

Firewood Month - October 2023

Project Intent and Messaging Outline



This document is designed to help outreach professionals, stakeholders, and other members of the larger forest health community understand the intent of Firewood Month. It includes the goal, partner information, weekly themes, sample social media messages, and graphics to allow for convenient participation.

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Introduction

Goals

Firewood Month's primary goal is to improve firewood users' habits as a result of increased awareness that firewood is a pathway for the spread of forest pests and diseases. The messages strive to nudge people in the direction of accepted best practices for firewood buying and/or gathering, which will depend on their locality and situation. We established theme weeks to organize best practices based on situations and audiences, though we invite partners to tailor the messages to your needs and audiences.

Leadership and Contacts

The Nature Conservancy's Forest Pest and Pathogen Program are the leaders of Firewood Month. Our major partners in this outreach event have traditionally included USDA's Hungry Pests campaign, North American Invasive Species Management Association's PlayCleanGo campaign, and dozens of other state and regional partners. For more information, please contact The Nature Conservancy's Forest Pest and Pathogen Program Director, Leigh Greenwood (lgreenwood@tnc.org), or Firewood Coordinator (laurel.downs@tnc.org).

Action Kit Audience and Partners

Our partners include outreach professionals, stakeholders, and other members of the larger plant protection community, such as State Departments of Agriculture, Regional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers, Agriculture Extension Offices, nonprofit organizations, and any other entity that wants to share this educational messaging on their outreach channels. Partners do not need to request permission to use any of our materials if they are being used for educational purposes.

Schedule

Each week in October has a theme. These themes allow partners to strategize when to "chime in" according to their preferences, audiences, and professional time constraints. There is no minimum requirement to participate, and it is not a problem if a given partner wishes to ignore the theme schedule due to their state or regions' needs.



2023 Resources and Changes of Note

New resources and outreach material

The Don't Move Firewood team updated their comprehensive research and synthesis report of firewood regulations, certification, and outreach statuses, with the goal to provide simple and accurate professional comparative summaries for each topic area across all US states and territories. Find the [Firewood Regulation, Certification, and Recommendation Report here \(republished April 2023\)](#). The DMF Resource Library has been maintained to provide plethora of outreach material available for free download at www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library; sample images of Firewood Month social media images can be found on the social media image library page: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month.

New Infestations

Spotted lanternfly (SLF) continues to spread and several new established infestations have been detected in 2023 including in new states such as Indiana and Iowa with [sightings in many other new areas](#). Emerald ash borer (EAB) continues its spread as well, with new detections in previously uninfested areas of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, and Maine. The EAB infestation near Portland OR remains a discrete single quarantined zone. [New infestations and subsequent quarantines of Giant African snail](#) are in Lee and Broward Counties, Florida.

Elm zigzag sawfly is relatively new pest, confirmed in Quebec in 2020 with subsequent detections in VA (2021), and NC, MD, PA, and NY (2022). As of Fall 2023 it has also been confirmed in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Ohio. While we have much to learn about this species, researchers have documented it overwinters in small cocoons attached to leaves or nearby objects (such as fenceposts), much like the overwintering egg stages of spotted lanternfly and spongy moth. This indicates firewood is a likely pathway for the spread of this pest. Elm zigzag sawfly also reproduces parthenogenically, so one adult is enough to start a new infestation.

Regulatory Updates

In 2023, some states enacted new, modified existing, or rescinded firewood related regulations that affect firewood as a regulated article. Florida implemented two new quarantines on giant African snail including in Lee (December 2022) and Broward Counties (June 2023). Several states are still actively in the process of rescinding their quarantines on walnut twig beetle; these include, Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan. Spotted lanternfly (SLF) continues to spread and states with known infestations are expanding their internal quarantines to keep up (e.g., PA added 6 counties to the SLF quarantine in 2023). Federal and/or state regulations continue to limit firewood movement to prevent the spread of spongy moth, imported fire ant, Asian longhorned beetle, and a variety of other regional pests of concern. The mid-Atlantic states' various quarantines on spotted lanternfly are also critically important in regards to firewood movement. Overall, the existing regulations that impact firewood movement provide protection to areas left unregulated due to the rescindment of the federal quarantine on emerald ash borer. State and provincial summaries are regularly updated (www.dontmovefirewood.org/map) to reflect current regulations and recommendations.

Note on federal emerald ash borer quarantine deregulation ongoing impacts

In 2021, the federal domestic emerald ash borer (EAB) quarantine regulations were removed. While this federal deregulation of EAB changed some aspects of the regulatory environment around the movement of firewood, it did not directly affect any state-based regulations on EAB. States have responded in one of three ways to the federal deregulation: 1) some states implemented new state-based regulations of EAB, 2) some rescinded their previously

held state-based regulations of EAB in conjunction with the federal deregulation, and 3) some states made no changes to their state-based regulations – this means that those that were affected by the EAB regulations before 2021 do not currently have a regulation that operates similarly in their region. Still other regulations relevant to firewood, such as federal regulations on other forest pests or pre-existing state-based regulations, remain in place. See <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/federal-deregulation-of-emerald-ash-borer/> and firewood.nationalplantboard.org/ for more information.

