

NEWS RELEASE



PROTECT AMERICA'S BEAUTIFUL TREES AND FORESTS: DON'T MOVE FIREWOOD

Keep our country's natural heritage safe from invasive insects and diseases this Fourth of July

Arlington, VA—June 20, 2012—Thousands of Americans celebrate Independence Day by heading to national and state parks, campgrounds, and forests to enjoy the outdoors. Many will bring along their own firewood for convenience - not realizing that bringing firewood from home poses a serious risk to the nation's forests by potentially spreading tree-killing pests. Many states, and several federal agencies, consider this risk severe enough to implement regulations restricting the movement of firewood, and in some places violations can come with a hefty fine.

"The Fourth of July holiday is a time when we all remember what an amazing country we live in, and healthy trees and forests are integral to the beauty of our lands and waters," said Leigh Greenwood, *Don't Move Firewood* campaign manager, The Nature Conservancy. "Tens of thousands of trees are destroyed every year by invasive tree-killing insects, and one of the most important steps everyone can take to protect our natural heritage is to stop moving forest pests to new areas on firewood. It's really that simple."

In many states, regulations limit how far firewood can be legally transported, and some states prohibit the entrance of out-of-state firewood altogether. These regulations most frequently include prohibitions against moving firewood over 50 miles or over state lines, although some states have stricter limits in place. For example, some states prohibit movement of firewood to state parks or other state-managed lands from more than 25 miles away. Additionally, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has federal quarantines in many states on wood products (including firewood, wooden pallets, and other materials) that could harbor pests like the Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and other damaging pests and pathogens.

"We encourage everyone to help protect to our country's natural resources from invasive species," said APHIS spokesperson Joelle Hayden. "Taking basic steps – like not moving firewood and following Federal and State quarantines – will help keep these dangerous pests from spreading unintentionally."

More than 450 non-native forest insects and diseases are now established in the United States. While most can't move far on their own, many pests can hitchhike undetected on firewood, starting new infestations in locations hundreds of miles away. These infestations can destroy forests, lower property values, and cost huge sums of money to control. Over the last hundred years, introduced species of invasive insects and diseases have killed tens of millions of trees in forests, cities, and towns across the country. In addition to the Asian longhorned beetle and emerald ash borer, these tree-killing pests include Dutch elm disease, Sirex woodwasp,

thousand cankers disease, hemlock woolly adelgid, sudden oak death, laurel wilt, and many others.

Following are tips from the *Don't Move Firewood* campaign:

- Take care to respect all state and local regulations on the movement of firewood and other unprocessed wood – some areas are subject to serious fines for violations. For more information, visit <http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/the-problem/state-state-information/index.html>.
- For a list of federal and state quarantine areas, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/quarantine-counties.htm>.
- Obtain firewood near the location where you will burn it – that means the wood was cut in a nearby forest, in the same county, or a maximum of 25-50 miles from where you'll have your fire depending on state regulations.
- Commercially kiln-dried wood is a good option if you must transport firewood.
- If you notice an insect or tree disease you don't recognize, take a photo or obtain a specimen of it, and compare it to Web site photos of the suspected pest. A good resource to help in identification is: <http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/gallery-of-pests>.
- If you believe you have found a new outbreak of an invasive insect or disease, contact your state department of agriculture: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/other/stateag.html>.
- Tell your friends and others about the risks of moving firewood – no one wants to be responsible for starting a new pest infestation.

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To learn more about how to prevent forest pests from destroying forests, log onto www.dontmovefirewood.org.

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 18 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 117 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Visit us on the Web at www.nature.org.