



PRC Invasive Pest Policy



Policy

Introduction

The County of Westchester manages thousands of acres of public lands including over 18,000 acres of parklands. The common denominators on these lands are trees and forests. As the largest single landowner within the County, we have the responsibility to be good stewards of this public property and set examples in the proper management of our natural resources. Our natural and planned forest resource provides tremendous benefits to the people of Westchester County. Besides obvious aesthetic values, forested lands provide economic values to property owners, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, pollution controls, storm water mitigation, carbon sequestration, wood products, agricultural resources, recreational opportunities, historical information, and the air we breathe. The true value of these benefits is in the billions of dollars.

Due to a number of outside influences including development, over browsing by deer, poor land management and invasive plants and pests, the forest resource is challenged in Westchester County. As a living ecosystem, forested land needs to regenerate over time. It is a renewable resource. However, this regeneration is hampered by these challenges and requires intervention to allow native trees to grow from seed to maturity.

During the past century invasive plants, foreign insects and diseases have been introduced to forests in North America. Due to lack of natural controls and/or lack of resistance, many of native forest trees have been threatened, and a few such as the American chestnut, have been brought to the edge of extinction. Recent insect pests such as the emerald ash borer (EAB) and Asian long horned beetle (ALB) are within striking distance of Westchester County. Our native forest is threatened by these non-native pests, which has the potential to cause significant economic and environmental hardship to Westchester County.

It is therefore the intention of Westchester County to take all precautionary measures practicable to prevent, manage and control invasive pests in our forests.

THE PLAN

The first step will be education. The County will inform key personnel within all departments managing property, including but not limited to Parks, Recreation & Conservation (PRC), Public Works, Westchester Community College, Environmental Facilities, Planning, Health, Airport, and Solid Waste Transfer Stations. The County will consult with Cooperative Extension, NYSDEC, NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSA&G) and the US Forest Service to formulate a policy and educational information on invasive pests and provide it to these personnel along with appropriate training. PRC will take the lead in public information along with Cooperative Extension by providing information to the general public. Additionally, this information will be provided to the supervisor of every City, Town and Village in Westchester County and County organizations such as the Turf & Landscape Association, WRAPS, 9th District of NYS garden Clubs, Teatown Lake Reservation, various public nature centers and preserves. As challenges present themselves PRC will host appropriate public information workshops in coordination with Cooperative Extension.

It will be County policy to locate and destroy any invasive plant, insect or disease where practicable and within our means on County property. A list of some of these species is enclosed and will be updated as necessary. The methods used will be manual, chemical, biological or a combination of any, in full compliance of Westchester County and NYSED pesticide rules and regulations. Various control methods will be provided in our educational materials. The PRC Conservation Division will provide information and training to the general public through a series of scheduled programs at our Nature

Centers, County Center and Lasdon Park & Arboretum in coordination with Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYSA & M and NYSDEC as necessary. The Department of Planning will also provide additional information to local planners and officials to avoid using invasive plants in landscape designs to avoid susceptible plants in their designs.

Effective immediately, the following rules will apply:

I. Pre-infestation Practices

1. Wood of any kind will not be permitted to enter any County facility, especially parks, to be used for firewood. The only exception will be wood generated at that facility or wood that is certified kiln dried. Any person(s) found to violate this ban will forfeit their arrangement and the firewood will be confiscated and destroyed. Appropriate firewood will be sold by every facility authorized to allow campfires in order to accommodate the public or provide guidance on locating acceptable kiln dried firewood.
2. Firewood generated by any County facility may not be transported out of the County.
3. The County will not plant or design any landscape plan that includes invasive plants identified on the official list of invasive plants.
4. Trees of the genus *Fraxinus* (ash) will not be recommended to be planted within Westchester County.
5. The Parks Department will generate a list of important trees on County lands that will receive priority in preventative and protective actions when a serious threat to their survival is determined by the County.

II. Quarantine Practices

In the event of an invasive pest establishing within Westchester County that results in quarantine declaration:

1. Westchester County will comply with all State and Federal laws regulating an invasive pest and the official declaration of quarantine.
2. Firewood or any untreated natural wood may not leave the generating site.
3. Any waste wood that is generated will be either destroyed on site or disposed of according to state and federal guidelines. Any wood transported out of the County will comply with state and federal guidelines that require it to be either declared safe by a certified inspector or delivered to an approved facility.
4. Logs generated for any wood product must be either chipped down to one inch in two dimensions or be transported to a certified (by NYS Agriculture & Markets) in winter months only.
5. State and Federal quarantine laws will be enforced by NYSA&G, NYSDEC and NYS Police.
6. PRC will generate a list of significant trees on Westchester County Parklands that will receive priority tree care that will include preventative and curative pesticide applications where possible.

