



By Dan Schmidt
Forest County WCO

Making a Difference



AS I SAT in my vehicle waiting for illegal ATV riders, I pondered the fate of an eastern hemlock I was parked near. I wondered whether woolly adelgids would find it and kill it by sucking the sap as they have to too many hemlocks throughout the commonwealth.

Many trees, plants, animals and waterways have been affected by the spread of invasive species or disease. Many of the state's waters are infested with zebra mussels, white nose syndrome has impacted several bat species in the eastern U.S., gypsy moths are again damaging ridges of oak and, unfortunately, the list goes on.

Diseases and invasive species spread in a variety of ways, some naturally, some with human assistance. Knowing that, there are a few precautions we can take so we don't add to the problem.

Check your equipment

Before leaving a watercourse, inspect your watercraft, boots etc. for any hitchhikers. Remove all vegetation stuck to the hull, trailer and motor.

Buy and use local firewood

Many insects call trees home. The next time you're loading firewood, check the bark and under it for egg

sacs, bugs or other evidence of insect hitchhikers. Don't be the camper who hauls infested firewood into a new area.

Know what you're picking

Some attractive plants and flowers can cause problems. For example, purple loosestrife is a beautiful perennial native to Europe, but it overtakes wetland areas by choking out native species. So be careful about what you pick and bring home.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

If you haven't heard by now, CWD was found in three free-ranging deer killed by hunters in Pennsylvania in 2012, and it's been present in other states and Canadian provinces for years. CWD is always fatal to any member of the deer family that contracts it. To prevent the spread of CWD, the Game Commission has an importation ban that was enacted for importing certain deer parts from out-of-state and those areas in Pennsylvania that had deer test positive for CWD.

For more details on CWD, visit the PGC's website www.pgc.state.pa.us or check out the *2013-14 Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest*.