Recent Trends in Recreation

The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily amplified an existing rise in popularity among recreationists to go camping. While there is still a year-to-year increase in the number of active camper households, in 2022 and 2023 we've seen those trends are returning to pre-pandemic levels. For example, findings from the [2022](#) and [2023](#) KOA North American Camping Reports indicate a decline in the number of new campers in 2022 (6.4 million) compared to 2021 (9.1 million) and 2020 (10.1 million), but there is still an increase in "active camper households" from year-to-year including 1.5 million new active camper households in the past year. This finding is consistent with the report's prediction that many first-timers would camp again. According to the 2023 KOA report, 92 million American households identified as campers and 58 million household camped at least once last year such that camping and "glamping" accounted for 32% of all leisure trips in 2022. Glamping, a nickname for luxury camping, is also on the rise and up by nearly 3 million from 2020. The substantial rise in all forms of camping creates a parallel increase of risk for the spread of forest pests and pathogens via the movement of infested firewood. Access to information regarding firewood regulations and best practices is more important than ever.

Regionally Specific Firewood Messaging

Certified heat-treated firewood availability is regional

In areas where certified, heat-treated firewood is typically commercially available (in general, this correlates closely with known infestations of emerald ash borer or spongy moth, see relevant maps below), it may be advisable to emphasize the use of *heat-treated* firewood over local firewood. “Local” has many possible interpretations, while heat-treated firewood is a regulated product.

- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/plant-health/eab-map> (*EAB interactive map*)
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/plant-health/spongy-moth-quarantine> (*Spongy Moth interactive map*)

Definitions of local firewood vary

“Local” firewood is not a defined or consistent term. Firewood regulations throughout the country vary; state regulations are most often either defined as a set distance (typically 10, 25, or 50 miles) or as a specified geographical area defined by a county, state, or regulated area. It is imperative that you determine what metrics and/or geographies will mean “local” in your area, and then reflect that in your messaging.

Recommendations on when and where to mention gathering firewood

The likelihood that gathering firewood on-site is legally permissible and environmentally sustainable varies greatly by region and land ownership patterns. Please make the decision to promote responsibly gathering or harvesting firewood based on your knowledge and best judgment for the areas you are targeting.

Firewood Scout and finding firewood vendors

The answer to the questions “how can I figure out where to buy firewood?” varies greatly by region. Some state Departments of Forestry or Agriculture maintain an online directory of approved dealers. Many states list their vendors on Firewood Scout, a cooperative firewood vendor locating website (<http://firewoodscout.org/>). The new crowd-sourced site <https://stacked.camp/> now has a substantial number of vendors listed in some parts of the country. Some states and areas have no online information. Do a brief search to find the best options available and make your recommendations accordingly.

Suggested wording on where firewood comes from

In the sample wording pages, you will see many messages that follow this rough pattern of wording: “the trees cut for firewood often died due to insects or disease...”. This has been extremely popular with the general public on the Don’t Move Firewood social media accounts, as people often envision firewood being cut from dead or declining trees. However, this may not be applicable to commercial or large-scale operations, especially in the Eastern states. If you do not feel like this message will resonate with your audience, feel free to not use it.

Canada specific messages and dates

Partners in Canada will want to refer to the Canadian Council for Invasive Species Firewood Month page to see some of the specific Canadian outreach materials. For instance, their posters show “Buy Local, Burn Local” as the official slogan alongside Don’t Move Firewood. Learn more at <https://canadainvasives.ca/programs/buy-local-burn-local/>.

You may find it helpful to consult national maps and related state-specific resources at these URLs:

- 🔥 <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/map/>
- 🔥 <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/Pest-Tracker>

Weekly Themes

Week 1 (Oct 1 – 7, 2023)

For the first week of Firewood Month, we focus on general information, disseminating ideas, promoting press releases describing the issues of firewood and the spread of forest pests.

Suggested outreach landing page: <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/firewood-month/>

General messages and sample wording: Messages strive to include a brief summary of the issue of forest pests and the firewood pathway, followed by positive messages of what each person can do to make a difference. Sample wording and concepts follow.

Moving firewood long distances can spread forest pests. Your firewood choices matter. Don't move firewood – instead, buy firewood where you'll burn it, buy certified, heat-treated firewood, or responsibly gather on site when permitted. You can protect the places you love by preventing the spread of forest pests that hide in firewood!

