

An Environmental Work Practice is a set of positive guidelines or "Do's and Don'ts" on how to control an aspect of the services, activities, or products of Yukon Energy that may have a negative effect on the environment.

TRANSMISSION ROW/DISTRIBUTION CORRIDOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

EMS-EWP-013

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of the **Environmental Work Practice for Transmission ROW (Right-of-Way) Vegetation Maintenance** is to outline the steps to properly manage vegetation in ROW with the least environmental impact.

2.0 Vegetation Maintenance in existing ROW

Activities carried out to maintain riparian vegetation in existing rights-of-way can negatively impact fish and fish habitat. Excessive loss of riparian vegetation, erosion and sedimentation, disturbance to the banks from the use of heavy equipment can cause environmental damage.

2.1 Requirements: Permits

The YEC Environment Department will assist with determining the need for and acquiring permits

- Ensure you are working within an existing ROW. If vegetation maintenance is to occur outside of an existing ROW, approval and permit by YTG Lands Branch may be required.
- Permits outside existing ROWs are not required unless the width of clearing is >1.5m and the total area cleared exceeds 4ha.
- In areas where the ROW is within, or partly within a highway right-of-way, clearing within the highway right-of-way will be carried out in accordance with Government of Yukon Dept. of Highways **Permit for Work within the ROW** issued under to the Highways Act.

2.2 Requirements: Access to the site

- In all other areas where there is no licence, a **Land Use Permit (LUP)** is required in accordance with federal/territorial *Land Use Regulations*.
- Creating a new access, a *YESAA application* may be required as well as a *Land Use Permit* and potentially a *Highways Permit*.
- Use existing accesses wherever possible
- Where trails are used for access, these will be clearly identified and flagged in the field prior to clearing.

- New accesses required for clearing will be clearly identified in the field, and will be constructed/reclaimed in accordance with appropriate permits.
- If a new access is found, collect the GPS coordinates of the beginning and end of the access route

Requirements: Vegetation removal

- Combined maintenance activities (e.g., mowing, brushing, topping, slashing, etc.) will affect no more than one third (1/3) of the total woody vegetation, such as trees and shrubs, in the right-of-way within 30 metres of the high water mark in any given year.
- Removal of vegetation within the riparian zone is limited to hand held equipment.
- Any vegetation that is removed is not allowed to enter the watercourse.
- Any mulching is done outside the riparian zone to ensure that debris does not enter the watercourse, and to ensure that the stream bank vegetation and soils are undisturbed.
- Removal of all debris and garbage from the area
- In occupied areas, trees are normally chipped and the chips left to decay.
- Smaller trees are felled and left to decay naturally. Burning is not normally permitted.
- All stumps to be cut flush or as close as possible to the ground, not to exceed 100mm from ground level
- Flagging is to be removed whenever possible after the job is complete

2.3 Requirements: Equipment Travel

- Method of equipment travel will depend on specific site conditions, weather conditions, presence of permafrost and depth of snow and access availability. Communication with YEC Manager of Environment and/or YTG Natural Resources Officer will be important in determining the method of least impact.
- Rubber tired vehicles will be used under the appropriate conditions (e.g, hard packed snow), and as authorized by the YTG Natural Resources Officer.
- Travel outside the existing ROW or trail will be minimized.
- No fording of streams or open water with equipment – use access by road/trail access to reach either side of water body
- If Fording a stream is necessary, a *Temporary Ford Stream Crossing Operational Statement* may must be followed from Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The permit allows for one stream crossing only
- When crossing, cross stream at 90 degree angles to the water to minimize erosion.

Temporary Ford Stream Crossing Operational Statement

2.4 Requirements: Maintenance Timing

- Working on frozen ground when possible minimizes disturbance of ice-rich ground (permafrost).
- The *Migratory Birds Act* states that vegetation maintenance cannot occur during the nesting period for birds (May 1-August 15th), in order to avoid any direct disturbance of active nests, and/or disturbance of nesting birds in adjacent forest/shrub habitat.
- If work cannot be scheduled outside the bird nesting window, then a certified biologist can conduct a bird nest survey in the area scheduled for maintenance 10 days before work is to start.

3.0 Applicable Legislation

- *Highways Act*: Permits are required, under the *Highways Act*, to construct an access road from the highway and to install and maintain signage on a highway.
 - Activity: **Tie an access road into the Highway**. Permit required under the *Highways Act*
 - Activity: **Use of land within highway right-of-way**. Permit, *Highways Act*
 - Activity: **Clearing using equipment**. Within Highway ROW. Government of Yukon Dept. of Highways “*Permit for Work within the Right-of-Way*” and the “*Performance of Work within the Right-of-Way*”
 - Activity: **To install and maintain signage on a highway**. Highways Permit, Highways Act Section 7 (2).

Land Use Permit:

- Activity: **Installing a utility right-of-way** if not in an existing licenced corridor. Land Use Permit, *Lands Act*, Yukon Government, Energy Mines and Resources.
 - A Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment and a Decision Document will be required before land use permits approvals may be issued.
- *Migratory Birds Convention Act*: Migratory Birds Regulations. Government of Canada