



ASH LISTENING SESSIONS FINAL REPORT

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PREPARED FOR THE
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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ASH LISTENING SESSIONS

Final Report

May 4, 2010 Grand Rapids

May 6, 2010 Eagan

Background

The exotic emerald ash borer (EAB) was first discovered in the United States in Detroit, Michigan, in 2002. The pest is believed to have arrived in this country from China in wooden shipping crates or pallets. Today, the EAB has been confirmed in 13 states and is responsible for the death of over 30 million ash trees in southeastern Michigan alone.

In April 2009 EAB was confirmed in Vernon county Wisconsin, across the Mississippi River from Houston county, Minnesota. In May 2009, EAB was found in a St. Paul neighborhood and, in 2010, in the Prospect Park East River Road neighborhood of Minneapolis. To date, three counties in Minnesota are under a quarantine: Houston, Ramsey, and Hennepin.

Nationwide, Minnesota has the third highest population of ash species including the native black, green and white. The ash resource in the state is significant, comprising nearly 8% of the total forested volume for all species across all ownerships (16.8 million cords). Ash also comprises a significant portion of the urban forest resource (estimated at 6.4% or approximately 3 million trees).¹

A management premise adopted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is that it is likely that the vast majority of ash trees in Minnesota will eventually be killed by EAB regardless of actions taken. Consequently, the use of market forces to encourage and facilitate utilization is an important strategy for reducing the cost and increasing the effectiveness of forest and urban stand preparation and sanitation work necessitated by the arrival of EAB.

Since efficient and wise utilization of ash resources is crucial in minimizing negative ecological and economic impacts, the Minnesota DNR is developing a *Utilization and Marketing Plan for Ash*. As part of the plan's development, input was gathered via survey with current industrial users of ash species, and through two "listening sessions" that included a wide variety of stakeholders. This report focuses on the input received through the two listening sessions.

Listening Sessions

In May, 2010 two ash listening sessions were held. The first session took place on May 4 at the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids and the second at the Lebanon Hills Visitor Center in

¹ Source: Rapid Assessment of Ash and Elm Resources in Minnesota Communities, Forestry Division, MN DNR.

Eagan. The purpose of the listening sessions was to gather stakeholder input for use in development of an ash utilization and marketing plan.² The “plan” is being developed to help accomplish management and mitigation strategies through the use of market forces.

Participants at the sessions represented a diverse group of stakeholders including representatives from communities, landowner groups, wood industries (large and small), urban tree service firms, non-governmental organizations, universities, public agencies, and others. Specific stakeholders (or their organizations) were selected to receive an invitation to the sessions through recommendations provided by members of a planning committee.³ All potential attendees received a short questionnaire consisting of a series of “trigger” questions that would be used at the listening sessions to gather input. An RSVP was also requested to ensure an accurate head count of attendees. Approximately 30 stakeholders participated at the Grand Rapids session and approximately 35 at the Eagan session.

The conduct of the listening sessions at both locations followed a similar format. Following general housekeeping instructions, introductions and an explanation of “purpose of session”, two presentations were made by DNR personnel on (1) EAB and Forest Health and (2) EAB and Utilization, Marketing and Management. The intent of the presentations was to bring all stakeholders to a common (minimal) level of understanding of EAB and the issue at hand. Next, the facilitator (Dovetail Partners) explained the process for gathering input from stakeholders. This process included dividing the large group into small groups of 4-6 individuals including one person serving as a “leader” to facilitate discussion and capture notes. Each small group worked through a series of key questions, ranking the top 2-3 items per question.⁴ Twice during the day, the small groups re-assembled into one large group and presented their high priority brainstorming results (with the high priority items recorded on flip charts). At the end of the day, stakeholders voted (anonymously) on their highest priority items for questions 1 -3 (time did not permit the ranking of results from all nine questions). See Appendix 2 for a list of priority items for questions 1 – 4 and 9.

Results for Key Questions

Since time did not permit a thorough discussion of all questions by stakeholders, questions 1-4 and 9 were designated as “key” or “must answer” questions by the planning committee. The following are the results for questions 1-4 and 9.

² A draft internal DNR document has been prepared on ash *management* guidance for rural forests

³ The ash listening session planning committee was comprised of individuals from the MN Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture, University of Minnesota (Duluth and Twin Cities campus), Minnesota Forest Resources Council and Dovetail Partners, Inc.

⁴ See Appendix 1 for the questions discussed at the listening sessions.

Question 1. What are the biggest challenges or hurdles to existing, and potentially expanded, ash markets and utilization?

Three highly ranked priority items were identified at both the Grand Rapids and Eagan sessions (highlighted in red in Appendix 2). These priorities are summarized as:

1. Lack of information and education on ash markets including access to existing markets (currently limited) and developing markets; utilization options; and wood properties.
2. Lack of information and education on the ash resource including lack of inventory data (especially on private property in communities).
3. Quarantines especially simplifying transport and regulatory aspects.

Two unique priority items identified in Grand Rapids, and reflecting the rural make-up of the participants, are:

- Administrative roadblocks to selling large tracts of ash
- When ash use increases, what happens to other species?

A unique priority item identified in Eagan, and reflecting the urban make-up of the participants, is:

- Developing “staging areas” to collect cut material and do processing and compliance

Eagan participants also prioritized two separate items that dealt with lack of infrastructure to properly address ash management and utilization including shortages of staff and community capacity.

Question 2. What are your recommendations or ideas for expanding markets for ash wood?

Developing a Minnesota Wood (buy local) effort was recommended as a local, regional and national campaign by the Grand Rapids group. The Eagan session identified four separate recommendations (two high priority) that touched on the theme of promoting, buying and using local wood including creating incentives to do so. Recommendations from both of these groups are highlighted in red Appendix 2.

The recommendation to develop niche and biomass markets was prioritized by both groups, and the notion of “cooperative actions” was prioritized by both groups but to much lesser extent in Grand Rapids.

Consequently, the top three priorities addressed by both groups are summarized as follows:

1. Engage local government units, architects, designers, procurement folks and others to “buy local” by promoting the use of Minnesota wood (including lumber products as well as mulch, biomass, etc.).
2. Develop niche markets for ash including biomass opportunities that promote green energy and community district heating.
3. Develop cooperative (combined) processing operations (including debarking), cooperative sales efforts, and cooperative community and industry relationships.

A unique priority from the Grand Rapids session (and not identified in Eagan) is:

- Provide more technical wood products assistance to industry

Question 3. What are your information and training needs (“gaps”) regarding EAB/utilization and marketing of ash?

Both the Grand Rapids and Eagan sessions placed a high priority on a public relations and promotional effort regarding ash utilization and marketing (highlighted in red in Appendix 2). Although to a lesser extent in Grand Rapids, both locations recognized the notion of a one-stop informational shop for landowners and other affected parties. These common priorities can be summarized as follows:

1. Need to develop promotional and public relations tools to keep EAB ash markets and utilization in front of the public.
2. Need to develop a one-stop informational shop for landowners and other interested parties including specifics on where and when to get help, strategies, action steps, and so forth.

Two unique high priority information and training needs from Grand Rapids (and not identified in Eagan) included:

- Reforestation and replacement after EAB [although this is more of a management need versus a marketing and utilization need]
- More information from other states on past experiences, lessons learned, and examples as to what they have done (Michigan in particular)

High priority information and training needs from Eagan (and not identified in Grand Rapids) are summarized as:

- Need to develop local wood processor directories including connecting users (industry) to communities.
- Need “how to” of on-site processing of a variety of products (utilization options) for small communities.

Also, the Eagan session again (see above, Question 2, priority #3) identified the importance of cooperation between communities by expressing a need for:

- Cooperative licensing/permitting between communities.

Responses to questions 4 and 9 were gathered, prioritized and captured on flip charts by the small groups during a report-out to the large group. However, ranking of priorities by the large group was not done.

Question 4. What concerns (if any) do you have about greater utilization of ash?

