



Post-Tornado Recovery and Timber Salvage

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

FAQ: Tornado Recovery Efforts

What happened?

- On December 10, 2021, an EF-4 tornado impacted the northern part of Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL) in Lyon County, KY. The tornado entered the unit north of Hillman Ferry Campground and traveled northeast to Clay Bay. On the same evening, an EF-3 tornado hit the southern part of LBL in Stewart County, TN. It came ashore just south of Gatlin Point and exited the unit south of Brandon Spring.
- Through extensive remote sensing and ground surveys, we identified approximately 7,000 acres of Land Between the Lakes were impacted by the two tornado events in December 2021.

What was damaged?

- From the initial and ongoing damage assessments conducted by trained foresters, we have confirmed sizable and varied landscape impacts. While aerial and ground assessments have confirmed catastrophic landscape damage within the impacted areas, no structures were destroyed.

What recovery work has occurred so far?

- Our highest priorities in our recovery efforts are public safety and safe operations. Soon after the tornadoes, our staff worked to protect human life and safety through removing hazard trees in developed areas, rerouting and closing unsafe trails, and repairing and reopening roads for safe public access.
- We will continue to work closely with our neighbors, partners, and the public on our recovery efforts to make the recreation area safe, healthy, and resilient for years to come.

FAQ: Timber Salvage

What are the next steps in the recovery efforts?

- Removing, or salvaging, the damaged trees will occur in the tornado-impacted areas that were marked and prepared by our skilled forestry specialists. Timber salvage operations in these areas were launched in May 2022.
- Salvage work will help return the tornado-impacted areas to safe and productive conditions, provide economic opportunities to communities, and reduce threats to adjacent, undamaged stands.
- This salvage work is not clearcutting. Not every downed tree will be removed and not every standing tree in the tornado-impacted areas will be cut. Our efforts will focus on the moderate, severe, and catastrophic damage in the tornado-impacted areas.

Why do you need to salvage trees in the tornado-impacted areas?

- As forestry professionals, our job is to properly manage the productivity and health of our nation's forests. Our proposed timber cleanup efforts are critical in achieving that. A particularly intense natural event, like tornadoes, can cause lasting damage that makes it harder for the forest to recover. The forests may need help to return to safer and more resilient conditions.
- Removing the damaged timber will help the forest recover by reducing potential source points for insect infestations, disease outbreaks, and localized, catastrophic wildfire intensities, which will ultimately improve wildlife habitat.

FAQ: Timber Salvage *(continued)*

Why is the salvaged timber being sold?

- By harvesting these damaged and dead trees, we maximize the value of our forest resource, which also helps offset the costs of critical recovery efforts necessary to return these impacted areas to healthy, thriving lands. Rapid deterioration of storm-damaged trees is of concern; thus, timely action is needed. Removing the damaged timber while it still has value allows for post-tornado recovery to occur expediently and at a significantly reduced cost.
- All revenue generated from timber salvage efforts will remain within LBL to directly support critical needs and restoration, which may include recovery efforts, road improvements, trail maintenance, and other programs.

Will the salvage operations be monitored during implementation?

- We use the expertise, experience, and judgement of our professional staff as well as outside experts from other agencies to assess potential impacts and ensure activities are consistent with laws, regulations, and policies.
- Our interdisciplinary team of trained resource specialists is committed to monitor implementation activities as they proceed to ensure the intent of the salvage projects and their design features are followed.

What will the tornado-impacted areas look like after salvage work is completed?

- A timeframe for landscape recovery from these tornadic events is to be measured in years, not months. Within the first year after the completed salvage projects, natural regeneration will begin with the return of native grasses and forbs. Many wildlife and game species need this type of habitat to thrive. A mix of habitat is important for a resilient and diverse forest. Over time and after a period of several years, trees and more native plants will begin to return. Our forestry specialists will continue to monitor the forest's regeneration and take appropriate management measures as necessary.

FAQ: Staying Informed and Safe

Where can I find more information and stay updated on recovery efforts?

- Recovery and timber salvage project updates are posted on the official LBL website and through the official LBL Facebook (@LBLSatRecArea) and Twitter (@LandBtwnLakes). The tornado recovery webpage can be accessed by visiting: www.landbetweenthelakes.us/projects.

How can I help with recovery efforts?

- The Friends of Land Between the Lakes (LBLA) are hosting volunteer shoreline cleanups throughout the months ahead. If you are interested in helping with future LBLA shoreline cleanup events, please email: volunteer@friendsoflbl.org and/or follow the LBLA Facebook page: facebook.com/FriendsofLandBetweenTheLakes.

How can I have a safe visit to LBL?

- Before your visit, check the Alerts page on the official LBL website for storm and recovery-related closures and notices: www.landbetweenthelakes.us/alerts.
- Do not enter tornado-impacted areas. Storm-damaged trees can fall unpredictably, causing injury or death. You are responsible for your own safety. Use extreme caution when travelling through storm-impacted areas.
- Please do not attempt to move, cut, or clear any storm debris as it is extremely dangerous.
- While road clearing from the tornado damage has been completed, visitors should use caution on roads. Repair work is ongoing and there is the potential that trees could fall. Please report any downed trees to LBL as it is safely possible via phone (270.924.2000), email (LBLInfo@usda.gov), or Facebook Messenger (@LBLSatRecArea).