

Minimizing environmental impacts



ATC works to minimize environmental impacts of construction, operation and maintenance. We comply with all laws that regulate activities that could significantly disturb birds, wildlife, wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas. We strive to reduce the impact that building, operating and maintaining our facilities has on the environment and pursue opportunities to support sustainable, healthy ecosystems.

Prior to building or upgrading a power line, we work cooperatively with state regulators and other appropriate agencies to evaluate and document any potential environmental impacts. This process involves comprehensive assessments of sensitive resources such as wetlands, woodlands, natural areas, threatened and endangered species, wildlife areas, residential and recreational areas, archeological resources and agricultural resources within the project area.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

We are committed to environmental leadership in all aspects of our business. We work thoughtfully and carefully to balance regulatory requirements, control costs, serve our customers and reduce our environmental impacts. Pairing our environmental commitment with partnerships with regulators and stakeholders provides a powerful venue for creative, innovative and entrepreneurial resolution of issues.

POWER LINE SITING

When siting a new power line, Wisconsin law requires we co-locate with existing facilities and infrastructure as much as possible. Desirable corridors typically include roadways, railroads, existing utility corridors, property lines and crop lines. Sometimes these types of corridors do not offer a suitable option. When that happens, ATC must site the power line in a new location. During power line siting and design, ATC identifies sensitive areas and develops plans to reduce potential impacts where possible. These plans are identified in ATC's regulatory application, which also is shared with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

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REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

During the evaluation of proposed line routes, we work with the WDNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other natural resource groups helps to ensure that power lines are routed within sensible areas. Ultimately, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin makes the final route selection after reviewing route options submitted by ATC.

CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES

ATC must adhere to state and federal laws regulating constructing, rebuilding or upgrading power lines. Permits and prescribed construction methods are required to complete work in environmentally sensitive areas. ATC often uses construction matting to minimize disturbance to soils and sensitive plant and animal life. We also use construction practices that reduce the spread of invasive species and transmittal of agricultural pests and diseases.



RESTORATION

Construction activities may temporarily impact local landscapes, but lands are inspected after construction to ensure proper restoration. This work may include soil decompaction, repairing ruts, seeding and, in certain areas, wetland restoration. Construction mats, which help to prevent soil compaction, are removed. Trees and brush growing directly beneath high-voltage power lines must be removed to allow safe operation of the lines. With landowner participation, low-growing native grasses and flowers may be planted in utility corridors. Restoration is a very important part of the construction process and our goal is to leave the utility corridor in good condition after the project is complete.

IMPROVEMENTS

When wood or metal line structures are taken out of service, we explore several options for disposal, including recycling and gifting to landowners or other parties. ATC has increased recycling of metal and wood structures in recent years, and some wood structures have been re-used by landowners or municipalities for mounting lights or warning sirens. Some metal structures may previously have been painted with lead-based paint. Care is taken to protect the environment in construction projects that involve removing or replacing these structures. We have developed a procedure in cooperation with the WDNR that ensures appropriate removal of these types of structures.