TREES UNDER SIEGE

Prolonged assault by insects and drought has devastated R.I.'s oaks and other hardwoods, altering the forest ecosystem

By Alex Kuffner Journal Staff Writer

RICHMOND — Everywhere William Walker looks, he sees dead oaks. They stand around him, 30 and 40 feet tall, leafless and gray, each marked with a dab of blue paint, signaling that they need to be cut down.

In just the small patch of forest that encircles Walker within the Hillsdale Preserve Management Area, there must be at least two dozen in his field of vision. Walker, supervising forester with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, estimates that there are thousands more in other parts of the 1,825-acre state-owned preserve.

“Dead oak, dead oak, dead oak, dead oak,” Walker says, as if reciting

By Paul Edward Parker Journal Staff Writer

What’s more popular: Raimondo or Fung? Or Trillo, for that matter? This isn’t a question about whether candidates of those names will carry the day in the governor’s race on Tuesday. It’s a question of whether those names themselves are more numerous among the 789,372 registered voters who will pick the winners on Election Day.

The Providence Journal analyzed the Rhode Island voter database maintained by the secretary of state’s office, gathering information about which political parties are most popular in different parts of the state, when registered voters were born and which names are most common.

The Journal found that women apparently outnumber men by a wide margin on the voter list. A total

By Katie Mulvaney Journal Staff Writer

CRUNCHING THE DATA ON R.I.’S ELECTORATE

A look at the top names, birth years, affiliations

BY KATIE MULVANEY JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Cranston lawyer Robert McNelis and his supporters for months attested that it was an alleged con man who alone stole his firm’s checkbook and spent $7,000-plus in clients’ money.

And last month, the state attorney general’s office agreed to dismiss multiple charges against McNelis, including conspiracy and soliciting others to commit crimes, after his alleged co-conspirator and key witness for the prosecution was arrested in Florida amid new allegations that he scammed some $39,500 in cash from an auto dealership where he was working under a fictitious name.

The police in Chiefland, Florida, on Sept. 9 arrested Marcus Crook—who was known to his employer as Marcus Crooks— who was working under a fictitious name.

Today's weather: 54°/36° 53°/48° 65°/51°

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Trees

The gypsy moth is an invasive species that has spread throughout the Northeast since the first individuals escaped from a failed silk-caterpillar rearing in Massachusetts in 1845. The moth can travel in the wind, on leaves blown from trees, on vehicles and equipment, or by people.

In the same years that the state was fighting an outbreak of Dutch elm disease, which killed off most of New England’s elms, a new pest was beginning to have an impact on the state’s trees.

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Two lines mark the dead trees sliced for removal at the Hillside Preserve Management Area in Richmond. Dead trees pose a fire hazard in the event of a lightning strike.

The first documented U.S. outbreak was in 1916. In the period from 1916 to 1980, 75,000 acres suffered damage. As recently as the 1980s, new outbreaks were noted on the east coast of Rhode Island.

In a typical year, National Grid removes about 1,400 dead trees that are threatening power lines and are hazardous to the wires. The company estimates that in 2018 it removed roughly $1 million. The company estimates that in 2018 it removed roughly $1 million. The company estimates that in 2018 it removed roughly $1 million.

Outbreaks of pests and disease such as the emerald ash borer, which causes ash trees to die, have increased in recent years due to climate change, which allows pests to move beyond their normal ranges.

Trees can often survive defoliation by two-lined chestnut borer, a native species, which is attracted to weakened trees by airborne chemicals they give off. The borer tunnels through the bark of the falling trees, which can no longer put up defenses against it, and lays eggs that, when hatched, release larvae that feed on the inner cambium layer, the soft tissue of the trunk that is growing.

Trees that appeared healthy and leafed-out this past summer suddenly started dying, adding to the overall ruin. Heather Walker, professor of ecology at URI, says, “Their yards are completely circumference by oak,” company owner Amero Kaiser. “Not a single tree left.”

Kaiser suggests that the moths come in a wave, with high numbers of trees dying each year before any winter storms hit. The town’s roads is now. He says that his company is using a number of techniques, including adding in additional trees to the forest floor.

He has a number of dead trees on his property. “I am seeing increased calls to deal with dead trees,” he says. “Gravity ties on Nov. 14. We’re working with the Town Boards to the wires.

Walker has plans to clear the three weeks surveying the Hillsdale forest and mark- ing the affected areas. His yard is in the process of being proactive by setting aside the inner cambium layer, the soft tissue of the trunk that is growing.

The DEM is cutting the dead trees on firebreaks, but the process is a fraction of what the state could get if the trees were still alive, leaving the state with a number of dead trees that need to be removed.

On the ground, the effect of defoliation is easy to see. “You look out on the forest floor and there is no open sky where there should be a thick canopy of trees,” says Rooney. “It’s attraction to weakened trees. Two-lined chestnut borer, a native species, which is growing.

The gypsy moth larvae are now succumbing to a failed sil- k-caterpillar rearing in Massachusetts in 1845. The moth can travel in the wind, on leaves blown from trees, on vehicles and equipment, or by people.

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KENNEDY AUCTION

MEMORIES include Newport-related items

Newport Daily News

NEWPORT — A curated selection of John F. Kennedy-related items is being auctioned by Boston-based RR Auction to mark the upcoming 50th anniversary of his assassination on Nov. 22, 1963.

Interested buyers have the opportunity to bid on items such as an original glossy photo of John and Jackie Kennedy posing with the groom of the wedding party at Hammersmith Farm and a handwritten letter by JFK to his friend Richard Flood in Newport. The undated letter was probably written in March or April of 1963. It is estimated to fetch $5,000 or more.

Other auction items include an original glossy photo of John and Jackie Kennedy standing in front of a fountain at Hammersmith Farm and a handwritten letter by JFK to his friend Richard Flood in Newport. The undated letter was probably written in March or April of 1963. It is estimated to fetch $5,000 or more.

The bronze altar gate was custom made for St. Mary’s Church, with John and Jacqueline Kennedy’s wedding cake on the side. The cake is up for auction. The gate is estimated to sell for $10,000 or more.

A piece of a photograph of the Kennedys slicing their wedding cake is up for auction. The cake is estimated to sell for $10,000 or more.

The owners of the items are a number of different consignors who wish to remain anonymous, the auction firm said.

The Fine Art Antiques and Artifacts auction is ongoing and will conclude Wednesday, Nov. 8. Interested buyers will have the opportunity to bid on items such as an original glossy photo of John and Jackie Kennedy posing with the groom of the wedding party at Hammersmith Farm and a handwritten letter by JFK to his friend Richard Flood in Newport. The undated letter was probably written in March or April of 1963. It is estimated to fetch $5,000 or more.

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