


HAZARD TREES

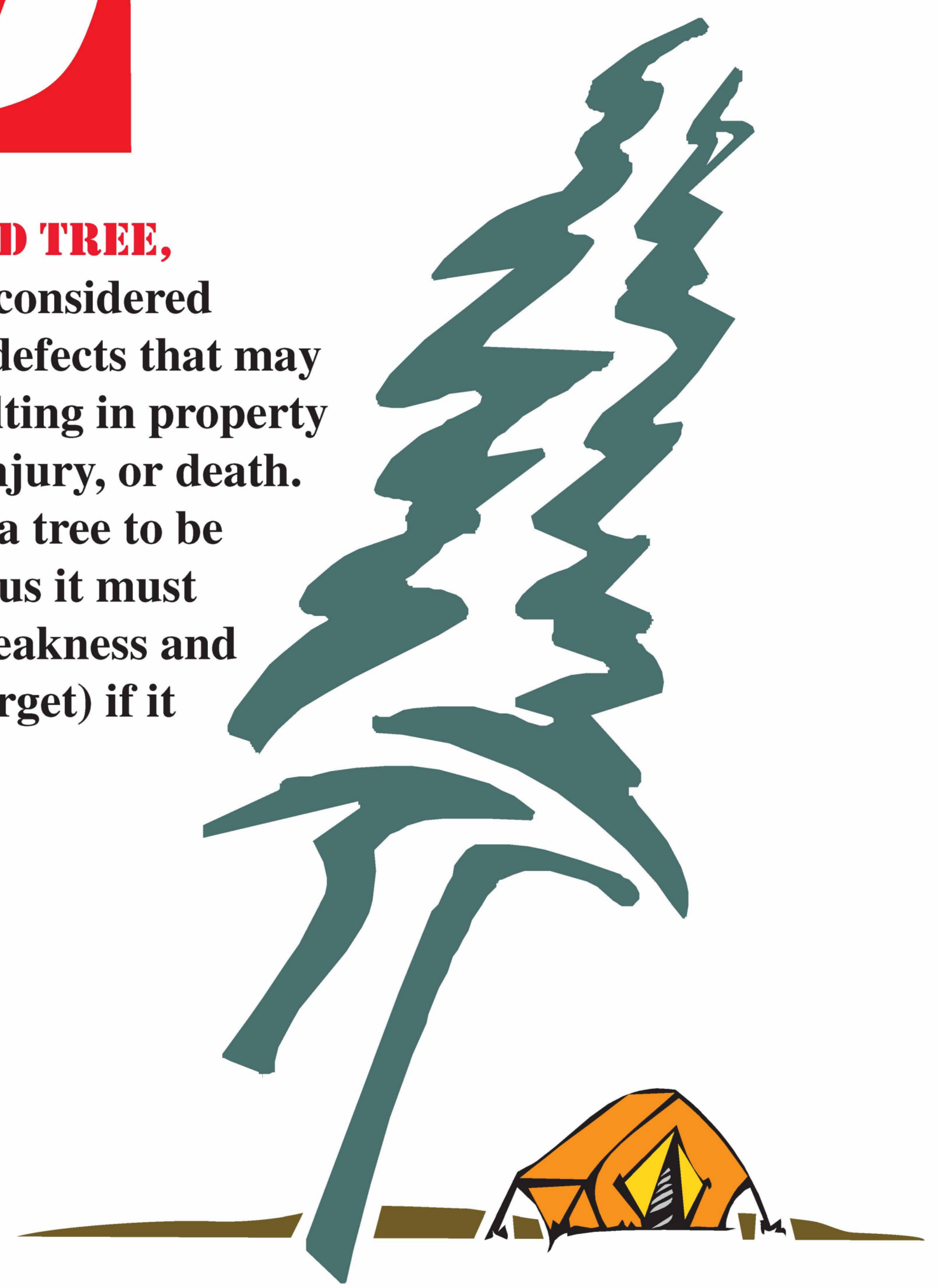
Trees are the dominant feature of forested ecosystems. Every tree will ultimately die, decay, and be recycled into the ecosystem to provide nutrients for future forests. While these processes are natural, they can pose a threat to backcountry travelers.



A PARTNERSHIP OF RESPONSIBILITY
Land management agencies strive to maintain the forest in an pleasing condition, while, at the same time, reducing risks to recreationists. Visitors, likewise, have a responsibility to accept a certain level of risk and act accordingly.



WHAT IS A HAZARD TREE, ANYWAY? a tree is considered hazardous if it has defects that may cause a failure resulting in property damage, personal injury, or death. In other words, for a tree to be considered hazardous it must have a structural weakness and something to hit (target) if it falls.



HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE A HAZARD TREE? → FIRST LOOK UP!



- 1 dead trees and branches
- 2 broken hanging branches
- 3 material hung up in a live tree
- 4 leaning trees at greater than 10° from vertical
- 5 signs of disease, especially mushrooms



ASSESSING HAZARD POTENTIAL
All trees have a potential for failure or hazard potential. The total hazard potential of a tree is the sum of its potential for failure and its potential for damage.

POTENTIAL FOR FAILURE + **POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE** = **HAZARD POTENTIAL**

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE RISK?

- 1 Avoid all dead trees and the danger zone in which they may fail. Never picnic or camp close to a dead tree. It could fall at any time without warning.
 
- 2 Never underestimate the danger posed by small trees. Dead trees or tree parts 6" in cross-section have fallen and killed people.
 
- 3 Avoid trees with excessive lean (10° or greater) or evidence of defect. Move to a safe area.
 
- 4 Do not stop to camp if it is excessively windy. Choose a safe place to spend the night.
 
- 5 Do not chop or bang into dead trees as the entire tree or top branches may fall on you.
 

3 BASICS FOR SAFETY

- 1 KNOWLEDGE
- 2 AWARENESS
- 3 GOOD JUDGMENT

If you can use these three basics, your backcountry experience should be memorable, safe and enjoyable.

