

## Approaches for managing black ash forests in Minnesota

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Past forest management in black ash communities has focused primarily on intermediate thinning or group selection removals in high quality pole-sized stands with the goal of maintaining uneven aged stands across the landscape. Even-aged clearcutting has also been applied but reforestation success has been mixed with the risk of understocked stands and conversion to non-forested communities an unfortunate reality. With the recent discoveries of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in southern Minnesota and the city of Duluth, and the expectation that the exotic insect will spread further into the forested part of the state, Minnesota DNR has provided direction to significantly increase the management of ash on state land. Although several states to the east are addressing the effects of EAB on their ash components in upland mixed hardwood forests, Minnesota is challenged by having an abundance of wet to very wet black ash dominated plant communities. A stand selection spatial query tool has been developed by the Ecological Land Classification Program to aid field staff in selecting the most ecologically appropriate stands for management and reforestation to non-ash species. A summary of prescription and timber sale examples will be presented. Updating DNR ash management guidelines and monitoring a variety of silvicultural approaches to meet management objectives are important next steps.

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