



Currents

64 County Route 639, Sussex, NJ 07461 . p: 973.875.5101 . f: 973.875.4114 / September 2020 / www.sussexrec.com



Photos by member Ken Cooper from Lake Neepaulin

Trees, Trees, Trees

Here in Sussex County, we are lucky to have the opportunity to enjoy the quiet comforts of rural life. Our bucolic fields, breathtaking mountains, and beautiful trees are all key to providing the “closer to nature” feel that makes this area so special. We all certainly love our scenic trees, but during storms, they can quickly become part of a big problem.

Fallen trees, tree limbs, and branches are the #1 cause of power

outages during extreme weather. This was the case this past month when Tropical Storm Isaias blew into our area. While this storm didn’t last long, it brought with it high winds that did a lot of damage to our trees in a short amount of time.

Following this storm, I’d like to take the opportunity to walk our readers through how Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative prepares for and responds to outages. We put a

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lot of effort (and expense) into keeping our lines clear of interference that could cause power outages. These preventative measures are very effective in protecting the flow of power and minimizing outages on a day-to-day basis. However, large storms and extreme weather have the potential to cause major damage that our crews have to meet head-on.

Trees, Trees, Trees

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Preventative Measures

We work year-round on right-of-way (ROW) clearing to minimize risk that trees, branches, and other types of vegetation pose to our power lines. Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative makes use of its tree trimming contractor, Asplundh Tree Experts, LLC, for this important job. Over a four-year timespan, they trim problem vegetation throughout our entire service territory.

Despite these preventative measures, major storms may still cause some damage to our transmission lines, substations, or local distribution lines that is hard to prepare against. Weather can be unpredictable and can even knock down large trees that are far outside the range we would normally trim.

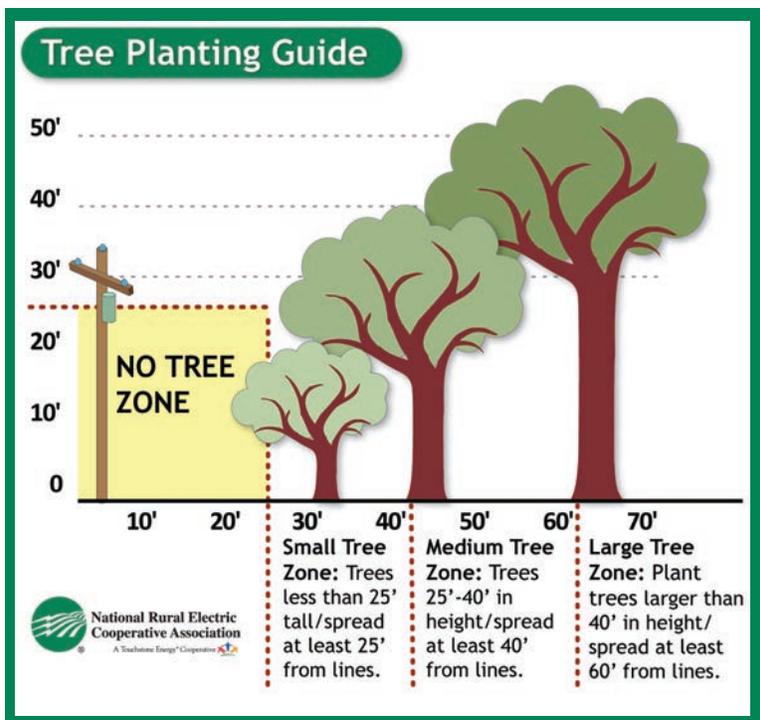
Large, tall trees are very heavy and can fall with such force on lines that a pole can snap. The process of replacing a broken pole can add a considerable amount of time to the power restoration process. Tropical Storm Isaias caused several poles to break across our service territory, which ended up having to be replaced before power could be restored.

The beautiful trees in our area, especially in the lake communities we serve, are all very old. Most of our communities were developed 40, 50, or even 60 years ago. When power was brought to these communities, the trees were not taller than the new poles. Many of those trees have continued to grow taller and larger over the decades. Now they tower over our lines. To maintain a true clearance, we'd need to double or triple the width of the right-of-way, which would be very tough to do in a relatively dense residential lake community. This problem isn't unique to our area, but it is more acute due to the number of lake communities we have here. Additionally, we now have invasive pests that previously never existed here, like the emerald ash borer and spotted lanternfly (see next page), leaving dead or dying trees scattered throughout our territory, and its getting worse.

