

What to expect following tree-clearing work



An explanation of what landowners can expect after forestry crews complete maintenance work in the transmission line right-of-way.

In response to changes in industry standards, ATC has revised vegetation management standards and practices to reduce outage risks to its facilities and to align more closely with easement rights. ATC owns and operates more than 9,000 miles of transmission lines and is in the process of applying these updated standards throughout our service area.

Since we are removing more trees and vegetation than 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 if the work included 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 what to expect after our contractors complete their work and may help address questions you have about our vegetation management program.



Photo of a right-of-way shortly after clearing work was completed.



The right-of-way populated with native grasses and ground cover.

Cleanup

After tree-clearing work is completed, 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.

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

The appearance of cleared areas

In addition to removing trees, it is often necessary to mow areas where dense, woody vegetation is present. The appearance of these areas following mowing is sometimes objectionable to property owners who were accustomed to a wooded appearance on their property. Over time, a previously woody area will generally populate with native grasses and natural ground cover, and transform into a more prairie-like setting. We recognize that 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 to transform their property within the right-of-way into a more usable grass area or 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.

The use of herbicides to control brush and tree re-growth

Years of experience and study by the utility industry has demonstrated that one of the most efficient and effective ways to keep rights-of-way clear of unwanted trees and brush is the through the careful and selective use of herbicides. Herbicides are often used following clearing and mowing to control re-growth 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 crew 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 corridor promotes the growth of native grasses, low-growing shrubs and other native ground cover that birds, deer and small animals prefer.



The safety of herbicides

All herbicides sold in the U.S. must be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA evaluates the chemicals based on the submission of 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.

Landscaping following tree clearing

Many property owners plant gardens, flowers, grasses and low-growing vegetation within the corridor. 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 are also 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 infrastructure 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:

Perennial Flowers

Asters, *Aster species*
 Blazingstar, *Liatris species*
 Bergamont, *Monarda fistulosa*
 Black Eyed Susan, *Rubeckia subtomentosa*
 Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*
 Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*
 Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*
 Compassplant, *Silphium laciniatum*
 Coneflower, Narrow-leaf Purple, *Encinacea angustifolia*
 Coneflower, Purple, *Encinacea purpurea*
 Coneflower, Yellow, *Ratibida pinnata*
 Coreopsis, Stiff, *Coreopsis palmata*
 Coreopsis, Tall, *Coreopsis tripteris*
 Cupplant, *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 virgatum*
 Wild Rye, Canada, *Elymus canadensis*
 Wild Rye, Virginia, *Elymus virginicus*

- 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 to 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?

Visit www.atcllc.com or contact Mary Carpenter at mcarpenter@atcllc.com or call 866-899-3204 (ext. 6922).

For more information about ATC's vegetation management practices, visit our website at www.atcllc.com.



Helping to **keep the lights on**, businesses running and communities strong™

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