What is oak wilt?

Kama Ross, District Forester

- Non-native invasive fungus
- Affects oak trees
- 100% fatal for red oak group
- By the time the trees wilt, they are dead – no treatment after infection

What are the current and potential impacts?

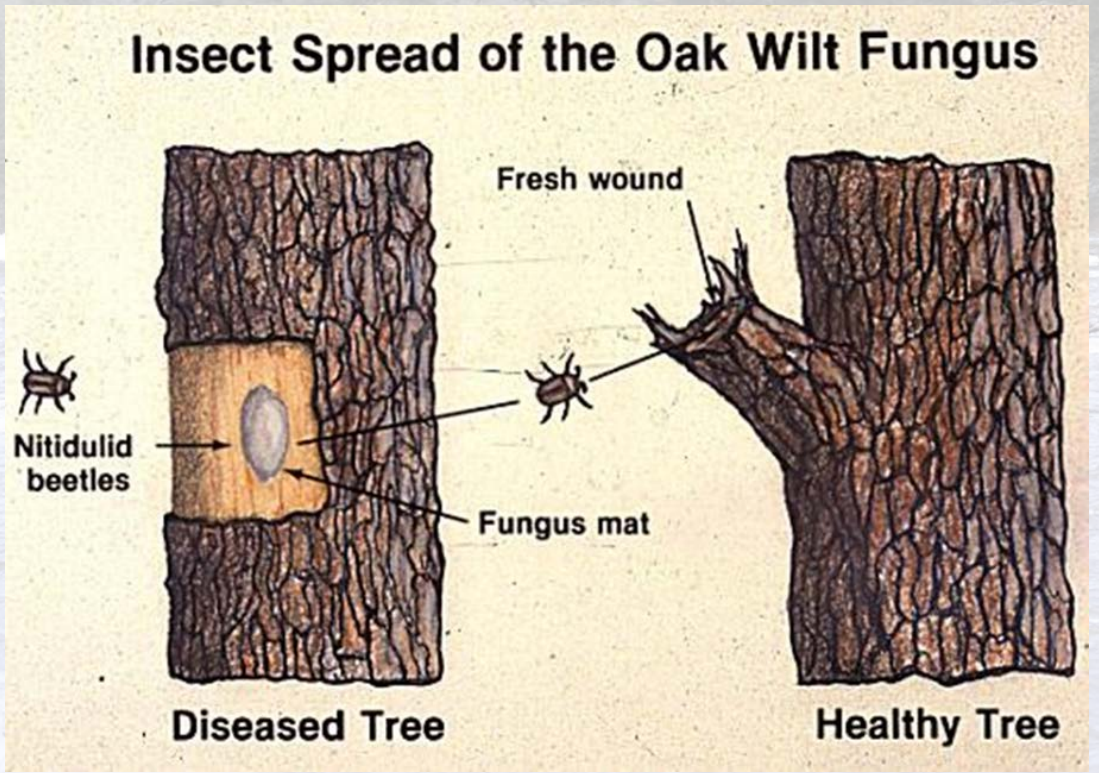
- Oak comprises ~10% of the forest volume in Michigan
- Oak wilt has been in Northern Michigan for many decades, 1980s
- Grand Traverse County continues to have the most new confirmed sites in Michigan
- Loss of timber value and wildlife benefits
- Aesthetic value/property values
- Loss of diversity of tree species in our forests
- Expense of treatment/control and tree removals

Identification of oak wilt

- From mid-summer to early fall, oak leaves wilt and FALL OFF TREE in just weeks, typically less than a month
- Trees that have recently wilted will eventually produce fungal spore mats under the bark
- Confirmation of presence of the fungus is required