The Don't Move Firewood campaign promotes the following three choices, which each participant in Firewood Month should regionally tailor and select according to factors in their local firewood situation:

- **Buy certified, heat-treated firewood.**
- **Buy it where you burn it / Buy firewood near where you'll burn it.**
- **Responsibly gather firewood on site where permitted.**

Sample wording of social media posts during the first week:

(Please tag Twitter posts #FirewoodMonth to allow for campaign tracking and easier sharing. You are welcome to remove the hashtags seen below for other platforms.)

- 🔥 The trees cut for firewood often died due to insects or disease. Don't spread pests – buy #firewood where you burn it. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Your choices matter- buy local #firewood, certified, heat-treated firewood, or gather on site where permitted. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Want to protect #nature? Don't move firewood. It can spread invasive pests hidden inside. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Forest pests can spread on contaminated #firewood, starting new infestations. Protect trees – don't move firewood. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Transporting #firewood can spread pests. Buy local or certified heat-treated firewood, or responsibly gather it on site! #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Help stop the spread of #invasive pests. Use certified, heat-treated or locally harvested firewood. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Join us in spreading the word on #FirewoodMonth – your #firewood choices matter! Learn more: (link of your choosing)

(a variety of images to complement these text examples can be found at the end of this document as well as on the Firewood month social media library page: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month)

Week 2 (Oct 8 – 14, 2023)

Focus on general information, or target fall recreationalists - especially the demographics of hunters, anglers, and RV owners. *In 2023, this week overlaps with [Fire Prevention Week](#) (Oct. 8 – 14), so cross-promoting with general fire safety tips may be desirable.*

Suggested outreach landing page: <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/firewoodmonthrecreation/>

Or, for hunters and anglers in particular: <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/hunters-and-anglers-can-help-protect-forest-health/>

General messages and sample wording: Messages will target outdoor recreationalists that are most likely to move significant amounts of firewood in the fall. This demographic includes all campers, but especially hunters, anglers, and recreational vehicle (RV) owners. Fall recreationalists are a particularly important group of people for the firewood pathway, as they often combine several demographic profiles that are most prone to moving firewood (long term campers, owners of large vehicles, owners of property with trees). All messages should include positive actions of what each person can do to make a difference. Sample wording and concepts follow.

Hunters, anglers, RV owners, and everyone that enjoys fall camping can protect the campsites and wildlife habitat they enjoy by preventing the spread of forest pests on firewood. Don't move firewood – instead, plan to either gather firewood on-site when permitted, or purchase firewood near your camping destination. Don't fill your vehicle with firewood to burn at an upcoming destination – this could spread forest pests and may also violate state or local laws—depending on the area. You have the power to slow the spread of forest pests!

Please note that for long stay campers (such as big game hunters, RV-ers, etc.) the solution to buy firewood may seem impractical or too expensive, so mentioning gathering firewood is particularly important for this group. For this reason, we suggest presenting the “gather” option FIRST when messaging directly to this demographic:

- **Gather firewood on site where permitted.**
- **Buy it where you burn it / Buy firewood near where you'll burn it.**
- **Buy certified, heat-treated firewood.**

Sample wording of social media posts during this week:

(Please tag Twitter posts #FirewoodMonth to allow for campaign tracking and easier sharing. You are welcome to remove the hashtags seen below for other platforms.)

- 🔥 Going #camping? Your #firewood choices matter- buy local wood or gather on site where permitted.
- 🔥 #Trees cut for firewood often died due to insects or disease. Protect your favorite places – don't bring #firewood from home to your campsite.
- 🔥 Want to protect #wildlife? Don't move #firewood. It can spread invasive pests hidden inside.
- 🔥 Just because #firewood looks clean doesn't mean it's safe to transport. Protect forests from #invasive pests; buy it where you burn it or gather firewood on site where permitted. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Join us in spreading the word on #FirewoodMonth – tell fellow campers that their #firewoodchoices matter!
- 🔥 Taking that #RV for a big trip? Prevent the movement of #forestpests- inspect the outside, and don't bring #firewood inside. Use local firewood. #FirewoodMonth (suggestion: use with RV and *Lymantria dispar* imagery, found in the image bank)

(a variety of images to complement these text examples can be found at the end of this document as well as on the Firewood month social media library page: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month)

Week 3 (Oct 15 – 21, 2023)

Focus on general information, or on firewood's important role as a forest product during [National Forest Products Week](#) in the USA.

General messages and sample wording: National Forest Products Week* begins the third Sunday in October each year when various forest product industry groups (primarily lumber and paper) promote their own messages. For reference see the [2021 Proclamation](#) or [2022 Proclamation](#) (the wording is different between years, and reading both is helpful). Our messages this week will work off the themes of forest health, forest products, and the importance of buying or harvesting firewood responsibly. All messages should include positive actions that each person can take to make a difference. Sample wording and concepts follow.

