Texas Forest Service

August 2010

FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◊ Wildlife ◊ Water ◊ Soil ◊ Best Management Practices ◊ Forest Health ◊ Recreation ◊ Aesthetics

STORM RECOVERY FOR TREES

After the storm -- The bark is stripped and withered leaves are scattered across your yard, leaving the branches bare. There might even be an old, strong limb that once helped propel your kids up into the canopy now resting on the ground, broken and detached. Can this tree be saved?

Storms often leave trees looking bare and deflated. But sometimes looks can be deceiving. Trees have an uncanny ability to recover from storm damage.

The first step is simply to assess the damage. Before you write your tree off, evaluate it by asking the following questions:

Q: Other than the storm damage, is the tree basically healthy and vigorous?
A: If the tree is basically healthy, it is not creating a hazard and it did not suffer major structural damage, it generally will recover if first aid measures are applied immediately after the storm.

Q: Are major limbs broken?
A: The larger a broken limb is, the harder it will be for the tree to recover from the damage. If a majority of the main branches are gone, the tree may have little chance of surviving.

Q: Has the leader (the main upward-trending branch on most trees) been lost?
A: In species where a leader is important to upward growth or desirable appearance, it may be a judgment call. The tree may live without its leader, but at best would be a stunted or deformed version of its former self.

Q: Is at least 50 percent of the tree's crown (branches and leaves) still intact?
A: This is a good rule of thumb for tree survivability. A tree with less than half its branches remaining may not be able to produce enough foliage to nourish the tree through another season.

Q: How big are the wounds where branches have been broken or bark has been damaged?
A: The larger the wound is in relation to the size of the limb, the less likely it is to heal, leaving the tree vulnerable to disease and pests. A two- to three-inch wound on a 12-inch diameter limb will seal over with new bark within a couple of years.

Q: Are there remaining branches that can form a new branch structure?
A: The remaining limbs will grow more vigorously as the tree tries to replace its missing foliage. Look to see if branches are in place that can eventually fill out the tree's appearance.

Q: Is the tree of a desirable species for its location?
A: If the tree is in the wrong location (such as a potentially tall tree beneath a power line) or an undesirable species for the property (messy fruit, etc.), then it may be best to remove it if it has serious damage.

What next?
So what category does your tree fall into? Is it a keeper? Should you wait and see if it will recover? Or is it already time to say goodbye? Go to the websites listed in the sidebar for more information.

from Texas Forest Service website

For more information:

- http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1331
- http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1335
- http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=5252&terms=trees+in+storms

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Help for Migragory Birds

from USDA NRCS news release, dated June 28, 2010

For more information:

- http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/mbhi_expand.html
- http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/mbhi/index.html

State Conservationist Donald W. Gohmert announced that USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with farmers, ranchers, and other landowners to develop and enhance habitat for birds making their annual migration south towards the Gulf of Mexico. Under the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative, NRCS will partner with producers to manage portions of their land to provide additional food and habitat for migrating birds.

"More than 50 million migratory birds traveling south in coming months will instinctively head toward the marshes and coastlands of the northern Gulf of Mexico," Gohmert said. "It has been well publicized that shorelines and marshes in other states have already been adversely impacted by oil from the Deepwater Horizon well. [Texas wetlands] are historic overwintering habitats for millions of migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. If these habitats are impacted by oil-laden water, the habitats expanded by farmers through this initiative will provide the birds high quality alternative wetlands on which to overwinter."

The initiative encompasses portions of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas. NRCS, in cooperation with its conservation partners, has identified priority areas that offer the greatest habitat potential for migrating bird populations. Priority areas in Texas are in Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Orange, Waller, and Wharton counties with secondary priority given to the adjacent counties that include Aransas, Austin, Fayette, Grimes, Jasper, Lavaca, Montgomery, Newton, Polk, Refugio, San Jacinto, Tyler, Victoria and Washington counties.

USDA will use conservation programs administered by NRCS and will work with partners, both public and private, to provide a variety of habitats to meet the needs of different species. Emphasis will be on creating or enhancing habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, including shallow water and mudflat habitats.

USDA will deliver this initiative with the support from partners in Texas including Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and associated Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The signup for the initiative will run from June 28 to August 1. Interested producers should contact their local USDA Service Center for additional information.

