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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Franklin and Wake counties join quarantine area for emerald ash borer

RALEIGH – Franklin and Wake counties are the latest to come under quarantine rules restricting the movement of hardwood firewood, ash nursery stock and other ash materials after emerald ash borers were confirmed in both counties. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler signed an emergency quarantine order allowing the expansion.

An emerald ash borer was found via the capture of a cerceris wasp in Franklin County. The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Plant Industry Division had been monitoring sites in Franklin County and throughout the state looking for evidence of EAB. Part of the monitoring included capturing cerceris wasps around baseball fields to see what food sources or insects they were bringing back to their underground nests. The method had been used to find EAB in Connecticut, and North Carolina is only the second state to successfully use this method in the United States.

Evidence of EAB was found by NCDA&CS staff in woods near the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. "This brings the total counties in the state under EAB quarantine rules to seven, with detections in Granville, Person, Vance and Warren counties in 2013 and Wayne County earlier this year," Troxler said. "We continue to monitor other counties for this highly destructive pest by trapping areas with ash trees. If you see the purple, triangle-shaped traps, please do not disturb them."

The beetle was first detected in the United States in Michigan in 2002. It is responsible for the death or decline of tens of millions of ash trees across the country.

Under the state quarantine, all hardwood firewood and plants and plant parts of the ash tree -- including living, dead, cut or fallen, green lumber, stumps, roots, branches and composted and uncomposted chips -- cannot be moved outside the county.

The Plant Industry Division and the N.C. Forest Service are working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Symptoms of emerald ash borer in ash trees include a general decline in the appearance of the tree, such as thinning from the top down and loss of leaves. Clumps of shoots, also known as epicormic sprouts, emerging from the trunk of the tree and increased woodpecker activity are other symptoms. The emerald ash borer is not the only pest that can cause these.

Emerald ash borers overwinter as larvae. The adult beetle is one-fourth to a half-inch long and is slender and metallic green. When the adults emerge from a tree, they leave behind a D-shaped exit hole. The larvae can also create serpentine tunneling marks, known as feeding galleries, which are found under the bark of the infested trees.

Home and landowners are encouraged to report any symptomatic activity in ash trees to the NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division hotline at 1-800-206-9333 or by email at newpest@ncagr.gov. The pest can affect any of the four types of ash trees grown in the state.

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 Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture