

## TREE WARDEN

A recent priority of the town has been to identify hazard trees along town road right of ways and prepare a plan to deal with them. During the Spring of 2009, along with Road Foreman, Ron Daniels, I traveled all town roads and identified high-risk trees in the right of ways and summarized the inventory in a report presented to Select Board on August 17.

The concept of tree risk management is a necessary community endeavor to protect public safety and infrastructure. As long as you have trees and targets you will have risks of damage to people and property. A 'hazard tree' is one that has structural defects in the roots, stem, or branches that may cause the tree or parts of the tree to fail, where such a failure may cause property damage or personal injury.

The first step of the process is to identify the hazard trees, followed by mitigation. For each hazard tree identified, the potential target (e.g., power line, building) was noted and an action of how to reduce the risk was determined. Because not all hazard trees can be remedied immediately and some pose more risk than others, a priority schedule was recommended.

Below are general comments about the hazard tree inventory and prioritization process:

1. The assumption is made that paved roads, (except in developments and the entrance to Lake Shaftsbury) handle more traffic and at a higher speed than a gravel road.
2. A hazard tree that has 2 targets should rate a higher priority than one with only one.
3. Two hazard trees were noted that were outside the town ROW but still presented a danger to the public.
4. Ash is a common tree along the town roads and is currently suffering from ash yellows disease that causes slow decline and eventual death. More ash trees will become hazard trees in the coming years.
5. When tree maintenance work is scheduled on power lines along town roads it would be helpful to the town if I met with the crew before cutting commences so the town's objectives can be incorporated.
6. Town road crews required to operate chain saws should be trained. Completion of the chainsaw safety and tree-felling technique course like the "Game of Logging" should be encouraged.
7. Tree removal funding should be a line item in the budget and be increased until the most serious risk trees are removed.

I would like to thank road foreman, Ron Daniels, for the time he spent driving to complete this survey. Ron drives a large truck while maintaining the town roads in summer and winter; his perspective was valuable in identifying hazards that I would not have seen.

A summary of hazard trees along town roads in Shaftsbury is on file at the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted

Jim White, Tree Warden