



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Feb. 27, 2024**

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## **Time to stop pruning oak trees earlier this season with unseasonably warm temperatures**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is recommending to finish pruning oak trees immediately to prevent the spread of oak wilt.

“Typically, we suggest to stop pruning oaks around March 15,” said Tivon Feeley, forest health program leader with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “But the unseasonably warm February has moved up that date. Pruning oak trees should stop now out of an abundance of caution.”

Oak wilt, caused by a fungus, has been present in Iowa for many years. Iowa’s red, black, and pin oak are more susceptible to oak wilt, but it can also infect white and bur oak. Black, pin, or red oak usually die within the same summer they are infected. White oak and bur oak can often take a number of years before they succumb to this disease.

A healthy tree can be infected through open wounds during the growing season where the fungus is carried from a diseased tree to a healthy tree by a small beetle or through root grafts between oak trees of the same species.

Feeley says symptoms of oak wilt on infected trees are usually visible in June or July. Look for leaves turning a bronzed brown along the outer margins of the

leaves. These leaves can often still have some green on them as they fall from the tree. The defoliation tends to start at the top of the tree.

The best way to prevent the spread of oak wilt is to prevent any wounding to oak trees during the growing season. If a tree is wounded from storm damage or pruning is required during the growing season, treat the wounds immediately with a wound dressing such as acrylic paint. Do not purchase pruning paints/sealants. Those products slow the tree's ability to seal over the wound.

Learn more about oak wilt prevention and control at [www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Forest-Health/Oak-Wilt](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Forest-Health/Oak-Wilt).

**Media Contact:** Tivon Feeley, Forest Health Forester, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-669-1402.

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## Land donors honored during reception in Des Moines

DES MOINES, Iowa – More than 950 acres of Iowa land in 14 counties with an estimated value of more than \$3.9 million was permanently protected through donations for conservation.

The donors associated with 12 donations of land or land value will be recognized during a ceremony on March 14, from 2 to 3 p.m., in the first-floor rotunda, at the State Capitol, in Des Moines.

Landowners who are in attendance will be honored individually for their donation. For more information about individual donations, visit the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/landdonors](http://www.iowadnr.gov/landdonors).

**Media Contact:** Whitney Schuhardt, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-250-3617.

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## **DNR to host public meeting on Big Creek State Park shelter improvements**

POLK CITY -- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will host an open house on March 7, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Lakeside Fellowship, 1121 West Bridge Road, in Polk City, to discuss plans for replacing shelters throughout the park.

The open house will begin with a short presentation with DNR staff on hand to answer questions.

For more information, or questions about the open house, contact Chad Kelchen, [Chad.Kelchen@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Chad.Kelchen@dnr.iowa.gov); or (515) 371-6018.