

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is making available to the public a draft environmental assessment regarding the removal of trees infested by the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) in Clermont County, Ohio. The draft environmental assessment examines the potential impacts of the program's proposed activities.

In its initial eradication efforts in Ohio, APHIS is proposing to remove all infested trees and continue conducting surveys to determine what additional program tools may be used in the infested area in the future. This action is necessary to prevent the further spread of ALB and to help eradicate this invasive pest from the area. The preferred alternative described in the draft environmental assessment includes removing infested trees, grinding stumps of removed host trees, applying the herbicide triclopyr on stumps that cannot be removed to eliminate regrowth, and chipping or burning cut trees.

The document is available online at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml. Anyone wishing to obtain a paper copy of the document should send a request to Brendon Reardon either by e-mail at Brendon.Reardon@aphis.usda.gov or by postal mail at 4700 River Road, Unit 26, Riverdale, MD 20737. Interested persons should request the document titled "Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Efforts in Clermont and Brown Counties, Ohio, July 2011" and provide the recipient's postal address.

Anyone who wishes to comment on the document should send comments to either the e-mail or postal address of Brendon Reardon (please see above) by September 2, 2011. Any comments received will be considered and may result in changes to the proposed activities. Once all comments are received and considered, a final determination will be made available at the website listed above.

APHIS will publish a legal notice once a week for two weeks announcing the availability of the draft environmental assessment for public comment. The legal notice will appear in the Cincinnati Enquirer, Bethel Journal, Community Journal Clermont, and Milford-Miami Advertiser. It will also appear at least once in The Independent Press.

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