

## 2013 Emerald Ash Borer Communications Plan

*April 2013*

*Updated September 2013*

## **BACKGROUND**

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The town has been actively managing the invasive insect, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) since it was discovered in Oakville in 2008. Oakville's EAB management program has been widely recognized as a model for other municipalities.

Ash represents about 9.6 per cent of Oakville's urban forest canopy cover. While the town is taking a very proactive approach to EAB and mitigating the impact on municipal properties, the impact on ecological benefits such as pollution reduction and energy savings that are provided by ash trees is greatly dependent on the participation of private ash tree owners.

The year 2013 is a crucial year to engage the community, as forestry professionals believe this may be the last summer an effective treatment program can begin. Trees that are not treated this year are expected to be too infested to treat and will be dead by next year. EAB is becoming more obvious throughout the town with dead and declining ash trees along roads, in parks and woodlands, and on private property. The EAB program is now beginning to focus on significant removal of infested ash trees on the public road allowance and tableland parks. The full impact of the town's ash tree removal program, particularly in woodland parks, is only just beginning and is expected to create public concern in the coming years as ash tree mortality from EAB escalates not only in Oakville, but around the Greater Toronto Area.

## **BUSINESS GOAL**

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To implement the 2013 EAB management program. The five components of the EAB management program are: Ash Tree Treatment, Community Engagement, Ash Tree Removal, Ash Tree Replacement and EAB Monitoring Programs.

The EAB management program addresses the corporate strategic goal to enhance our natural environment and have environmentally sustainable programs and services.

## **COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES**

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The primary goal of the Community Engagement program is to inform and educate residents of Oakville's EAB management program and how they can assist by treating their private ash trees, or removing them and planting a replacement tree for the sustainability of our urban forest and to help meet Oakville's forty per cent canopy coverage goal. Specifically:

1. To raise public awareness of the threat of EAB and of the Town of Oakville's EAB Management Plan and encourage action by incurring a 25% increase in Oakville's Canopy Club followers by September 30, 2013.
2. To educate Oakville residents about ash tree treatment and removal options through targeted marketing/communications and social media, increasing the number of visits to Oakville's EAB web page by 25 per cent by September 30, 2013.
3. To educate Oakville residents of the necessity of closure and high risk tree removal in town woodlands through targeted marketing/communications, increasing the number of visits to Oakville's Woodlands web page by 25 per cent by March 31, 2013
4. To develop new partnerships within the business community and gain promotional and financial support through corporate sponsorships and grants to support woodland regeneration efforts. The goal is to secure 5 partnerships by Dec. 20, 2013.

## **RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

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Oakville is the first municipality in Canada to complete an early warning detection project, allowing staff to detect the increase in insect populations several years earlier than the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) method. In 2010, the Town of Oakville employed state-of-the-art technology to manage the threat of EAB. Tree inventory efforts were undertaken via a Hyperspectral Imaging (HSI) that provided an accurate means of verifying the distribution of ash trees throughout Oakville. The technology provides a measurable inventory of the town's ash population—even on private property.

Eighty per cent of Oakville's treatable ash tree canopy is located on private property. Ash trees which are still healthy and structurally sound can be saved if residents know about them and choose to treat them. Knowing where this insect will strike and targeting trees that can be saved will increase Oakville's chances of success in saving its tree canopy.



## **TARGET AUDIENCE(S)/KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

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Oakville Residents  
Oakville Town Council  
Local businesses  
Media

## **KEY MESSAGES**

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- Oakville is leading the way in the management of the invasive foreign insect the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
- Treat your ash trees. Be a knowledgeable consumer. Do your research and get multiple quotes.
- To win the battle against EAB there will need to be significant participation by Town of Oakville residents to become aware of EAB; learn how to identify ash trees and EAB infestation; and become educated on the options to save or remove ash trees.
- Join Oakville's Canopy Club campaign to preserve our tree canopy. Whether you have an ash tree or not, here's how you can become a Canopy Club Champion: spread the word; treat your ash trees; remove dead or dying ash trees to minimize the spread; dispose of removed trees properly; replant a new species of tree; get involved; become a Canopy Club partner; tell us what you think.
- Dead and dying ash trees pose a hazard to public safety and property. The town will begin a number of woodland closures in 2013/2014 to remove high risk ash trees. Prime sites are being designated through a Woodlands Conservation Program to provide new tree plantings in response to the devastation caused by EAB.



