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Amy Stewart
Superintendent
Warren County School District
Central Administrative Offices
6820 Market Street
Russell, PA 16345-3406

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Dear Ms. Stewart:

Thank you for your letter from the Warren County School District of July 2, 2018, and received in our office on July 6, 2018. I welcome the opportunity to provide you with information regarding the management of ash resources and Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation on the Allegheny National Forest (ANF).

In total, between October 2011 and June 2018, 9.4 million board feet of ash, valued at over \$3.3 million, was sold from the ANF. During that same timeframe, 7.1 million board feet of ash, valued at just over \$2 million, was harvested. An additional nearly 4 million board feet of ash will be offered in 2018. Although we feel very good about these numbers, it must be realized that multiple factors affect the timing, location, and quantity of our sale offerings.

Much of the ANF ash resource referenced by the Warren County School District occurs in richer and wetter sites that are not always physically suited for ground-based timber harvest equipment and ash occurs in such low numbers that timber salvage activities are not operationally feasible. The ANF has taken aggressive measures to increase the volume of ash available for sale and is actively managing the very real threat posed by the EAB.

In 2009, despite EAB not yet having been found on the ANF, the ANF began reducing the abundance of ash trees through harvest. Shortly after EAB's detection on the forest in 2013, the ANF first began to salvage all ash within ongoing timber sale units and along the timber haul routes associated with those sales.

The proposed salvage and restoration activities under the Ash Remediation Project were scoped in December 2015, and a final decision was issued in May 2017. Over 3,200 acres of timber harvesting (stand regeneration) in areas dominated by ash will occur over the life of this multi-year project.

Regarding the treatment of ash for infestations of EAB, activities relative to potential EAB infestation on the ANF began in 2006. At that time, EAB was not present on the ANF; however, the threat existed and the ANF staff have proactively undertaken a number of outreach and educational efforts to broaden public understanding of the impacts of EAB and reduce the potential for EAB introduction. These efforts included:



- newspaper articles and a postcard mailing to 12,000 seasonal landowners within the ANF boundary to inform them about the risk of bringing ash material;
- a ban, since 2007, on bringing firewood to the ANF to minimize the potential for introduction of EAB via transport within firewood;
- training of campground hosts on identifying EAB and assessing the origin of firewood transported by recreation users of the ANF;
- outreach activities in dispersed and developed recreation areas to inform recreation users about EAB and the risk of transporting the insect to these areas; and
- hosting public workshops with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Bureau of Forestry and National Wild Turkey Federation staff to inform area landowners about EAB and activities to address it, including opportunities for the collection of seed for long-term storage.

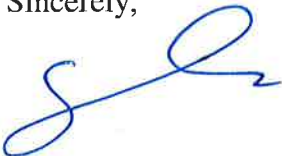
Since 2008, the ANF has conducted surveys to assess ash resources within recreation areas and to monitor for EAB infestations on the ANF. Ash seed was also collected and sent to the National Seed Storage Facility for long-term storage in 2011 and 2013.

ANF staff collaborate with U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station and State and Private Forestry – Forest Health Protection staff to conserve high value ash trees in campgrounds and an ash component across the ANF landscape for genetic and seed tree conservation. In 2015, over 670 ash trees were treated with insecticide to suppress EAB infestations in campgrounds, dispersed recreation areas, and in 22 clusters of ash trees identified as long-term seed sources. Re-treatments occurred in 2018 and monitoring of these trees indicates that the vast majority of them remain healthy thus far, indicating a high rate of success for these treatments. These efforts are critical in ensuring a healthy supply of genetically viable ash for future regeneration efforts.

I hope the information shared above helps to elaborate on the ANF's ash management efforts that have sought to strategically recover ash's economic value for contribution to the local and regional economy while concurrently striving to retain a component on the landscape for long-term conservation.

Thank you for your interest in ash management on the ANF. I would like to offer my staff to provide you with a presentation on the status of the ANF and its resources, specifically with regards to ash remediation and management, at your convenience. If you have any questions, or would like to schedule such a presentation, please contact Forest Silviculturist Andrea Hille at (814) 728-6161 or ahille@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



for ROMAN TORRES
Acting Forest Supervisor

cc: Kathleen Atkinson