

Ice Storm Damage Assessments Underway in Vermont

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Montpelier-Damage from last week's ice storm is being revealed as people check on their sugar woods. The federal Farm Services (FSA) offices have begun taking applications for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for maple sugar makers. The affected areas appear to be mainly in Lamoille, Orleans, Franklin, Chittenden and Washington Counties where FSA officials are encouraging sugar bush owners to call to report damage.

The ECP funds can be used to cost-share debris removal in active sugar woods. FSA is investigating whether special practice funds can be accessed to help with maple tap and tubing replacement for sugarbushes that were already prepared for this year's tapping. ECP also can help with funds to move debris off of the tubing and open up sugaring access roads or trails.

Vermont County Foresters are also fielding calls from affected owners of other affected woodlots. The foresters urge people to use hardhats and extreme caution when walking around or working in woodlots with ice-laden trees branches. While the ice made those branches heavier, the expected snow this week could add yet an extra layer of risk for sudden breakage.

Windsor County Forester Jon Bouton quoted experienced woodsman Irwin Post: "Imagine what it would be like to have a baseball bat land on your head from a few feet up. Well, branches are bigger and fall further!"

While the need for sugar bush work is immediate, when safety conditions allow, owners of other woodlands should also assess their property to report tree damage, and make decisions on amendments to forest management plans for Use Value Appraisal (Current Use).

For more information on FSA programs in check out : www.fsa.usda.gov

(You can reach the Vermont FSA pages from this site).

To locate the County Forester in your area: www.vtfpr.org/resource/for_forrres_countfor.cfm

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