

Safety Tailgate (Continued)

Bending

Often objects will be below waist height and one will have to bend to reach them. Follow the safe bending method to prevent back injury.

- Bending forward at the waist is hard on your back.
- Instead, get close to the object and lower yourself to it by bending your hips and knees while maintaining an upright back.

General Tips

- Shift positions frequently to reduce stress on joints.
- Avoid positions or activities causing pain.
- Take frequent **short** breaks to avoid being in one position too long.
- Incorporate preventative exercises and stretches into your daily routine.
- If it is too heavy, **get help!**
- Be there to help others, and



BGE Tries to Protect Vegetation: Uses Davidsonville Location to Demonstrate Eco-Friendly Policy

By Elisha Sauers

Photos provided by IVM Partners

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Utility company officials have often said they're caught in a customer-service Catch-22.

If the lights go out every time a power line swags through some treetops, ratepayers will demand more reliable service.

But then, if the field crews are spotted mowing down trees and vegetation around the electric

grid, others will accuse them of being poor stewards of the environment.

Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. officials said they are now committed to a pilot program that demonstrates that these two objectives aren't mutually exclusive.

At the request of federal authorities, the utility conducted a guided tour of the major transmission line right of way in Davidsonville yesterday for Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials. The event was intended to show how the utility is trying to employ industry and environmentally sustainable best practices.

About a year ago, many residents near the same site, near the headwaters of the South River, assailed BGE for a massive clear-cutting that took out a lot of trees and left unsightly debris in its wake. Many decried the downed tree limbs and logs that were scattered on embankments alongside Rutland Road in Davidsonville.

The BGE pilot program involves a nonprofit ecosystems-management firm called Integrated Vegetation Management Partners, which pro-

vides oversight of the right-of-way maintenance and reviews the results of previous hand-cutting and mowing.

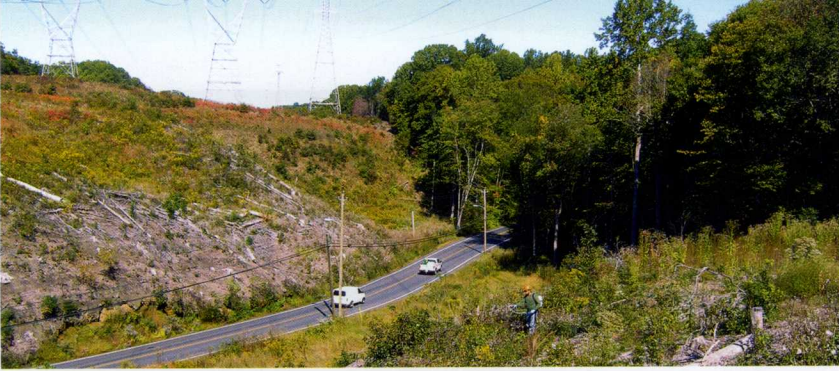
The goal is to not only provide reliable service for the community but also to preserve the habitat for plants and animals, the environmental experts said.

And as a secondary goal, the program tries to educate others about the many considerations behind BGE's actions.



Rick Johnstone, IVM Partners addressing field workshop on BGE ROW, in hat on right.





Selective backpack treatments produce precise coverage.

For example, Rick Johnstone, president of IVM Partners, said the clear-cutting debris should have been left on the site to provide natural habitats for animals and prevent soil erosion on the embankments.

He said compliance with federal regulations is also a bottom line, and reliable electric service has been deemed a national security issue.

"It's popular to go after the utility," Johnstone said, but "we can't afford to interrupt the national grid."

He said the lesson was learned in August 2003, when extreme heat caused the metal in some Ohio power lines to stretch and sag up to 25 feet into tree canopies, causing three separate transmission lines to fail. Millions of people in the Northeast lost power and it cost \$8 billion to restore service, he said.

But merely cropping the tops off trees is not an acceptable way to prevent future crises, officials said at the event. Experts said trees respond by quickly sprouting copious new buds that will eventually interrupt lines.

Another inadequate practice, Johnstone said, is the consistent use of mowers and chain saws. Such equipment pollutes the air with carbon dioxide and inevitably leaks hydraulic fluid and oil, which leaches into the water. The blades of these machines can also destroy low-lying animal nests.

The vegetation experts suggested carefully applying herbicides to kill off invasive plants. Experts gave demonstrations at the right-of-way of some of the equipment and techniques they're using with the chemicals.

The crew used a spraying system attached to small vehicles with GPS computers, and backpacks with special nozzles to produce

precise coverage. A special liquid carrier called "thinvert," added to some of the chemicals, also reduces the amount of the product that blows away or evaporates, experts said.

"If you use herbicides appropriately, you can actually improve natural habitat," Johnstone said.

Environmental studies have shown that indigenous species of lower grasses, herbs and flowers - with root systems and seeds imbedded in the soil - are given a new opportunity to grow when foreign competitors are removed from the ecosystem.

Tom Valenti, BGE's vice president of logistics, said the pilot project is part of the company's recent commitment to "look beyond compliance" and exercise a degree of environmental stewardship that exceeds regulatory expectations.

"It was the right time for us to give it a go," he said.

In the future, company officials will determine whether they want to continue incorporating IVM Partners' recommendations in their maintenance practices.

Below: Complaint area in March 2009 shortly after clearing. Logs are left onsite to stabilize soil.

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