<b>The Vision</b>	<b>The Value</b>	<b>The Differentiator</b>	<b>Call to Action</b>
<i>The town has an EAB management plan to save the town's tree Canopy.</i>	<i>EAB threatens to kill one in nearly ten trees in the town. With more than 177,000 ash trees or 9.6 per cent of Oakville's existing tree canopy at risk, residents' awareness and engagement is crucial.</i>	<i>Trees matter in Oakville. The town is committed to increasing its canopy coverage, and is leading the municipal battle against EAB.</i>	<i>Learn what the town is doing and what you can do to protect our ash trees. Go to the Town of Oakville's website for more information and join the Oakville Canopy Club to spread the word.</i>

<b>The Vision</b>	<b>The Value</b>	<b>The Differentiator</b>	<b>Call to Action</b>
<i>Treat your tree against EAB.</i>	<i>2013 is the crucial year to engage and inform the Oakville population about treatment. This summer will likely be the last year an effective treatment program can begin before trees are too infested to save.</i>	<i>Eighty per cent of Oakville's ash tree canopy is on private property. Residents can make a difference if they choose to.</i>	<i>Contact a certified arborist to treat your ash tree. Go to the Town of Oakville's website for more information. Follow Oakville Canopy Club on Facebook and Twitter.</i>

<b>The Vision</b>	<b>The Value</b>	<b>The Differentiator</b>	<b>Call to Action</b>
<i>Residents should remove dead and dying ash trees for safety.</i>	<i>Dead and dying ash trees pose a hazard to public safety and property and may constitute a violation of the property standards by-law.</i>	<i>Removing dead trees also removes EAB from the population safeguarding treated trees. Residents are encouraged to plant new native species to replace our lost canopy.</i>	<i>Contact a certified arborist to remove dead and dying trees and replace with a new tree. Go to the Town of Oakville's website for more information, follow Oakville Canopy Club on Facebook and Twitter.</i>

<b>The Vision</b>	<b>The Value</b>	<b>The Differentiator</b>	<b>Call to Action</b>
<i>The town will begin a number of woodland closures in 2013/2014 to remove high risk ash trees for public safety.</i>	<i>Mitigate negative public reaction. Dead and dying ash trees pose a hazard to public safety and property.</i>	<i>Prime sites are being designated through a Woodlands Conservation Program to provide new tree plantings in response to the devastation caused by EAB.</i>	<i>Take part in community plantings. Go to the Town of Oakville's website for more information, follow Oakville Canopy Club on Facebook and Twitter, become a corporate sponsor.</i>

## **COMMUNICATION ROLL OUT**

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### **Strategy:**

- 1) Conduct ongoing media relations to secure positive coverage for the Town of Oakville on the topic of EAB.
- 2) Update communications vehicles and conduct targeted marketing to increase public awareness of EAB, gain positive community support of the town's EAB program and encourage action from private ash tree owners.
- 3) Develop sponsorship package and initiate corporate relations to elicit promotional and financial support from business community.
- 4) Conduct follow up surveys to assess awareness and action taken by private ash tree owners.

**Objectives 1 & 2.** Raise public awareness of the threat of EAB and the Town of Oakville's EAB Management Plan and seek action by incurring a 25% increase in Oakville's Canopy Club followers by September 2013. Educate Oakville residents about Oakville's EAB toolkit and treatment and removal options by increasing the number of unique visits to Oakville's EAB web page by 25 per cent through targeted marketing/communications and social media efforts by September 30, 2013.

<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Status</b>
Media relations	Ongoing media releases, advisories, and photo opps.	All	ongoing	n/c	ongoing
Social Media	Ongoing Canopy Club Facebook page & Twitter updates	All	ongoing	n/c	ongoing
Direct Mail	Flyer inserted with tax bill	All property owners	Mailed first week of May	\$800	complete
Flyer	Flyer distributed at events, town facilities, garden centres, businesses, schools, restaurants, stores, horticulture society, community groups.	All	May to August	\$400	complete
Transit shelter advertising	Posters at 15 transit shelters throughout town	All	May 15 to August 31	\$5,000 (10 shelters free through Oakville Transit)	complete
Bus advertising	Extended king ads on 10 buses	All	June, July, August	\$5,000 (production)	complete
Door hangers	Messaging on all forestry door hangers as well as specific door hangers for town treatment and removal	All Oakville Residents	Launch May - ongoing	\$4,000	complete