Both the Grand Rapids and Eagan stakeholders expressed concerns regarding ramping up ash utilization and the impact on other species in the short-term, and then followed by long-term disruptions once the ash resource base disappears. This concern addressed both non-ash resource implications and the re-tooling of infrastructure. A second concern that surfaced in both stakeholder groups was the feasibility of greater ash utilization regarding bio-based energy. Both of these concerns are summarized as follows:

1. Concern about the “boom and bust” nature of ash including the impact on other species and infrastructure.
2. Concern about not only “how” to stimulate a bio-based energy market but “where” to site biomass energy facilities including (with) community acceptance.

Additional concerns regarding greater utilization of ash can be found in Appendix 2.

Question 9. Any other thoughts we have not covered that you would like to share on ash utilization and marketing challenges, needs, concerns, strategies or opportunities?

This question provided stakeholders an opportunity to address key topics or interest areas that were missed in earlier questions (and/or responses). The question also gave stakeholders a chance to re-emphasize priority areas that were discussed earlier or highlight pet peeves (get things off their chest). “Other thoughts” were not ranked by the large group but the listing in Appendix 2 is the outcome of important issues brought forward by the small groups.

The “firewood issue” is one “new” priority that surfaced at both the Grand Rapids and Eagan sessions. Also, previously discussed topics relating to regulations/quarantines and collection yards/cooperatives also made the short list of “other thoughts” at both sessions. These three priorities are summarized as follows:

1. Need to better develop and expand the DNR/MDA firewood initiative/certification program.

2. Need to develop cooperatives, collection yards (logs and other wood articles) and storage sites (lumber for ex.).
3. Need reasonable regulations and the capacity to enforce quarantines.

Two additional priorities that were discussed earlier but only surfaced at one of the sessions for question 9 were:

- Need a list of utilization companies (Eagan), and
- Need to market to local or small interest groups (MN Grown) (Eagan)
- (Also, one item that was recorded in discussions but NOT brought forward from a small group to the large is the importance within tribal communities of the “need to recognize the cultural significance of the ash resource”) (Grand Rapids)

Results for Questions 5 – 8

Questions 5 – 8 were considered “second tier” (if time permits questions) and were addressed to varying degrees by stakeholders. The following is a summary of highlights for questions 5 – 8.

Question 5. What are the information gaps (if any) regarding your understanding/knowledge of quarantine regulations/compliance agreements related to safe transport and processing of ash? Do you have recommendations or ideas for how quarantines or regulations could be changed to better facilitate utilization of ash, while still maintaining safe transport and processing to prevent EAB spread?

The small group discussions on question 5 were similar between Grand Rapids and Eagan in that both groups were concerned that overly restrictive regulations or illogical quarantine boundaries could severely hamper ash utilization. In Grand Rapids, the issue was raised that quarantine boundaries must consider industry utilization options (i.e., benefits must outweigh costs and if regulations are too severe than industry is limited in its ability to help solve a problem). Also, there was a recommendation that ash products less likely to spread the EAB should be promoted. In Eagan, two stakeholder groups (small groups) specifically raised the issue of moving ash materials along I-694 between two quarantined counties (Hennepin and Ramsey) and one non-quarantined county (Anoka). Also, in Eagan there was discussion and a sense of confusion between quarantine regulations and firewood movement restrictions including non-ash hardwood firewood.

Consequently, four priority items (unranked) can be summarized as follows:

1. Regulators need to consider market (utilization) implications when establishing quarantine boundaries (Grand Rapids and Eagan priority).

2. Promote ash products less likely to spread EAB (i.e., chips, pellets, kiln dried lumber) (Grand Rapids).
3. There is a need to clarify, promote and educate stakeholders on the differences between firewood movement restrictions and quarantines (Eagan priority).
4. The I-694 corridor in the Twin Cities between Hennepin and Ramsey counties should be included in (or exempted from) the current EAB quarantine (Eagan priority).

Question 6. What local or state government regulatory structures, ordinances and incentives could be created in your community or region to foster growth and support of an ash utilization program?

In Grand Rapids and Eagan a number of items surfaced that were highlighted in earlier questions. These can be summarized into the following (unranked) priorities:

1. Provide education followed by incentives to favor ash in local projects (incentives could include tax free mill sites, tax reductions for delivering ash to local collections yards, right-of-first refusal on ash wood to local producers, etc.) (Grand Rapids and Eagan)
2. Focus on cooperative approaches including collection yards and regional resource centers (Grand Rapids and Eagan).
3. Develop a networking directory for communities to use in establishing community and industry linkages (Grand Rapids).

Question 7. What groups/organizations could be enlisted to support an ash utilization and marketing program?

At both Grand Rapids and Eagan, this question produced a list (unranked) of groups and organizations:

Grand Rapids

Private Landowners
 USFS
 USDA
 DNR
 Tribal Governments (*)
 Industry
 Chambers of Commerce (*)
 Transportation Networks
 Building Associations (*)
 Forest Product Firms

Eagan

Tree Care Advisors
 Tree Inspectors
 Cooperatives
 Energy Companies
 Master ...
 Crafter Associations (*)
 Scenic Byways Commissions (*)
 Alternative Wood Producers (*)
 Grass Root Green Initiatives (USGBC) (*)

Many of the groups and organizations listed above were involved in one or both of the stakeholder meetings. However, the groups noted with an asterisk (*) were either absent or underrepresented at the Grand Rapids and Eagan sessions.

Question 8. What, if any, are the hurdles to utilization and marketing partnerships between adjacent communities?

This question revealed that stakeholders at both Grand Rapids and Eagan believe that issues of communication, logistics, politics, competition, and “bad blood” are hurdles to establishing utilization and marketing partnerships between communities. A history of established (strained) relationships might interfere with emergency utilization efforts.

Two recommendations (from the Eagan group) can be summarized as follows:

- Identify “experts” that can assist in joint utilization and marketing efforts, and
- Use a facilitator to establish collaborative efforts and partnerships between communities

Recommendations

Based on stakeholder input, a number of recommendations are offered as the top achievable actions. These recommendations take into account previous work and resources devoted to the topic as well as current status and the “low hanging fruit” nature of the issue.

Recommendation #1 – Develop a Twin Cities-based wood processor directory that can be used to connect communities (ash managers) to wood users or industry (ash processors).

Comment: The notion of a directory to assist ash producers and users was noted frequently by stakeholders. An existing Twins Cities wood industry directory (sawmills and dry kilns) is currently being revised by the DNR Division of Forestry. A modified version of this directory could incorporate a focus on ash including mills that saw ash, secondary users of ash, crafters that can or will use ash, etc.

Recommendation #2 – Develop an ash materials networking directory for communities in northern Minnesota (“out state”) for use in establishing community and industry linkages.

Comment: This recommendation is similar to #1 except the focus is “out state”. A significant portion of this directory could be compiled from existing industry directories (secondary and primary). A component of this directory could include community contacts (city forester or community arborist) in addition to mills. Both recommendations (#1 and #2) stem from a lack of information (real or otherwise) available to communities on potential markets (users) for ash materials.

Recommendation #3 - Develop a handbook or guide on wood properties of ash.

Comment: In addition to directories linking producers and processors, there is a need to create awareness of, and educate stakeholders about, the physical properties of ash wood including current and potential uses, limitations, and so forth. Information to be included in such a handbook has likely already been compiled and merely needs to be re-packaged for use in Minnesota.

Recommendation #4 – Collect and disseminate information from other states such as Michigan on past experiences, lessons learned, and examples as to what they have done regarding utilization and marketing of ash.

Comment: The Ash Utilization Options project in Michigan has organized in one location information helpful for Minnesotans dealing with ash utilization and marketing issues (<http://semircd.org/ash/>). The Michigan information could form the basis for a Minnesota effort.

Recommendation #5 – Develop promotional and public relations tools to keep EAB ash markets and utilization in front of the public.

Comment: The majority of “tools” needed to accomplish this recommendation have likely already been developed (either in Minnesota or in other states). The key is to continually inform stakeholders about ash markets so interest does not wane.

Recommendation #6 – Promote the use of Minnesota wood (ash) by engaging with local government units, architects, designers, procurement folks and others to “buy local”.

