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Perspective

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Greetings from the Ohio Division of Forestry. The division has been involved with many different issues this year and I'd like to update you on two of them: Asian longhorned beetle and state forest certification.

As you may have read in the previous issue of *The Ohio Woodland Journal*, an infestation of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) has been discovered in southwestern Ohio. The division has been working hard to minimize the impact of this invasive insect.

As of mid-September, ALB is confined to Clermont County in southwestern Ohio. Research is still being conducted on the age of this infestation, but current estimates are five to seven years. The exact method of entry for ALB is still unknown, but is believed to have been on wood packaging material.

With federal funding support, the Division of Forestry has assigned three division foresters to assist the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and the Ohio Department of Agriculture in conducting delimiting surveys. This means that they are inspecting every host tree within the core area of Tate and Monroe townships of Clermont County for visible damage such as egg sites and exit holes. Host trees for ALB include maples, elms, buckeyes (including horsechestnut), willows, birch, and ash. Additional division foresters are assisting at various times as well.

To date, more than 36,000 trees have been surveyed, with more than 2,700 infested trees identified. Once the core area surveys are complete, all host trees within a mile and a half of each known infested tree will be surveyed.

A contract bid process for tree removal in the area has been initiated. Once the contract has been awarded and all environmental assessments have been met, tree removals will begin. Infested trees will be removed and chipped to destroy all life stages of ALB. Removals may begin as early as this winter.

After the initial removal efforts, three consecutive surveys of all host trees in the area must be conducted. In order for the infestation to be declared eradicated, these three surveys must reveal no signs of ALB.

The second issue that I want to update you on – state forest certification – is also important for Ohio's forests. Last year the division announced that Ohio's 21 state forests had met the stringent environmental and social standards required for certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® program and the Forest Stewardship Council® program.

State forests are now the only certified timberlands in the state. There are already at least three forest products companies in Ohio that are able to take advantage of state forest certified timber by selling certified products in the marketplace. Consumers purchasing products made from wood grown in Ohio's state forests can be assured that they are making a "green" choice.

In order to achieve this certification, the division demonstrated to independent, third-party auditors that our forest management met standards related to the protection of biodiversity and water quality, public involvement and transparency, and sustainable timber harvesting. The division was given exceptionally high marks for our support of forest research, our commitment to logger education, and our outreach to private landowners. This certification also requires the division to undergo annual audits of Ohio's state forests to ensure compliance in demonstrating our continued commitment to sustainable management. This year the inspection was held during the third week of September.

Final audit reports from the initial certification process can be read on our website at: <http://ohiodnr.com/Default.aspx?tabid=22816>. As soon as they are available, final reports from the 2011 compliance audit will be posted there as well.