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FORESTRY OFFICIALS MAP DAMAGED AREAS
State Forester Offers Tips To Landowners

A preliminary survey conducted by State Forester Randy Dye indicates the forests of Jackson, Roane, Upshur and Webster counties suffered the most damage from February’s ice storm. Serious levels of tree damage also are present in the counties of Braxton, Calhoun, Gilmer, Lewis, Mason and Wirt. Aerial surveys are under way to map the damaged areas of all ten counties and should be complete by Friday, March 14.

Dye estimates that landowners have between three and four months to sell trees that were uprooted by the storm. “Cool temperatures and low humidity should protect uprooted trees from deteriorating during the spring. However, as temperatures and humidity rise, the risk of insect and disease damage will increase,” said Dye. Trees that are heavily damaged but still standing should be harvested within the next year.

Landowners should survey their property carefully to determine the type of damage to their trees. Three levels of damage are prevalent in standing trees after ice storms. Trees that lean, have broken limbs or less than 50% damage to the crown, or top of the tree, have a good chance of fully recovering. Trees with 50-75% crown loss can be kept but may develop stain and decay. Trees with more than 75% crown damage should be harvested within one year to avoid disease and insect infestation.

The State Forester encourages landowners to seek professional advice before selling their timber. “Contact your local Division of Forestry District Office to see if a timber harvesting exemption is needed,” Dye said. West Virginia law requires logging operators to be licensed; however, landowners marketing timber products from their own property may be eligible for a harvesting exemption at no cost.

Division personnel and private forestry consultants can advise landowners about marketing timber and timber sales. The Division of Forestry currently is working with the USDA Forest Service to develop a marketing package to help private landowners with damaged timber. When this package is complete, information will be posted on the Division’s website at www.wvforestry.com.

For more information, contact Forestry Communications Officer Leslie Fitzwater at (304) 558-2788.