Comment: The key item in this recommendation is “promote”. Actual adoption of buying local ash products by merchants and others could be a long and time-consuming effort. However, the “promotional” step in the process can be started immediately by using some of the materials and information gleaned from other states. Also, linking with a local green initiative (such as USGBC) to promote “buy local” would be beneficial.

Recommendation # 7 – Include the Anoka county portion of the I-694 corridor in the current Hennepin and Ramsey county quarantines.

Comment: This specific quarantine issue was raised by at least two separate groups in Eagan. Implementing this recommendation would demonstrate a good faith effort to work with industry regarding ash utilization.

Recommendation #8 – Evaluate the cultural significance of increased ash utilization among Tribal entities.

Comment: This issue received limited attention at the two listening sessions. However, one stakeholder did comment on the issue and since it was an issue discussed by the planning committee, a follow-up is appropriate. The recommendation is not necessarily to “resolve” any cultural issues surrounding the use of ash but rather to become knowledgeable about possible concerns as they could impact future management and utilization decisions.

Appendix 1. Ash Listening Session Questions

Ash Utilization & Marketing Listening Session Questions

We need your help. The invasive Emerald Ash Borer will cause significant ash mortality in Minnesota. The DNR Division of Forestry, in cooperation with other agencies and stakeholders, is gathering input for use in development of ash utilization & marketing plans. Markets will be critical to reducing cost and enabling effective management of the ash resource. **The purpose of the questions below is to help determine ways to improve markets for ash timber from both urban and forest sources. Your answers will be used during development of an ash utilization and marketing plan for Minnesota. We are not gathering input on management strategies (for example, transitioning to a lesser ash component - another group is working on that) but are focusing on utilization & markets as a tool to accomplish management.**

Key Questions for Ash Listening Session Participants:

- 1) What are the biggest **challenges or hurdles** to existing, and potentially expanded, ash markets & utilization?
 - a)
 - b)

- 2) What are your **recommendations or ideas** for expanding markets for ash wood?

- 3) What are your **information and training needs** (“gaps”) regarding EAB/utilization and marketing of ash?
 - a) Greatest need (highest priority)?

- 4) What **concerns** (if any) do you have about greater utilization of ash?
Example: *Concern* about market value of trees potentially driving management decisions.

- 5) What are the information gaps (if any) regarding your **understanding/knowledge of quarantine regulations/ compliance agreements** related to safe transport and processing of ash?
 - a) Do you have **recommendations or ideas** for how quarantines or regulations could be changed to better facilitate utilization of ash, while still maintaining safe transport and processing to prevent EAB spread?

Additional questions if time permits:

6) What local or state government regulatory **structures, ordinances and incentives could be created** in your community or region to foster growth and support of an ash utilization program? (Examples might include “collection yards” with an objective of pursuing value-added processing options; and guidelines (incentives) that encourage communities to use ash products internally for things like park benches, fencing material, picnic tables, etc.)

7) What groups/organizations could be enlisted to support an ash utilization and marketing program?

8) **For communities:** What, if any, are the hurdles to utilization and marketing partnerships between adjacent communities?

9) Any other thoughts we have not covered that you would like to share on ash utilization and marketing challenges, needs, concerns, strategies or opportunities?

Thank you!

Appendix 2. Prioritized ranking of questions 1-3 (and unranked questions 4 and 9) at Grand Rapids and Eagan.

The stakeholders at the two listening sessions were divided into small groups (4-6 individuals) and asked to brainstorm responses and prioritize their answers for questions 1-3. The small groups then presented their “answers” to the large group (combination of small groups) with the responses captured on flip charts. At the end of the day, each stakeholder was given 4 votes to rank the top items on the flip charts. The following is the rank order of “answers” to questions 1-3 with the specific number of votes in parenthesis. Also, duplicative or similar items between the Grand Rapids and Eagan groups are highlighted in red. (Note: Questions 4 and 9 are also summarized in this appendix although the results presented are not ranked).

Grand Rapids - Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group **Q1. Challenges or Hurdles**

- **Lack of information and education on ash resource, markets (existing & developing) and utilization/wood properties (15 votes)**
- Administrative roadblocks to selling large tracts of ash (12)
- When ash use increases, what happens to other species? (11)
- **Current ash market is limited (10)**
- Coordination of management and utilization efforts across ownerships (could impact effectiveness of strategies) (9)
- **Quarantine (8)**
- Reforestation and riparian area guidelines (6)
- Economies of scale for all landowners and users (5)
- Not knowing the manufacturing capacity for ash-using companies (2)
- Inability to make all relevant information available to a broad audience (2)
- Current prioritization of land managers away from treating ash stands (1)
- Proprietary information for ash products and use (“we” do the research/”we” own the information) (0)
- Economics involving price of product: low end products (0)

Eagan – Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group **Q1. Challenges or Hurdles**

- **Knowledge of local and regional transport, processing and equipment (17 votes)**
- **Lack of inventory data, especially private (13)**
- Capacity of community to deal with the issue (need to develop adequate infrastructure) (12)
- Lack of infrastructure of all kinds for managing ash (e.g., staffing issues) (11)
- Developing “staging areas” to bring cut material and do processing and compliance (11)
- **Regulations/Quarantine – simplify transport and regulatory aspects (10)**
- **Access to variety of markets (10)**
- Education of diverse target audiences (9)

- Marketing ash collaboratively (7)
- Ash is small, low volume, inaccessible, scattered (windbreaks for ex.) – (6)
- Local Government Unit (LGU) procurement policy and lack of branding (3)
- Transportation –cost and regulation (3)
- Lack of connection between communities and the general public to the ash market (3)
- Public opinion – support for the program by the community (working with homeowners) (3)
- Economy of scale (0)

Grand Rapids - Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group

Q2. Recommendations or Ideas for Expanding Ash Markets

- Promote using Minnesota Wood (Buy Local), e.g., mulch, sound barriers, pallets, biomass, etc. (local, regional national) (17 votes)
- Developing niche markets and biomass markets (all markets including product development) (13)
- Provide more technical wood product utilization assistance to industry (9)
- Promote more efficient removal for harvesting ash – large enough areas (5)
- Encourage new business by, e.g., subsidizing expansions or start-up; guaranteeing supply, etc. (5)
- Need education and research (including technical knowledge) for grant money to explore ideas (4 votes)
- Plans for harvesting and utilization – preplanned for land managers (3)
- “Regional” or cooperative debarking resources development (3)
- Lower cost of transportation, e.g., subsidies or load limit changes (2)
- Market strategy for wood pellet use – tax credit for residential consumption (1)

Eagan - Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group

Q2. Recommendation or Ideas for Expanding Ash Markets

- Develop cooperative or combined processing operations, including professional and educational capacity (18)
- Increase local government use of ash wood, especially lumber (15)
- Get communities and industry together (users and suppliers) (14)
- Involve architects, designers and procurement folks in creating demand for ash wood (ex.: LEED, Green Star) (12)
- Community district heating system (in some towns) (9)
- Create incentives program for buying products (ex.: public housing) (7)
- Combine sales and/or do cooperative sales (neighborhoods and landowners) (6)
- Firewood treatment – enable movement (5)
- Promote local use, green marketing, carbon balance advantages (5)
- Education (U of M short courses one option) (4)
- More green energy – promote wood (e.g., cellulosic conversion) (3)
- Develop specialized niche markets for ash (2)
- Create local incentives for solid ash wood fuel (1)

- Mobility/equipment and increased storage capacity (0)

Grand Rapids - Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group

Q3. Information and Training Needs

- Reforestation and replacement after EAB (19)
- **Promotion of “use it or lose it” theme (15)**
- More information from other states on past experiences, lessons learned, and examples as to what they have done (Michigan in particular) (9)
- For private landowners a one-stop shop to cover: How to get help? When? What to do? Evaluation/appraisals of stumpage products, etc. (5)
- Training on best practices for processing and transport (4)
- More information on quarantines (2)
- Hard to prepare for ash utilization when we don’t know where the infestation will occur (1)
- Information gap related to exposure to markets (1)
- Look for comparisons between DED and EAB – learn from that history (0)
- Other ash forest health concerns – not just EAB (0)

Eagan - Top Items identified by small groups and prioritized by large group

Q3. Information and Training Needs

- Local wood processor directories including connecting users (industry) to communities (33 votes)
- **Public relations tool kit and need to regularly keep in front of public, e.g., news releases (27)**
- Need “how to” of on-site processing of a variety of products (13)
- “One stop shop” with consistent messages and information (12)
- Informing small communities on utilization options and where to get help (11)
- Cooperative licensing/permitting between communities (7)
- Cost benefit analysis of utilization (cut now or later) (6)
- Education (broad-based) for (as examples): public including kids; elected officials; community leaders; economic developers. (4)
- Greater information on local regulations/ordinances (3)
- Information of program cost for statewide U&M implementation (decision makers) (This has to do with legislative actions but probably shouldn’t use “legislature” in final report) (1)
- How to/Where to access wood processors information (0)

Grand Rapids - Top Items identified by small groups (unranked)

Q4. Concerns

- Allowing specialty markets to develop. What are the investment and training needs needed to develop these?
- How to make infrastructure investments?

