

2021 Pest Update
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As we move into spring and the growing season, we will see some forest pests emerging. We are going to have several pests that may potentially affect our forests in different areas of the region. This is an update on what pests we will see in the coming year.

Gypsy moth populations are building in the region. You might see defoliation this summer, particularly on oak species. The hot spots will be northwestern McKean county, southern Cameron, and eastern Elk counties.

These are the areas with heaviest infestations. Lower populations occur in the eastern 2/3 of McKean, northeastern Cameron, and southwestern Potter County. That is not to say you will not see a gypsy moth outside these areas, and spring and summer weather will determine the intensity of the outbreak.



The experts think these populations will be building in the coming years.

The treatment for forest land is aerial application of insecticide, or hope for a cool wet spring which helps a fungal pathogen biocontrol collapse the population. Also when gypsy moth populations are at high densities, there is a type of virus that helps with control. This is something to closely monitor in the coming years.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lymantria_2

White pine needle disease (WPND) has also affected this area the last few years. Several fungal pathogens cause WPND. They infect the 2nd and 3rd year needles, causing them to rapidly turn brown and drop to the ground. This disease complex has been exacerbated by wet conditions in 2018 and 2019, and a native fungal build up. The trees can survive a single year of needle drop, but several years in a row may stress trees to the point of mortality. Most of this has been seen in southeastern Potter County, and in northern and southeastern Potter in 2020. It has been persisting for the past few years in the southeastern part of the county. Not much was reported in McKean, Cameron or Elk counties.





Emerald ash borer has pretty much spread throughout the area and we will continue to see mortality of ash in the coming year. There are still some strong holds and relatively healthy-looking trees, but we will probably see these dwindle quickly. In a few more years, it may be possible to find “lingering ash” – ash that have survived the borer outbreak through some genetic or physiological factors. These trees will be very important for the future of the species.

PA DCNR Forest Health

Hemlock woolly adelgid has been on the uptick due to the mild winter of 19-20. Surveys show an increase in populations with high numbers in eastern Elk, southern and eastern Cameron and southeastern Potter Counties. If winters stay mild the population of adelgid in Potter County and McKean Counties will increase. As of now McKean is not highly affected by adelgid, but this will most likely change in the near future.



PA DCNR Forest Health

Beech leaf disease (BLD) is a relatively new, but fast-moving, issue to the area. You might have patches of beech with what looks like shriveled up leaves or dark bands when you look up into the canopy. We have confirmed it in areas of Potter, McKean and Elk Counties. Cameron is likely affected as well, but not yet confirmed.

BLD is caused by a non-native leaf worm (nematode). It is not known at this time if the nematode



carries a pathogen or virus that impacts the tree. Research is ongoing, and treatments and their effectiveness are still being studied. BLD is causing mortality in beech, especially smaller beech, at this time. It will take many years to see overstory mortality.

This is not to scare you about these problems that may be affecting your forest land. It will hopefully just make you aware of what is happening on the landscape, and may allow you to take timely action to prevent issues in your forest.