

## Great Lakes Grant Helps Restore Wetland After EAB Damage

### The Challenge:

The emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive insect in North America that kills ash trees. Native to Asia, they were first detected near Detroit, MI, in 2002. Since then, the borer has killed tens of millions of ash trees in 35 States, the District of Columbia, and parts of Canada. The tiny insect can decimate woodlands that are dominated by native ash trees, leaving in its wake dead forests and standing fuel for wildfires.

### The Solution:

While the emerald ash borer presents a major problem for forest health managers, its destructive aftermath offers an opportunity to increase biodiversity when replanting forests.

The Genesee Land Trust, Inc., in New York received a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant for \$50,549 awarded through the USDA Forest Service. They used the grant to help restore a forested wetland habitat devastated by an emerald ash borer infestation. With the help of volunteers, the grant recipient planted 2,679 trees and shrubs across 20 acres in the Lake Ontario Coastal Wetland area. In all, 15 varieties of trees that are climate-adapted for the area and 11 varieties of shrubs were planted during the project.

### Resulting Benefits:

Planting a wide variety of trees and shrubs improves the urban forest's resiliency to potential threats. The newly planted trees and shrubs will help intercept nearly 3 million gallons of storm water runoff and point source pollution, as well as reduce local soil erosion.

The diverse plantings also provide numerous benefits to the site including wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and green infrastructure. Migratory birds, many of which are species of concern, are drawn to the diversified habitat. As a consequence, the replanted site is popular with bird watchers.



A sign in the woods discusses the harmful environmental effects of the emerald ash borer. (Courtesy photo by Genesee Land Trust, Inc.)

### Sharing Success:

Working with local volunteers to plant trees and shrubs helped build community investment in a project from which they stand to benefit. It also presents a “teachable moment” to increase public understanding of the value of trees.

*Planting 2,679 trees and shrubs helps intercept nearly 3 million gallons of storm water runoff and pollutants.*

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