



News Release

US Dept of Agriculture
Forest Service
Allegheny National Forest
4 Farm Colony Drive
Warren, PA 16365

Contact: Andrea Hille or Susan Stout
Telephone: 814-728-6161; 814-563-1040

December 18, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Confirmed in the Tionesta Research Natural Area

Warren, Pa. – Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) was detected in the West Fork area of the Tionesta Research Natural Area (TRNA) by Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources personnel on November 20, 2013, and confirmed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture on December 16, 2013. This invasive insect from Asia threatens eastern hemlock trees and the biodiversity they support in eastern United States parks and forests. An infestation of HWA causes a cascade of environmental changes for some wildlife, fish, invertebrates, and plants in response to the increased light and warmer temperatures from Hemlock mortality.

Hemlock woolly adelgid was detected in Cook Forest and Clear Creek State Parks in the spring of 2013, and in locations on the Allegheny National Forest that include the Clarion River, Allegheny River, and Webbs Ferry areas. HWA has been in the northeastern United States since the 1950s and was found in southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1960s. It has recently spread to northwestern Pennsylvania.

Eastern hemlock is the most abundant tree species in the TRNA, followed by American beech. American beech in the TRNA has experienced widespread mortality in the past decade due to the spread of the introduced beech bark disease complex through the area.

The US Forest Service is partnering with The Nature Conservancy, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission, New York Department of Environment Conservation, and New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and other interested organizations to develop an eastern hemlock conservation strategy for the high Allegheny Plateau of Pennsylvania and New York.

Early detection of new sites with hemlock woolly adelgid is a high priority, and ANF staff will work with partners and forest health protection staff to continue monitoring for the insect and address known infestations.

The Tionesta Area of the Allegheny National Forest was purchased by the U.S. Government in 1936 to preserve the last remaining area of uncut hemlock-beech forest of the Allegheny Plateau in Pennsylvania and New York. It represents one of the only remaining patches of the original six million acre forest that once covered the Allegheny Plateau. In 1940, the northern half was designated as the Tionesta Scenic Area, and the southern half as the Tionesta Research Natural Area. Together, the Tionesta Scenic and Research Natural Areas comprise over 4,000 acres of remnant, original forest. This represents about 12 percent of old growth in PA, and is the largest contiguous old growth area between the Adirondaks and the Great Smokey Mountains.

Research studies have been conducted in the Research Natural Area since 1940, and one study began in 1942 continues to this day. These areas were added to the National Registry of Natural Landmarks in 1973, due to their unique values.

###