

What criteria does Alberta Parks staff use to assess the health of a tree to identify a hazardous tree?

- Burn damage
- Tree disease or fungal bodies
- Lean Angle
- Root damage
- Bark damage
- Cracks or splits

Trunk rot caused by *Phellinus Tremulae*



Why are there hazardous trees?

Horse River Wildfire

In 2016, the Horse River wildfire caused extensive damage to the Boreal Forest in the Fort McMurray area, which included large portions within Gregoire Lake Provincial Park. After reopening the park, extensive wind gusts blew down trees within the park that appeared healthy but internally were not.



Summer 2019, trail unaffected by wildfire

Contact

Additional questions or information can be directed to:

**Northeast Region Park Ecologist,
James Morgan**

Phone: 780-623-5477

Email: james.morgan@gov.ab.ca

Updated April 2020

Hazardous Tree Removal

Gregoire Lake Provincial Park



What's Happened

A hazardous tree survey was completed in 2018, but trees that were affected by the fire still appeared healthy to the surveyors. The stress from the fire took multiple years to cause damage to the trunk of the trees.

In 2019/2020, Alberta Parks conducted a Hazardous Tree Assessment within the park. Any tree that posed a risk to falling on trails, infrastructure, campgrounds or public areas were surveyed.

Hazardous trees were removed in the winter of 2020.



Heart rot observed in a Trembling Aspen tree trunk at Gregoire Lake Provincial Park

Next Steps

In Spring 2020, revegetation efforts will include planting native tree species throughout the park in designated areas.

Throughout 2020, Alberta Parks will survey the park and monitor regeneration growth, as well as soil health.

FAQs

How long will the trees take to regrow?

Trembling Aspen will shoot from the roots of the cut down mature trees and will provide the majority of the understory. You will see regrowth start right away but it will take decades to reach the original forest cover.

Where did the wildlife go during the fire?

Large animals are able to escape the fire and smaller animals take refuge underground or in rocky outcrops. Unfortunately, there is a fraction of the forest population of wildlife that were not able to escape the wildfire.

Is the park safe now?

The park is safer than past years following the fire. The park has been surveyed by Alberta Parks staff for hazardous trees. Supplemental surveys throughout the park will be completed to monitor regeneration of the burnt areas and assess forest stand health. Although hazardous trees have been removed, there is still potential for trees to fall due to natural events.



Trunk rot caused by *Phellinus Tremulae*



Trunk cracks and fractures

Why are some of the burnt tree trunks left standing?

Standing, dead trees that remain after a fire are called snags. Snags and fallen woody debris provide important habitat for many species of wildlife: insects, birds such as woodpeckers, and small mammals like bats. A forest made of burned and unburned patches helps to retain forest cover.

How long will the park take to look like it used to before the fire?

It will take decades of growth for the burnt areas to reach their old stand height and density. However, these new stands will provide diverse age stands for birds and wildlife in the area.

How come so many trees were removed?

Along with the trees that were flagged as hazardous due to the fire, trees that were at high risk of falling due to wind gusts, soil erosion, disease, and fungal bodies were also removed. This was done to limit the number of future tree removals required in the park.