

WATCHDOG Q&A

# What's killing Appleton's trees? It's a small but formidable foe



**Watchdog Q&A**  
Duke Behnke  
USA TODAY NETWORK - WIS.

**Reader question:** We live in the area of Horizons Elementary School in Appleton and noticed that many trees in our neighborhood are dying. Are they all the same type of tree? What is causing them to die?

**Answer:** The trees in your neighborhood that are in decline are ash trees, and they have fallen victim to the emerald ash borer.

The destruction is particularly visible on the south side of Woodland Park, but it is occurring throughout the city.

The emerald ash borer is an invasive beetle with a metallic green color. The larvae feed on vascular tissues under the bark of ash trees, interrupting the flow of nutrients and water, effectively starving the trees.

The pest was introduced from Asia and has killed tens of millions of ash trees in 36 states, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.



**Appleton has no immediate plan to remove dead ash trees from Woodland Park.**  
DAN POWERS/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Appleton has been fighting the emerald ash borer since early 2015. It treats ash trees with insecticides to slow the losses, and it removes dead or weakened ash trees and replaces them with other species.

The natural area on the south side of Woodland Park, however, is not a priority right now.

Rather, the city forestry division is focused on removing stands of ash trees from high-traffic areas where, if a tree were to fall, there's a greater likelihood of injury or damage to property.

"We have some streets where three or four blocks is 100% ash trees for the street trees," City Forester Mike Stanonik said.



**The emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees across the Midwest.** FILE/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Dean Gazza, director of parks, recreation and facilities management, said the goal is to remove all diseased trees, including those in the parks, but with the breadth of destruction, that will take time and money.

"We prioritize the areas where people are most active," Gazza said. "Eventually, the backlog will get caught up and they can get to some of these more remote areas where the trees are dying also."

*Post-Crescent reporter Duke Behnke answers your questions about local government. Send questions to [dbehnke@gannett.com](mailto:dbehnke@gannett.com) or call him at 920-993-7176.*

# Green Bay Packers name Maureen Smith as new chief financial officer

**Richard Ryman**

Green Bay Press-Gazette  
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

GREEN BAY - Maureen Smith will succeed Paul Baniel as the chief financial officer of the Green Bay Packers.

Smith comes to the Packers from Minnesota United FC of Major League Soccer. She also will oversee the Packers' information technology department. She will join the Packers organization as CFO in September.

Baniel, who is vice president of finance and administration, will retire in October.

Smith was executive vice president and chief operating officer for Minnesota United for seven years, joining the club as controller. During her time with the soccer club, she oversaw all core business func-



**Maureen Smith was named chief financial officer of the Green Bay Packers, succeeding Paul Baniel, who will retire in October.** PROVIDED PHOTO

tions of the organization, from a minor-league startup with 50 employees to the MLS franchise with more than 150 full-

time and 300 part-time employees. She also was responsible for the construction of Allianz Field, a \$250 million soccer stadium.

"She played a key role with Minnesota United FC as the team grew into a Major League Soccer club. Her impressive financial expertise, in a variety of industries, will be excellent assets to our organization," said Packers President and CEO Mark Murphy.

Smith began her career as a certified public accountant and for more than 10 years was an independent small-business consultant. In 2011, she joined United-Health Group as director of operations, overseeing finance, accounting and operations for the company's Office of Social Responsibility and for United Health Founda-

The Packers reported a record \$610.3 million in revenue for the 2022-23 fiscal year, which ended in March. It reported \$68.6 million in profit from operations.

The team invested more than \$1 billion in its Brown County operations, including more than \$600 million since the 2003 renovation of Lambeau Field.

Baniel joined the team in 2009 as vice president of finance after working six years for Potawatomi Hotel and Casino in Milwaukee and 16 years for the Milwaukee Brewers.

Smith, a graduate of University of Michigan, is married and has five children.

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