



News Release

3821 West Roosevelt Road
Little Rock, AR 72204

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patti Erwin, Urban Forestry Coordinator, (479) 422-0900,
patti.erwin@arkansas.gov

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Urban Forest Strike Team to assess damage in Northern Arkansas

An Urban Forest Strike Team will begin work the week of February 27-March 6 in Bentonville, Cotter, Eureka Springs, Fayetteville, Harrison, Jonesboro and Springdale. The strike team, requested by the cities through the Arkansas Forestry Commission, will evaluate publicly-owned trees damaged by the recent ice storm and collect data to be used in applying for FEMA reimbursement. The Urban Forest Strike Team is a project of the Southern Group of State Foresters.

The strike team consists of five crews of certified arborists trained for post-disaster assessment of trees for public risk. Assisting with this effort are various city personnel. Crews and vehicles will be marked Urban Forest Strike Team (UFST). Trees assessed will be marked with a small paint "dot" that indicates eligibility for FEMA debris reimbursement. Orange indicates a tree removal (i.e. extensive damage), and white indicates tree pruning (i.e. broken limb removal). The areas to be assessed include city parks and some street trees.

Communities receiving this support benefit by having trained professionals provide tree management information in a timely manner for response and recovery.

Strike team arborists assisting with this effort represent the following states and/or organizations: Arkansas Forestry Commission, Texas Forest Service, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, Virginia Department of Forestry, Fairfax County, Virginia and the USDA Forest Service.

For homeowners concerned about damaged trees on their property, AFC recommends hiring a certified arborist with proof of insurance, and warns homeowners to be wary of drive-by tree services. For more information on finding a certified arborist, ice storm cleanup and tree health, visit the Arkansas Forestry Commission web site at www.arkansasforestry.org, or call (501) 296-1940.

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