

Maine Forest & Tree Pest Emergency Action Plan 2013

INTRODUCTION:

Invasive species have had significant negative economic and ecologic impacts upon various ecosystems in Maine for more than 100 years. The accidental introduction of the fungus that causes chestnut blight affected forest ecosystems across the State. More recently, the gypsy moth has cost millions of dollars in control and management.

Increased international trade and travel has led to a significant increase in the accidental movement of species into new areas. Additionally, fragmentation and disturbance have made forest ecosystems more vulnerable to establishment and proliferation of invasive species. More than 400 non-native insects that feed on trees and shrubs are now established in the United States with significant economic impacts.

Most non-native, and potentially invasive, species are prevented from entering this country by USDA-APHIS port inspections; however, due to the volume and cryptic nature of many of these species, some escape detection and become established. The early detection and eradication of an invasive species, either before it becomes established, or before populations increase, is critical to limiting their impacts.

In Maine, a network of regulations, inspections and surveys is already in place to detect the introduction of an invasive species. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (MACF) Horticulture program conducts inspections of nursery stock entering the State, as well as systematic surveys through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program. The MACF Maine Forest Service, Forest Health Program conducts annual, systematic surveys in forested areas through the Cooperative Forest Health Program and the Forest Health Monitoring program.

In those situations where a new invasive species of regulatory significance is initially detected on federal or tribal lands, the federal government has primary responsibility for survey and response. In such cases the state role will be more secondary and supportive. However, because our federal and tribal holdings are scattered the state will be involved in a cooperative response. Irrespective of which agency has primary responsibilities this plan will broadly define the state response role.

This Emergency Action Plan will be activated when a new, invasive species of regulatory significance is detected either through surveys or from specimens for identification, and its taxonomic identification is confirmed by specialists. The submittal of specimens for identification, especially species of regulatory concern, will be coordinated through the State Plant Regulatory Official or State Plant Health Director's office. Once they are notified of the identity of the specimen, the Emergency Response Plan will begin with the activation of the Incident Command System.

SCOPE and PURPOSE:

- A. To ensure adequate and appropriate response to new insect and disease threats to the forest and tree resources of Maine
- B. To ensure effective and timely communication between local, regional, state and federal government agencies, academia, plant industry professionals and the public, related to new forest or tree invading insects or diseases.
- C. To clearly define agency roles for Maine's response to invading insects or diseases using a modified Incident Command System (ICS) that addresses assessment, outreach, education, eradication and containment, relevant authorities and/or duties, and the coordination of resources.
- D. To ensure effective public notification of the threat and likely response activities.
- E. To ensure continued monitoring of forest and tree resources to allow for the identification and assessment of invasive threats.
- F. To ensure the implementation of appropriate management and control measures.

AUTHORIZATION:

All actions taken during the execution of this plan are authorized by and conducted in accordance with the provisions of the following:

- A. Federal Law
 - Plant Protection Act, 7 U.S.C. § 7701 (2000),
 - Agricultural Bioterrorism Prevention Act of 2002, 7 CFR pt. 331(2005)
- B. State Law
 - Horticulture, 7 MRSA chapter 405A section 2211 to 2217
 - Quarantines, 7 MRSA chapter 409 section 2301
 - Pest Control Compact 7 MRSA chapter 410 section 2311 to 2328
 - Maine Forest Service 12 MRSA chapter 803 sections 8201 to 8306
 - Northeast Fire Protection Compact

Other authorities may also apply.

AGENCY ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry** is the state agency responsible for preventing the introduction into and the dissemination within Maine of insect and disease invaders of Maine's crops and forests. Its responsibilities will include but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Provide surveillance and detection, follow-up inspections on reported suspect invasive species, identification, assessment and monitoring.

2. Notify and coordinate activities with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and other appropriate organizations related to program responsibilities and this response plan.
3. Provide initial identification of samples and suspect organism.
4. Develop a communication and outreach plan for cooperators and the public on invasive species threats and develop specific messages once a damaging invasive species has been confirmed in Maine.
5. Coordinate the communication of invasive species information with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), other federal agencies, government entities within the state and other impacted groups.
6. Implement and maintain appropriate state and federal quarantines.
7. Review and coordinate control activities to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws.
8. Condemn and seize materials when appropriate.
9. Oversee eradication or destruction of infested or potentially infested materials or vectors.
10. Provide or assist with the procurement of funding for survey, outreach and monitoring when appropriate.
11. Provide pest management expertise and advice to all cooperators and the public.
12. Provide forest management expertise and advice and liaison with cooperators (particularly the Forest Products and Tree Care Industries, private forest land owners) and the public.
13. Provide advice to help with restoration and mitigation

B. USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is the lead Federal agency to prevent the introduction of plant pests in the United States and to prevent interstate dissemination.

