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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

## Storm Damaged Trees Require Immediate Care

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LINCOLN, Neb. — High winds, large hail and lightning strikes can have lasting and potentially negative impacts on trees. If immediate steps are not taken to address the damages, these “hazard trees” pose legitimate threats to people and property. The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) would like to remind tree owners of some basic safety tips when assessing and addressing damaged trees.

Trees struck by severe weather require immediate attention. However, removing or pruning damaged limbs and branches often calls for the help of a trained professional.

“A site visit from a certified arborist can assess the health and management needs of the trees,” said NFS Community Forestry Program Leader, Eric Berg. “But most importantly they identify proactive work that can be done to reduce the potential of damage from future storms.”

When assessing your damaged tree(s), first check for nearby infrastructure such as power lines or buildings. If any work could cause incidental damage, contact a certified arborist. Removal of downed power lines should never be attempted and working near the lines isn’t recommended.

If a tree tips in a storm, it often means the tree had damaged or poorly developed roots. Trees leaning from broken roots usually do not survive. Even if a tipped tree does recover, it still is at risk of falling. For this reason, mature trees with root damage should be inspected to identify and reduce the potential of falls. Very young trees, typically those planted within the last five years, may survive if they are gently pulled back to a vertical position. Staking or guying of straightened trees is usually required for at least one growing season.

Loose branches or trunks split by a lightning strike are also safety concerns. The only pruning that should be done immediately is removing broken branches. Fine pruning or finishing cuts can wait until the tree is thoroughly checked. Broken, firmly attached branches may not pose any risk. These can be pruned after hazardous branches are removed.

Chainsaw work off the ground—utilizing a ladder, scaffolding, etc.—should not be attempted by homeowners. Trees carry significant weight in their branches, often creating unpredictable shifts or swings when cut loose. Typical “tree hazards” can be safely addressed, sometimes allowing the tree to recover. When in doubt it is highly recommended to contact a certified arborist or the homeowner’s preferred tree care service.

For more in-depth information on tree care and severe weather, please visit: <http://bit.ly/stormdamagedtrees>

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