- Habitat loss concerns
- Short-term nature of supply. What about infrastructure when ash runs out?
- Resource implications to other forest types of increased ash harvest.
- Markets drive management
- Economics – highest and best use in market economy
- How to stimulate the bio-based energy market
- Risk management of EAB – timeline from pre-infestation to the end
- What will be displaced in the market when we use a lot of ash?

Eagan - Top Items identified by small groups (unranked)

Q4. Concerns

- Will a developed ash market cause large future disruptions once the raw material has been depleted?
- Utilization may spread EAB
- Variables of private versus public utilization
- Where to site biomass energy facilities (community acceptance)
- Wood transporters who skirt/ignore regulations
- Transportation costs
- “What’s easiest gets done”
- Boom and bust – ash availability

Grand Rapids - Top Items identified by small groups (unranked)

Q9. Other Thoughts

- Commitments to plans well beyond political election cycles.
- Who is going to pay (this stuff is expensive!)? e.g., public? Individual landowner?
- Start working on strategies now or ASAP. Don’t wait for a perfect plan.
- Most effective approach is to use existing industry (rather than develop new infrastructure)
- Address firewood issue in comprehensive manner (local). DNR firewood initiative only small part of total “firewood” picture.
- Promote collection yard and sort for local needs
- Cannot remove management from market (KW or kitchen cabinets).
- Need reasonable regulations – government should not hurt (negatively impact) industry for using ash (from a “cost” perspective)

Eagan – Top Items identified by small groups (unranked)

Q9. Other Thoughts

- Mass storage for later use
- New Viking Stadium (build it out of ash!)
- List of utilization companies
- Capacity to enforce quarantines
- Development of cooperatives or foundations modeling gypsy moth (slow the spread) or cooperative weed management areas with public assistance
- Marketing to local or small interest groups (MN Grown)
- Enhance marketing for MDA firewood certification program

Appendix 3: Ash Utilization & Marketing Listening Session Notes (Unedited)

The following is the transcribed unedited notes from the small group (break-out) sessions at both the Grand Rapids and Eagan listening sessions.

Grand Rapids, May 4, 2010

Group 1: (no names present on note page)

Q4.

- Markets always drive management
- Highest + best use
- Allowing specialty markets to develop – and how to encourage
- Encourage training for those needing income
- Stimulate bio-based energy
- Help folks develop s skill set, training: they need to help niche markets grow (Heather Rand)
- Labor
- Family Forest Landowners get them involved
- Patchwork ownership

Q5.

- Family Forest landowners not knowing what quarantine/reg.
- Training for foresters on quarantines
- Minnesota Association of Counties
- Counties need to take more responsibilities for EAB quarantines
- Is there training for mill programs? Cities? Counties?

Q9.

- Recognize cultural significance of ash resource
- Because of changes in resource + markets we can:
 - Grants/pilot projects for workforce, and we can lobby for it (Heather Rand)
 - We can fund feasibility studies
 - We can help communities
- League of MN Cities
 - Ash
- Townships
 - Lets get to leaders, make sure they are informed
- Costs associated with it
- We can't remove management from markets

Group 2: Steve Vongroven, Jana Albers = notes, Rose Johnson, Dale Erikson, Kelly Morse
Grand Rapids 5/4

Q1a. Economics (DE)

- Market for pulpwood/small size – biomass
 - Such a low value – can't afford to harvest + transport. Stumpage price not out of line (now)
 - * Don't get price for product delivered
 - B-cap program – meddled and emerging market (not natural supply + demand) not used correctly/being rewritten
 - Fell + skid to all weather road, can't even de-limb, < \$5 a stump
 - Volume per sale is not a hurdle – need 10/20 loads
 - Don't see issue – too much volume available
 - Canadian buyers – biomass, also depends on currency value
 - Need energy market to be stable [2,000 green tons burned per day]
- b.
- Info. gap – private landowner (KP) challenge, potential markets {burls, saw logs
 - How to understand market? How to get help? Where to turn? Timeline of risk (JA) - when do I do something?
- c.
- Good info. network (KP) on EAB since discovered in TC (DE)} not a challenge
- d.
- Riparian zone management guidelines in conflict with ash harvest (DE) (fed and state)
 - Ability to sell large volume/acreages (RJ) if kicked into salvage + pre-salvage mode
- e.
- Landscape lose effectiveness of suppression strategy when partner landowners can't + won't be able to manage/sale/pre-salvage, etc. – need good management, economy is secondary
- f.
- For small communities/townships – lack of (JA) staff, lack of training

Q2.

- Also vernal pools need to be more explicit on ability to harvest ash there
- Municipal ordinances rewritten to accommodate work on put property
- Low/no cost timber sales
- Knowledge gap incremental EAB U/M markets for entrepreneurs/marketers/foresters (KP)
- Opportunities for education, encourage new business by:
 - Subsidy startups/add-ons for ash utilization
 - Fed/state commitment to provide the wood

- Economic/business incentives (look at model from Ontario) (DE)
- Guarantee supply to businesses
- Quota to cut/supply
- Uses contracts, long term
- 'Mats'
- Administrative/wall of wood when discovered in a county
 - Governments set the stage: preplan – NePa/EA/State plans SFRMP, get generic plan then able to react on local sites as needed
- No/low cost timber sales may not

Q3.

- Communities (KM) chip almost all wood waste (tub grinder)
- Private companies do chipping – in/out of business at old Ainsworth site in GR, use logs, chips, etc. but needs to be supported
- Idea NePa/EA – locate sites + react as needed, generic portion
- “One stop shopping”, info gap especially for private landowners (KP)
 - How to get help from whom
 - When do I do something/what do I do?
 - Potential markets – all ranges of products

Q4.

- More info. on flooding/ecological impacts of loss of black ash on low sites
 - Needs to all owners, businesses
- Also how to restore = post ash restoration of sites, can we take “cat/ail” sites & rehabilitate them?
- Risk management – what can/should I do?
 - Pre-infestation – what can/should I do? What is timeline?
 - During quarantine – what can/should I do?
 - Takes fear/immediacy out of planning making good planning
- Not sure what depth of demand is for ash products
- If greater utility/what about loss of habitat?
 - Based on past/current experiences why would we do now what we expect EAB to do and in the process degrade wetland and fish habitat?
 - Should we wait for science/silviculture to get more info. on restore/rehabilitation before we do harvest?
- Flow of business – keep it in place
 - In municipalities, doing chipping/grinding
 - Using private companies or city pay for disposal
- Merchandizing yards or concentration areas ~ 75 mile radius (needs to be economy of scale)
 - Bio-mass
 - Other products
 - How to design investments in infrastructure, public/private
- Wall of ash wood situation – need extensions on other sales

Q5.