The Work of Restoration

When an outage strikes, our crews of linemen and our contractor's tree crews mobilize to tackle the cause of the outage. Our OMS (Outage Management System) allows us to monitor our entire system and pinpoint homes without power. However, determining the exact cause of each outage and the tools and manpower we will need to resolve each problem can take some time. That's why it's always helpful for our members to report these types of issues. If you see a tree that's fallen on power lines, a blown transformer, a broken pole, or a similar issue, please report it to us at 973-875-5101.

The scale of an outage event has an influence on how long it may take to fix. A large storm like Tropical Storm Isaias



usually causes multiple outages across our system, each affecting a different amount of members. For outages of this size, we have to make use of all of our line and tree crews, and occasionally call on other cooperatives in Pennsylvania to provide additional crews and equipment. For some circumstances, specialized equipment may be needed. For example, on August 7 we had to bring in a crane to remove a large tree that had fallen on power lines on Alamoosook Road in Highland Lakes.



Our priority is always to restore power to the largest groups of people first, working from the substation out along the circuit. The power lines closest to the substation have to get restored first before lines further out can be re-energized. This is why some areas may end up being restored before other areas, regardless of which area lost power first.

As a member of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, we want you to be able to depend on the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost. Our vegetation management efforts are all a part of improving reliability of day-to-day service. Unfortunately, weather events like tropical storms, hurricanes, and snowstorms will always be a factor that can cause damage to our system. While we can't prevent extreme weather from impacting our service, know that our crews will always work through the night until every last member has their power restored. Thank you to all the members who are patient with us throughout this process – your words of encouragement mean the world!

The Spotted Lanternfly

By: Claudia Raffay, Director of Marketing & Member Services
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Crates of products arrive at U.S. ports every day. Along with the products, the crates sometimes carry unwanted stowaways. Invasive plant and insect species have become a real issue, affecting our homes, our communities and our environment. We all know of the stink bug and the emerald ash borer that have attacked crops and trees.

An invasive species from Asia, the spotted lanternfly landed in Pennsylvania's Berks County around 2012. Once again, this brightly colored, moth-like insect has been spotted in our area, which is a cause for concern. The spotted lanternfly threatens grapes, orchards, and hardwood trees.

The spotted lanternfly is known as a plant-hopper – they hop around and suck sap from just about anything, including trees, shrubs, and herbs. They lay their eggs on everything — furniture, rocks, toys, cars — which makes them easy to spread as the items can then transport the eggs across the country. Like the emerald ash borer, which accounts for a majority of the dead ash trees in our area, the lanternfly can also cause damage to trees which can fall and cause outages. The lanternfly is easy to kill with pesticides, but those chemicals will also kill all the good bugs.

Pennsylvania has established a spotted lanternfly program in hopes to eradicate or contain the problem. We should be aware of this issue as Pennsylvania's neighbor. We have included images here, including an image of what multiple spotted lanternflies look like while "hidden" on a tree, to help you identify the invasive insects. If you want more information or want to report a sighting go to

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/plant_health/alert-spotted-lanternfly.pdf.



BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!



Sussex Rural
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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation.

Source: energy.gov

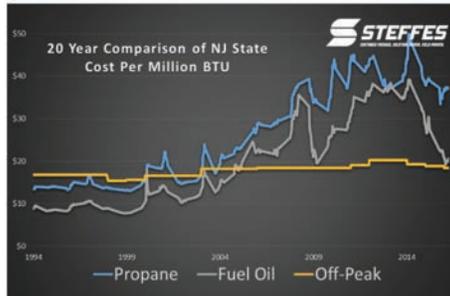


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September 22, 2020

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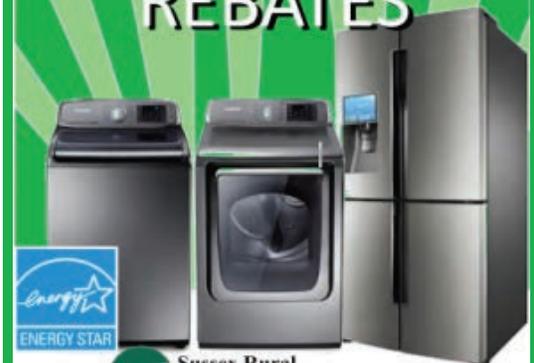
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For more information:
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