



**U.S. Forest Service  
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National Park Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
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## **Sawyer crew clearing roads and trails in St. Croix Valley Blowdown Complex**

An incident management team with a crew of sawyers and equipment operators is opening roads and trails and providing access to shelters in the St. Croix Valley Blowdown Complex. The roads and trails are impassable due to a large blowdown on July 1, 2011 and another blowdown on July 19, 2011.

The crew is made up of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forestry and parks and trails staff, Conservation Corps Minnesota, and smokechasers. The 50 workers are operating in teams of 3 to 5 people with chain saws and assistance from excavators to remove downed trees from roads and recreational trails. In some of the areas with the heaviest blowdown, access is so limited that teams are working without excavators. Crews are also removing leaning trees and trees hanging over the trails.

An aerial assessment of the area on Friday, July 31, shows that 161,000 acres were impacted by the July 1 storm. Of that, 73,200 acres are state park and state forest lands. The heaviest impact starts west of St. Croix State Park headquarters and runs through Markville.

The July 19 storm damaged 24,500 acres, mostly on state forest lands. Between the two storms, 185,000 acres have been impacted in Pine County.

Timber appraisers are checking to see how much of the blowdown might be salvaged and offered for future sale. The value of the timber prior to the blowdown was \$2 to \$4 million. Quick removal of the downed trees improves the economic value. Removal also reduces future fire danger and damage from disease and insects.

The St. Croix Valley Blowdown Complex includes St. Croix State Park and St. Croix, Nemadji and Chengwetana state forests.