

Dear Durham, NH Planning Board

I am writing concerning the proposed tree work on Packers Falls Rd. I did not look at the area but removal of the small # of dead or high risk defective trees seems reasonable as it helps with public safety as well as maintaining the utility lines.

I am assuming that the work in this area will include tree trimming. Mike Lynch indicates that this will be "Maintenance Trimming". I think it would be good to clarify what the specifications are for this, and to request a very conservative approach for tree trimming on a scenic roads. I feel that some of the trimming work I have seen recently (I am most familiar with tree work around my neighborhood on Pinecrest and Denbow Roads) has removed too many limbs over a significant length of the trunk (I assume the approach is to remove a large number of limbs in hopes of getting the smaller proportion that may fail in the future).

Eversource has a tough job in maintaining the utility lines, and I appreciate the work they do to keep the power on, however, I think there are a number of issues that should be considered in planning this work. Some of the more important concerns include;

Aesthetics

Clearing limbs on a large length of the tree trunk does not look natural, and I think impacts the scenic character of our roads.

Loss of too much tree crown affects long term tree health

Excessive trimming removes too much of the tree crown and foliage. Trees need leaves to produce food. Loss of leaf area reduces this food production and uses up energy reserves in the tree. Some trees may become more stressed and less able to tolerate insect, disease, drought or other problems. Larger trees have a smaller proportion of tree crown removed, so they can recover from the impact more easily. Small trees or unhealthy trees are less able to recover and may decline over a period of time. This makes them more prone to fail at some time in the future.

Tree Wounds

A large number of wounds caused to the tree through pruning, provide entry points for disease and insects. Many wounds will close and not become a problem, but each wound is a spot where decay may begin in a tree. Removal of large limbs creates large wounds which take a long time to close. Over many years internal tree decay can enlarge, and increase the risk of tree failure.

Re-sprouting

When heavily pruned some trees re-sprout prolifically. The sprouts grow quickly and are weakly attached near the outside of the trunk. As these weakly attached limbs get larger over several years they are more prone to failure than the original branches that formed as the tree grew.

Tree dynamics are changed

Tree crowns of different species grow in different crown shapes for a reason. The trees have evolved so that they can tolerate wind, snow, shade, etc. in different ways. When we heavily trim trees we change that dynamic. For instance a tree with branches spaced over the top 2/3rds of its trunk (called live crown ratio) may be trimmed up so that branches only exist on the top 1/3rd of the trunk. These changes the dynamics of wind force on the tree. In some species, drastically lowering the live crown ratio may indicate a higher likelihood of failure.

I understand the need for tree pruning on roads and along utility lines, but I believe a more conservative technique can balance good tree health with utility line maintenance. Well trained arborists can identify and

remove a large percentage of these tree branches that will ultimately fail. Branches that are more likely to fail have certain traits that can be identified (included bark, long horizontal branches, weak branch unions) and certain tree species are more prone to branch failure. This more conservative approach would reduce the amount of cutting done, the cost to the utility company and the impact on the trees and aesthetics along the roads. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Parry
5 Denbow Rd., Durham, NH



Utility line trimming done at corner of Pincrest and Denbow Roads - 2014