

Researchers aim to restore riparian corridors and an iconic tree

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Research by the U.S. Forest Service at the Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) is exploring whether native trees can restore a degraded stream corridor and whether degraded stream corridors can help one of those native trees—the American elm—stage a comeback.

"Forest Service research is a vital part of keeping our rural and urban forests healthy, sustainable and more resilient to disturbances now and for future generations," said Michael T. Rains, Director of the Forest Service's Northern Research Station and the Forest Products Laboratory.

Creek and stream corridors on the 16,259-acre Forest within Grasslands for Grazing Management Areas were recently fenced and treated for non-native invasive plants such as multiflora rose and buckthorn. Beginning on May 11, scientists and FLNF officials will plant different combinations of tree and shrub species in four riparian areas and monitor the success of these different treatments for improving carbon and nitrogen ratios in the soil as well as plant, insect and wildlife biodiversity.

Another purpose of the research is to evaluate whether degraded stream corridors are suitable habitats for reintroduction of a [forest](#) icon, the American elm. Northern Research Station scientists in Delaware, Ohio, have developed and tested Dutch elm disease-tolerant American elm in urban areas; this study will explore whether the tree can survive in degraded habitat and contribute to restoration.

"Research on National Forests yields results that can benefit woodland owners throughout the region," said District Ranger Jodie L. Vanselow. "We are excited to work with the Northern Research Station on a project that we anticipate will enhance water quality on the Forest and perhaps demonstrate a method of restoration that applies to all forest owners, public and private."

The American elm has been decimated in forests and cities in the eight decades since Dutch Elm Disease was introduced to the United States. Northern Research Station scientists have developed American elm tree strains with high levels of tolerance to Dutch elm disease and are exploring the trees' hardiness and ability to withstand cold in both urban and forest landscapes.

Provided by USDA Forest Service

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