

The City of Hailey Tree Committee has identified several hazardous trees in Hop Porter and Heagle Parks, and has recommended their removal or trimming. As a community service, Davey Tree Surgery Company and other professional tree service companies and certified arborists have volunteered to remove or trim the identified trees in Hop Porter Park. The work will begin on Friday, June 12 and will continue throughout that weekend until completed. Members of the Hailey Tree Committee and City Staff will be present to answer questions and provide for safety while operations are occurring.

1. Why is the City looking at Hazard Trees?
2. What is a Hazard Tree?
3. How can I tell which trees are being evaluated as a potential hazard?
4. I notice some signs on the trees say they will be removed, but others are only being pruned - Why?
5. Does the tree species make a difference?
6. Who makes the decision to recommend removal or pruning of hazard trees?
7. Why are you doing this work now? Why not sooner?
8. How do I know you've addressed all the problems with a hazard tree?
9. So what are you doing to replace these important shade trees in our Parks?
10. Will more hazard trees be removed or pruned in Parks?
11. I've heard there is a problem with a tree in the popular Jimmy's Garden Park – is that true?
12. What else is the Hailey Tree Committee doing?

1. **Why is the City looking at Hazard Trees?** Trees add to our enjoyment of outdoor experiences especially in our parks and along our streets. Too often, we are unaware of the risks associated with defective trees, which can cause injury and damage. Interest in hazard tree management has increased in recent years due to safety and liability concerns resulting from preventable accidents. Recognizing hazardous trees and taking proper corrective actions can protect property and save lives. The goals of our hazard tree management program are to maximize public safety and maintain a healthy sustainable urban forest for the City. With the formation of the Hailey City Tree Committee, the City now has a superb advisory group to focus on this issue.
2. **What is a Hazard Tree?** A “hazard tree” is a tree with structural defects likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, which could strike a “target.” A target can be a vehicle, building, or a place where people gather such as a park bench, picnic table, play structure, or sidewalk.
3. **How can I tell which trees are being evaluated as a potential hazard?** The trees were marked by professional certified arborists with red ribbon for removal, and green ribbon for trimming / pruning. You may also see spray paint on some tree trunks. Signs have been placed upon the trees, identifying the hazardous trees and explaining why the tree must be removed or pruned for the safety of park users. Should citizens be concerned over a particular tree, they are encouraged to call the Hailey Public Works Department or the Hailey Tree Committee for further dialogue. (Contact numbers at end of FAQ)
4. **I notice some signs on the trees say they will be removed, but others are only being pruned - Why?** In a park, trees are a valuable resource, providing shade and places for children to play. Professional certified arborists evaluate a tree based on several factors and determine if it should be pruned for health, or it must be removed. When a tree has a structural defect or a disease, it may still be able to live for several more years. If, in the opinion of the professional certified arborist, pruning

will remove some of the hazard, and lower the risk rating of the tree, pruning may be all that is necessary. Tree removal is considered a last resort, but there are circumstances where it is necessary. When tree removal is recommended, it is because the safety of park users is paramount and the tree represents too great a risk for park users.

5. **Does the tree species make a difference?** Yes! Most of the hazardous trees in Hop Porter Park are a hybrid poplar, which is generally an undesirable tree for parks. The advantage to a hybrid poplar is that it grows up to six to ten times faster than similar trees, providing shade and the appearance of a mature tree in a few short years. However, the faster a tree grows, the wider its growth rings, and as a result, the less structural strength it has. They also tend to be prone to disease such as fungus and cankers. And they do not live as long as many other more appropriate trees for parks. As these hybrid poplar trees are gradually removed, underplanting different species to take their place will create a more beautiful and sustainable park system.
6. **Who makes the decision to recommend removal or pruning of hazard trees?** Because park trees are so treasured by the citizens of Hailey, three professional certified arborists evaluated the trees as a group using strict best management standards set forth by the International Society of Arboriculture. These professionals understand the value of trees in a park and balanced that with the safety of the users in the park. Their recommendations were adopted by the City to be followed. Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge, training, and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance the beauty and health of trees, and attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees.
7. **Why are you doing this work now?** The City of Hailey recognized the importance of its urban forest by passing Ordinance 1013 which sets policies for public trees on August 11, 2008. As part of that ordinance, the Hailey City Tree Committee was also established to “promote sound arboricultural practices and tree diversity, and to promote public education of proper tree care practices”. This energetic group brings expertise and passion to the public trees in the City.