Advertising	- Canopy Club messaging in vendor ads in Oakville Beaver	All	Every Thursday in May, June, July, August	n/c	complete
	- in Parks & Rec brochure		August	n/c	complete
	- Full page 'Treatment' ads in Oakville Beaver and Oakville Today		July / August	\$8,000	complete
	- Ads promoting Canopy Club events		Ongoing	\$6,500	complete
	- Let's Talk Oakville		September	n/c	complete
Car decal	For Forestry vehicles and staff cars	All	July, August	\$400	complete
Digital screens	Digital screens at all town facilities	All	June, July, August	n/c	complete
Posters	Posters at all town facilities	All	June, July, August	n/c	complete
Canopy Club events	- Arbor Week & Arbor Day	All	May 14-17	total: \$10,000	complete
	- UofT Forestry Workshop		May		complete
	- Open House		June 20		complete
	- Canopy Club Bike Ride		July 26		complete
	- National Tree Day		September 25		complete
Participation in community events	- Environmental Awareness Day	All	May	n/c	complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Horticultural Society garden tour</li> <li>- Ice Cream with Ralph &amp; Alan</li> <li>- Halton Multicultural Fair</li> <li>- Oakville Chamber Breakfast</li> <li>- Midnight Madness</li> <li>- Oakville Waterfront Festival</li> <li>- ISA Conference</li> <li>- Movie under the Stars</li> <li>- OPFA Seminar</li> </ul>		<p>June 9</p> <p>June 15</p> <p>June 21</p> <p>June 26</p> <p>July 19</p> <p>August 2,3</p> <p>August 3-6</p> <p>August 10</p> <p>October 25</p>		
Third party events	-Boston Pizza	All	June, July, August	n/c	complete
Intrigue Media	Video screen advertising at various locations in Oakville		June, July, August	n/c	complete
Internal communications	E-Talk		ongoing	n/c	ongoing
Website			ongoing	n/c	ongoing
Promotional items	T-shirts, golf shirts, bike shirts, tattoos, silly bands, colouring books		ongoing	total: 10,000	complete

**Objective 3.** Educate Oakville residents of the necessity of town woodlands closures and high risk tree removal through targeted marketing/communications, and increase number of visits to Oakville's Woodlands web page by 20% by March 31, 2013.

2014 EAB Work Plan Staff Report to Council			Dec. 2013	
Media release			Dec. 2013 or following report to council	
QR coded signs on Woodland regen sites			Jan.	
Advertising			Launch Jan 2014	
Park closures signage			Launch Jan 2014	
Parks & Rec Guide			Jan, Aug 2014	
Corporate partnerships / sponsorships			Launch Oct./Nov.	
Letter to residents			Jan 2014, and as closures progress	
Digital screens			Jan 2014, and as closures progress	
Insert in tax bill			May 2014	
Public notice / flyer in town facilities, libraries			Launch Jan 2014	
Public Open House			Jan. 22, 2014, and possibly one in summer 2014	
Councillor Fact Sheet			Launch Jan 2014	
Social media			Launch Jan 2014	
Dedicated web page			Launch Jan 2014	
Events – EAB Symposium / Tree Protection workshop			May 2014	

**Objective 4.** Develop new partnerships within the business community and gain promotional and financial support through corporate sponsorships to support woodland regeneration efforts. The goal is to secure 5 partnerships by Dec. 20, 2013.

Sponsorship Package			Launch September 2013		
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## EVALUATION

Objective and/or Strategy	Measure <i>Note: one measure could cover all of them</i>	Outcome/Result
<p>Raise public awareness of the threat of EAB and of the Town of Oakville's EAB Management Plan and encourage action by incurring a 25% increase in Oakville's Canopy Club followers by September 30, 2013.</p> <p>Educate Oakville residents about ash tree treatment and removal options through targeted marketing/communications and social media, increasing the number of visits to Oakville's EAB web page by 25 per cent by September 30, 2013.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase number of Canopy Club followers (Facebook/Twitter) by 25 per cent</li> <li>• increase number of web page visits by 25 per cent</li> <li>• implement QR codes on transit shelters and monitor number of scans</li> <li>• monitor number and subject of phone and email inquiries to ServiceOakville *</li> <li>• monitor media coverage</li> <li>• type of feedback at events*</li> <li>• questionnaire to Open House attendees</li> <li>• questionnaire to service providers re number private trees treated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of September 30, 2013 the number of Facebook followers increased to 224, a growth of 34 per cent since 2012. The number of Twitter followers increased to 329, an increase of 45 per cent.</li> <li>• As of September 30, 2013 the EAB home page had 4,563 page views, a 27 per cent increase from 2012.</li> <li>• Spikes in the total number of page views of all EAB/Canopy Club pages were seen during the summer treatment promotion campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 130 per cent increase in June (2,634 in 2013, up from 1,145 in June 2012)</li> <li>- 6 per cent increase in July (2,315 in 2013, up from 2,177 in July 2012)</li> <li>- 81 per cent increase in August (1,548 in 2013, up from 851 in Aug. 2012)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Between May 25 and August 30, QR codes on transit shelters received 28 scans</li> <li>• Between April and September 2013, the EAB campaign received ongoing media coverage with 28 known print / online articles, posts.</li> <li>• Forty people attended an EAB Open House in June 2013. 100 per cent of Open House</li> </ul>

