

July 11, 2022

## **Summer 2022 Project for Remediation of November 30 to December 1, 2021 Windstorm Damage to SBR Forests**

Over the last few days owners have noticed and commented on logging activities in the general vicinity of the "Boneyard"/Fisher Creek area.

This is part of a FireSmart/storm debris clean-up project that is intended to last throughout the summer and address, among other things, the parts of the ranch where so many trees have been blown down in such close proximity to each other that it looks as if the areas have been clear cut – even though they have not. One such area is in the area we refer to as the "Boneyard", which has suffered shocking storm damage -- as can be seen in the photograph at the end of this Notice, taken soon after the storm.

### **Background**

The high winds associated with the December 1, 2021 storm dates brought down an estimated 2,800 (probably more) trees on our common area lands. Many of the downed trees "tipped over" with the root ball intact and in these cases adjacent trees were often downed in the process, causing a tangled mess. In other cases the whipping action of the wind (aided by roots frozen in the ground, insect, wind and water damage) caused trees to break off at their weakest point. Many of these trees are "hanging" – not lying on the ground but not connected to the earth either.

Then, in late April and into late June, the ranch experienced 4 or 5 wet weather events and more high winds, causing large numbers of trees to fall in new areas and additional trees to fall in already affected areas. Even before the December wind storm, parts of the ranch such as the Fisher Creek area had a significant number of blown-down trees.

Members of the Board have made extensive tours on foot and horseback through our forests with staff and FireSmart contractors over the last three months and report the following:

\*Our common area forests were last logged in the 1960's and at the time the trees harvested were probably slightly younger than our current tall, large trees, as indicated by the sizes of the old stumps left behind.

\*Most of the Fisher Creek forested area is impassable for foot travel with an estimated *80 acres of trees* down, much of this from the December 1 storm but also historically and from our June rains and wind. New growth cannot easily take place where the forest floor is covered with downed trees and related debris.

\*Our common area forests are riddled with old growth/end-of-life trees. Old growth trees can be expected to blow down continually if not managed in a selective logging program which, when undertaken, leaves healthy younger trees to flourish over the short (and longer) term as a result of their enhanced access to sunshine and nutrients.

\* We have long known that we are in a part of the Province that is vulnerable to forest fire and have been advised that we simply must address the issue by cleaning up blown down trees throughout the property and identifying old growth/end of life trees that are vulnerable to blow down and can be expected to fall in the not too distant future.

### **Actions being Taken**

The Board has been in discussions with two different timber contractors and has received an analysis of the risks associated with our current (and foreseeable future) situation, including follow-up blow down occurrences. As a result of that process, we have identified contractors who have experience in cleaning up blow-down situations like ours and who have proposed a project whereby they will recover their project costs solely from the sale of the blown down trees.

The project has 3 stages. Stage 1 is the clean-up stage whereby areas of wind downed trees will be accessed and the logs and related debris removed. During Stage 2 the contractors will carry out such selective logging of end-of-life trees which currently represent a fire hazard as is Board approved. Stage 3 will be an annual review of our forests and identification of recommended FireSmart action.

### **What Owners Can Expect**

Stage 1. The first stage of the project begins with the Fisher Creek area. This area has been chosen not only because of its shockingly devastated condition but also so that owners can become familiar with the logging process in a more isolated part of the ranch.

The huge numbers of blown down trees will be accessed and removed from the area by logging truck. When the Fisher Creek area has been cleared and remediated, other parts of the ranch where wind devastation has occurred, including the condo pasture, will be addressed.

Stage 2. The second stage of the project will be the identification and selective logging of individual end-of-life trees which are vulnerable to wind and insect damage. This stage will begin with the areas where ground conditions are most favourable to the process. *Selective logging is the opposite of clear-cutting.* Selected trees are removed on a best practices basis to the benefit of all trees in the area.

During the course of the project the loggers will be removing downed trees from blow down sites, temporarily storing them on our lands and then removing them to one or more saw mills by logging truck. Related debris which cannot be removed from the ranch and processed in this way will be moved to several safe burn sites (one in each of several staging areas) and burned as soon as weather conditions permit. Burn piles will be conically shaped so as to create the smallest possible foot print and allow a quick burn.

Each logged area will be remediated to proper logging standards by the contractors within 30 days of completion of that area. This will give the parts of the ranch

devastated by blow down the best chance of returning to normal in the shortest possible time.

\*\*\*\*\*

**While the project is underway there will be unavoidable disruption at the ranch, some of it significant. The storm damage our forests have suffered over the years will take time to clean up -- but clean up is an essential part of our proper stewardship of the land.**

**(Photograph of a portion of the Fisher Creek area taken shortly after the December 1 wind storm, showing the resulting devastation.)**

