



PRESS RELEASE

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Communications Office • Sisters of Saint Francis
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Sisters of St. Francis receive Federal Grant to Control Emerald Ash Borer

On December 8, 2006, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) notified the Sisters of St. Francis that they would receive \$20,000 from the Federal Government to enhance woodland conservation in the Western Lake Erie Basin Watershed by “demonstrating effective integrated control techniques and reforestation methods in areas of the Emerald Ash Borer devastation”, namely on the Sisters’ 89 acre property.

In September of 2005, the Emerald Ash Borer was discovered on the Sisters of St. Francis Sylvania grounds (1803 trees); and the Sisters contacted county and state officials to report the infestation. The Sylvania grounds were then put under quarantine regulations.

Sister M. Jeremias Stinson, Manager of the Sisters’ Shines, Grounds and Woodlands, began to research the environmental impact this infestation would create. By December 2005, she had developed an **Eight Point program: Integrated Program Response to the Emerald Ash Borer.**

For many months, the lines of communication have remained open from the Sisters’ Motherhouse through city, county, state and federal agencies. Many representatives from those agencies visited the Sylvania grounds, including Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur who has been instrumental in coordinating this grant.

The Integrated Program Response to the Emerald Ash Borer is the first of its kind. It has been accepted by the Federal Government. The grant monies received will help fund this pilot program.

As part of the Agreement, Sister Jeremias will be working with NRCS - US Forestry Service and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry to demonstrate management and reforestation techniques as outlined in her program. She will also assist the NRCS in educating private land owners about the program by doing project demonstrations. This agreement is a three year commitment for the Sisters of St. Francis.

Sister Jeremias has also been asked to develop and distribute news releases at any media events held through the NRCS - USFDA to highlight the “forestry work of the Sisters of St. Francis”. The history of the Sisters’ land and all that was done to their original “yellow sand” through the hard work of those past and present is now in the files and archives of government offices from here to Washington, D.C. The Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, are proud that they have taken the lead to preserve, respect and reverence the “Gift” of all creation.