		<p>attendees who responded to the survey rated the event as “Very Helpful/Relevant”. 75 per cent said the event “Greatly increased their knowledge of EAB”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers were surveyed regarding number of private trees treated: TruGreen saw a 90 per cent increase in the number of private tree treatments: 97 in 2013 compared to 51 in 2012. Of the 97 clients, TruGreen reported 72 were treating for the first time.</li> </ul>
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Objective and/or Strategy	Measure <i>Note: one measure could cover all of them</i>	Outcome/Result
Educate Oakville residents of the necessity of closure and high risk tree removal in town woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase number of web visits</li> <li>• implement QR codes on park signs and monitor number of scans</li> <li>• monitor number and subject of phone and email inquiries to ServiceOakville</li> <li>• monitor media coverage</li> <li>• Feedback from Open House</li> </ul>	

Objective and/or Strategy	Measure <i>Note: one measure could cover</i>	Outcome/Result
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	<b><i>all of them</i></b>	
Develop new partnerships within the business community and gain promotional and financial support through corporate sponsorships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of sponsors</li> <li>• number of prime sites sponsored</li> <li>• dollar amount raised</li> </ul>	<p>In 2013, the Canopy Club formed partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boston Pizza Dorval - over the summer, Boston Pizza donated 15 per cent of lunch &amp; dinner sales on Mondays &amp; Wednesdays to the Canopy Club. Proceeds were used to support the National Tree Day woodlands regeneration event on Sept. 25. *</li> <li>• Dillon Consulting - also a sponsor of the National Tree Day event.</li> <li>• BioForest Technologies Inc.</li> <li>• COBS Bread Lakeshore</li> <li>• Maple Hill Tree Service (Sponsors of the Canopy Club Bike Ride)</li> <li>• The Oakville Chamber of Commerce. Many of the Canopy Club promotions and events were listed on the Chamber's website and e-newsletter. John McNeil also spoke at the Chamber's popular breakfast event.</li> </ul> <p>A formal sponsorship package has been developed and sponsorships of the Woodlands Conservation Program will begin in fall 2013.</p>



## **POST MORTEM**

### **COMMENTS ON OUTCOMES/RESULTS**

\* **Measure:** monitor number and subject of phone and email inquiries to *ServiceOakville*.

Over the spring and summer months, *ServiceOakville* handled over 4,700 inquiries on behalf of partner departments, with 55% of the calls for the Forestry section, and siting 320 inquiries related to EAB. However, this cannot be confirmed as the entire amount of inquiries related to EAB as some inquiries may be identified only as “large tree”, “woodland tree” or “tree removal”. As well, *ServiceOakville* had not been set up to identify responses from particular marketing campaigns, which could be rectified in the future.

\* **Measure:** questionnaire to service providers re number private trees treated.

Service providers were surveyed regarding the number of private trees treated. Of the six companies surveyed, three responded.

- TruGreen had the most detailed results, and reported a 90 per cent increase in number of private tree treatments from 2012 to 2013. In addition, TruGreen reported 203 commercial trees received first-time treatment in 2013.
- Maple Hill reported providing injections at 11 residential properties and 7 schools in Oakville. Of the 18 total clients, nine or 50 per cent were treating for the first time.
- Arbourwood Tree Service was not able to capture results by service provided, but did report “the residents of Oakville are the most informed clients we have in regards to EAB.”

\* **Partnerships – Boston Pizza**

While proceeds from the Boston Pizza partnership were not significant (franchise owner indicated that overall sales were very slow over the summer), the partnership still had great promotional value. Canopy Club posters, flyers, and promos on video screens were at the restaurant for the entire three months, and whether or not diners contributed their receipt for the cause, they saw the poster and/or read or took away the flyer, contributing to public awareness which was our main objective.

\* **Feedback at events**

Self-surveying at events with regard to ‘awareness’ provided generally very positive feedback, with many respondents reporting seeing EAB communications “everywhere” siting the Beaver, buses and transit shelter advertising.

**APPROVALS:**

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Gisèle Shaw, Manager, Corporate Communications

Date

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Jane Courtemanche, Director, Strategy, Policy & Communications

Date

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Client Name, Department/Commission

Date