

**Finding of No Significant Impact Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Efforts
in
Clermont and Brown Counties, Ohio**

**Environmental Assessment
September 2011**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for eradication of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) from a recently discovered infested site in Tate Township, Clermont County, Ohio, and any additional future finds in Clermont and Brown Counties, Ohio. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference. It is available online at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml and from-

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The EA analyzed two alternatives: (1) no action by APHIS to remove ALB-infested trees, and (2) the preferred alternative, to cut down and remove infested trees to prevent further spread of ALB. The eradication program includes the removal of infested trees and ALB host trees, followed by chipping, and grinding stumps or use of an herbicide on stumps to prevent re-growth. The eradication program also includes maintaining the current ALB quarantine and adding new areas to the quarantine if additional ALB-infested areas are discovered.

The ALB eradication program (preferred alternative) is a cooperative effort among APHIS, the U.S. Forest Service (FS), State cooperators, impacted municipalities, and local residents. APHIS and the cooperators share responsibility for survey; tree removal and destruction; replanting; and public outreach. APHIS has the lead responsibility in the areas of regulatory actions, control, survey, environmental monitoring, data management, public outreach, and technology enhancement. FS helps communities recover from tree loss with replanting efforts, and works with APHIS on technology enhancement issues, public outreach, and detection of infestations.

APHIS considered the potential environmental consequences of each alternative in the EA. The no action alternative could result in the spread of ALB throughout the area and across the country, thereby causing considerable damage to host plants and associated habitats. Successful implementation of the preferred alternative would result in negligible local impacts to wildlife habitat and an aesthetic impact to humans because of the cutting of host trees. Cutting is restricted to relatively small areas and only host trees, not all trees, are affected. Further, any impacts will be mitigated to the extent that USDA and the other cooperators replant trees. Impacts from the use of the herbicide triclopyr will be negligible. The potential for off-site movement via drift or runoff is very small as it would only be applied by hand sprayer or painted directly on the stumps of cut host material.

Based on the preferred alternative, cumulative effects are not anticipated. Effects from the quarantine and cutting are short-lived.

APHIS has determined that with the implementation of protection measures, the proposed program may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat, running buffalo clover, and rayed bean. The program will have no effect on the fanshell, pink mucket pearl mussel, sheepnose, and snuffbox. APHIS submitted the biological assessment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and received a letter of concurrence dated August 15, 2011. No program activities beyond Tate Township in Clermont County will occur without completing additional consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

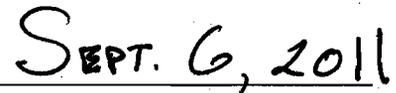
In March APHIS posted the EA on its Web site and in July placed announcements in local newspapers about its availability for public comment. The public comment period ended on September 2, 2011. APHIS received one comment, in support of the eradication program.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on past experience with ALB eradication efforts in Chicago, the New York metropolitan area (including New Jersey and Staten Island), and Massachusetts, the application of standard operating procedures for the applications, and the expected environmental consequences, as analyzed in the EA.

Further, I find the preferred alternative of removal and chipping or burning of host trees and herbicide treatment or grinding of stumps to be consistent with the principles of environmental justice as expressed in Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Families." Implementation of the preferred alternative will not result in any disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects on any minority populations or low-income populations. In addition, the preferred alternative is consistent with Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." There will be no disproportionate effects to the environmental health and safety of children with the implementation of this program. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed program, I further find that an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared and that the program may proceed.



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Date