III. Emerald Ash Borer and Wood Waste Practices

If EAB is confirmed to be in Westchester County, the entire County will have declared under Quarantine by NYS Agriculture & Markets (NYSA&G). Any and all wood waste may be disposed of within Westchester County without regulation. EAB is specific to ash trees only, but we will have to prove that all waste wood within a waste container is free of any ash wood. If wood from any *Fraxinus* (ash) species (any tree limb, twig, stem, roots, stumps or logs over 1 inch in diameter) is transported out of the County the following regulations apply:

A. If Westchester County is connected to another County(s) under Quarantine and deposited within another Quarantined county:

1. The transporter or hauler should be certified by NYSA&G to transport wood out of the County. However, the hauler will be required to prove that the waste being transported did not pass through a county or State that was not quarantined.

2. The waste wood should be required to be deposited in a NYSA&G certified facility. However, the facility must be certified if the facility receiving our wood waste then transports it out of their facility to another location outside of the Quarantine area.
3. Leaves and twigs (under 1 inch in diameter) are not regulated.

B. If Westchester County has to transport waste wood through or to a county(s) not under EAB Quarantine:

1. The transporter or hauler must be certified by NYSA&G to transport wood out of the County.
2. The waste wood will be required to be deposited to a NYSA&G certified facility.
3. Wood may only be transported out of Westchester County in winter months.
4. Wood may be composted, burned or stockpiled within Westchester County without certification.
5. Wood chipped less than 1 inch in diameter in two dimensions and certified by NYSA&G may be transported out of Westchester County to any location.
6. NYSA&G must certify all chippers and haulers on an annual basis until the Quarantine is lifted.

C. Transporting to Connecticut:

1. The State of Connecticut has promulgated rules and regulations regarding EAB similar to New York and Westchester County must comply.
2. No waste wood may be transported over the Connecticut State line without a permit from the Director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

IV. Asian Long Horned Beetle (ALB) Practices

1. If ALB is discovered within Westchester County, a radius of up to 2 miles (or greater as directed by State agencies) from the center of the infestation will be declared under Quarantine by NYSA&G.
2. No wood of any size or species will be allowed to leave the Quarantine area unless it chipped to no larger than 1/2 inch in two dimensions and certified by NYSA&G. Chippers must be certified by NYSA&G.
3. Leaves are exempt but cannot have any twigs or branches mixed in which is difficult to accomplish, therefore it is best to not move any leaves out of an ALB Quarantine zone.
4. These regulations will remain in effect until NYSA&G declares the Quarantine over.

V. Invasive Plant Practices

The following plants and trees are considered to be invasive and a threat to the native woodlands in Westchester County and will not be recommended or planted on County property. The Department will make every effort possible to eradicate these species within County native forests:

Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)
 Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
 Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
 Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)
 Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)
 Barberry (*Berberis* sp.)
 Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
 Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculata*)
 Black Swallowwort (*Cynanchum nigrum*)
 Russian Olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*)
 Autumn Olive (*Eleagnus umbellata*)
 Burning Bush – (*Euonymus alatus*)
 Japanese Hops (*Humulus japonicus*)
 Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)

Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
Japanese silt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*)
Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)
Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
Mile-a-Minute Vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*)
Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*)
Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)
Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

VI. Invasive Control Practices

The Parks Department will try to eliminate invasive plants on at least 1% of native woodland presently found on PRC lands every year. This represents approximately 120 acres annually. This will be accomplished in the following methods:

1. Mechanical Controls (cutting, pulling, pruning and chipping)
2. Biological Controls (biological pesticides, introduction of predators and pathogens)
3. Chemical Controls (herbicides)
4. Planting Schemes (planting to increase shade to inhibit invasive plant growth)

The Department will use volunteers and staff to identify the work areas and schedule work parties. Sites will be selected on a priority basis where aesthetics, wildlife habitat, native regeneration, water quality, access, and environmental significance will be major factors. As each site will vary in environmental conditions along with the invasive plant species, the site manager will formulate a work plan to address the challenges. The County Forester and Curators will provide significant input for these practices. Restoration sites will be identified on a priority basis and be submitted to the Director of Conservation by January 15 annually. Invasive plant eradication practices will be dependent upon species and environmental conditions. Annual restoration sites should be completed by December 1.

Last Review: March 2022

Last Updated: March 2022