

Six hit with firewood violations

DEC finds violators during stops to enforce invasive species rules

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LAKE GEORGE — Six people face fines for illegally moving firewood in the Lake George region of the Adirondacks after roadside stops last week by state wildlife officials to enforce invasive species rules, according to the state [Department of Environmental Conservation](#).

More than 7,000 drivers Friday passed through two DEC checkpoints for firewood, one at the northbound ramp for Exit 21 at the Village of Lake George, and another at Route 9N at the Northway overpass. The moving of firewood is controlled under three-year-old state rules meant to curb the spread of invasive insects that threaten forests.

These rules ban moving firewood more than 50 miles from its source, unless it has been certified as treated with heat to kill potential invasive insects. State officials hope the rules will slow the spread of such invasive species as the emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle and sirex woodwasp through infested wood; none of those insects currently are in the Adirondacks.

Of 31 vehicles found in Lake George with firewood, six people were ticketed and face fines of up to \$250, plus a \$100 civil penalty and up to 15 days in jail. Violations included transporting wood from out of state, transporting wood from a quarantined county known to contain invasive insects, and transporting untreated firewood beyond 50 miles.

"The level of compliance indicates that the public is getting the message," said [Robert Stegemann](#), DEC regional director. "We must make every effort to protect the forest preserve and private woodlands in the Adirondacks from invasive insects, including enforcement for those who don't comply."

Another DEC checkpoint was also set up Friday on Route 30 in the Adirondacks near the border of Hamilton and Fulton counties. Only one ticket for issued, for illegally transporting firewood from out of state.

The state adopted the firewood rules in 2009 as invasive species from elsewhere continued moving toward New York. Since arriving in Michigan in 2002, the bright-green emerald ash borer has devastated tens of millions of ash trees and continues to spread east.

In March, Albany County was added to a growing list of counties under quarantine, when the state [Department of Agriculture and Markets](#) restricted the movement of ash logs or wood, nursery stock and all firewood.

Last fall, a single adult ash borer was found inside an insect trap near the Selkirk rail yard in Bethlehem.

State wildlife officials have scattered thousand of the purple traps to track the insect's advance. The insect has no natural predators in New York, although wildlife officials are testing several types of Chinese wasps in release sites in the Hudson Valley.

The beetles were found for the first time on the east side of the Hudson River in March, when borers were caught in a state trap in Dutchess County. So far, 20 of the state's 52 counties, including Greene, Ulster and Orange counties in the Hudson Valley, are under quarantine imposed by DEC, the federal [Agriculture Department](#) or state Agriculture Department.

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