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Subject: ALB- infested trees found on uninhabited island off Staten Island

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) press release on **Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB)**- infested trees found on uninhabited NY island off Staten Island. Contacts: Suzanne Bond at (301) 734-5175, and Andrea McNally at (202) 690-4178.

WASHINGTON, March 12, 2007--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today announced evidence of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) infestation in hardwood trees on Prall's Island, N.Y., an 80-acre, uninhabited island lying between Staten Island, N.Y., and northern New Jersey.

Inspectors from APHIS' New York ALB eradication program in cooperation with New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation and Agriculture and Markets, surveyed the island on March 1 for signs of the ALB and discovered several heavily infested red maple trees and infested gray birch trees. They found a total of 15 infested trees upon their first inspections of the northern sector of the island.

Several of the infested trees had the perfectly round ALB exit holes that indicate beetles have emerged from the trees; healed-over exit holes were also present, indicating the infestation is more than a year old. All of the infested trees will be cut down and the wood chipped to destroy all beetle larvae. Surveys will continue at Prall's Island, weather permitting, to determine the full scope of ALB infestation.

The property is owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and maintained as a bird sanctuary. Prall's Island lies outside of the established boundaries of the Middlesex-Union County, N.J., ALB quarantine zone. As a result of this find, quarantines will be placed on Prall's Island and on Staten Island due to its proximity to Prall's Island. Surveys on Staten Island will also take place to determine if any infestations occur in that area. Quarantines are put in place to regulate movement of firewood, lumber, nursery stock, tree limbs and other woody materials that serve as hosts for the invasive beetle.

In New York, quarantines currently exist on Long Island in an area bordering the Nassau County and Suffolk County boundary line and also in the Islip area of Long Island. Portions of Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan are also quarantined. A total of 132 square-miles are in quarantine in that state. The ALB was first discovered in New York in 1996.

In New Jersey, two separate ALB infestations have been detected, one in the Middlesex and Union County area in 2004 and the other in Hudson County in 2002. With the Hudson County, N.J., quarantine lifted in 2005, only 25 square-miles remain in quarantine in that state. Hudson County, N.J., could be declared free of ALB in 2008.

Chicago, Ill., where ALB was discovered in 1998, had the final nine-mile quarantine lifted in 2006. Chicago could be declared free of ALB by early 2008.

A mature ALB is about 1 to 1.5 inches long, has a shiny, jet black body with distinctive white spots and long antennae that are banded in black and white. The adult beetles are most evident between June and October. As developing larvae during the winter months, ALB tunnel through the heartwood of various tree species, damaging the pathways that move water and nutrients throughout the tree and ultimately killing the tree.

APHIS and its cooperators eradicate the ALB by imposing quarantines, conducting visual inspections around confirmed sites to determine the scope of infestations, removing infested and high-risk exposed trees and chemically treating host trees as part of an area-wide integrated pest eradication strategy.

The goal is to eliminate this destructive insect from the United States before it can establish itself elsewhere.

APHIS' partners in the New York ALB cooperative eradication program are the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; New York City Department of Parks and Recreation; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and USDA's Forest Service.

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For more information:

1. Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA, Asian Longhorned Beetle Home Page www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/alb/index.html
2. New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Asian Longhorned Beetle Webpage at www.state.nj.us/agriculture/alblinks.htm
3. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Asian Longhorned Beetle Information at www.rce.rutgers.edu/alb
4. Please see the NJinPAS posting archive at www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/NJinPAS/listservpostings.asp to review previous NJDA updates from 2004 to present; query 'ALB' in search box.

Anyone suspecting the presence of this beetle should contact the NJDA at 1-866-BEETLE-1 or (609) 292-5440.

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