

What to expect following right-of-way maintenance and vegetation management

ATC's vegetation management standards and practices help ensure the safe and reliable operation of transmission facilities and align with easement rights.

ATC owns and operates more than 9,400 miles of transmission lines located on thousands of acres of right-of-way.

Since we are removing more trees and vegetation than in years past, some landowners are understandably surprised by the appearance of their property following the work in the right-of-way. This is especially true when the work involves the use of mowing equipment.

ATC contracts with vegetation management experts to complete vegetation management work. Our contractors are professionals, trained and experienced in providing safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable line clearance services to the utility industry. This brochure describes their work and helps address questions you may have about our vegetation management program.

Understanding cleanup practices

After removing or trimming incompatible trees, the wood – which is the landowner's property – is generally left on site on the edge of the right-of-way. This is discussed with the landowner in advance. ATC's easement rights and other factors will dictate the handling of the wood.

NOTE: To help prevent the spread of diseases and invasive insects such as the Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy Moths and Dutch Elm Disease, the Department of Natural Resources prohibits bringing firewood onto any DNR properties from more than 50 miles away. Many counties and municipalities have additional local restrictions on transporting firewood.





A right-of-way shortly after clearing work was completed



Let nature do its work

Cleared areas transform over time

In addition to removing incompatible trees, it is often necessary to mow areas where dense, woody vegetation is present. The appearance of these areas following mowing is temporary. Over time, a previously woody area will generally populate with native grasses and natural groundcover, and transform into a more prairie-like setting. This transformation can take one or more growing seasons. Over time, the mulch and stumps will decay and the remains will be absorbed by the soil, and it is for this reason that we encourage landowners to let nature do its work.

Some property owners may want their property within the right-of-way to be a grassy area or an extension of their yard. Waiting a year before contracting with a landscaper to do extensive restoration work will allow the soil and land to be better prepared for planting grass or for other landscaping options. The associated restoration expenses are borne by the property owner.

Herbicides control brush and tree regrowth

Years of experience and study by the utility industry have demonstrated that one of the most efficient and effective ways to keep rights-of-way clear of unwanted trees and brush is through the careful and selective use of herbicides. Herbicides often are used following clearing and mowing to control regrowth of unwanted woody and invasive vegetation, and will not affect grasses and other non-woody species.

In many cases, the vegetation removed from dense woody areas is not desirable native shrubs and trees, but invasive woody plants like buckthorn and honeysuckle. These fast-growing plants not only hinder worker access to the transmission facilities, but compete with native grasses and plants for nutrients, sunlight and water. Eliminating invasive and unwanted woody vegetation in the right-of-way promotes the growth of native grasses, low-growing shrubs and other native groundcover that birds, deer and small animals prefer.

Herbicide application is EPA-approved

All herbicides sold in the U.S. must be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA evaluates the chemicals based on scientific studies showing their effectiveness without unreasonable adverse effect on human health and the environment. Direct contact with treated areas within the first four hours may result in irritation or itching, but has no long-term adverse health effects. The products used on ATC rights-of-way are not unlike the products used to control weeds on residential properties, and are applied by trained, licensed professionals.

Select low-growing vegetation

Many property owners plant gardens, flowers, grasses and low-growing vegetation within the right-of-way. This vegetation may not pose problems for the property owner or our facilities. Under the terms of the easement, however, all vegetation and structures located within the easement are at risk of removal

should circumstances warrant, and ATC is generally not responsible for restoration.

Keep in mind that small, immature trees planted today can grow into problem trees in the future. While still subject to removal under the terms of the easement, the species of grasses and flowers listed on the back of this brochure are less likely to interfere with access for emergency or maintenance crews than shrubs or tall growing vegetation. These grasses and flowers also are native to our area, and once established, need less water to maintain. They also attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife. If you're unsure about a specific plant, please contact us before planting.

Consideration is given to the environment



We recognize that the construction and maintenance of our facilities impacts the environment, the landscape, and land use. We work to maintain a balance between our requirements for safety and reliability with our commitment to minimizing impacts to the environment. Long before crews arrive to perform forestry work, an environmental project manager reviews the features of the right-of-way scheduled for maintenance to evaluate the environmental implications including the location of waterways, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and other sensitivities. This review is captured on comprehensive maps that the contractors in the field use to guide their work in environmentally sensitive areas. Some of the actions taken include:

- Obtaining regulatory permits when crews must cross a waterway with any type of vehicle, regardless of presence or absence of water.
- Avoiding or minimizing access through wetlands whenever possible.

- Taking all necessary precautions to avoid or reduce soil disturbance to prevent erosion.
- Protecting inlets to public sanitary and stormwater systems.
- Identifying threatened and endangered species and habitats, and using methods to avoid and minimize impacts on them.

ATC has long worked with landowners and communities to allow compatible uses within its transmission line rights-of-way. Farming, grazing, open space, parks, golf courses, parking lots, wildlife habitat, bike paths and hiking trails are just some of these compatible uses.

Questions?

Please visit www.atcllc.com or contact Mary Carpenter at mcarpenter@atcllc.com or call 866.899.3204 (ext. 6922).

Appropriate vegetation

Asters
Aster species

Blazing Star
Liatris species

Bergamot
Monarda fistulosa

Black-Eyed Susan
Rudbeckia subtomentosa

Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis

Columbine
Aquilegia canadensis

Common Milkweed
Asclepias syriaca

Compassplant
Silphium laciniatum

Coneflower
(Narrow-Leaf Purple)
Echinacea angustifolia

Coneflower (Purple)
Echinacea pupurea

Coneflower (Yellow)
Ratibida pinnata

Coreopsis (Stiff)
Coreopsis palmata

Coreopsis (Tall)
Coreopsis tripteris

Cup Plant
Silphium perfoliatum

Goldenrods
Solidago species

Great Solomon's Seal
Polygonatum canaliculatum

Lavender Hyssop
Agastache foeniculum

Lupine
Lupinus perennis

New Jersey Tea
Ceanothus americanus

Purple Prairie Clover
Petalostemon purpureum

Prairie Dock
Silphium terebinthinaceum

Sunflowers
Helianthus species

Grasses

Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardi

Indiangrass
Sorghastrum nutans

Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium

Prairie Dropseed
Sporobolus heterolepis

Sideoats Grama
Bouteloua curtipendula

Switchgrass
Panicum vergatum

Wild Rye (Canada)
Elymus canadensis

Wild Rye (Virginia)
Elymus virginicus



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