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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hoosier National Forest Announces Firewood Ban Forest Hopes to Slow Spread of Emerald Ash Borer

Bedford, IN (February 22, 2010) — Ken Day, Forest Supervisor on the Hoosier National Forest signed a closure order this month banning any unauthorized firewood from being brought into the Forest. Similar bans are already in place on State Forests and Park properties.

According to Day, “The emerald ash borer is a serious threat to Indiana’s forests. We know the borer has already been found in a few places in southern Indiana, but with this ban we’re hoping to slow further spread of the beetle.”

The beetle, an exotic beetle from Asia, preys on ash species, which comprise an estimated four percent of the trees on the Hoosier. Day explains the beetle moves very slowly on its own but spreads quickly with the movement of firewood or nursery stock. Eliminating infested firewood coming onto the Hoosier will hopefully stop the leap-frog pattern of infested sites.

Campers and other visitors can still bring in pine firewood or other conifer wood and kiln dried lumber. They can also buy or bring in certified firewood from USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) or the Indiana DNR. Day

said a link to a list of vendors selling certified firewood is available from the Forest website. He notes, "Visitors may also collect downed wood from the Forest floor to use while camping."

The Hoosier will be co-hosting two open houses with Indiana DNR, Division of Entomology and Pathology to help local people who wish to become certified firewood vendors learn how the process works. These sessions will be held in Bedford on March 18 and one in Tell City on March 25. These informational sessions will be held from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Residents and firewood sellers may come by during this time to find out how to become a vendor that sells certified firewood with the state or federal label.

The Hoosier has worked closely with the USDA APHIS and the Indiana DNR to determine the best course of action. Emerald ash borer was found in the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area in the winter of 2008 and the Forest is concerned that we minimize further spread.

"Ash is an important component of our Forest ecosystem," said Day. "We want to do everything we can to try to save this species in southern Indiana."

For further information, contact Chris Thornton, Silviculturist at 812-547-9235 or Judi Perez, Public Affairs Officer 812-276-4770.

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