1. Monitor ports of entry and conduct inspections for exotic pests.
2. Implement emergency measures at the federal level to prevent dissemination of exotic plant pests when discovered.
3. Confirm identification of invasive species.
4. Provide federal funding for survey, outreach, monitoring and response when appropriate.
5. Conduct investigations.

C. USDA Forest Service (USFS) is the lead Federal agency to prevent the introduction of forest and plant pests into Federal lands. The USFS through its State and Private Forest Health Protection Group also assists in the evaluation and eradication of exotic forest insect and disease pests as well as the management of new pests should they become established.

1. Assist other agencies as needed in the detection, evaluation, eradication, and monitoring of new exotic pest introductions.

2. Create new awareness of invasive pests through information, education and technology transfer.
3. Improve management of new and established exotic pests through the development of new technologies.
4. For established exotic pests, provide technical assistance for management and control activities, including development of NEPA documentation, project planning documents, aircraft calibration, radio communication, and coordination of threatened and endangered species consultations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Incident Command Group (ICG)

Purpose: The ICG will coordinate the overall response, approve action plans, and serve as final authority on all activities and decisions.

Members:

- Incident Commander, MACF, Plant Health, State Plant Regulatory Official
- MACF, MFS, State Entomologist
- USDA APHIS PPQ, State Plant Health Director
- Team Leaders as needed:
- Planning and Finance
- Operations
- Communications
- Others as determined by the Incident Commander

Tasks:

The Incident Commander will:

- upon official verification of an invasive species detection, convene a meeting of the ICG
- appoint individual Team Leaders to coordinate efforts on each Team and to serve on the ICG

The ICG will:

- make the decision to initiate the Emergency Response Plan
- have overall command of the incident
- assess pest risk and determine the appropriate response method
- approve a response plan
- mobilize Teams as needed
- initiate appropriate state and federal quarantines
- assign actions to be taken by Team Leaders
- coordinate and approve all Team activities
- resolve issues not easily addressed by any Team

The three teams under the ICG will include the following:

A.Planning and Finance Team

Purpose: The Planning and Finance Team shall provide effective planning, obtain appropriate resources, and conduct proper administrative management of the legal, fiscal and technical aspects of the Incident Response. Once informed of an incident, the Planning and Finance Team will consult with the Incident Commander (IC) and the Operations Team and others to evaluate and assess the scope of the event and together develop the Incident Action Plan. As planning and finance activities occur the Team will provide information to the IC, Operations Team and Communications Team. Members of the Team will receive direction from the IC and work closely with the other teams.

Members:

- A. Representative from MACF, Plant Health
- B. Representative from MACF, Maine Forest Service
- C. Representative of the Operations Team
- D. Representative of the Communications Team
- E. Adjunct Members will be included as appropriate, such as representatives from MACF Pesticide Control Board
- F. Others the Team Leader feels are needed, potentially including but not limited to, individuals from the represented organizations who have needed expertise/capability in:
 - Grant writing;
 - Procurement;
 - Writing commodity or service contract specifications;
 - environmental regulations, and other legal issues;
 - Geographic Information Systems.

Tasks:

Once informed of an incident, the Planning and Finance Team will consult with the Incident Commander and the Operations Team and others to evaluate and assess the scope of the event and together develop the Incident Action Plan. Within the Incident Action Plan there will be the following tasks and responsibilities for the Planning and Finance Team. Each of these responsibilities is carried out in consultation with and in coordination with the Operations Team and others within the structure of the Incident Command Group.

- Assessment and monitoring:
 - Continually monitor and be aware of scope and severity of the situation.
 - Review monitoring data and monitoring effort needed.
- Determine the amount and type of response effort needed including:
 - Type and amount of material, equipment and services that may be needed
 - Personnel resources needed, including capabilities/expertise and amount of workers or person hours needed.
 - Interface needed with landowners, other agencies and general public as necessary.
 - Permits and environmental requirements.
- Determine funding sources (federal, state, local):
 - Make contacts – reference grant/funding availability and requirements
 - Write grants

- Satisfy NEPA requirements and deadlines
- Determine need of and coordinate to obtain environmental permits
- Satisfy grant reporting requirements
- Budget and financial management:
 - Closely monitor and manage expenditures and available resources.
 - Anticipate future resource needs.
 - Keep the Incident Commander apprised of current financial and resource status.
 - Plan for restoration efforts and management strategies should a pest become established

B.Operations Team

Purpose: The Operations Team will implement the “on the ground” management of the invasive species incident. This Team will be responsible for field operations to determine the scope of the infestation, implement management options (including quarantines if necessary), conduct follow up assessments and restore impacted areas. As field operations are implemented, the Team will provide information to the IC, Planning and Finance Team and Communications Team. Members of the Team will receive direction from the IC and work closely with the Planning and Finance Team.

