

Forester Focus: Tim Fleury, Merrimack County

May 20, 2016

TIM vs. EAB: *Tim Fleury's role in the fight with emerald ash borer (EAB)*

This article is the fourth in a series by Alicia Carlson, forest stewardship program outreach assistant, that looks into the day-to-day work of UNH Cooperative Extension's county foresters. We will publish an article focused on each county forester and a different aspect of the role they play in managing New Hampshire's forests.

Tim Fleury knows a thing or two about the emerald ash borer (EAB). He's been ensconced in the battle against the invasive pest since it was first discovered in New Hampshire in March 2013. As Tim is quick to point out, there are many players in this battle. But Tim plays a pivotal role in educating landowners, natural resource professionals, and community leaders about the steps they can take to help slow the spread of EAB.

I recently went on a landowner visit with Tim in Merrimack County, where Tim is the county forester for UNH Cooperative Extension. We met a consulting forester who manages a good-sized property in Canterbury. (If you haven't seen the map of the emerald ash borer infested area recently, [check this out](#): Canterbury is in the heart of the red zone and trees within the town are quickly being killed by the ½-inch beetle.)



We walked around the property with the consulting forester. Tim had his eyes on the canopy of the still-leafless trees as we walked. The consulting forester is concerned about the state of the ash trees on the property and was looking for advice from Tim about how soon the landowner should think about removing her ash trees. Although we didn't see any imminent signs of an EAB presence, Tim told us, "It's likely the trees are already infested, given the proximity to other infestations. Two years ago, I looked at ash trees on Borough Road (in Canterbury) and they looked fine; now they're dead." Tim advocates for removing ash trees within an infested area before they start dying. It's safer for the person cutting the trees, since EAB infested trees start falling apart from the top.

Tim knows about EAB and has seen its effects. He participated in the initial sampling in Concord to find infested trees. Back in 2013, it was difficult to find trees in Concord with outward signs of EAB infestation. Now, three years later, it's harder to find an ash tree that's not blonded or dying. Tim told me, "Very soon, we'll start to see a lot more mortality of ash trees around Concord, Canterbury and Loudon. It'll make the issue even more visible and bring more questions from the public."

Depending on which part of the county he's in, Tim provides different advice to landowners. "Most people have heard about EAB, but they don't always know the symptoms," said Tim. Most people want to know what they can do with their trees. Tim says one option is to "do nothing." Some people are treating their trees with pesticides, but we don't have a good record to let us know how many landowners choose this option. Tim visited a woodlot in Wilmot recently and he advised that EAB will likely reach them within the next 10 years. They can consider harvesting then.

Tim also works with communities to let them know their options. He talks with community leaders about the costs associated with EAB. He helps them think about whether it's more appropriate to take down and replace their roadside trees or to set up a treatment plan. Treating ash trees can be cheaper than removal, particularly for larger trees.



Tim partners with several agencies and organizations in his outreach efforts. Representatives from the city of Concord, N.H. Division of Forests and Lands, UNH Cooperative Extension, and N.H. Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food were on-hand for a recent workshop about the state of Concord's trees. These groups have worked together on many outreach activities and they participate in committees to keep each other up-to-date on new research and regulations.

For instance, forest health specialists with the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands are [researching biocontrols](#) for EAB. They've called on Tim to help them find suitable locations to release predatory wasps in EAB-infested areas. They're looking for locations on the edges of known infestations where the trees are infested, but not heavily. And they're looking for smaller diameter trees so the wasps have an easier time finding the EAB. So far, they've seen some [promising preliminary results](#) that show the wasps may be having an effect on the EAB populations. And the forest health specialists are looking for more places to release them. Tim took me to a new potential site along the Merrimack River where they hope to release wasps this spring.

There's also potential for research at an old tree nursery. Tim and his colleague Amy Papineau, a horticulture specialist with UNH Cooperative Extension, recently stumbled upon an abandoned nursery where Amy noticed several different cultivars of ash trees. She immediately saw the potential to research the resistance of different subspecies of ash to EAB. Tim has been in contact with the landowner and the U.S. Forest Service to see if they're interested in partnering.

Of course, EAB has now spread far beyond the Concord city limits. It's been found in several more towns in Merrimack County, plus towns in 3 other counties: Rockingham, Hillsborough and Belknap. Tim has provided assistance to the county foresters in the other counties, since he's now our resident expert on the subject (like it or not!). Tim says about emerald ash borer, "There isn't a more important story in Merrimack County." Luckily, we have people like Tim who are leading the fight for us.



Photos, top to bottom: Tim Fleury discusses ash management with a consulting forester. (photo by Alicia Carlson) Tim Fleury takes a closer look at serpentine galleries left by EAB larvae. (photo by Amy Papineau) Tim Fleury stands among an abandoned nursery of ash cultivars. (photo by Amy Papineau)