



FACT SHEET

BRIDLE TRAILS STATE PARK

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

➤ **Why do electric utilities have to manage vegetation along transmission lines?**

Electric utilities are required by law to maintain the reliability of their transmission lines. New, stricter federal standards have recently been put into effect by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the agency responsible for transmission line reliability. These new regulations were the result of an August 2003 electric power blackout which affected large portions of the Northeast and Midwest United States and Ontario, Canada. A joint U.S.-Canadian investigative team found that this blackout was caused, in part, by inadequate vegetation management.

➤ **How does City Light typically manage vegetation along its transmission lines?**

City Light has a Transmission Vegetation Management Plan for its entire transmission system (TVMP). Under the TVMP, City Light typically removes, per easement rights or with land owner permission, any large tree that could contact the line if it were to fall. Smaller trees that could grow up under the line are also removed. In addition, City Light is in the process of developing protocols and specific plans for working within sensitive locations, such as the right of way through Bridle Tails State Park.

➤ **What type of vegetation management has been done along CITY LIGHT's transmission line right-of-way (ROW) through Bridle Trails in the past?**

The last major vegetation management work on the right-of-way through the Park was in 1998-1999 in preparation for energizing the wires on the west side of the line.

➤ **How many outages have been caused by trees falling on the transmission line through Bridle Trails State Park?**

Between 2001 and 2007 there were 7 tree-related outages recorded along City Light's 27 mile-long Eastside Line and 5 of these were in the 0.7 mile section through Bridle Trails State Park (December 2001, October 2005, January 2006, December 2006, and December 2007). Most of the outages were associated with storms, such as the wind storm on December 14, 2006, and several involved multiple trees.

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➤ **How does City Light plan to manage vegetation through Bridle Trails State Park in the future?**

Over the past year City Light has worked closely with State Parks to cooperatively develop a vegetation management plan specific to Bridle Trails State Park. The **purpose** of this site-specific plan is to guide vegetation management now and into the future along the City Light right-of-way through the Park. The overall **goals** for the Plan are to:

- Reduce power outages caused by tree failure within or adjacent to the right-of-way;
- Protect the health, aesthetics and integrity of the forest within the Park and its recreational opportunities, particularly the equestrian activities;
- Facilitate clear communications between City Light and State Parks staff and clarify responsibilities; and
- Establish an intact, low growing native plant community in the cleared area of the right-of-way that is resistant to invasion by trees.

➤ **How does this Plan differ from City Light’s standard vegetation management practices for transmission line rights-of-way?**

The plan is more protective to vegetation in and adjacent to the right-of-way than City Light’s standard vegetation management practices. It is based on science and focuses on the management of “hazard trees”, which are defined as trees that are dead, dying, diseased, deformed, or otherwise unstable, and that could contact the transmission line if they were to fall. The plan also requires that City Light and State Parks agree on which trees are cut. Both City Light and State Parks signed the plan in May 2008.

➤ **What are the key elements of the plan?**

Key elements of the Plan include: (1) specific criteria for identifying hazard trees; (2) standards for removing identified hazard trees, pruning trees with limbs near the lines, and removing small trees from the cleared areas under and adjacent to the lines; (3) revegetation guidelines for trees that are removed; and (4) communication and coordination protocols between City Light and Parks. The Plan will be revisited and revised, if needed, every 4 years.

2008 PLANS

➤ **What has City Light done in 2008 to implement the Vegetation Management Plan for Bridle Trails Park?**

On May 21, representatives from City Light, State Parks, Bridle Trails State Park, and the Bridle Trails Park Foundation met on site to mark trees to be cut in 2008. A total of 40 trees were marked, 3 on the east side and 37 on the west side. Six trees are already dead and 30 show obvious signs of disease or damage; 4 appear healthy but are within 15 feet of a tree with obvious signs of laminated root rot, a fungus of Douglas-fir trees that is spread through the roots. An additional 15 trees were marked for close monitoring.

➤ **What other activities will occur in 2008?**

City Light will cut the 40 marked trees in the Park sometime before October 2008. It is possible that a few additional trees will need to be cut due to damage during the felling of nearby trees and/or evidence of laminated root rot. In addition, small trees that could grow into the lines will be cleared from under the lines on the right of way and trees with limbs growing close to the lines will be pruned. City Light also plans to paint over the blue marks on the trees with grey or black paint and number the trees designated for monitoring. The schedule for these activities will be determined in coordination with State Parks.

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