



Tree Risk Assessment

Trees are an important part of the overall interpretation of a historic site however trees require continual care and maintenance during their life. Historic New England has to balance the care of the trees with the fiscal realities of the budget therefore it is necessary to determine areas of risk within the collection in order to assist with the prioritization of tree care. Risk, in this context, is the potential of a tree to cause harm to people and/or property. It should also be noted that a tree may be structurally sound and healthy but if it is trapping moisture and rotting woodwork or shading an antique rose bed then it also represents “risk” to the property.

Risk Assessment Strategy

Site Specific: Each site should be divided into zones corresponding to the level of potential risk to the public and the historic resources. These zones should be determined in a team consisting of the landscape manager, the preservation manager and the site manager with final approval by the team leader of property care. Rankings should be reviewed every five years.

- High Risk
 - Main entryways and public paths, the museum zone, trees affecting historic resources, trees affecting high use areas on abutting land.
- Medium Risk
 - Secondary roads, guest trails, specimen trees in fields.
- Low Risk
 - Woodland borders, wood lots, areas on property of little or no visitation.

Collection Specific: Each property should be given a ranking based on the overall level activity and volume of trees in the high-risk areas. This ranking determines how often assessments should occur and the overall ranking should be determined by Historic New England’s Proactive Preservation and Interpretation Planning (PPIP) committee. Rankings should be reviewed every five years by PPIP or as visitation/use changes at each site.

- High Activity
 - Properties with high visitation and/or public activity.
- Medium Activity
 - Properties with a moderate amount of visitation and/or activity.
- Low Activity
 - Properties have few trees or a small amount of visitation and/or activity.