



**RIGHT**  
*Fast Forward Future*, a sculpture in the *Hemlock Hospice* installation at Harvard Forest.

## IN REAL LIFE

### ART, ECOLOGY, AND TECHNOLOGY MEET IN TWO HARVARD UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPES.

BY MADELINE BODIN

from a hemlock, now the main tree species in the grove, toward a black birch. Across the trail, a giant data stick made from hemlock wood is a comment on the loss of the climate data that is encoded in each hemlock's growth rings.

It isn't the first time that Harvard has used one of its outdoor properties to host a project that blends ecology, education, and art. *Other Order*, an artwork of GPS-triggered sounds, debuted three years ago in the Bussey Brook Meadow at Harvard's Arnold Arboretum in Boston. In addition to ambient sounds like the rushing of the sewer that runs beneath the meadow, the piece includes the voice of Peter Del Tredici, who recently retired as a senior research scientist at the arboretum, explaining the urban ecology of the site.

At the edge of a hemlock grove in Harvard Forest in Petersham, Massachusetts, 18 artworks dot a forest trail. The installation, which opened in October, is designed to bring attention to the impact of an aphid-like invasive insect, the hemlock woolly adelgid, which has already killed hemlocks in Harvard Forest.

*Hemlock Hospice* (which is on view through November 18, 2018) is both a sculpture installation and an art-science communication project primarily created by David Buckley Borden, an artist with a master's degree in landscape architecture, and Aaron Ellison, a senior ecologist at the Harvard Forest. At one point along the trail, five entangled triangles point the way to the forest's future. Black birches are expected to grow in place of the hemlocks that are being killed by the invasive insect, and the triangles seem to topple

*Other Order*, which is available as a free download but is GPS activated, combines sounds and information about the history, ecology, and contemporary uses of the meadow. It was created by Del Tredici and Teri Rueb, an artist who combines mobile media art and landscape studies, and who has a PhD from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Except for existing trails, both *Hemlock Hospice* and *Other Order* are the only designed elements at their respective sites.

Participants describe these projects as genuine collaborations between artist and scientist, building on the strengths of each partner, that could serve as models for commercial client interactions. Rueb says sculpture, signage, recordings, and sounds all allow people to interact with landscapes in new ways, creating another layer of meaning. Rueb, originally a sculptor, was drawn to working with sound by a quality also found in landscapes: change. Buildings are relatively static, she says, but both sound and landscapes are ephemeral. "It forces you to think temporally," she says. "It's part of what you embrace as a designer." ●