

For more information, contact:

Joi Alexander
Communications Director
319-892-5118
joi.alexander@linncounty.org

For Immediate Release

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Derecho Tree Debris Cleanup Enters Final Phase

LINN COUNTY, IA – April 14, 2021 – Cleanup from the August 2020 derecho will enter the final phase in unincorporated Linn County this month. In addition to completing the right-of-way debris pickup following the Nov. 9, 2020 deadline, Linn County is providing two additional ways for rural residents to dispose of derecho vegetative/tree debris during this final phase of cleanup: a self-haul drop-off location and open burning.

Please note this information is specific to rural, unincorporated Linn County. Cities within Linn County have their own debris removal requirements.

RIGHT-OF-WAY PICKUP

Linn County's debris removal contractor, Ceres Environmental Services, Inc., will return April 26 to finish removing derecho tree debris that was placed in the ROW by the Nov. 9, 2020 deadline. Linn County documented these locations following the Nov. 9 deadline and submitted this information to FEMA to meet reimbursement requirements. Any tree debris that was placed in the ROW after the Nov. 9 deadline is the responsibility of the property owner. To date, more than one million cubic yards of tree debris have been processed from property in unincorporated Linn County.

Residents in unincorporated Linn County who have vegetative/tree debris from the derecho that was not placed in the ROW by the Nov. 9, 2020 deadline now have the two disposal options described below: self-haul drop-off and open burning.

SELF-HAUL TREE DEBRIS DROP-OFF

Beginning April 19, Linn County will once again provide a location for residents of unincorporated Linn County to haul their tree and other vegetative storm debris and drop off free of charge. To meet FEMA reimbursement requirements, this drop-off location is for tree and other vegetative derecho debris from property in unincorporated Linn County only; for this reason, **pre-registration is required.**

To register, [complete the online registration form](#). Residents may call 319-892-6000 to register in lieu of completing an online registration. A Linn County staff member will complete the online form using information provided by the caller.

Linn County will close the debris drop-off site once it reaches capacity for FEMA reimbursement, which is anticipated to take approximately three weeks.

Self-haul Location Details

Wickiup Hill Learning Area

10260 Morris Hills Road

(Continue straight at the end of Morris Hills Rd – do not enter the Wickiup Hill parking lot)

The site will be open daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (including weekends)

Self-haul Instructions

- The self-haul site is for vegetative derecho storm debris from unincorporated Linn County residents only (trees, brush, vegetation).
- This location is self-haul, drop-off only. Staff is not available to help unload debris.
- **Pre-registration is required.** To register your delivery, [complete the online registration form](#). Residents may call 319-892-6000 to register in lieu of completing an online registration. A Linn County staff member will complete the online form using information provided by the caller.
- Tie down or cover your loads to prevent debris from falling out during transport.
- Use caution around the heavy equipment at the drop-off sites.

If assistance is needed for debris removal, homeowners are encouraged to contact local contractors. Be sure to get a quote for any contract work and do not pay up front for removal or repair services. Contact your insurance company for information regarding damage claims. Save all receipts in case the expenses are eligible for reimbursement from insurance or a disaster relief program.

OPEN BURNING

The Linn County Board of Supervisors will allow residents who live in unincorporated Linn County within the half-mile buffer zone around the cities of Cedar Rapids, Marion, Hiawatha (zoned as Urban Services Residential - USR) to request a no fee registration to openly burn tree debris from the August derecho. Typically, open burning in this half-mile buffer zone is not allowed. To register an open burn, [complete the online registration form](#). Residents may call 319-892-6000 to register in lieu of completing an online registration. A Linn County staff member will complete the online form using information provided by the caller.

It is important for residents to complete the open burn registration request so that the Linn County Sheriff's Office and local fire departments are aware of the potential for open burning.

Residents in unincorporated Linn County outside the half-mile USR buffer zone should continue to [obtain open burning permits through the regular online application portal](#) from Linn County Public Health or by calling 319-892-6000.

Open Burning Rules

- A landowner may only burn landscape waste from their own property; they cannot burn material transported to their property from another property. Only a municipal site operated by a local governmental entity may openly burn trees and tree trimmings originating from another property.
- Landowners in the half-mile buffer zone may only burn vegetative debris derived from the August derecho.
- Burning shall only occur from dawn to dusk.
- Burning shall not be conducted when wind speeds exceed 15 mph.

- Secondary fuels including gasoline, diesel, or rubber tires shall not be used to ignite landscape waste.
- Maximize the separation distance from the fire to any structure or combustible materials.
- Have a plan for fire extinguishment, such as a garden hose connected to a water outlet that is long enough to reach the fire.
- Other Linn County municipalities may have additional local restrictions more restrictive than Linn County rules. Please check with your local officials before starting an open burn.
- Never leave a fire unattended, especially overnight.

DEBRIS REMOVAL FROM STREAMS AND WATERWAYS

Linn County is working with the USDA's Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service on a separate project to protect infrastructure and waterways by removing debris from natural waterways that could either damage a downstream bridge or block a structure resulting in flooding. More information on this project will be released once it becomes available.