



**West Virginia Division of Forestry**  
**www.wvforestry.com**  
**Joe Manchin III, Governor**  
**Randy Dye, Director/State Forester**

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### **Arrest Made in Webster County Sycamore Fire Juvenile faces felony charges**

*CHARLESTON, W. Va.* – Investigators from the Divisions of Forestry and Natural Resources and the Webster County Sheriff’s Office have determined a juvenile should be charged with setting fire to a historic Sycamore tree in Webster County last year. The juvenile, age 17, from Bergoo has been charged with a felony count of arson for setting fire to the lands of another. A second juvenile also was charged with a misdemeanor for providing investigators with false information in regards to this case. The preliminary hearing is set for Jan. 17.

Forestry Investigator Art Yagel was praised for helping to bring this four-month investigation to an end.

“Art’s extraordinary efforts to solve this case resulted in the successful conclusion of this investigation,” said Forestry Investigative Unit Supervisor Sam Butcher. “Despite being brought into the case several days after the arson occurred, Art was able to work with other agencies and gain their trust and cooperation to track down the culprit.”

The sycamore, estimated to be at least 500 years old, received extensive damage in the Sept. 3, 2007, fire and will not recover from its injuries. Experts have inspected the tree and recommend that it may either have to be cut down or fenced off as a safety measure.

For more information about the Division of Forestry, visit the Web site,  
[www.wvforestry.com](http://www.wvforestry.com).

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