

WIND RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

The process of developing a management plan for your woodlot should take into consideration the local risk of wind damage (windthrow and breakage).

The following questions should be asked:

- Is there evidence of past damage on this site?
 - Are there natural openings, areas of blowdown, insect/disease damage, etc.?
- Is the entire site (or a portion) wind-exposed due to natural terrain?
 - Is there a steep slope, aspect, high elevation, etc.?
- Is the site (or a portion) wind-exposed due to an adjacent opening?
 - Is the neighbouring lot clear-cut, etc.?
 - Are there any changes to the adjacent landscape anticipated?
- Is there evidence that root masses are predominately shallow?
 - Consider the site history; if it was an old field it could have hard pan (a compressed soil layer) that could cause roots to stay shallow.
- Is the site poorly drained?
 - Is there standing water at certain times of the year?
 - Is it impacted by spring runoff or seasonally wet (vernal pool)?
 - Is the area covered with grasses/ferns/alders?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is "yes" you should consider mitigating the risk to your woodlot. Depending on the severity of the risk, this could involve incorporating buffers, aligning of trails, reducing the percent of basal area (keep trees thicker), or prioritizing wind risk trees for removal. In some cases, partial harvest may not be recommended due to the excessive risk of opening the stand.

NOTE: Wind damage can occur in any stand type however mature balsam fir stands or stands with a high fir component are especially prone to damage. Shallow-rooted spruce stands are also highly susceptible.

