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NEWS

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Statewide inventory to help foresters manage urban tree concerns

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – This fall, arborists completed the first phase of a project designed to create a statewide inventory of urban and community forests, and quantify the environmental benefits they provide.

The inventory will help urban and community foresters around the state address such concerns as emerald ash borer – an invasive insect pest first confirmed in Colorado last month and already responsible for the death or decline of tens of millions of ash trees in 21 states. One of the first steps in responding to emerald ash borer and other insect pests is identifying where host trees are located; this inventory is intended to fill in the existing gaps.

“Although this is only a random sampling of trees in Colorado communities, this project will complement existing tree inventory data and fill in the inventory gaps necessary for community foresters to make tree management decisions,” said Vince Urbina, community forester for the Colorado State Forest Service.

Funded by a 2011 USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Grant and administered by the CSFS, the inventory project enlisted contractor Davey Resource Group to gather tree inventory data on 200 randomly selected, one-tenth acre plots. Sampling locations were located in communities along the I-76, I-70 and U.S. Highway 50 corridors in eastern Colorado. Arborists collected data on urban trees, including tree size, canopy density, number of trees by species, overall health, environmental benefits and crown condition. The data will be used to determine susceptibility to invasive pests. Analysis of the Phase I data should be complete by Dec. 1, and will be made available to Colorado’s community foresters.

The second phase of Colorado’s tree inventory project began this month, with 40 plots completed in Grand Junction and others started on the northern Front Range, but was halted due to advancing fall conditions and the loss of leaves on deciduous trees. That phase will resume in Front Range communities in early summer 2014.

The inventory project is the result of community forestry threats identified during development of the 2009 Colorado Forest Action Plan. The plan was produced by the CSFS to focus limited resources on forest management where it will achieve the greatest benefit.

More information about urban and community forestry issues is available at <http://csfs.colostate.edu>.

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