



## NSRC Progress Report 2022

### Building Stewardship Capacity: Protecting the Brown Ash of the Northern Forest

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#### Project Abstract

This project's goal is to advance the use of practices that will help sustain brown ash on the Northern Forest landscape. Brown ash has cultural significance to local Indigenous tribes and is threatened by the emerald ash borer (EAB). Researchers work in tandem with Tribal partners to identify adaptive management strategies that can be supported by the Wabanaki to slow the spread of EAB and promote ash regeneration. The project will inform landowners about the cultural significance of ash to Tribal communities. Long term, the project aims to improve relationships among landowners and Tribal communities as it relates to sustaining Tribal culture and enrolling more landowners in monitoring programs. The project will develop best management practices for brown ash conservation in Maine using scientific and traditional knowledge. Through a partnership with the Wabanaki Youth in Science Program (WaYS), the project will engage a Tribal youth with an interest in the forestry profession to assist in the field work of this project and educate youth on local conservation.

#### Progress in 2022

Graduate student Tyler Everett has led efforts in securing memoranda of understandings with all six study sites participating in the management trials. Within these memoranda of understandings is an outline of expected experimental treatments to be incorporated into the management at each site. Mr. Everett and others from UMaine also presented this project to Mi'kmaq Nation Tribal Council and visited the site accompanied by the Tribal Forester, Jon Scott; Tribal Planner, Dena Winslow; and Vice Chief and Master Basket Maker Richard Silliboy. The details of the project and future plans were discussed in great detail among all and, pending IRB approval, the project can continue soon. Mr. Everett also worked to finalize and submit the IRB application to hold four community meeting focus group sessions within each Tribal Nation partner community. This includes a community meeting with the following Tribal Nation partners: Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi'kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point Sipayik, and the Penobscot Nation. Inventory and field work are right around the corner. Mr. Everett has made progress in mapping study sites for this inventory field work and has also created a job posting in partnership with the Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS) program for a Forest Research Technician to support field work components.



*Richard Silliboy, Vice Chief of Mi'kmaq Nation and master basket maker, works on a basket he led the construction of while coaching along APCA lab group members.*



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### Problems or Changes

In June 2022, an EAB detection was reported in Waterville, ME. The detection was investigated by the Maine Forest Service and through delimitation surveys and further exploration into the impacts of the site it is hypothesized that this is a satellite infestation that has likely been present at the site for a number of years before the detection was reported. In response to this Waterville detection and others, the Maine Forest Service has issued an emergency order setting forth temporary quarantine rules in new portions of Oxford, Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Somerset counties. Given the proximity of this Waterville detection to the Central Maine study site locations, we are on standby for experimental treatment of these sites until quarantine boundaries and guidance are updated by the Maine Forest Service. This is being done out of an abundance of caution for spreading EAB any further than it has spread thus far.

### Plans for 2023

Community meeting focus group sessions are scheduled to occur in spring 2023. At these meetings, the research team will garner information about the priorities of the Tribal Nation community in management response to emerald ash borer. With this information, the team can finalize the experimental treatments for all six study sites, ensuring that they meet Tribal priorities and answer necessary questions posed by meeting participants. Pre-treatment inventory is expected to occur at each study site in spring 2023. During this spring entry into the field, EAB monitoring efforts will be initiated as trap trees. Study site treatments are expected to occur in summer 2023, which will be followed immediately after with post-treatment inventory. EAB monitoring results for study site trap trees will be developed during peeling events in partnership with the Maine Forest Service in fall 2023. Elements of this work, the research and engagement process, and goals will be shared at the 2023 National Native Seed Conference, The New England Society of American Foresters 2023 Annual Meeting, and the 2023 New England Forest Pest Council Annual Meeting. Additional outreach and education opportunities are also planned in 2023. The lab group leading this research from the University of Maine is the Ash Protection Collaboration Across Wabanakik and, starting in March 2023, the lab group will be kicking off an informational in-person and virtual webinar training series highlighting this project and others focused on protecting ash in the Dawn Land.

### Collaboration

Meeting with project partners has been a critical aspect of this project. Partners in this project have been assisted in various presentation opportunities for the project. For example, our USFS and Forest Stewards Guild partners have been supportive of assisting with presentation opportunities, often partaking in presentations or moderating sessions. Our efforts and approach to this project has been shared as follows.

- Featured on the United South and Eastern Tribes Forest and Wetland Webinar Training Series
- Presented at the 2022 NESAF Annual Meeting; as part of the USFS Forest Service Talk Series ([Article and Recorded Webinar](#)); as part of the USDA NIFA Webinar Series; at the 2022 National Adaptation Forum; to the Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Agency Retreat Event; to the public during the Maine Audubon Society Native Plant Sale and the Common Ground Fair; to the Maine Land Trust Network during their semi-annual meeting.
- Aspects of this work and prior work was shared with Dartmouth College Students in the colleges' Environmental Studies Program

Sharing the goals and priorities of Tribal Nation partners through this research project not only has helped further define the path of this research project, but it also has strengthened the extensive network of collaborators focused on ash preservation and protection.