

8.3.16

Town of Groton – Selectmen
754 North Groton Road
Groton, NH 03241

Dear Selectmen:

My name is Scott Knapp; Utility Arborist for the New Hampshire Electric Co-op (NHEC) and I am writing you in response to your letter and the meeting we had a couple of weeks ago. You mentioned the town had a warrant article for herbicide treatment under utility lines in the town of Groton. I believe each individual property owner has the right to decide if they would like their property treated or not treated.

Mechanical cutting of woody vegetation obviously has the immediate effect of reducing, to near ground level, vegetation which would otherwise reach into or restrict visual observation of, or restrict access to, NHEC's electric distribution facilities. However, mechanical cutting alone, will not keep the right of way fully maintained. Mechanical methods ultimately create re-sprouts which then create a more undesirable right of way; increased stem density. As I am sure you have witnessed, freshly-cut stumps quickly re-sprout, with many new saplings emerging from each stump. These saplings grow rapidly. Within a relative short period of time rights-of-way can become dense thickets of saplings which create significant operational challenges to the utility and which are not particularly accommodating to the native wildlife. The development of such thickets requires even more frequent re-cutting of the area.

Our goal and objectives on a utility right of way are the maintenance and stabilization of early-successional (low growing) ecological communities that compete with tall vegetation. A desirable side effect of these methods is much needed open land habitat that benefits a wide range of wildlife – including many threatened or endangered animals, amphibians, insects and plants. These rights-of-ways are excellent homes, breeding grounds, nurseries and food sources for the wildlife species our crew regularly come across including deer, rabbits, wild turkeys, songbirds and other foragers as well as coyotes, bobcats, black bears, eagles, owls, and hawks. The end result of a well maintained right- of- way is a landscape that benefits the utilities, its members, the public-at-large and the environment.

One of my responsibilities; to select the most cost-effective treatment for each ROW management scenario and because no two situations are alike, different treatments are often needed to maximize cost effectiveness. In general, we expect the treatment will lead to a reduction in tree stem density and will minimize further tree problems, which will lead to a reduction in both direct and indirect costs. IVM equates to using treatments that are less costly in terms of dollars, produce minimal risks for human health and the environment, and create the desired vegetation conditions that will become sustainable.

NHEC contracts 'Vegetation Control Services, Inc.' (VCS) from Athol, MA to do all of the herbicide treatments on our system. VCS is a pioneer and professional leader in selective vegetation management on utility rights-of-way..

- The application methods for the selected area; hand pumped back pack basal method or motorized back pack foliar sprayer.
 - The hand pumped back pack basal applications can be done year round depending on lack of snow cover and can treat one to three acres per man per day depending on density, access.
 - The motorized back pack foliar spray applications are typically made from June 1st through October 15th and can treat +/- ten acres per man per day depending on density, access.

All applications are made in strict accordance with label recommendations and are done by applicators that are registered and certified within the Division of Pesticide Control. Included are all the MSDS's that have been approved as specified in the special permit application and in accordance with conditions of the special permit, plus any appropriate adjuvants.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you; if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me on my cell phone 603.998.7474 or via email at knapps@nhec.com.

Sincerely,

Scott Knapp
Utility Arborist - NHEC