As part of their initial goals, they determined that a hazard tree analysis was needed for the City. Coincidentally, Idaho Power Company notified the City that it would be through the Wood River Valley on a scheduled 36-month rotation of utility line pruning. They offered their services for any needed hazard tree removal and Hailey Tree Committee Chair Jen Smith directed them to the City. The City of Hailey was fortunate to have this unexpected opportunity be offered to them at this time. Davey Tree Surgery Company, Idaho Power’s utility line clearing contractor, is performing the work.

8. **How do I know you’ve addressed all the problems with a hazard tree?** Arborists cannot detect every condition that could possibly lead to the structural failure of a tree. Trees are living organisms that fail in ways we do not fully understand. Conditions are often hidden within trees and below ground. Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, or for a specified period of time. Likewise, remedial treatments, like any medicine, cannot be guaranteed. Trees can be managed, but they cannot be controlled. To live near trees is to accept some degree of risk. The only way to eliminate all risk associated with trees is to eliminate all trees. A good example of this principle is the large spruce trees at the old County Courthouse that recently blew over during a May, 2009 storm.
9. **So what are you doing to replace these important shade trees in our Parks?** The Tree Committee is already developing a replacement plan for the trees which are removed, and replacement plantings will be budgeted for and begun this fall. The replacement park-friendly shade tree species planted this fall will be the start of the next generation of growth for Hailey’s beautiful parks.

However, even before that, in July, three replacement trees will be planted in Hop Porter Park on the eastern border. Press releases will announce the exact date and time of this event, if you'd like to attend.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation towards replacement tree planting, the Hailey Parks Foundation, a non-profit group, is set up to receive donations. They will ensure your donation goes towards an appropriate replacement tree in one of Hailey's parks. [Hailey Parks Foundation P.O. Box 3107, Hailey, ID 83333]

10. **Will more hazard trees be removed or pruned in Parks?** Yes, hazard tree evaluation is an on-going program for the City with its urban forest. Because trees are living organisms, they are assessed on a regular basis to determine their health. They may also be assessed after a particularly violent storm or other natural event that can affect their structural integrity.
  
11. **I've heard there is a problem with a tree in the popular Jimmy's Garden Park – is that true?** Yes. In addition to the work at Hop Porter Park, the tree at the southeast corner of Jimmy's Garden has also been identified as a tree of concern. A group of volunteers called Blaine County Tree Preserve has offered to significantly trim the tree. Their effort is to preserve the life of the tree as long as possible, allowing the already established underplantings to grow and create shade for the park, before the old tree must be fully removed. The tree will undergo continual inspection, especially after a wind event, to ensure that it remains as safe as possible.
  
12. **What else is the Hailey Tree Committee doing?** Although only having been formed in August 2008, the Hailey Tree Committee has already accomplished much including successfully getting the City of Hailey designated as a 'Tree City USA Community'; establishing and celebrating Arbor Day by planting trees in Balmoral Park; developing draft policies for public trees and donations; individual tree risk assessment; and urban forest education and training for City staff.

A major upcoming focus for the group will be a city-wide public tree inventory. Trees do more than improve the appearance of our streets and open spaces; they provide long term public health and environmental benefits. Trees improve our shared quality of life and enhance property values. This public tree inventory will help determine the best composition of our urban forest as well as the condition and maintenance needs of each city tree. Based on this data, our tree programs will be able to meeting their management goals more efficiently.

In order to conduct the inventory, certified arborists will use computers to capture specific details about each tree. In addition to documenting species and park or street location, the arborists will record the condition and stability of each tree, looking for any signs of damage, decay, or disease, and noting any current or potential conflicts with utilities or other environmental conditions. Reducing risk is a primary objective in completing these assessments. The arborists will identify any pruning, removals, or planting needs in addition to digitally mapping all the trees in order to aid the City in the future management of its urban forest resources.

The City is grateful for all of these volunteer efforts in the identification and removal of hazard trees in Hop Porter and Heagle Parks. The City of Hailey treasures its public trees and commends the Tree Committee in proactively managing this priceless resource.

## **Contacts**

Jen Smith, Tree Committee Chair at 720-5208  
Tom Hellen, Public Works Dept. 788-9830 ext. 14