

# Buy It (Or Collect It) Where You Burn It

*Follow firewood rules for tasty s'mores and healthy forests*

**PARK**

*Etiquette*

**F**ew things are sweeter than a cool autumn evening spent around a crackling campfire with good company. But did you know that firewood sourced from outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park may be hosting hidden company of its own in the form of dangerous invasive pests?

Smokies Forester Jesse Webster wants to remind visitors that the park's firewood regulations exist to strike a balance between the perfect s'more and a healthy forest.

"The park contains some of the largest remaining uncut sections of forest in the eastern United States," said Webster. "Some of these old-growth trees are over 500 years old, and the tallest native hardwood tree in North America is found in the Smokies. These forests play an important part in keeping the air and water clean for surrounding communities, and wildlife, like our lovable bears, healthy."

Non-native insects and diseases that hitch a ride into the park via firewood threaten these forests. Some of these pests and diseases include emerald ash borer, which kills ash trees, laurel wilt, which kills sassafras trees, and thousand cankers disease, which kills walnut trees.

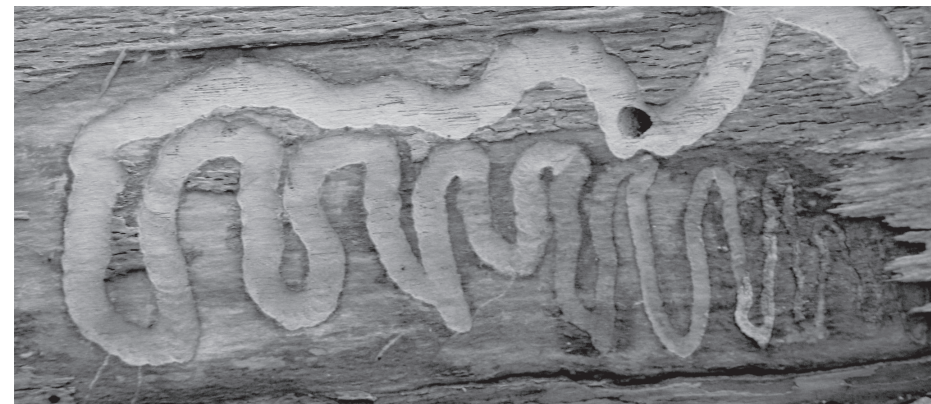
"Since these pests didn't evolve here over time, there are no natural established controls for them," said Webster. "Therefore, they can reach exponential numbers the trees are unable to tolerate."

Webster works with a team that has been in a long battle to protect the Smokies' trees. They treat approximately 300,000 eastern hemlocks by spraying and injecting them with insecticides and using predator beetles. They also treat 700 green and white ash trees.

However, there's a cheaper and less time-intensive way visitors can help, too—and it starts with your campfire.

While wood you purchase or find outside the park may look healthy, there's a chance it contains tiny insect eggs or microscopic fungal spores that can lead to new infestations.

"We are constantly concerned with new introductions that could arrive from firewood movement," said Webster. "Just last year, Asian longhorned beetle was detected near Charleston, South Carolina. If this pest made it to the Smokies, it could be devastating to multiple native



**Top:** The emerald ash borer, a beetle native to northeast Asia, has had devastating impacts on green and white ash trees in the park. *Photo by Bill Keim.* **Above:** Emerald ash borer larvae feed on the tree in a serpentine pattern, disrupting the tree's ability to transfer nutrients to its leaves. *Photo by Mark Apgar.*

tree species in the park. The firewood policy helps reduce the threat of these new forest insects and diseases."

The safest—and required—options for firewood in the Smokies are:

1. Downed, dead wood found within the park
  2. Certified heat-treated wood
- Using wood found within the park ensures you're not introducing diseases

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**Only use firewood certified with a heat-treated compliance stamp**



North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Plant Industry Division  
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This firewood has been certified heat-treated to a core temperature of 71.1°C (160°F) for 75 minutes.

Business Name  
Business Address  
Certification No. FIPS-###-YEAR

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**~Jesse Webster**

**Forester, Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

that aren't already here. However, it must be sourced from already-fallen trees. It is not permissible to cut live trees or branches.

Heat-treated firewood that is bundled and certified by the USDA or a state agency is the only wood visitors may bring into the park. This is an affordable, high-quality wood that lights easily, burns well, and is safe for toasting marshmallows and other camp favorites. Heat treatment kills any pathogens living in the wood, so you don't have to worry about uninvited guests at your family campout.

**You can find certified heat-treated wood from businesses around the park and from concessioners at Cades Cove, Smokemont, and Elkmont during their operating seasons.**

“Most people don't want to see their favorite campground with dead and dying trees,” Webster said. By following the park's simple firewood regulations, we can all play a part in keeping our campsites beautiful and our tree shade plentiful for many more campfires to come.

# Please leave your firewood at home.



**Use only heat-treated firewood or dead and down wood within the park.**

**Harmful pests can hitchhike into the park on your firewood, which could kill millions of trees.**