

Dear Scouts, Scouters, and other users of the Griswold Scout Reservation,

Over the last few years, the Rangers at the Griswold Scout Reservation (GSR), with guidance from a NH licensed forester, have been monitoring the progress of infestation of two different invasive insect species at GSR.

The presence of the Emerald Ash Borer is most likely being related to an infestation which began around the Loudon area, and was linked to out of state firewood being brought across state lines, while Red Pine Scale is spread naturally by birds.

About a year ago, our forester noticed signs of a Red Pine Scale infestation in an area between Lake Eileen and Manning Lake. In an effort to slow the progress of the insect, the majority of the Red Pine trees were removed during a scheduled timber harvest. The idea being that the insect can easily move from tree to tree in areas where there are an abundance of Red pines, however when the trees are spread over a greater area the spread tends to be much less. Although it was suspected that eventually they would infest most if not all of the Red Pines, it was believed that this would take many years to occur.

In March of 2020, the forester noted that the spread seemed to be occurring even faster than anticipated and decided to bring in a representative from the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands to evaluate the situation. It was agreed that the infestation was significant and that we would likely see most if not all of the Red Pines on the property dead within 1-2 years. In September, it was clear that the situation was progressing at an even quicker pace and given the mortality rate of the trees that were observed, the original time estimate needed to be reduced by at least half.

Because of this, the Daniel Webster Council was faced with 2 options.

Option 1 – Perform a salvage harvest of the majority of Red Pine trees on the property while they are still alive and before they become a hazard. At this point they also contain some market value.

Option 2 – Wait until the Red Pine trees die, and then be forced to pay to have them removed, at which time they would have zero market value.

Fortunately, Red Pine is not a predominant species of tree at GSR. There are a few areas that they grow heavily, however those areas are rather small in comparison to the vast forests of mixed hardwood and other conifer species.

Unfortunately, some of the areas with the heaviest Red Pine growth are close to and surround some areas of camp that are near and dear to our hearts. With most of them being around the area of the Hidden Valley Chapel, Magee and Buley Campsites, and along the northeast shore of Lake Eileen. There are other areas along the slopes of Mount Shannon and Mount Mack as well, however these areas are more remote.

Because of the locations that the Red Pine is growing, extra precautions will need to be taken to minimize the impact of the harvesting operations. Our Rangers and forester will be working alongside our loggers to be sure that there is as minimal impact as possible to these sensitive areas.

Unfortunately, no matter how much care is taken, there will be a visual impact in the area for several

years following the harvest. Rest assured though, mother nature will heal herself and we expect a healthy hardwood understory to develop over the next few years.

As far as the Emerald Ash Borer is concerned, the infestation is certainly no less critical, and similar to the situation with the Red Pine, we have been harvesting the mature ash trees a little heavier than we normally would during the last few harvests due to the fact that we knew the insect was coming, and it made more sense to remove the trees pre-infestation than waiting for them to become worthless.

Because there are ash trees located in the center areas of camp, areas that are not normally harvested, there are quite a few trees that have reached the point that they will need to be removed as well. These trees are located mostly at Camp Bell in the area around the Staff Cabins. As with the Red Pine, the unfortunate reality is that although we do not have a ton of ash trees, the predominant species in that immediate area is ash. There will be a significant visual impact here as well and much like the situation at Hidden Valley we expect the understory to fill back in over several years.

Although this is an unfortunate situation, we feel that we are taking the most appropriate action at this time to ensure the health of our forests and the safety of our guests.

Harvesting is scheduled to begin within the next month or so and should take less than 30 days to complete.

Bryan Boyajian
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Daniel Webster Council
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