

Forestry officials: Hemlock-killing bug suspected in Appalachia destruction

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARLAN, Ky. — A sap-sucking bug that has destroyed hemlock trees throughout southern Appalachia may have crossed into Kentucky's borders, forestry officials said Wednesday.

State entomologist John

Obrycki confirmed that the insects that invaded a cluster of trees in the Rebel Rock of Harlan County are hemlock woolly adelgids, minuscule aphid-like insects that only target hemlocks. Officials are awaiting confirmation from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. The infestation just south of Kentenia State Forest

is the first to be identified in Kentucky, though cases have been reported in West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee.

The adelgid, a native of Japan, is spreading along the eastern United States, carried by wind or on birds and animals, according to the state Division of Forestry.

The insects kill hemlocks by sucking them dry of sap while concealing themselves in tiny cotton-like cocoons.

Tim McClure, a state forest health environmental scientist, combed through roughly 10 acres of woods on Wednesday. He said the cluster of four trees suffered from a "light infestation" on unidentified private

property, but he said it's unclear whether the bugs have reached the wider state-owned forest.

Forestry officials plan to spend several weeks checking for the 4,200-acre Kentenia forest for adelgids. Obrycki said two surveyors from the University of Kentucky spotted the white woolly cocoons on the hemlocks in

Harlan County during an inspection after hearing that the insects were approaching the Kentucky border from Tennessee and Virginia.

"We sent (the surveyors) looking for hemlocks," Obrycki said, adding that there aren't any preventive measures available yet. "There is not a good control method for it."

CARNIVAL • CONTINUED FROM 1

when they say 'no, I'm not' it shows that there are people who support the community even if they aren't a part of it themselves and hopefully influence others."

Part of the carnival activities included a closet with reasons people are

afraid to reveal their sexual orientation on the inside in DayGlo paint, as well as Styrofoam bricks with words such as "carpet muncher," "butch" and "fag" written on them. Students could also spin a multi-colored wheel to answer questions about the GLBTQ community.

Jolie Hale, a second-

year English student and chairwoman of judicial affairs for BGLSA, disagreed with criticism that many of the activities "self-stereotyped" the gay community.

"The point is to inform people about the existence of homosexuality and homophobia, not say something about the makeup

of the gay community," Hale said.

She said the carnival was also aimed at providing a relaxed experience in a week filled with less laid-back events.

"We have more serious events this week, and we wanted to take a couple of hours to be laid-back and have fun," Hale said.

Hillary Gillis, a first-year anthropology student and secretary of BGLSA, also felt the purpose of the event was to promote the existence of the community, not stereotype it.

"Our basic goal was to have people out here and be visible so people would see that there is a community here," Gillis said. "The events are just to have a little fun and see that we are out here."

Lewis acknowledged that while some of the

events could be considered stereotypical of the gay community, it was important to keep the greater goals in mind.

"We tried to use the closet and wall as ways to draw people in," Lewis said. "To a certain extent, it is stereotyping, but we have to meet people where they are, and this is what some expect. We can't change anybody's mind at the carnival, but we can start conversations which will hopefully have an effect."

Lee Hartnett, associate director of sexual health and violence prevention, said the carnival was successful, but wished she could have used it to promote Shane Windmeyer, who spoke Monday on homosexuality in the Greek system.

"I think the carnival has exceeded our expectations, we have had lots of students

interested, accepting and viewing stickers," Hartnett said. "I would have liked to have more time to advertise the speaker, maybe by having this on Monday and him on Wednesday, but I know that's a matter of scheduling."

The carnival also featured information desks and T-shirts with statements about the gay community. One read "I'm your brother, sister, cousin, friend, neighbor. Don't treat me differently, just with basic human rights."

Lewis said the event was planned by looking at similar events at other schools.

"We borrowed ideas from other universities for our carnival," Lewis said.

Dykes said her favorite part of the carnival was the SafeZone information desk, where interested students could learn about the program and ways to help prevent homophobia.

"I like that they are advertising information to join SafeZone and make the situation better," Dykes said. "It gives you a way to actually be active on the issue."

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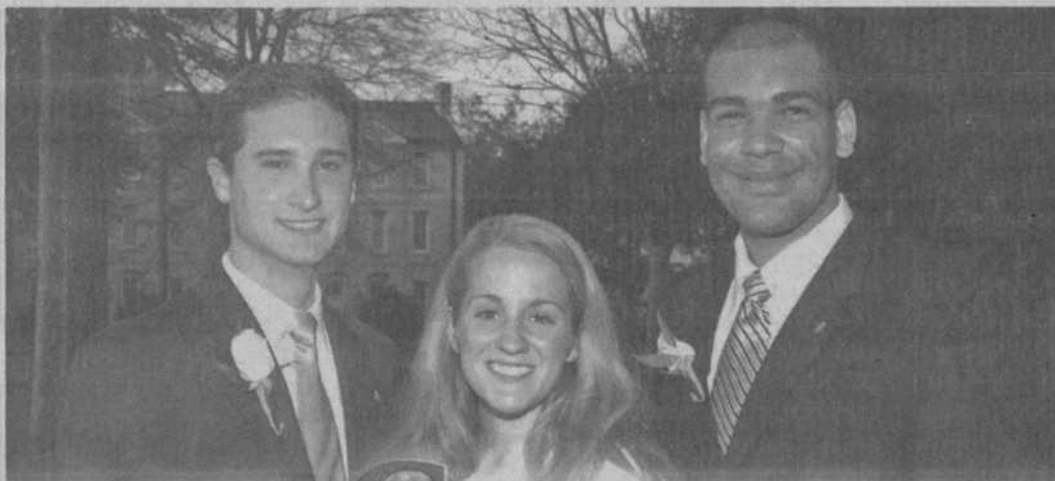
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