

# COUNTY OF MORRIS

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Official News Release

For Immediate Release

## COUNTY AWARDS CONTRACT FOR ASH TREE REMOVAL ALONG COUNTY ROADS TO DEAL WITH INFESTATION OF TREE-KILLING INSECT *SAFETY PROJECT STARTING IN LONG HILL AND MORRIS TOWNSHIP*

Morris County is initiating a long-term tree removal program along county roads to deal with infestation caused by the tiny-but-harmful Emerald Ash Borer, a small but deadly insect that infects and destroys ash trees in its path.



For the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, Morris County will take down ash trees along county rights-of-ways in all 39 municipalities. The first round of cutting will occur in Morris Township and Long Hill over the next several weeks.

The Board of Freeholders last night (June 13) unanimously approved a resolution to award a \$498,465 contract to Landing-based Tree King

for the first round of tree removal.

This initial project includes the removal of 880 trees in total in Long Hill and Morris Township. Stumps that front developed property will be ground to six-inches below grade. That land will then be top-soiled and seeded. The contractor is responsible for removing and properly recycling the downed trees.

Residents and property owners living along county rights-of-way where ash trees will be removed will be notified by letter and/or a tag placed on their doors at least one week prior to tree removal.

The county project does not include infected ash trees along municipal rights of way.

The Morris County Shade Tree Division has been doing an inventory of ash trees along county roads, and has tagged endangered trees for future removal. Once work is done in Long Hill and Morris Township, removal will move to other towns in the southeast quadrant of the county.



Infected ash tree

“This is a difficult but necessary project,” said Freeholder Deborah Smith. “We are directly in the path of the infestation. Removing these trees must be done for public safety reasons, and we have to act quickly to stay ahead on this issue.”

It would be costly, with no guarantee of effectiveness, to try to save the ash trees. The Park Commission has decided to attempt to save a select number of ash trees at its arboretum properties based on the trees’ locations and health of the specimens.

The Emerald Ash Borer has killed millions of ash trees in North America after being first discovered in North America in 2002 in Michigan and Ontario, and has since made its deadly way to Morris County.

- Almost all untreated ash trees die within five years;
- Infected ash trees become brittle and difficult-to-remove;
- There are several treatment options, but they are very costly,

requiring annual treatment, and are not guaranteed to work.

There are no plans to re-plant trees in county right of ways but to keep those areas clear of vegetation to prevent future safety issues, and also to limit future damage to power lines during storms.

**The Morris County Park Commission** also has developed an EAB response plan that has a primary goal of removing ash trees from high use areas of the park system before they become a safety hazard.

High-use areas are defined as major park infrastructure, where park users are likely to be stationary for prolonged periods of time, paved or otherwise improved trails, and park roadways. To date, the Commission has identified and tagged more than 12,000 ash trees in 34 facilities as part of this inventory.

**View the Park Commission plan at:**

<https://www.morrisparks.net/index.php/commission/emerald-ash-borer-2/>

For more information on the Emerald Ash Borer, visit:

<http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/emeraldashborer.html>

<https://plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu/emerald-ash-borer-faq/>

[emerald-ash-borer-presentation-morris-county-final](#)

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