

AFTER THE STORM

Woodland Owner's Guide to Recovery



Knowledge is power! Complete a D.I.Y. assessment of your woods.

If you can walk your woodland safely, gather basic information on tree damage. Make a simple map, take pictures, identify tree species, and estimate the degree of damage and number of acres impacted, then use this D.I.Y. assessment chart:

Woodland Owners D.I.Y. Assessment Chart

If Tree Damage is...		Then consider these actions...
Less than 50 percent of tree canopy branches broken, less than 50 trees.	Damage is generally not a problem and trees will recover without issue.	Clean up and dispose of debris.
More than 50 percent of tree canopy branches broken, less than 50 trees.	Damage is wait-and-see with a recommendation to monitor tree status over the next couple of years.	Clean up and dispose of debris. If there continues to be decline, a harvest could be considered at that time.
Large branches torn from main stem within 20 feet of the ground.	The main stem of the tree—most economically valuable portion—is intact, which is ideal when facing a salvage harvest.	Salvage harvest is possible if you have more than 5 acres of pine or 10 acres of hardwoods.
Tree Trunk lying on the ground or main stem twisted or broken.	Trees that are completely uprooted will degrade quickly by insects and fungi.	What is a salvage harvest? It is the removal of economically valuable timber that has suffered damage. It's the best way to capture value that is quickly declining, like processing wild game before spoilage. Pine should be harvested as soon as possible, whereas hardwoods like oak and aspen will generally hold value for a year.
Main stem bent and leaning more than 60 degrees (greater than 45 degree lean).	If the main stem of the tree is bent above 10 feet off the ground, there is still a merchantable main stem. If severely bent below 10 feet, it could be a total loss.	
Main stem broken between 10 to 20 feet off the ground.	If the main stem is broke above 10 feet, there may still be a salvageable main stem and value captured.	
Main stem broken within 10 feet off the ground.	If the main stem is broke below 10 feet, the main stem may be a total loss, but the top may have value to capture.	

Damaged TREE SAFETY

If at any point, you feel unsafe, dial 911 immediately.

Unsafe Trees: Storm damaged trees put your personal safety at risk! Wear a hard hat and avoid walking under or near hazard trees. Storm damaged trees can be bent under pressure and move unpredictably when pruned, cut, or moved during clean-up.

Powerlines: Stay away from downed powerlines and call your utility

company immediately. Never try to remove or cut down trees or tree limbs near electrical lines. If a tree is a threat to fall on a powerline, notify your local power company or electric cooperative right away. Touching a tree limb in contact with an electrical line is extremely hazardous and life-threatening. Never pile or burn brush beneath or near powerlines.

Call in the professionals who have the training, experience and proper equipment to do the job safely.

Salvage Harvest Next Steps:

Make sure your storm-damaged timber is harvested in a way that is best for your re-growing your forest and protects the future potential of your woodlands.

YES, I have potential salvage harvest!

Consider hiring a private consulting forester to represent your interests and what's best for your woods long-term. Find one available in your county at:

dnr.wi.gov, keyword "forester"

HMMMM, I'm still not sure what to do!

DNR foresters are available to meet with you, evaluate your property and determine if salvage operations would be appropriate.

MyWisconsinWoods.org, keyword "forester"

Remember, if your property is enrolled under the Managed Forest Law (MFL), an approved cutting notice must be filed with DNR Managed Forest Law Specialist for your county before any trees can be harvested on your property.

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What type of “tree person” is right for me?

DNR County Foresters:

DNR foresters are available to meet with you free of charge, walk your property, and determine if salvage operations would be appropriate. They are not able to assist with the sale of your timber. When a large number of landowners are affected you may experience delays. DNR Foresters provide information on cost sharing opportunities for example, covering a portion of costs to re-plant trees. MyWisconsinWoods.org, keyword “forester”

Cooperating or Consulting Foresters: Private foresters provide assistance to private landown-

ers on a contract or fee basis, which the landowner pays. In addition to many of the same services offered by DNR foresters, cooperating foresters may provide additional services like timber sales, custom tree planting and forest improvement, forest pest control applications, forest appraisals for tax or investment purposes, and commercial recreation planning and development. dnr.wi.gov, keyword “forester”

Tree services: Tree care specialists and arborists mainly work with individual trees and have experience pruning and removing storm-damaged trees in a yard type setting

including removing trees from structures. Arborists, especially ISA certified arborists, also have expertise in assessing the health and risks of trees left standing after storms.

Logging companies: Loggers mainly work in a forest setting generally larger than 5 acres. Most logging companies do not remove trees near buildings or on small lots.



DISPOSAL OPTIONS

After a disaster event, the volume of wood debris, demolition and household waste will be higher and even more of a concern for landfill disposal than typical volumes. Please contact your municipality to see if they have a waste facility or approved debris disposal sites.

- **Chipping** of clean, unpainted wood waste on your property is preferred. Chipped wood can be used as mulch for trails or other landscaping which is not adjacent to your home (due to wildfire risk). Make sure the chipped wood waste is not placed in a floodplain, wetland or any open waters of the state. Check with your municipality, businesses that offer chipping and grinding services, and local landscapers for options.
- **Drop off sites** may be established in your local county or municipality for wood debris drop off. Check local governments for wood debris drop off locations, hours, and guidelines.
- **Winter Burning:** If other methods are not possible, another option is piling debris on your property (small piles preferred) and burning when the ground is completely snow covered (no DNR burn permit required).
- **Debris Burning** is the #1 cause of wildfires in Wisconsin. As a last resort, if you choose to burn debris when the ground is not snow-covered, make sure you obtain the required, free annual DNR burning permit. Visit the WISBURN website at: dnr.wi.gov keyword “fire” or call 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876) to obtain a burn permit. Remember to check the burning restrictions every day you wish to burn (updated by 11:00 a.m. daily).
- **Solid Waste Disposal Site:** Don't co-mingle these materials with natural/woody debris. Keep materials separated into categories based on disposal options.

Paint a New Landscape

If you experienced significant tree damage, you probably feel violated. A beautiful tree-filled yard has been transformed into an unsightly mess of uprooted trees and broken limbs. A favorite woods has been reduced to an unrecognizable tangle. It's a heartbreaking loss in our lifetime, but just another beginning in the natural cycle of life.

Depending on the existing forest type, regeneration may occur naturally or may require site preparation and planting. For example, forest stands with a healthy aspen or oak component will most likely regenerate naturally. Pine or spruce plantations may need to have the site prepared and new trees planted either by hand or machine. Woodland owners should consider a salvage harvest to remove large tree debris as a first step.

Once the tree damage is removed, homeowners are free to paint a new landscape with plantings of trees and shrubs. Care should be given to consider species hardiness, growth form, and size at maturity.

What appears to be an ending is really a new beginning.



Wildlife is extremely adaptable. Severe winds that are catastrophic to humans and our lives, are just another day to wildlife. Some species will move to unaffected areas

while other species will take advantage of the new habitats created by the regenerating forest. They are survivors and life will go on.

It is said that every cloud has a silver lining, even storm clouds. In time your landscape or forest will recover and you will enjoy a new beauty.



MyWisconsinWoods.org