



About borers

The emerald ash borer, or *Agrilus planipennis*, is native to eastern Russia, northern China, Japan and Korea.

It did not arrive in North America until the 1990s, likely in ash wood used for stabilizing cargo in ships. It was first reported to have killed trees in Detroit in 2002.

The adult beetle is dark metallic green and ½-inch long.

Source: USDA Forest Service

Forester asked to do inventory of ash trees in White's Woods

7-12-07

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WHITE TOWNSHIP

Amid reports that officials have discovered a destructive beetle in Cranberry Township, the White Township supervisors voted Wednesday to ask a local forester to revisit White's Woods and investigate the ash trees to possibly modify an adopted forestry stewardship and management plan.

In a motion by supervisor Gail McCauley, the supervisors voted in the absence of supervisor George Lenz for David Babyak to estimate the number of ash trees in the forest, the source of food for the emerald ash borer.

"I don't feel that's unreasonable," she said while making the motion.

The emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle from Asia, damages ash trees, according to

information from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The larvae feed in the tissues of ash tree bark, destroying the tree within about three years.

McCauley reasoned that by removing the ash trees from White's Woods — possibly instead of poplar trees scheduled to be removed through Babyak's original plan to remove 555,000 board-feet of trees — White's Woods would be less attractive to the species.

McCauley investigated the issue after hearing media reports that the beetle was found in Cranberry Township, Butler County, about 70 miles away. She phoned the Department of Agriculture and spoke

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Inventory of ash trees planned

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with Carl Valley, of the Bureau of Plant Industry, who confirmed that report.

She read aloud a letter that she sent to the Department of Agriculture as a follow-up to the phone conversation. In the letter, McCauley writes that there is no known insecticide or herbicide to control the beetle; the U.S. has lost about 20 million ash trees to the species; and that Pennsylvania has already lost 3 million ash trees worth approximately \$760 million.

If the species is found, the area must be quarantined to slow the spread of the bug, according to the DCNR. Any ash trees in the area would be destroyed, McCauley said, and would not be able to be sold.

But by removing the trees before the beetle arrives, the township could possibly sell the ash trees as a substitute for another tree species scheduled to be cut with Babyak's forestry stewardship and management plan.

"Either way, the trees will be lost if we don't do something," said McCauley.

When the supervisors adopted the controversial plan, McCauley included in the motion a clause to allow for modifications at the request of the supervisors.

Also regarding White's Woods, Solicitor Michael Delaney clarified the township's position on selling the property. Just because one supervisor made a comment about selling the woods at a meeting doesn't mean that is the

township's official position, he said.

There is no offer to sell or to purchase at the moment, Delaney said. Township Manager Larry Garner is currently investigating if the township could even legally sell the property. Members of the group Friends of White's Woods, who oppose the management plan, are searching for a land trust or conservancy for possible purchase.

In other business, the supervisors:

■ Are considering the possibility of converting a one of the junior legion baseball fields at the White Township Recreation Complex to a softball field. At a meeting last month, Harold Wilson, Indiana High School's girls' softball coach, said that the need for more softball fields in the area is growing.

Milton Lady, property administrator for White Township, said this could be a possibility, as some of the baseball fields are not being utilized as much as originally intended. An issue, though, is with the differences in the field for baseball and softball. Baseball uses a pitcher's mound and grass infield; softball does not use a mound and plays on a bare infield.

Lady is currently investigating the feasibility of conversion, as supervisors voted unanimously last month to pursue the issue.

■ Viewed a preliminary master plan for renovations to Kennedy King Park. The renovations will convert two old tennis courts

into a basketball area and remodel the playground, among other aspects.

At another township park, Getty Heights, the township has installed new bleachers and a horseshoe pit, Lady said. The supervisors also voted to award contracts to finish work at Getty Heights to the following: Craig Fencing, of Altoona, for \$12,070 for chain link fence; Soil Inc., of New Castle, for \$3,036 worth of infield mix for the baseball field; Lowe's, of White Township, for \$142 worth of traffic paint; and Marion Center Supply, Marion Center, for about \$340 worth of concrete mix and sand.

■ Heard an update on the Chevy Chase Stormwater Management project. Work began about two weeks ago, Garner said, and is going well. With the rain Wednesday, there were some issues with extra runoff.

Because some of the catch basins are currently under construction, they were not functioning, Garner said. This caused more stormwater running down Fifth Street than usual during periods of downpours. The project will replace all pipe work and catch basins in the Chevy Chase area and is expected to be finished around mid-August.

■ Noted that the township has until Tuesday to respond to a request by Susan Dahlheimer, of Friends of White's Woods. Dahlheimer requested information from the township regarding the township's history and ownership of the property.