- Can't get wood out of states on a timely basis under a quarantine
- Marketing profitability
- Kiss Principle: stipulations that wood from QA must be restricted (like chips/pellets/kiln – that does lend itself to EAB transmission), end product if transportation out of QA
- Lack of MDA contracts (bottleneck) – limited staff availability to managers, business owners & general public to get quarantine/ compliance agreements
 - FAQ on website
 - Training sessions
 - Dedicated jobs for compliance agreements; able to handle the load?

Q6.

- Concrete yards with use & product creation
 - Pending definitions of rules & guaranteed market
- Public Utilities Companies specify timeline, utility of woody biomass – “25% by 2025”
- Fire wood restriction for bulk sales, out of state fire wood = prohibited

Q9.

- Fire wood restriction for bulk sales, out of state fire wood = prohibited

Group 5: Gary Swanson, 218-335-8652

Q1.

- Utilization of urban trees – mills won't take them due to nails, regardless of quality
- Future glut of wood on market, not good pulp
- Concern about resources available for setting up timber sales
- Land managers see time better aspect setting up sales in more valuable timber!
- Current ash market
- Technology is limiting – i.e. biomass pellets
- Low volume stands and access to stands
- Quarantines are hurdle
- Sales job to burning pellets, not currently going on in Minnesota, needs promotions
- Change mindset of reserving ash in sales, need to work with tribes (?)
- Regeneration method to maintain forest cover on unconverted sites

Q2.

- Use Minnesota wood markets
- Work with companies to use local chips for mulch rather than bringing in mulch from out of state. Develop a mulch market and community compost sites, “use Minnesota products” highway corridors

- Could ash be used for treated landscape or railroad ties? Move markets to use ash rather than pine
- Develop a process in communities to make lists of needs for solid wood products, a control place to cut this material
- Market strategy to promote use of wood pellets for personal use. Tax credit?
- Substitute ash for other species – where can this be done? Promote ash nationally – basket makers in Mich. – small industry, specialty products nationally. Flooring, cabinetry, etc.
- Regional de-barker resources

Q4.

- Wildlife concerns
- Water quality
- Replacement – other species may decrease in value or demand
- Concern that less volume would be harvested, other species in lieu of increased ash harvest

Q5.

- Need to get info into one place in easy to understand way (community resource)
- Problem not so much gaps as delivery

5a.

- Set a trigger point when quarantine will be statewide
- Consider markets when setting up quarantine areas
- Increase use of trap trees for early detection – a requirement for communities (community resources)

Q6.

- Collection yards: offer incentives to local producers first. They get the wood once the cut list is filled
- Property tax incentives for people to haul their own ash to local collection yards
- Tariff on wood products not made of ash wood
- Tax free mill sites

Q7.

- Private landowners
- U.S.F.S
- U.S.D.A.
- DNR
- Tribal government
- Industry
- Forest products
- Chambers of commerce
- Transportation networks
- Building associations

Q8.

- Established relationships may curtail emergency utilization
- Laws? Ordinances?
- Logistic hurdles for sort yards
- Partnerships between adjacent communities

Q9.

- Promote use of regional “port yards” where communities could pool their needs for wood products and get them made (produced) there
- Promote #6 (collection yards, tax incentives, tariffs)

Grand Rapids

05-04-10

Ash utilization listening session

Notes from Paul Ahlen, MDA PHS2

Q1: Currently using ash for paper pulp and some for fuel chips

- the operational time constraints (flight vs. non-flight periods) are very restrictive
- the gypsy moth requirements for treating (i.e. using) wood within 5 days and clean up with that same time period is very costly and labor intensive to maintain compliance
- if the treatment/utilization requirements for EAB are the same as they are for gypsy moth, then the first bullet will apply (time constraints are restrictive)
- can a buffer area be developed around an area (like a pulp or sawmill)?
- clearcut ash around a mill/receiving facility so it can continue to receive and use ash all year long?

Frozen ash- cut in winter- and chipped in winter produces more “chips and fines” and produces poorer paper product. Would rather use ash pulp blended in all year long.

Worried about ability to legally transport ash due to quarantine restrictions- could limit transport and therefore limit use- thereby making ash worthless

Concerned with amount of ash timber that will hit the market (potentially all at once)

Small diameter utilization makes pulp/biomass a more likely use.

URBAN- currently using local biomass plant and burning ash chips

URBAN- not even sure what all the markets are now

Most landowners don't act soon enough (to harvest timber) and then expect industry to salvage dead standing timber

Educate general public- get message out to harvest ash now

Biomass is an unpredictable energy market (due to other fuel/energy price fluctuations)

Unknown availability of ash resource

May need to amend/review/rewrite BMPs for logging in wetlands area, if we are to salvage more % of ash

Over abundance (disproportionate) of sensitive plants/animals in ash swamps- currently limit harvest/salvage options

Federal restrictions on clearcutting ash stands

Need research on impacts of harvesting or not harvesting ash resource (environmental impacts of logging in sensitive areas vs. not harvesting, ex. Water quality may be negatively impacted either way)

RANKED #2: Unsure what our (company's) use capacity really is

RANKED #1: Quarantine issues

Q2: Encourage fuel chip markets through low interest loans, or grants- or similar financing for other treatment methods

Biomass crop assistance program- through FSA- for fuel chips- currently being redrafted, maybe wood can be used

URBAN- Hibbing biomass plant- currently using chips- would burn more but transportation is the limiting factor

-streets (road conditions) are currently at capacity

-barely at capacity, almost exceeding, already some problems with amount of truck traffic on certain routes

Utilize railroads (not cost effective unless traveling more than 300+ miles)

Raise road weight restrictions

Send fuel chips to Iowa to burn for carbon credits- during electricity production

Fiber board production

URBAN- erosion, runoff, how will a community be held responsible for erosion etc.

-will the city/county be held liable?

RANKED #1- lower the cost of transportation through subsidies or increasing load limits

Q3: RANKED #2- more information about quarantine

URBAN- want way to advise community, based on size of town/city/resource how to proceed

URBAN- more regional/localized plans that meet more specific needs

-ex. Grand Rapids vs. Caledonia, may be similar sized, but different ash resource amount

Pros and cons of harvesting in ash stands (cut or leave it?)

Technical need to see what pulp and energy producers can use/form of product/quantity

URBAN- more public relations interaction needed with local community

RANKED #1- “use it or lose it” promote this theme regarding ash resource

Educate public about the biology of EAB

Q4: RANKED #1- What will greater utilization hurt? What will be displaced (in utilization, in the marketplace)?

What acres will not get treated (thinned, harvested) because you’ll be busy treating ash?

What will these consumers (new businesses) use when ash is gone (in 20-30 years)?

Ash management will affect the management of all species

Q5: Handbook needed regarding quarantine rules, regulations, explanations, and online

Explain factors involved describing how a county gets quarantined

RANKED #1- make sure industries aren’t hurt by quarantine if you expect industry to use ash. This might be the most important point of the entire session.

No undue regulations since we are only slowing the spread, not eradicating

Focus on what you (industry and consumers) can do with ash, instead of “can’t”

Q6: pulp mill- gets loads with 2% ash on semi, needs to be included in quarantine boundary, or clean up of ash landing (at mill) will be cost prohibitive
-more regulation = extra cost = less utilization

Q9: most cost effective use is by using/enhancing existing industry
-poorest investment is bringing in new industry to use finite resource

Need commitments and plans that will span beyond 1 administration or 4-8 year terms

Ash Utilization and Marketing Listening Session Questions

Grand Rapids, 5/4/10

Group 4 Notes

Group Leader: Renae Smith

Question number 1 discussion:

- Ash is considered an “off species” in hardboard mill production. There will need to be a better understanding of how an increase in ash will affect the production of materials (the more technical end of it).
- Work needs to be done with mills and producers to incorporate more use or begin use of ash.
- Concern over the increase in ash being a “one time deal.” After techniques and processing have been changed to include more ash, there is concern that when ash is gone the changes will have been made and they will have to change again.
- Ash is least desirable of “alternate species” in some uses.
- Proprietary information may not be shared about the most effective use of ash in products.
- Ensuring reforestation after removal.
- As ash use increases what will happen with displace materials.
- Proximity to markets may determine or hinder the use.
- Environmental hurdles, the affect of terrain, water table and other aspects of the environment resulting from multiple removals.
- Concern that if all ash is removed from an area, EAB may jump to another species.
- Seasonality around access to ash, ensuring access during the winter months when the EAB flight season is not occurring.

