

History and visual assessment of the Cottonwood at 85 Lake Buel Rd.



Located at 85 Lake Buel Road there is a large Cottonwood tree. Visual assessment of the tree confirms biological health but structural integrity and location issues. The tree is located at the edge of the road with main distribution lines located under the tree. This presents challenges as Cottonwood is a weak wooded species prone to breakage in storms even when healthy. Given the trees size just about any failure in the tree on the road side will cause extensive damage to infrastructure and endanger the general public.



This specific limb failure resulted in the secondary line going to the homeowner's house to be taken down and onto their vehicles creating a safety hazard for the customer. There are multiple large limb failures in the tree and at my initial assessment in 2020 there was a large limb being suspended about 40' in the air by vines. It has since fallen or was removed over the winter.



The circled areas are where the line had sustained damage in the past and needed repairs.

More concerning than the weak wooded nature of the species itself is the potential for catastrophic failure of the tree.



Circled are the reproductive structures of a polypore fungi which infected the tree long ago. It has been slowly decaying the inside of the tree at that major lead junction and the trunk of the tree below. The result of either of these areas failing will be main lines down and multiple broken poles. The customer at 85 Lake Buel Rd would not be able to leave their house for an extended period of time and the road would be impassable until cleanup and reconstruction could be completed. The resulting outage would affect all of Lake Buel Rd and parts of New Marlborough.

With all of this in mind National grid would like to remove the tree in order to eliminate any further damage to their infrastructure and to make the area safer for the homeowners nearby.