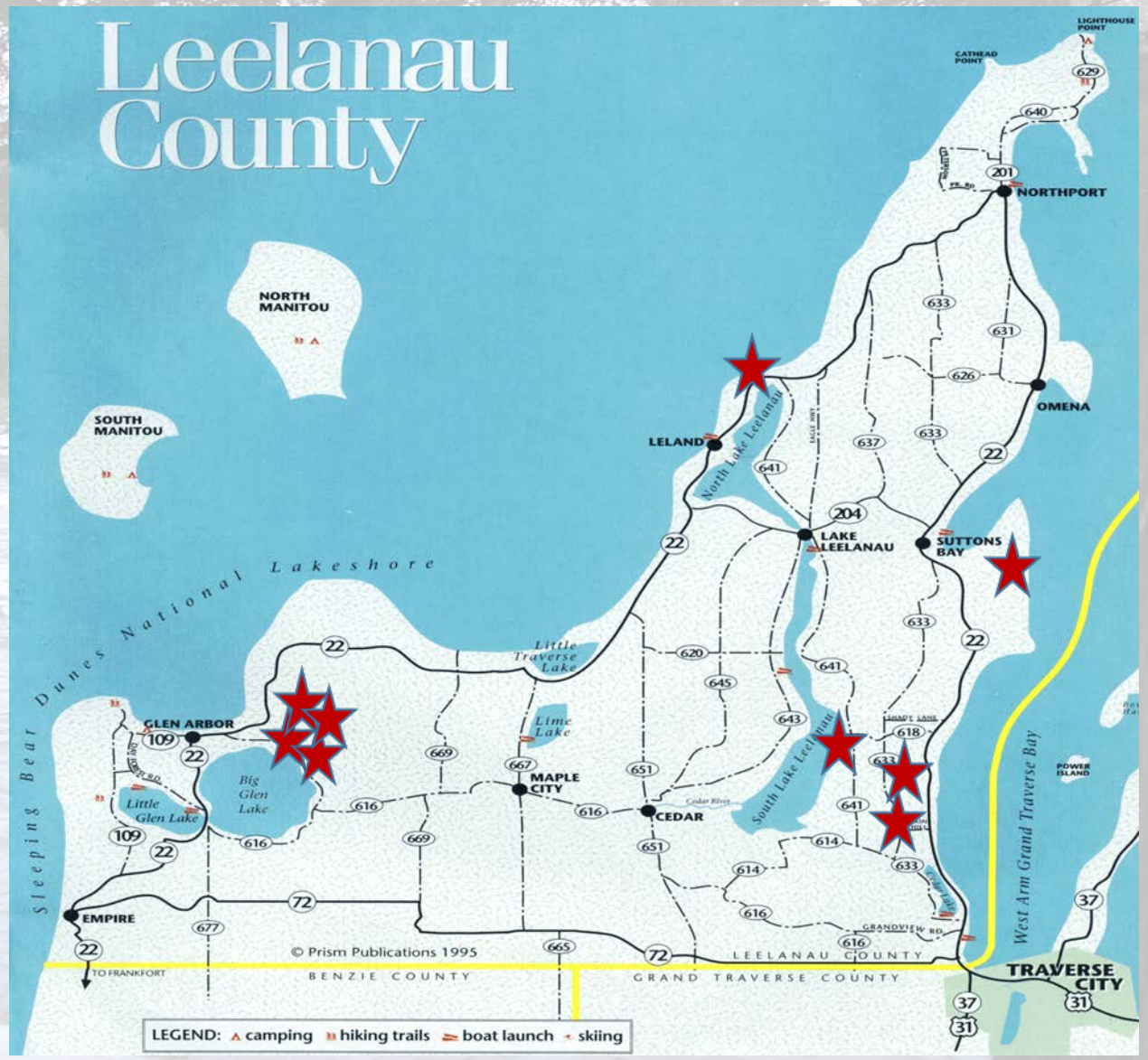
How does it spread?

Spreads above ground from nutidulid (sap/picnic) beetles that are attracted to fungal spore mats and wounds on tree



Spreads belowground via root grafts from infected trees to healthy trees

Confirmed Oak Wilt Sites in Leelanau County



Oak Wilt Can Be Controlled…

- Don’t prune, injure or remove red oaks during growing season, April to November for landowners near confirmed oak wilt sites
- Talk with your neighbors who have red oak trees
- Confirm with tree care professional
- Report confirmation to FAP or DNR
- Follow treatment plan
- Oak Wilt is not going away but we can control it’s spread with
- Education, Education, Education….
- Ongoing discussion with state regulators- MDARD/DNR.
- Leelanau County Board of Commissioners support of educational efforts with all residents, visitors, tree services, landscapers, realtors, excavators, construction…

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MICHIGAN CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

MICHIGAN FORESTRY Assistance Program

Questions?