Members:

- A. MACF, Plant Health staff
- B. MACF, Maine Forest Service staff
- C. USDA APHIS PPQ staff
- D. Adjunct Members for example may include representatives from:
 - a. USDA US Forest Service
 - b. Tribal representatives
 - c. Local, municipal and community groups
 - d. Appropriate industry groups (MeLNA, SWOAM etc.)

Tasks:

- Upon direction from the Incident Commander, the team will convene and determine the appropriate response action including:
 - Delimit the scope of the infestation
 - Conduct trace-back surveys to determine source of infestation
 - Develop survey methodologies
 - Conduct evaluation surveys
 - Implement management and quarantine options
 - Conduct follow up surveys and inform Incident Commander with results of surveys
 - Coordinate with Planning and Finance Team the scope of activities and need for funding and permits

C. Communications Team

Purpose: The Communications Team will develop a communications strategy, serve as spokesperson, issue press releases, advisories, and otherwise manage media and public relations as directed by the ICG and the IC. This team will also develop and deliver educational programs to assist the public in understanding prevention, detection and control mechanisms for specific pests and diseases.

Members:

- A. MACF, Public Information Officer
- B. USDA APHIS PPQ representative
- C. USDA Forest Service representative
- D. UMCE, Media Specialist
- E. Others as determined by incident and team

Tasks:

- All agencies will collaborate to communicate accurate information quickly and broadly in a manner that supports the prevention, identification and control of a possible infestation.
- Upon direction from the Incident Commander, the team will convene and determine the appropriate communication strategy that will be made a component of the Incident Action Plan.
- Spokespersons will be chosen by each agency. Typically, when a spokesperson is chosen, that person will act as spokesperson throughout the entire event in order to provide continuity.
- Spokespersons will be members of the Communications Group and approved by the Incident Commander.
- The team will also provide assistance with drafting press release(s) for local government and provide local support as needed.
- The team will coordinate activities with technical experts to ensure their availability to assist in press briefings when needed.
- This team will keep cooperating agencies, legislative liaison, Department Commissioners and appropriate Directors, apprised of all activities as appropriate.
- Press releases issued by the state will be approved by the Incident Commander.
- The need for press conferences will be determined by the Communications Group and approved by the Incident Commander.

PROCESS

Notifying and Mobilizing:

- A. In the event of an invasive species detection by any agency or cooperator, that agency or cooperator will notify the SPRO at MACF and upon official verification by the USDA APHIS laboratory, the MACF will initiate the Forest and Tree Pests Emergency Action Plan

- B. Once a positive invasive species identification and confirmation is determined within Maine requiring resources of other agencies and cooperators the Incident Commander will convene a meeting of the ICG. The ICG will make the decision whether to activate the Emergency Response Plan. Appropriate personnel will be assigned to assist the three working teams and a Project Leader will be selected to manage the event by the ICG.

- C. Next the Planning and Finance Team and the Operations Team shall consult to assist the Incident Commander/ICG in determining an appropriate response and to begin to develop the Emergency Response Plan consistent with this Emergency Action Plan. The incident response plan will address:
 - a. Who are we going to tell and what? - internal and external communication
 - b. Where is it and how bad is it? - the need for core and delimiting surveys and provide an evaluation of the risk of spread.
 - c. What are we going to do about it? - stop movement, emergency orders
 - d. Who is going to do it? - the role and responsibilities of each of the work teams and delineate and assign sufficient and appropriate staff for mission success.
 - e. How are we going to pay for it?—budget, record keeping and documentation necessary for the response effort.

The incident will be considered completed when the infestation has been delimited and evaluated and pathways have been identified and mitigated. Thereafter, ongoing response will be coordinated through the MACF - Maine Forest Service.

Glossary

APHIS - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

CFR - Code of Federal Regulations

MRSA - Maine Revised Statutes Annotated

IC - Incident Commander

ICG - Incident Command Group

ICS - Incident Command System

MACF - Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

MFS – Maine Forest Service

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act

PPQ - USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine

UMCE – University of Maine Cooperative Extension

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

USFS - USDA Forest Service

Eradication - the complete destruction of every trace of something

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