

St. James Township
37830 Kings Highway
Beaver Island, MI 49782

Peaine Township
36825 Kings Highway
Beaver Island, MI 49782

SUBJECT: The Emerald Ash Borer and Wood Movement to the Islands

In 2019, the Townships of Peaine and St. James passed an ordinance regulating and banning the movement of firewood, logs, lumber and wood pallets from the mainland to the Beaver Island Archipelago. Any wood brought to the Islands had to be bark free and/or processed in a manner which made it free of insects and disease.

The major concern was for the forests of the Archipelago, as there has been a massive incursion of the Emerald Ash Borer in the State of Michigan-- which has devastated the Ash tree population on the Michigan mainland. In hopes of keeping the Beaver Islands free of infestation, island volunteers have been monitoring our forests for years, with the help of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In 2017, an Emerald Ash Borer trap captured a female emerald ash borer. Tests in 2018 and this spring have also found the beetle's larvae in two isolated Ash locations on Beaver Island. A full court press has ensued with a multidisciplinary team coming to the Island in March of this year to conduct surveys and to begin eradication processes. The team, consisting of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Charlevoix-Antrim-Kalkaska-Emmet Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (COKE CISMA) and volunteer members of the Beaver Island Association.

Pamela Grassmick, a resident of Beaver Island and a member of the Beaver Island Association, has been instrumental in bringing attention to the issue. She and others have worked for over a decade in monitoring our forests and wetlands for invasive species of all kinds. "We actually stripped the trees and looked at the larvae. There are different stages of the larvae and we found all stages present in two spots on the island," Grassmick said.

Due to the early detection and the control methods now in place, forestry experts think Beaver Island has a good chance of controlling this pest. "The professionals feel confident we can control this on the island – if we get on top of it right now," Grassmick said.

To that end, the Townships have passed this ordinance and will plan on enforcing it. Signs, bringing attention to the Ordinance, will be placed at all ports of entry to the island. The Beaver Island Ferry Company and both airports will have warning signs placed where travelers to the Islands can see them. Businesses, campgrounds and other gathering places will also post these signs. Pam Grassmick adds: "The Beaver Island Townships' signs are a vital step in controlling the movement of untreated wood which could harbor invasive forest pests. Islanders recognize that the ecology and economic future are dependent on the health of our forests and it is great to see the township's support in action."

All are encouraged to buy or obtain fire wood locally, and to be especially mindful not to move Ash wood around the island or between the islands of the Beaver Island Archipelago.

For more information on the Emerald Ash Borer and the work that is taking place to eradicate it, please go to the Beaver Island Association website: www.beaverislandassociation.org. The Township websites will also carry more information about this ordinance.