Firewood is the original forest product – and a renewable resource. Your firewood choices matter. Harvest firewood responsibly or buy firewood locally from forest products businesses. Trees cut for firewood have often died due to insects or disease; to protect forests, avoid transporting cut wood across state or quarantine boundaries. By taking these steps, you have the power to protect our Nation's forests and trees!

The Don't Move Firewood campaign typically promotes three choices for firewood. In the case of National Forest Products Week, the last option is modified (Harvest vs Gather) to fit the intended audience and tone more closely.

- **Buy certified, heat-treated firewood.**
- **Buy it where you burn it / Buy firewood near where you'll burn it.**
- **Harvest firewood in compliance with local regulations.**

Sample wording of social media posts during this week:

(Please tag Twitter posts #FirewoodMonth to allow for campaign tracking and easier sharing. You are welcome to remove the hashtags seen below for other platforms.)

- 🔥 When you think about sustainable #forestproducts, think local #firewood! Buy it where you'll burn it. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 #Firewood is an important #forest product for many rural communities. Buy local or harvest with a permit. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Support the #forestproducts industry and prevent the spread of invasive species, all at once! Buy certified, heat-treated #firewood. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Celebrate National #ForestProducts Week by learning about the importance of responsible #firewood choices. *(insert educational link of choice)* #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Spread the word on #FirewoodMonth and #ForestProducts Week– tell your colleagues that their #firewood choices matter!

(a variety of images to complement these text examples can be found at the end of this document as well as on the Firewood month social media library page: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month)

**Forest Products Week in the USA is in October, note that in Canada it is in September.*

Week 4 (Oct 22 – 31, 2023)

Focus on general information, or messages targeted to people that buy or gather firewood to heat their homes or cabins.

Suggested outreach landing page: <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/firewoodmonthheating/>

General messages and sample wording: Messages this week will focus on the topics of home heating, wood stoves, cordwood, and buying from established wood sellers to reduce the accidental or intentional/unethical selling of cords from across a regulated boundary. All messages should include positive actions of what each person can do to make a difference. Sample wording and concepts follow.

Everyone who heats their home or cabin with a woodstove can help slow the spread of invasive tree-killing pests by burning responsibly harvested firewood. If buying cords of wood, ask your firewood seller if they are following your local or regional restrictions. In many places, quarantines and movement rules are in place to reduce the movement of tree-killing pests in firewood. Your firewood choices matter- buy local firewood, or responsibly harvest your own firewood in accordance with local rules.

Woodstove users typically buy and use firewood in cords, making the message to buy packaged certified, heat-treated firewood unrealistic from both an economic and logistics perspective. Instead, we suggest using the following two messages for this audience during this week.

- **Buy firewood from a local and reputable dealer.**
- **Harvest your own firewood responsibly- know your local regulations.**

Sample wording of social media posts during this week:

(Please tag Twitter posts #FirewoodMonth to allow for campaign tracking and easier sharing. You are welcome to remove the hashtags seen below for other platforms.)

- 🔥 Buying #firewood in cords? Purchase responsibly - ask your wood supplier if there are any local restrictions due to #forestpests. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 #Firewood can be infested with tree-killing insects. Buy or harvest locally to reduce the risk of spreading invasive species. #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 DYK wet #firewood wastes energy and creates more pollution? Buy your firewood locally and keep it dry for best results! #FirewoodMonth – consider including a link to: <https://www.epa.gov/burnwise/best-wood-burning-practices>
- 🔥 Heat your home with #firewood? Buy local firewood, or harvest your own responsibly. Learn how this protects trees at [dontmovefirewood.org](https://www.dontmovefirewood.org) . #FirewoodMonth
- 🔥 Spread the word on #FirewoodMonth + protect your trees - tell your neighbors their #firewood choices matter!

(a variety of images to complement these text examples can be found at the end of this document as well as on the Firewood month social media library page: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month)

Sample Image Bank

SCROLL THROUGH PAGES TO SEE ALL OPTIONS

Most images can also be found on the new Firewood month social media library page:

https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library/?_sft_item_type=firewood-month

Contact Laurel at laurel.downs@tnc.org if you need help finding a specific image/graphic.

Various Hungry Pests **Social Media quality** images below. Please visit the website for alternative ideas, images in higher resolution, and other items:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/usda-efforts/partner-tools>







Various Don't Move Firewood **Social Media** quality images below. Please visit the website much more:
<https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/resource-library>





forest health depends on you

- buy local firewood
- buy certified, heat-treated firewood
- gather onsite when permitted

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DEAR CAMPER,



PROTECT THE PLACES YOU LOVE



**LEAVE YOUR FIREWOOD AT HOME
BUY IT WHERE YOU BURN IT!**

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