FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MINNESOTA ASH TREES AT RISK

A little green bug is about to cause Minnesota to lose 2.65 million community ash trees, which translates into losing over $437 million in tree benefits in our communities – every year!

You have undoubtedly heard about this emerald green insect that was found seven years ago feeding on ash trees in St. Paul. Ever since, it has been wreaking havoc on Minnesota ash trees all over the state, and many communities are fighting back. The insect, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), is an invasive beetle from Asia, and may look like a nice, innocent, green beetle, but it certainly is not. The emerald ash borer is eyeing one of the largest buffets of ash trees in the nation right here in Minnesota, with over 923 million trees at risk.

While EAB has been in Minnesota for several years, we are now at a tipping point. If you look at the history of EAB in other states, you’ll see that this insect is about to cost billions of dollars more to our state’s communities. Not only will this have a major economic impact, but it will also have a major environmental impact on our communities, by killing 20-40% of all community trees.

While this insect is ready to become a major problem, a group of Minnesota tree advocates are preparing to spread the word about the best ways to address the problem. The Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee and a partnership of other groups are organizing volunteers to make sure Minnesotans know about the devastation Emerald Ash Borer will cause in Minnesota communities. In addition, bills have been authored in both the Minnesota House (H.F. 2408) and in the Minnesota Senate (S.F. 3174) that focus on creating a matching grant program that will include activities such as the strategic removal of infested trees, protection of vital ash trees using lowest risk treatments, and other integrated pest management suppression activities. Without action to manage the emerald ash borer, Minnesota will lose 2.65 million community ash trees, which translates into losing over $437 million in tree benefits in our communities – every year!

If you’d like to help Minnesota fight back against EAB and save our community forests, contact your legislators and tell them you support HF 2408 and SF 3174. Our community forests can’t wait. Time is running out. For more information, contact Karen Zumach, MNSTAC Vice President, at karenz@treetrust.org or (952) 767-3886.