Panna Maria Oaks

from Texas Forest Service website—Famous Trees of Texas

For more information:

- http://famoustree-softexas.tamu.edu/TreeHistory.aspx?TreeName=Panna Maria Oaks

Most Christmas Eve services are held within the protective walls of a church building, but one such service, was not. The year was 1854 and the place was a small hill in Central Texas (now in Karnes Co.) overlooking the junction of the San Antonio and Cibolo rivers. The time was midnight. Assembled under these live oak trees, a strangely garbed group of seven or eight hundred settlers bent in prayer as a young priest conducted Mass.

After the service, a few spent the night huddled together under the oaks, while others slept amid their belongings in shallow trenches or in the profusion of tall grass. Thus, the first emigration of Polish settlers to America passed their Christmas Eve in a strange land. This spot, Panna Maria, was the first Polish settlement in the New World.

In spite of the many hardships, the deeply religious people made plans to build a church that first spring. Work began in the summer, and the first Polish church in America was built beside these historic live oaks which sheltered the first Mass.

Working Trees for Water Quality

Water quality is the end result of the individual actions of all the "neighbors" in a watershed. Rural landowners and community residents need to look beyond their own boundaries to improve water quality and coordinate water resource management.

Working Trees can help alleviate water quality and quantity problems. From upland areas down to the water's edge, *Working Trees* reduce and slow runoff and trap pollutants in both rural and urban settings.

Working Trees means putting the right trees in the right places, and in the correct design, to do specific jobs. Land managers, community planners and watershed residents can all use *Working Trees* to make high quality water a reality.

Displacement of permanent vegetation such as trees, shrubs and grasses by annual crops or community development increases the amount of runoff into streams and lakes, as well as the speed at which those waters are delivered. This rapidly moving runoff creates flooding and transports high levels of sediments, attached pollutants and dissolved contaminants into surface water. Increased runoff also causes the erosion of streambanks, resulting in the degradation of aquatic habitats and the accelerated deposition of sediments into rivers and reservoirs. When rain moves quickly off the land rather than being allowed to soak into the ground, it can't recharge soil moisture or maintain groundwater base flows.

Incorporating *Working Trees* into the landscape at strategic positions in the watershed provides ecological services that protect water resources and meet landowner objectives. Leaves, branches, roots, plant litter, and stems of trees and shrubs reduce flooding and flood damage. Tree and shrub canopies, debris and roots improve and stabilize aquatic habitat. Vegetation, plant debris and roots help to filter contaminants and slow surface runoff.

from a publication by the USDA National Agroforestry Center

For more information:

- http://www.unl.edu/nac/workingtrees/wtwq.pdf
- http://www.unl.edu/nac/

Funding Available for Longleaf

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial assistance to landowners to implement conservation practices that will maintain, improve and restore the longleaf pine ecosystem in East Texas.

Offered through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS will pay landowners for most of the cost of installing conservation practices to improve the health and extent of the longleaf pine ecosystem.

"Research tells us that the longleaf pine ecosystem is one of the most diverse ecosystems outside the tropics and is in a state of decline in both ecosystem area and health," said Don Gohmert, NRCS state conservationist for Texas. "With only 3 percent of the original 90 million acres remaining in the longleaf pine ecosystem, it is home to 29 species that are Federally listed as threatened and/or endangered."

Highest priority will be given to land suitable for tree production in the following counties: Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Hardin, Houston, Jasper, Liberty, Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler, and Walker. Land outside these counties that is determined to be suitable for longleaf pine production will also be considered.

Eligible conservation practices include firebreaks, forest site preparation, forest stand improvement, prescribed burning, and tree/shrub establishment. Landowners can apply at their local NRCS office in the USDA Service Center.

from Mark Habiger, NRCS, Temple, TX

For more information:

- http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/whip_src/longleaf_pine.html

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DESIGNS FOR BUFFERS

The Conservation Buffers website offers resources for planning and designing buffers in rural and urban landscapes. The primary resource is *Conservation Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors, and Greenways* which provides over 80 illustrated design guidelines synthesized and developed from a review of over 1400 research publications.

Each guideline describes a specific way that a vegetative buffer can be applied to protect soil, improve air and water quality, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, produce economic products, provide recreation opportunities, or beautify the landscape.

This publication is available for order as a spiral-bound field guide, as a downloadable PDF and as an online version. Go to **http://www.unl.edu/nac/bufferguidelines/index.html.**

The publication itself can be found at **http://www.unl.edu/nac/bufferguidelines/docs/conservation_buffers.pdf**, or can be ordered at **http://www.unl.edu/nac/order.htm#buffer**.

Other design tools and resources will be added to this site at a later time. Click on "Other Tools" to find out what resources are coming.

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