Question number 2 discussion:

- Ensure efficiency in removals. If removing ash from a city it may be more effective to do the removal in a large enough volume. (Community)
- MN Wood Campaign promoting ash (encourage markets to purchase ash material, promote potential wasted trees going to good use).
- Promote more use of ash in pallets (concern that there is a weight, density or cost issue).
- Promote use of ash in biomass. The group seemed to feel that biomass was a likely solution for all of the ash material that will be lost.
- Promote use and understating of technical use of ash (example wood properties).
- Get ash out into the markets and see what the markets do.
- Create a market for ash.
- DNR could promote the use or expansion of the use of ash pulp (ex in paper companies).

Question number 3 discussion:

- Education on reforestation and replacement
- Training or information that draws in on past experiences from other infested areas (with consideration to the fact that the markets are not the same in Michigan as they are in Minnesota).

- More training on BMP's regarding the use of ash in relation to the quarantine and biology of the insect (ex. When can materials be moved, how long can they sit in a marshalling yard before they have to be processed, etc.).

Question number 4 discussion:

- If a lot of ash is put up for sale will another wood not be available. Ash needs to be available over and above the current levels of management. Ash cannot displace current levels of management.
- Concern that the ash market will go down.
- Concern that after processes for production have been changed, ash will leave the market.

Question number 5 discussion:

- Some group members were not familiar with the specifics of the quarantine. This was due to the fact that until the quarantine affects their business practices they will not be as concerned.
- Ensure that companies have a clear understanding of the quarantine. This could be established through developing and sharing BMP's.
- Ash is not a desirable species to begin with. If requirements for handling ash become too strict or too costly, some companies may not want to deal with it. Consider less restriction, not more.
- Make sure that the benefits of having a quarantine outweigh the costs. And, ensure that the companies that will be subject to the quarantine have a clear understanding of those benefits.
- Some companies may accelerate use of ash where possible to stay ahead of the problem. They may try to get as much of the ash product through the system before it EAB and the quarantine get to an area.
- Concern that quarantine requirements will not flow easily from state to state. For example, some companies work with Minnesota and Wisconsin, how will the quarantine affect the movement between those states?
- Ensure that companies have a clear understanding of the process to obtain compliance agreements and the "ease" of getting one.

Question number 6 discussion:

- Ordinances or educational efforts to help inform or influence community residents, particularly with removal of infested trees.
- Reimbursement program or incentive for removal of infested ash trees on private property, specifically for urban areas but could maybe be applied to more rural areas too.
- Promotion of or creation of "networking" directory for ash utilization for communities. Essentially putting communities in touch with companies who will either buy or take ash wood. Similar to some directories that are already in place like, MNBio-ex, MN Materials Exchange, but maybe more focused on community wood.
- Make ash timber sales more appealing (ex. Accessible, less expensive, etc.)

Question number 7 discussion:

Did not have time to discuss.

Question number 8 discussion:

- Education of residents regarding the insect and removal of infested trees.
- Education of residents regarding the proactive removal of non-infested trees.
- Addressing the public relations aspect of management.
- How to handle the larger quantities of tree removals.

Question number 9 discussion:

- Importance of getting information out to private land owners to consider selling ash before the insect hits and is quarantined, or before market value decreased.
- Don't over think the actions of the overall utilization and marketing plan, do not wait until it is perfect. It just needs to get done.
- Some participants were not concerned about the planning for utilization of ash wood. They felt that if the material is marketing it will find a niche.
- There is a lot of concern with what is done with the land after a large number of ash is removed.

Julie Miedtke group leader/ Mimi Barzen note taker

Q1. Challenges:

- *Making ash available to those with marketing capacity or the ability to get the raw product to those who can utilize it
- * Nonindustrial private owners (NIPF) have problems with scale – how does a one implement ash strategies on smaller acreages, often with smaller diameter volume. The economies of scale are lacking.
- *No ready markets except for firewood
- *lack of availability of low impact logging for NIPF
- *lack of knowledge by general public, architects, builders, etc about the quality of the ash resource
- *management options are limited due to mainly wetland locations of black ash
- *high turnover in NIPF ownership and lack of knowledge about the resource
- *NIPF often don't know how much ash resource they have on their property
- *all users need to have knowledge about the availability of ash products such as cabinets, flooring, etc
- *hard to get the highest and best use of ash
- * lack of technology to harvest and utilize the ash resource at the mill
- * not enough power plants to utilize the ash resource for biomass

Comments provided by a mill owner not able to attend:

- *there is a swing slightly back in the demand for black ash from asia so some ash may be able to fill that market
- * tongue and groove paneling has better chance for successful marketing
- * use in the paper, pulp and chip market will be limited at best
- * suggested testing for use as high-end briquette market

Additional comments:

-Can biomass generated from black ash, including small diameter wood, be used in rural areas to generate power? Folks in Sweden have created rural heating districts and we might learn from them.

-Family Forest Landowners that own a 1/3 of MN's land base will need assistance from harvest to market. There are many challenges associated working with NIPF-frequent change in ownership, and many do not work with a professional forester--YET we know they harvest significant amounts of wood. How do we work together to help this audience with special needs? How do we connect them to markets and resources? There are economies of scale associated with these types of problems and it's important to consider all owners/users.

-We had a reminder, a story, of landowners living near UPM-Blandin who would harvest small amounts of pulpwood, peel the logs and place the wood at end of their driveways. The mill would drive by, pick up logs and hauled to the mill. There was a comment that there may be some interest in returning to that 'small scale'.

Finally, someone wise said, "let's make sure we have all the information that we need to support decisions that will meet the supply and demand".

Eagan May 6, 2010

Members: John Sander, John Lloyd, Jeff Guillemette, Michael Benedict

Q1.

- Operating riparian area and limiting harvest – rural issue but also urban
- State statues limiting ability to sell wood – DOT
- Lack of staging areas for cut material until enough gathered to sell to market – TS and DOT
- Cultural use and movement, especially black ash between states (and within the state) BIA – regulation of market
- Compliance center to process small quantities of ash – to relieve burden of multiple can (?) agreements (cutting to proper lengths)
- Knowledge of merchandizing lengths for capturing marketing opportunities (DOT)
- Knowing the roles (?) added markets (TS) ('initially')
- Develop the ash market that demands the same product – low demand maybe
- Lack of info on how to use the ash found in order to ___ (?) the market
- Opportunity to process to a final marketable product – (build a kiln)
- State sponsored: subsidize wood fuel to increase utilization of ash (re: tax incentive \$1500)

1. Simplify regulatory aspects of transporting the wood
2. Developing staging areas to bring cut materials and do processing and do compliance
3. Marketing the ash collaboratively to increase the demand

2. Incentivizing the tax credit for ash burning appliances
 1. Pellets, wood stoves
 2. Develop specialized niche markets for ash as a sawn product
 3. Marketing as a ____ (?) energy opportunity more than ____ (?) – industrialized
 - Find out the particulars (?) with cellulostic conversion and where we are with that and can ash be used in the process
3. Opportunities on cellulostic conversion
 - Increase delivery points to simplify regulation compliances
 - Need to schedule PR and news releases in order to keep it up front and relevant to the public. Do not let the public forget
 - More environmental education with emphasis on EAB (Val and EAB costume (?))
 - More publicity on existing and future drop off sites – more accessibility of the initial “front door” of information
 - When to ____ (?) as part of education effect

Q4.

- Will a developed market cause large disparities once the raw material has been exhausted?

Q5.

- Increase delivery points to simplify regulation compliance
- Better plan the strategic aspects of moving ash through quarantine and non-quarantine and back to quarantine counties, Hennepin – thru Anoka – into Ramsey via 694

Q8.

- Politics at the local level
- Budgets
- Identifying who the actual experts are and support them in information dissemination
- Facilitate communication between city foresters (mail lists to disseminate information)

Group 4: Val C, Anne Cole - notes

Q1.

