

## FPR PROCEDURE 6.1

**Title:** Hazard Tree Surveys on Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation Lands

**Date:** 1/17/2023

### **Purpose:**

This procedure is intended to provide a uniform method of surveying for, identifying, and correcting trees that could pose a risk to humans or property while visiting or using certain Vermont state lands.

### **Applicability:**

The procedure applies to all areas of Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) lands having facilities developed to allow for public access and are high use areas (e.g., camping areas, picnic areas, designated parking areas, trails).

It does not apply to tree marking for vegetation management objectives.

### **Definitions:**

- **High use areas:** Areas which may have constant or frequent public occupancy during one or more seasons.
- **High hazard trees:** Trees with visible defects or trees within an infested/infected area that have not been treated to prevent mortality, indicating they have a high potential for failing and a high potential to strike people or property that may be expected to be within range.
- **Qualified personnel:** Trained FPR staff, and partner organization staff and volunteers approved by FPR.
- **Training:** FPR Hazard Tree Training or USDA Forest Service Hazard Tree Training.
- **Infested/infected area:** An area with a known infestation of a forest health pest or pathogen that poses a threat of significant mortality to trees

### **Procedure:**

The Parks Regional Managers and Forest Health Program Manager, or their designees, shall coordinate all surveys conducted in State Parks, annual review of surveys, and storage of resultant data.

Stewardship Foresters, or their designees, shall coordinate all surveys conducted on State Forests.

The Forestry Division will ensure that all FPR personnel who conduct hazard tree surveys are qualified to identify high hazard trees and complete the surveys, and have attended an initial training and a refresher training every two years.

All surveys shall be conducted according to the following minimum standards:

- High use areas will be identified and will be reviewed annually by district staff in both Parks and Forestry.
- High use areas will be surveyed at least once a year. Additional surveys may be requested due to weather events, changes in public use, or other concerns.

Determination of high hazard trees will only be made by qualified personnel.

- Data will be recorded on the most current "Hazard Tree Survey Form" or equivalent field data collection system.
  - Only high hazard trees will be recorded on the form even if they are removed or maintained during the survey.
  - Trees identified as a high hazard in Parks will be identified on an attached map.
- During mitigation operations, survey forms will be consulted to ensure that all recorded high hazard trees are removed or maintained for safety.
- Survey data and maps will be transferred to the Parks Regional Manager or Stewardship Forester, or their designees for action and long-term data storage.
- Actions taken will be recorded, and the completed survey forms will be archived in accordance with the State's retention policy.
- Trees determined to be an extreme hazard (trees that are actively failing) at any time by any FPR staff will be mitigated immediately to protect people and property. Mitigation may include closing access to a public space until the extreme hazard tree can be mitigated safely.
- When a tree is determined to be a high hazard due to its presence in an infested area and susceptibility to that infestation, qualified personnel may, at their discretion, choose not to mark and record that tree on the survey form if it is still vigorous and unlikely to fail within the next year. Regional Park Managers or Stewardship Foresters will be notified if this occurs.

In addition, the following procedures will apply to all surveys within developed State Parks:

- Assigned Forestry Division qualified personnel will consult with the responsible Parks Regional Manager or designee prior to conducting annual surveys.
- Surveys will be done in time to allow for necessary action(s) to be completed prior to a time of high public use.
- Parks staff may accompany Forestry Division qualified personnel during surveys taking place in designated state parks.
- All high hazard trees shall be marked with highly visible tree paint. A different color or method will be used to mark trees to be removed for other objectives.
- Where high hazard trees have been identified, but not removed or maintained prior to a time of high public use, the target zone at risk from these trees shall be closed to the public.

**Rationale:**

To provide a responsible and documented method for minimizing the potential for injury to humans and/or damage to property from high hazard trees.

DocuSigned by:  
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Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner