

MPRB receives grant to prepare for Emerald Ash Borer invasion

POSTED: Thursday, January 21, 2010

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) battle against Emerald Ash Borer got a financial boost from a Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) grant. The MPRB's Forestry Division received \$98,400 as part of the MDA's Forest Protection Reserve Planning and Preparedness Grant Program.

The grant monies will be used to proactively remove ash trees on boulevards, parks, golf courses and other City property; grind the resulting stumps; and replant diverse trees in a controlled and orderly manner.

According to Ralph Sievert, MPRB director of park forestry, emphasis will be placed on removing 300-400 declining or defective ash trees and replacing them with 350-450 new trees of diverse species. "Our effort will also include partnering with neighborhood organizations to educate residents of the Emerald Ash Borer threat and how the program will be implemented."

"Our municipal tree resource is a valuable asset in Minneapolis, providing approximately \$15 million in total net benefits to the community," said Ralph Sievert, MPRB forestry director. "This grant will help us sustain these benefits even when facing the loss of 20 percent of our tree canopy,"

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has already killed more than 40 million ash trees nationwide, most in southeast Michigan. There is currently no known cure. The Minneapolis urban forest includes 38,000 ash trees in the public boulevards (19 percent of total trees). Twenty-one percent—over 200,000 of all public and private trees—are ash.

"Because we face the inevitable loss of our ash trees in the future, we need to begin this process now, not wait until our boulevards and parks are bare," said Jon Gurban, MPRB Superintendent. "The grant also enables us to continue our efforts to enhance species diversity of our urban tree canopy, which is one of our city's hallmarks."

A total of \$857,000 in grants was made to local units of government. The maximum amount available per grant was \$100,000. Completion date for the grant is May 2011.

CONTACT:

Dawn Sommers
Communications & Marketing Director
612-230-6407
dsommers@minneapolisparcs.org