- Requirements
 - Staging area, processing
 - Quarantines
 - Education
- *Area of storage (state or local)
- Costs
- Value added (perception)
- Volume of grade
- How to increase demand
- Size of raw material

- Communication
- Transportation
- * State or local area of staging/storage quarantine issues

Q2.

- Nursery use
- Biomass
- Firewood treatment
- Promotion of ash
- Education = what groups – History of Wood, U of M, 4-H course
- Contest for utilization

Q3.

- Local permit/licensing (by municipality) coop
 - What does marketable mean
- Directory – local wood industries
 - What are the steps to utilizing local ash

Q4.

- Where are you going you put bio-plant?
- Finite resource
- Greater supply, lower cost
- Get to small markets while wood is usable
- As demand increases EAB movement increases
- More fly by night companies spring up

Q5.

- Mandatory training at dumpsite
- What do home owners do with infested trees
- If you find a new infestation on private property in an un-quarantined area what is the responsibility to report?
 - Ex. Homeowner – what is there role?

Q9.

- Marketing to local or small interest groups (MN Grown)

Group 5: Sue Burks – DNR, Ginger Kopp – NRCS, Trisha Nelson – MNDOT, Wayne D – DNR, Bob Koch - MDA

Q1.

- Single row green ash windbreaks don't have volume of forest and scattered and lower quality (*rural*)
 - Low quality and lack of markets (?)
 - Cost of removal – windbreaks, right of way
- Why choose ash vs. aspen and birch (faster growing) for harvest
 - Increase markets and interest in ash
- How to connect communities to primary markets
- Access to black as (swamps) (*rural*)

- Impact on hydrology when harvesting black ash (*rural*)
- Communities not prepared to deal with volume of ash (lack of resources, yards, contra (?) chips)
- Ash will flood the market (more supply than demand) (*rural and urban*)
- Lack of inventory data
- Most ash is small, this can limit uses (markets)
- Management strategy maybe counter to marketing and utilization
- Lack of communication info to public and community about what can be done with their ash resource
- Lack of infrastructure in agencies and communities (*rural and urban*)
- Good quality as is scattered (*rural and urban*)

Question 1. Prioritized and Condensed List

1. Most ash is small – low volume, low quality and scattered and inaccessible (*rural and urban*)
2. Lack of infrastructure (staff and resources) to remove ash (state and LUGs) (*urban*)
3. Lack of connecting communities and public to markets – lack of education (*urban*)
4. Lack of inventory to know where and what the resource is (*urban*)
5. Flooding markets (*rural and urban*)
6. Proactive urban management strategies counter to marketing and utilization (*urban*)

Q2.

- Determine which companies use/need ash
- Cooperative marshalling yards and equipment
- Combined timber sales (contract focused)
- State and LUG specifying ash in purchasing
- Funding ash wood utilization studies research
- Cost share incentives for converting windbreak to other species away from ash (management)
 - Targeted cost share funding
 - Increase funding
- Demo projects (portable mills) for urban and small inaccessible alternative markets
- Connect with woodcraft guilds or groups
 - Facilitate partnerships with communities

Q3.

- Cost-benefit analysis of utilization – including risk analysis (ex. Cut now, later or not at all)
- Who's utilizing ash and how can we connect with them from community and public perspective
- Continue with forest detector training – identified trees can be cut and used
- Inform public that ash can be used

- Inform small communities (LUGs) on ash management and utilization
 - Resources for tech transfer
 - What are the options and where to go for help
- Clarify state and federal agency responsibilities
 - Make sure public knows who to go to (ex. “front door”) for information
- Regeneration options to maintain diversity

Q4.

- Flooding of market with large scale removals
- Difficulty of creating increased and/or sustained ash utilization – 2 distinct components
- Maintaining tree diversity if ash are removed – maple will be next monoculture

Q5.

- Clarification of regulations - MDA quarantine vs. DNR firewood regulations
- Acceptable means of treatment and processing
- How to become compliant with regulations
- Outreach to haulers – wood industry, 20 haulers (nontraditional)
- Outreach to law enforcement (in quarantine)

5a.

- Drop DNR buffer counties for firewood regulations
- Expand MDA certification program and drop DNR approved vendor program for firewood

Q6.

- Prioritize incentives within comm. specs. to favor ash – LEED program, erosion control (ash products)
- Landowners get free mulch from chipped trees removed from their property
- Community give away programs – replacement trees

Q7.

- Crafter associations, scenic byways commission, alternative wood products, 20 haulers, all existing state and federal agencies that are involved, local grassroots green initiatives, (US Green Building Council)

Q8.

- Shared marshalling yards and equipment
- Combined timber sales/harvesting
- Resource inequality between partners
- Most small LUGs have little to no infrastructure to deal with tree issues
- Relationships and value differences
- Competing priorities at LUG level

Q9.

- Cooperatives or foundations modeled after Gypsy Moths Slow the Spread and cooperative wood management areas – public funding or incentives

Group 6: Bruce Zumbahlen – retired DNR forester, Laura Van Riper – MN DNR, note taker, Andi Dierich – UM, DNR, Victor Krause – UM Duluth

Q1.

Victor: Duluth –getting the wood out of the urban area

Andi: Having enough wood from an area to do something with it

Bruce: Metal – limits its use

Bruce: Good inventory on boulevard trees, not inventoried on private lands

Laura: How to deal with quarantines

Andi: Location of current resources (disproportional across state)

Bruce: Size of material

Victor: Public opinion

Andi: Companies and contracts

Bruce: Some mills aren't _____ (?) because it causes the whole area to be quarantined

Victor: Steepness of hills in urban areas (Duluth)

Andi: Ash forest pockets within the urban landscape

Bruce: Economy of scale

Andi: City structure including community capacity

Andi: City structure – lack of city forester – who is responsible

1. One tree at a time, hard to hire someone for one tree at a time

- Street at a time – ok?
- Unregulated people going door to door, won't be paid
- Don't have a lot of service providers in outstate areas, can be disreputable
- Need access to certified providers
- Duluth – steep twisty streets

2. Difficult to get in and out to small pockets of ash (economy of scale)

3. Use is restricted by metal that may be in trees from urban areas

- Don't want metal in trees, not taken by mills

4. What is on people's lots? Twice as much as boulevards/parklands?

- How is a community going to market/deal with ashes on private property (regulate)?
- Ties into community structure (is there a forester) and capacity to deal with it

5. What happens when no mill within quarantine area?

- Firewood
- Close to boundary of quarantine?

- As quarantine zones become larger, it may be easier because there will be more options for processing

6. Ex. District energy in metro U.S.

- Resources in other parts of the state
- Biomass as a market, communities could build biomass energy centers

7. Small material = easier to chip, need size that communities can use

8. What are people going to think about losing their boulevard trees

- Value of dead snags, wildlife
- What are capabilities to deal with public opinion? Funding, city structure
- Charges each year
- Transparency

9. Who is going to be doing the work?

- Door to door contractors – any regulation?
- Safeguard for the public
- Are cities going to coordinate/develop standards?

10. If EAB shows up at a mill, they will get quarantined

11. Landscape – getting in and out tight streets

- Rugged terrain
- Isolated trees in difficult to access areas

12. Economies of scale

Identify top 3:

- Public opinion/relations
- Infrastructure/capacity –ability to deal with the issue, professional expertise
- Available volumes – not enough to make utilization worth while – economy of scale

Ideas: Regional resource centers

Q2. Opportunities for Expanding Ash Markets

- Explore community biomass centers (such as district energy) heating systems
- Regional resource centers/consortium – pool resources together (Gary Johnson-type work)
- Promote government to order ash products
- Local markets – floorboards, chairs, etc. – promote locally grown, push as a green market
- Lots of mulch – locally grown ash mulch vs. imported mulch for other states (ex. cypress)

- Marketing the non-quarantine ash on a national scale (ex. paneling in western states)

*Energy centers

* Green marketing

* Regional resource centers/consortium

Q3.

