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Congressional Staffs Saw Damaging Effects of Invasive Species

The 7th forest health field tour for Congressional members and staffs was conducted on July 23, 2004. The tour was a one-day trip hosted by the Washington Office and Region 8 Forest Health Protection (FHP) Staffs. Participants in the tour were staff members from 12 congressional offices and 3 congressional committees representing 11 states. Our cooperators included the National Park Service, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, and Shenandoah National Park.

This tour was more than a “show and tell” about forest management practices, but how the Forest Service (FS) plan to thwart economic, ecological, and aesthetic damages to our forest. The group visited the Shouse Village Community, a neighborhood adjacent to Wolf Trap Farm in Vienna, Virginia, to observe and hear about the impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species in urban forests. The group then traveled to the Shenandoah National Park where they explored multiple field sites to see and discuss forest health issues affecting the Park and other eastern forests. At these sites the group observed the devastation to Hemlock groves caused by the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid; oak tree mortality caused by the Gypsy Moth and oak decline; native plant displacement caused by exotic invasive plants; conifer tree impacts caused by the Southern Pine Beetle; and forest health problems caused by a high level of atmospheric ozone.

Throughout the tour, FS employees, cooperators, and congressional staffers were heavily engaged in discussions about the agency’s role in restoring and rehabilitating forest and rangeland ecosystems. Participants provided written and oral comments expressing their appreciation for the time and effort put into orchestrating this tour. Specifically, they enjoyed learning about the challenges faced by the FS and our course of action. The FHP organization will continue to use this medium of communications to keep our publics inform.

[Click here](#) to download the slide show (14.2 MB)--Congressional Field Tour