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Science, art, and design meet in *Hemlock Hospice*, a year-long installation and exhibition by David Buckley Borden, opening at Harvard Forest on October 7, 2017

Harvard Forest's Hemlock trees may be gone within a decade!

Hemlock Hospice art trail & exhibition will take visitors on a journey through the massive decline of a forest species while educating and encouraging community action for our environment

Petersham, MA – From October 7, 2017 – November 18, 2018, the Harvard Forest will present *Hemlock Hospice*, an outdoor site-specific sculpture installation and a parallel exhibition of prints, drawings, and sculptures in the Fisher Museum created by Harvard Forest Bullard Fellow **David Buckley Borden**. The opening reception for *Hemlock Hospice* will be on Saturday, October 7, from 12 noon until 4pm.

Eastern hemlock, a foundation tree in eastern forests, is slowly vanishing from North America as it is weakened and killed by a small insect, the hemlock woolly adelgid. Scientists project that the hemlock forests in Massachusetts will functionally disappear by 2025. While telling the story of the demise of the eastern hemlock, the *Hemlock Hospice* exhibition will address larger issues of climate change and the future of New England forests.

David Buckley Borden, an interdisciplinary artist and designer, has been in residence at the Harvard Forest for the past year. During that period, he has collaborated with world-class ecologists on interdisciplinary art-science communication projects involving landscape installations and arts-based interpretive trail design.

Created in collaboration with Senior Ecologist **Aaron Ellison**, and designed to communicate the latest scientific research being done at Harvard University's center for forest research and education located in Central Massachusetts, the *Hemlock Hospice* installation features 13 new sculptures installed along an interpretative trail through the magnificent hemlocks on the forest's Prospect Hill Tract.

Says Borden, "The artist can play a unique role in communicating the reality of science. As environmental challenges become more critical, scientists are increasingly asked to provide vital information to policy makers, community groups, and individuals. During my time as a Bullard Fellow at the Harvard Forest I have been exploring the question, 'How can art and design support science communication to foster cultural cohesion around ecological issues and help inform ecology-minded decision making.' The urgency of getting a population of non-scientists to both understand and care about aspects of ecology is real. And, ecological awareness is a powerful mechanism for changing how we think about our relationship with our environment."

"A field-based installation that blends science, art, and design, *Hemlock Hospice* respects the eastern hemlock and its ecological role as a foundation forest species; promotes an understanding of the adelgid; and encourages empathetic conversations among all the sustainers of and caregivers for our forests—ecologists and artists, foresters and journalists, naturalists and citizens—while fostering social cohesion around ecological issues," adds Ellison.

"As a scientist, I study how our forests may respond to the loss of this 'foundation' tree species," he continues. "As a human being, I cry, I mourn, and I look to the future for hope. David's

installation will tell the story of the eastern hemlock in a new way, communicating why so many scientists and poets care about it, and what their plight tells us about the future of our environment.”

The *Hemlock Hospice* trail will take visitors on a journey of the disappearance of a species at the Harvard Forest, while inside the Fisher Museum, the accompanying exhibition extends the story of the Museum’s famous dioramas chronicling the history of New England’s forests until the 1930s. Borden continues the story from 2016 onwards and imagines a future ecology without the once majestic foundation tree species, the eastern hemlock.

Hemlock Hospice is more than an art-science collaboration; it is also an educational initiative. A self-guided trail map will be available at the Fisher Museum, and public workshops and print and social media tools will promote reflection, critical thinking, and creativity among scientists, artists, educators, humanists, and the general public.



Examples of David Buckley Borden's *Hemlock Hospice* work at the Harvard Forest.
Top: *Fast Forward Futures*. Bottom Left: *Hemlock Data Stick*. Bottom Right: *Wayfinding Barrier*