Laura: Having consistent message to get out to people

Victor: Clarify – educate on quarantine rules – specific messages and promote one source

Bruce: Having a directory of various products that are being sought (listing markets for ash products! lumber, mulch, etc.)

Laura: Education for elected officials (so governments can spec for ash)

Victor: Also ex. Duluth economic development boards and business development boards – people who would put together consortiums, energy centers

Bruce: Keep everything on one website – consistent message – one stop shop – have directory, rules, etc.

Andi: A centralized go-to agency.

Andi: Community education.

Q4.

Victor: Industry! Concern that the influence of ash will reduce pieces of other species

Laura: The example on the sheet – concern at market value if trees driving management decisions

Victor: Must have a plan for regeneration (don't move so quickly you don't have a plan)

Laura: The more ash is being cut and moved around the state, the greater the chance of spreading EAB to new sites

Victor: Fly-by-night removal operations that don't follow the rules especially in urban areas

Bruce: Developing an apathy to the problem, people lose interest

Victor: Loss of wildlife habitat (in the snags)

Andi: Drop in ash value due to abundance, therefore, a dramatic swing in prices.

Q5.

- We don't know a lot about specific details of quarantine rules – sizes of woodchips, etc.
 - Who enforces the quarantine regulations? (Not enough capacity to enforce)
 - What about firewood regulations posted in more places than state parks
 - More extensive regulation and enforcement
 - Law specifically regulating firewood
 - Subsidize local firewood?
- Elementary education (kids talk to their parents)

Q6.

Andi: Regional Resource Centers

Q7.

Andi: TCA's, Tree Inspectors, Co-ops, Energy companies, Master

Q8.

Victor: How to divide costs (especially small community joining with large community)

Lara: Is the communication there? Do people know who to talk to?

Victor: Distance

Bruce: Rival politics, turf, interagency/group competition, parochial – spill over from other issues, local politics

Andi: Bad blood

Keith: Consistency in regulations/ordinance across areas

Bruce: Communication

Laura: Need a leader to pull people together, keep things going

Bruce: Can groups like MN STAL help be facilitators for collaboration – setup mini shade tree advisory committees across the state, challenge: connect the communities

Q9.

Major new market: Mandate that the new Vikings stadium be made of ash

Victor: Increasing the general favorable opinion of ash wood products – beauty, quality, more public displays

Keith: Help people understand that local ash wood products are good to buy, won't move EAB

Laura: Time frames for people in outstate MN – explaining, estimating time frames for EAB arrival, implementing strategies

Victor: Sorting trees and community comes up with a list of needs - Duluth has local wood processing facility

Victor: Flaking ash in process

Bruce/Laura: Value of snags, not all ash has to be removed

Phases

1. Prep and planning years before EAB
2. When EAB is there/near
3. What to do after EAB has moved through

Need plans for all 3 stages

Be wary of doing really large removals far away from EAB when there is a small market for ash

Q1. (Recap)

Hurdles/Challenges

1. Capacity/infrastructure of community to deal with issue
 - Professional/tech expertise
 - Support of authorities/city council
 - Program/regulation/ordinances
 - Regulation of tree service vendors/campaign (especially fly-by-night)

2. Public opinion

- Support for program (\$5.00 per resident)
- Dealing with resource on private land: homeowners – education
- Replacement issue/removal issue

3. Economies of scale issue

- Pockets/individual trees
- Material of a certain size for a particular market, having enough
- Access issues/transportation

Q2. (Recap)

Opportunities

1. Consortium for smaller communities to share resources

- Professional expertise/coordination of activities
- Community yards

2. District heating for some communities (biomass)

- District Energy in St. Paul

3. Promoting local use/reducing carbon footprint (marketing)

- Mulch/chips, home sources
- Products for community use (increase)
- Spec

Ken Holman Group Notes

Q2. Ideas/Expanding Markets

1. Create a label for local ash
2. Develop use of ash in local procurement policy
3. Involve end user (architects, designers, LEED, GeenStar) in creating demand
4. Increase mobility, equipment and storage
5. Create incentives program for buying products (eg. Public housing)
6. Local, high visibility use (eg. Twins bats, seat backs)

Q3. Gaps in Info and Training

- On-site processing of variety of products (eg. arborist education/prepping)
- Access to wood processors (“sawmill/kiln” list)
- Info on equipment and operator availability
- LUG mutual aid, joint powers agreements, training
- Info on program costs for stwd. U+M implementation

Q5. Concerns @ Quarantine

- Lump hardwoods just cause can't ID ash
- During non-flight, can transport out of quarantine? Process?
- Consistent compliance and enforcement
- Who to call to “tip”
- General awareness of quarantine

Q9. Miscellaneous

- Use of material, standards for erosion, other environmental practices
- Timely use of dead wood (before too brittle or marketable)
- Mass storage of lumber by LUGs for need later, greater use and consistent supply
- Need web access, stwd. urban tree data and distribution to local, state officials

05-06-10

Ash utilization listening session

Notes from Paul Ahlen, MDA PHS2

Q1: hard for government to use wood resource- because of bureaucracy

Don't disrupt our existing operations, because it may reduce productivity

Urban sawlogs are not preferred/liked by industry

Cost to obtain urban sawlog- profit margin too tight

Harvest, store logs in right sizes in cost effective manner for the tree care company (not necessarily "saw log" length)

Need inventory of ash, need timely and cost effective inventory

Politically, chips are not viewed as a good use. . . "couldn't you make something of value" is often heard

People, politicians, want to "see" something made from ash (like a floor, not chips/mulch)

Permits too expensive, too many different permits needed (different and separate for each city, many companies work in multiple cities)

Hard to work within quarantine boundary

- I694 finger of Anoka County doesn't allow transportation of ash on this highway route
- one participant had a sawmill located in Scott County, not in the quarantine

Space for processing (within the quarantine)

Promote removals of "healthy" appearing trees

Communication gap about regulations

RANKED #1: Regulation

RANKED #2: Transportation (cost and regulation)

Q2: Incentives from government

-make it less costly to use ash

Utilize waste

-park trees used for park benches

-utilize within an organization (DOT produce trailer beds, parks produce park benches, Housing Authority use within their houses, etc.)

Prizes for best/most utilization from government

Wood worker's Guild example- meet weekly at local school in Minneapolis (currently occurring), they could be using more local ash

Recommendations will differ for government entity (bigger) vs. individual homeowner or tree care company (smaller)

Group neighborhood removals for more economical utilization

Marshaling yards for logs

Firewood use

RANKED #1: Local government use more ash

-concrete forms

-picnic tables

-bus stops

-community mulch sites

-dog park chips

Q3: Info commercials

City access cable channel

State Fair

Big scary EAB model (at State Fair) that REALLY grabs attention

Before and after pictures of ash lined streets (from MI?)

State rules and regulations uniform guidelines for all levels of government

Train/show government staff tools of trade, utilization equipment

Is quarantine really helping slow the spread? Quantify.

RANKED #1: PR program needs to be bigger and better, and provide access to to it for local government use (PR tool kit)

Q4: Spending dollars to save dimes

Chips/mulch/burning may be best use

Perception may be more important than financial reality of utilization

Market gets flooded- then what? Ash may really not be worth anything at that point

Public perception- it will always be impossible to please everyone

Don't force use where it doesn't make sense

RANKED #1: variables of private vs public utilization, cost (\$) vs. utilization, and the public's perception of this

Q5: Anoka County slice along I694 should be in quarantine

Processing sites outside of quarantine are not able to use ash

All of Hennepin County doesn't make sense in quarantine

Average homeowners don't know there is a quarantine

Public that aren't IN a quarantine don't know why it is important
-don't know why they should care

RANKED #1: Fill transportation gaps with quarantine boundaries/restrictions

RANKED #2: All the private sector needs better and more contact (with managing agencies, MDA, DNR, etc.)

Q9: People need to get the bejeebers scared out of them

All the utilization tools are outside of the quarantine

List of utilization companies and what they need/are looking for (quality, lengths, diameters, quantity, etc.)

This report was prepared by
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