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IMMEDIATE

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**DEC OFFERS LANDOWNERS ADVICE IN ASSESSING TREE DAMAGE
Time, Proper Care Will Help Many Trees Recover**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today offered landowners tips on how to address tree damage that occurred on their property as a result of the October snowstorm and State of Emergency affecting Western New York.

DEC Foresters remind those affected by the storm that trees are amazingly resilient, and many will recover with proper care and time. When assessing tree damage, safety should be the first priority. Landowners should stay away from downed power lines and beware of broken limbs and hanging branches that may come down.

DEC also advises patience: landowners should not be in a hurry to prune or remove damaged trees that are not hazardous. Pruning is best done in the dormant season, which is just beginning. A tree can have up to 75 percent of its live crown removed before it potentially loses its ability to survive. If a tree does not represent an imminent hazard to people or property, take the time necessary to be sure it gets proper care and make a decision about it in a few weeks or months.

After a major storm, public officials, utility workers and private tree care firms must focus first on dealing with hazards to life and property and the removal of debris. Landowners are advised to be patient to allow public officials to respond to tree hazards. Street trees, usually located between the sidewalk and the curb, are publicly owned and are the municipalities' responsibility.

If a hazardous tree is large or the area requiring work is off the ground, hire a professional arborist. Trained arborists know proper pruning and removal techniques that can increase the chance of tree survival or ensure safe removal of hazards.

Be sure to select a certified arborist, and ask for certificates of insurance, including proof of liability for personal and property damage and worker's compensation. It is also advisable to request local references and get more than one estimate.

For more details on safe handling and care for damaged trees, landowners can consult the following websites:

\$ The International Society of Arboriculture can provide contact information for certified arborists:

www.isa-arbor.com/home.aspx

\$ The American Red Cross can provide chainsaw safety information:

www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/chainsaw.pdf

\$ United States Forest Service on storm damage:

<http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/ice/durham/publications.shtm>

\$ U.S. Forest Service pruning guidelines :

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/Spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/prun001.htm

For more information or questions about tree care, landowners can also contact R8 forestry office at (585) 226-5466 or the R9 forestry office at (716) 851-7010. Maps of DEC's regions can be found at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/about/abtrull3.html> on DEC's website.

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