



Trimming along NH Route 156 May 6, 2022

Trimming along the Power Lines

Steve Soreff, MD

This Spring in Nottingham, one could not but notice the small army of folks trimming trees and brushes on the [New Hampshire Electric Co-op](#) (NEC) power lines. This reporter reached out to NEC for more information. In response to where question NEC listed the following roads in Nottingham where crews working for it would be trimming: “ BEACH HEAD RD, BRUSTLE RD, CAHILL LN, COVE RD, DOLLOFF DAM RD, FRENCH RD, INDIAN RUN. JAMPSA TRAIL, LAKEVIEW DR, LAMPREY DR, LOOKOUT POINT LN, MEINDL RD, MOOERS RD, MOUNTAIN RD, RAYMOND RD, RTE 156, SACHS RD, SEAMANS POINT RD, SHORE DR, SMOKE RD, SOUTH RD, TUCKAWAY SHORES RD, and WHITE GROVE RD. “. It is a very extensive project.

The next question was the reason for all this trimming. NEC described its Vegetation Management this way. “New Hampshire is one of the most forested states in the country and damage from falling trees and branches is by far the leading cause of power outages for New Hampshire Electric Cooperative members. With this in mind, NHEC uses an Integrated Vegetation Management Plan (IVMP) to ensure that our 5000 miles of power line rights-of-way are kept clear of tall-growing trees that may interfere with the safety and reliability of our electric distribution system. As part of NHEC’s IVMP, we employ qualified contract tree crews from a number of services to perform work in the field. We have a team of arborists and professional staff who work closely with qualified tree contractors to maintain our rights-of-way and reduce power outages.”

It then defined IVMP. “Our IVMP is the way we maintain our right-of-way corridors where power lines are located. An IVMP consists of mechanical and cultural control measures to keep rights-of-way clear and reduce power outages. Chainsaws, mechanical mowers, bucket trucks, brush chippers, and skidder buckets are the primary tools in our mechanical control efforts. These machines clear brush and potentially dangerous trees from the right-of-way corridor and are the first step in our IVMP. Our IVMP is working all year to maintain a reliable

electric system with fewer and shorter outages. It's our goal to keep the lights on at your home or business."

NEC next defined the Right-of-Way. "A right-of-way is a corridor, or pathway, of land that NHEC's electric lines follow. These rights-of-way provide a safety zone between our wires and trees, buildings, or other objects. When rights-of-way are kept clear they also provide safe access for our line crews to maintain, repair, or improve the lines and poles. Throughout most of NHEC's distribution system, we have the responsibility for clearing trees or branches that are within 15 feet of either side of the power line, and 20 feet above them." And NEC went on to explain " Why We Clear Rights-of-Way. Trees cause outages. To minimize outage length durations. Safety for our line workers and the public."

NEC added about "Member Notification. Prior to conducting vegetation management work on or abutting an individual's property, NHEC makes every reasonable effort to make contact by mail, phone, or in person. NHEC also posts a monthly schedule on its website of where work is occurring: <https://www.nhec.com/vegetation/>. Right Tree/Right Place Today's small tree is tomorrow's outage. NHEC members have an important role to play in keeping power lines clear of undesirable vegetation. When planting trees in or near power lines, be sure to plant species that at maturity will not exceed a height of 8 ft. For member convenience, NHEC has posted a list of tree and shrub species that are ideal for planting near power lines: <https://www.nhec.com/vegetation/>."



Herbicide Use Notification by Vegetation Control Service, from Nottingham town website

Furthermore, in addition to its Vegetation Management of trimming, NEC is also using selective herbicides. Here is what the Nottingham town website said. "New Hampshire Electric

Co-op (NHEC) and its contractor consultant, Vegetation Control Service, Inc. intend to selectively apply herbicides to undesirable vegetation growing within power line right of way corridors located in Nottingham and surrounding towns. Details of this treatment program are included in the attached document, along with maps and locations of the power lines. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the herbicide treatment program, please contact Mike Couture, Vegetation Control Service, Inc. and NHEC Project Manager at 603-325-3227 between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.” That website also included a [link](#) covering possible herbicide locations, notification, and what to do if you are notified. The notice has the date of the notification, the date of the planned herbicide application, whom to call, and that the owner has 14 days to call if one has concerns. One of those who did receive such a notice did call with concerns. That person was told you have the right to refuse the herbicide.