



## Missouri Department of Conservation & Top of the Ozarks RC&D Forestry Committee

The following column is the fourth in a series intended to benefit woodland owners.

### **Ice Damage In The Rural Area** **By Mike Fiaoni**

Six years ago Missouri saw an ice storm the likes that many of us had never seen before. It was months before many towns had the mess cleaned up and life returned to normal. Many urban trees were stripped of their branches, had tops broken out and were all but killed. The evening news showed countless photos of downed power lines and ice covered skeleton trees, but what about the trees outside the city limits? What about the trees on the back 40 or 100 acres, did they receive any damage, and if so what can we do to help them? What is possible for one or two yard trees is not possible for several acres of damaged trees. In fact there really is not much that needs to be done or can be done for damaged trees on several acres. So what do you do and what can you do?

First survey the damage and get an estimate on the number of trees or acres affect and where those trees are located. Are there numerous broken branches above your favorite hiking trail, picnic table, fishing or hunting spot? If so then you either need to remove the branches, trees or find a new recreational spot. Next what are the age and species of most of the trees affected? If most of them are in the red oak

group, which are starting to die, then you may consider doing a timber sale to remove those trees. If most or all the trees affected are mature, then you may also want to consider doing a timber sale. These sales should be done within three to five years of damage before rot and decay starts moving in and lessening the value of the tree. If on the other hand it's just a few scattered individual trees, you may want to consider leaving them along and letting Mother Nature take her course. Damaged branches and trees and even dead trees can be a great asset to various wildlife.

For safety reason, wear a hardhat and keep your ears and eye alert for broken and falling branches. It doesn't take a very big branch falling just twelve to fifteen feet to do a great deal of injury or even death. If all this is still as clear as mud, you may consider calling a professional forester to come out and assess your timber. You can look up your local Missouri Department of Conservation forester online at [www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/myforester-search.html](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/myforester-search.html) or call (573) 522-4115. There is also a large network of consulting foresters, who charge for their services, available across the state. You can look up their listing at [www.missouriforesters.com](http://www.missouriforesters.com). Submitted by Peter Maki, Forestry Communication Specialist, Top of the Ozarks RC&D

