead and damaged trees standing is not an option because of the danger they pose. Apart from the economic costs, the social and environmental damage to communities is very real. With budgets stretched to the breaking point, many cities and towns can't afford replanting and restoration in the aftermath of an invasive insect infestation.

#### The Solution

In late September 2009, a conference was held in Chicago—Coping with the Costs: the Economic, Social, and Environmental Impacts of Invasive Insects on our Communities. It introduced community managers to potential resources for managing the economic impacts of invasive insects, minimizing further tree losses, and moving their community toward tree restoration in innovative ways. The conference featured presentations and panel discussions by regional and national experts, networking opportunities, and a field trip to emerald ash borer-affected communities in Chicago and its suburbs.

Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry personnel brought together the conference's organizers, including the Morton Arboretum, which hosted the event and handled its logistics; Purdue University; APHIS; and The Nature Conservancy.

This conference was of particular interest to community managers who are actively involved with invasive pest



*Attendees listen to a presentation at the Coping with the Costs conference.*

issues and groups that could provide potential resources to address these issues. The conference offered tools and networking opportunities to public, private, corporate, and institutional land managers to help them with the impacts on an invasive insect infestation.

#### Resulting Benefits

Over 100 people attended this conference from several Midwestern States, including Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota. Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois taped a video message to attendees that was well received and offered insight into options for affected communities. Networking sessions addressed topics such as cost factors in tree removal decisions, replanting, and the role of Federal agencies.

According to a conference evaluation, most participants viewed their experience as very positive and useful. The ability to network face to face with peers from other States was also frequently mentioned as a highlight.

#### Sharing Success

Presentations and other conference materials will be archived at [www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/).

*NA brought together community managers and potential sources of assistance to deal with the aftermath of an invasive insect infestation.*



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