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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Awbury Arboretum Advances Tree Canopy Health with Hazard Study

Evaluation of 182 trees marks a proactive step toward a safer and healthier tree canopy at Awbury, ensuring long-term sustainability and community resilience.

Philadelphia, PA - Awbury Arboretum has completed a hazardous tree assessment of 182 trees across its 56-acre historic landscape, a proactive effort to strengthen both visitor safety and the long-term health of its tree canopy. The study was conducted by the Urban Forestry Department of Morris Arboretum & Gardens and funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The hazardous tree study is the first step toward a comprehensive inventory of Awbury's trees and ongoing investment in their care.

The Morris team identified, tagged, and evaluated trees throughout the property, recommending 55 removals, 108 pruning, and additional monitoring and treatments where needed. "This study is about more than removing hazardous trees—it's about protecting our visitors today and ensuring a thriving, resilient canopy for tomorrow," said Sara Stevenson, Executive Director of Awbury Arboretum. "It also represents a major step in carrying out the goals we set in our strategic plan. This is an exciting time for Awbury—we're following through on the priorities we laid out to care for our land, community, and for the organization as a whole."

Key benefits of the study include:

- **Visitor Safety:** Trees near walking paths and gathering areas were prioritized for immediate care.
- **Tree Resilience:** Proactive pruning and selective monitoring will extend the life of healthy trees while preparing the canopy for future stressors.
- **Ecological Stewardship:** By managing threats now, Awbury safeguards the essential services trees provide, such as shade, biodiversity, storm water management, and natural beauty, for generations to come.

Native oaks, including red, scarlet, shingle, and bur, were identified as keystone species vital to local wildlife. Large maples, elms, and tulip trees further strengthen the Arboretum's ecological base. At the same time, the study flagged invasive Norway and Sycamore maple as invasive species of concern, underscoring the importance of ongoing management.

"This study gives us the detailed information we need to prioritize our canopy care," said Jenna Bachman, Gardens and Grounds Manager at Awbury Arboretum. "By addressing hazardous trees today through removal, pruning, or monitoring, we're giving our canopy the best chance to remain healthy and resilient."

The study represents a critical milestone in Awbury's broader commitment to responsible land care and community. Thanks to generous funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Awbury will next undertake intensive tree plantings across the site. Additional funding from the Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Fund and The William Penn Foundation will support a full tree inventory of the entire property.

About Awbury Arboretum: Established in 1916, Awbury Arboretum is a free public garden and farm and serves as an accessible greenspace that welcomes the pursuit of learning, recreation, and peace. As a beacon of historical and environmental stewardship, these grounds shelter and protect both social and biological diversity. We envision Awbury as a vital part of a greener, healthier Philadelphia that encourages an ever-deepening integration of city life and the natural world.