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*By Design for Nature*

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Last week I had written briefly about a tree removal project being stopped by a mother squirrel and her little ones up in the top of the tree. Trees are used as a home by critters of all kinds from birds, squirrels, raccoons and many insects. I have more than a few stories of encounters with wildlife in trees that are fun to tell. If at all possible we perform a close visual inspection prior to climbing to avoid any encounters and hasty retreats!

Knowing that many animals use trees as habitat, we can suggest and create trees for their use on certain locations. Typically, this opportunity presents itself when we are removing a tree. Taking it down to a safe height where it is no longer a threat to people or objects, but leaving it high enough for animals to use. This is often called a wildlife snag. This typically applies to property of some size but even a short tree trunk with stubbed branches can support bird feeders and supply years of fun birdwatching. Sometimes we will even perform specific boring cuts to provide a hollow on the trunk, giving certain birds and/or animals a spot to begin a home. Taller wildlife snags that can be left near the water can provide perches for Eagle and Osprey. I have also had homeowners in this scenario build a platform that we have attached to the top of a half-removed tree for a nesting site.

People often ask the question, is leaving a dead tree, or portion of one, harmful by providing a home to destructive insects such as Bark Beetle. The answer is rarely. Most Bark Beetles have exited by the time a person notices the tree is dead. Remaining wood will attract wood boring insects, and they in turn will attract many varieties of birds who will feed on the borers.

So if you enjoy the wildlife and the opportunity presents itself, consider leaving a portion of a tree removal for them to use.