



ABOUT NASF

The mission of the National Association of State Foresters is to represent state and territorial forester interests by influencing forest policy and leading efforts to promote healthy and sustainable trees and forests.

ABOUT USFS

The U.S. Forest Service mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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Protecting Northern New England's Forests from Harm with the Vermont Division of Forests



With support from the USDA Forest Service, Vermont's Urban and Community Forestry and Forest Health programs are achieving goals outlined in the state's Forest Action Plan.

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is a major threat to the native eastern hemlock and a partnership of three states is working to expand protection for the threatened trees.

The project has engaged at least 19 partners and 34 trained volunteers within Vermont, where 75 sites were monitored. The three states produced a 32 page guide on managing hemlock threatened by HWA.

Hemlock woolly adelgid and elongate hemlock scale are forest pests causing major damage throughout the native range of eastern hemlock, and are moving into the forests of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The three states worked in partnership to submit a Competitive Allocation Request for Proposals application. By receiving this grant, the three states were able to collaborate on activities to protect the productive capacity of hemlock in critical habitats, urban tree canopies, and timberlands.

This project was able to be successful in part due to the commitment and contributions of volunteers and other partners, the regional collaboration, and the coordinating roles of the USDA Forest Service and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Initiative.

Vermont's (VT) Urban and Community Forestry and Forest Health programs have been working with the University of Vermont Extension, the VT Agency of Agriculture, and the USDA to maintain a Forest Pest First Detector program. By the end of FY14, there were 147 trained volunteers in this program. In addition, relationships were developed with schools and colleges, conservation commissions, and other citizens concerned about forest health. In FY14, a total of 65 sites in 18 towns were surveyed to detect spread of hemlock woolly adelgid, with 34 volunteers participating in these surveys, reporting upwards of 187 volunteer hours.

“Hemlock woolly adelgid doesn't recognize state boundaries, so our fight to slow the spread shouldn't either. Working with our partners in New Hampshire and Maine, we've engaged volunteer first detectors to help in our surveillance efforts,” said Steven Sinclair, State Forester.

Regional collaboration was also key to the project's success. The three states worked together to adapt available information to northern conditions and to implement uniform methods. One outcome in FY14 was drafting the pictorial guide “Managing Hemlock in Northern New England Forests Threatened by Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Elongate Hemlock Scale”, drawing on resource managers in the three states for input and review. In FY14, Vermont worked with volunteers to install impact monitoring plots in five locations, and to monitor five winter mortality and three predator release sites. When added to data from 37 monitoring sites in the other two states, there will be meaningful information to help manage HWA in the colder parts of the infested area.

The project also succeeded thanks to the coordinating role of the US Forest Service. The survey protocols, management practices, and bio-controls used in this project were all developed through the HWA Initiative. Monitoring data was submitted to regional databases supported by the HWA Initiative to enhance its usefulness in HWA management decision-making. In FY14, Forest Health Protection provided support in designing and producing the hemlock management guide, as well as technical review. Monitoring data submitted to a database housed at Virginia Tech contributed to a report describing HWA winter mortality and recovery. *Photo credit: Caitlin Cusack; Chris Evans, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Bugwood.org.*