

EXPANSION OF THE AMERICAN ELM RESTORATION EFFORT TO THE UPPER MIDWEST

James M. Slavicek

USDA Forest Service, 359 Main Road, Delaware, OH

ABSTRACT

The Forestry Sciences Laboratory, Northeastern Research Station, initiated a project in 2003 to restore the American elm in the state of Ohio. This effort has been expanded to the upper Midwest through establishment of a restoration site in Decorah, IA, Eagle Island, WI, and Hastings, MN. These three sites were established in June of 2005. The sites in Iowa and Minnesota were former farm fields that have been partially planted with trees and are being allowed to naturally evolve. The Wisconsin site is an island that had been reconstructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The island contains small sapling trees and grasses were planted in 2003. The effort in these states is being carried out in partnership with Luther College in Iowa,

the Army Corps of Engineers in Minnesota, Carpenter St. Croix Nature Center in Minnesota, and the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. American elm tree strains with high levels of tolerance to Dutch elm disease (DED) were established in areas where the trees can naturally regenerate and spread. The process of regeneration will allow the American elm to co-evolve with the DED fungal pathogen to ensure this valuable tree species will not be lost from the American landscape. Eight restoration sites have been established to date: in Ohio at the Mohican-Memorial State Forest, Ashland County; Maumee State Forest, Henry County; Highbanks Metro Park, Delaware County; Glacier Ridge Metro Park, Union County; and The Wilds, Muskingum County, and in the new states described above.