



Author inspects Christmas trees along right-of-way. Tree management program practically eliminates maintenance and produces profit for easement landowners.

# Brush Control Programs Gain Public Support In New Hampshire

By S. N. MACRIGEANIS

Public Service Co. of New Hampshire  
Forester

PEOPLE readily accepting a transmission right-of-way sounds about as far fetched as linemen enjoying an ice storm. But, it's happening in New Hampshire. And, it's happening to Public Service Co. of New Hampshire with virtually all rights-of-way on easement land. Not only have environmental outcries fallen off considerably, but people in general are beginning to appreciate the extra values of carefully maintained rights-of-way.

This turnaround in public opinion didn't happen overnight. It took a

Basal application of Hyvar XL bromacil is made in the fall by "Bucky" Edmondson of Bartlett Tree Co. Forester Macriganis checks the technique. Only 7 to 10 ounces of bromacil and water is needed to control 2-inch stem of most brush.



**MANAGERS' 10-SECOND SUMMARY:** *Switching from fuel oil to bromacil brush killer is one of four ways PSNH gains public support for vegetation maintenance program on transmission rights-of-way.*

great deal of planning and hard work on four major fronts:

First, we had to develop chemical brush control programs that not only solved our maintenance problem, but increased wildlife populations in the bargain.

Second, we had to come up with a way of keeping our foliage spray treatments out of the public's view.

Third, we had to find a better way to control resprouting stumps. Fuel oil had to go because every use brought on a rash of complaints. The availability of a new chemical brush control compound — Hyvar XL bromacil weed killer — provided the answer here.

Finally, we had to discover ways of encouraging the public and our easement neighbors to take advantage of our rights-of-way.

## TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Contrary to what many people believe, New Hampshire's greatest need is for more open areas, *not* more trees. It's true. There are nearly three times as many forests and woodlands today as there were in the early 1800's. Back then, land in our state was mostly cultivated. New Hampshire was a major grain producer with less than 35 percent of its land in trees. Now the State is nearly 90 percent forests and woodlands, and this has caused a major reduction in wildlife because of a loss of open areas for food, forage and nesting.

So, our goal of increasing wildlife along our 22,000 acres of rights-of-way first began with a change in our land clearing practices. Instead of cutting and burning brush and trees,

*(continued on page 30)*

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## BRUSH CONTROL PROGRAMS

(from page 20)

we now cut and windrow brush. This method doesn't disturb the topsoil; and grass moves in much faster. And, the faster the grass comes, the faster wildlife returns to the right-of-way.

### SPRAY ONLY HIGH-GROWING BRUSH

Next came a change in our chemical brush control program. Instead of broadcasting chemicals to control all brush along our transmission rights-of-way, we've adopted what we call a "selective foliage spraying program."

Our contracted crews move in with hydraulic equipment and spray only tall-growing, troublesome brush, leaving the low-growing brush for a home for birds and small game. This "selective spraying" is employed on virtually all 1500 miles of transmission lines with the exception of a few hundred, inaccessible acres in our Northern Division. Here, on rocky, swampy terrain, we have no choice but to spray by helicopter.

### BRUSH SCREENS HIDE FOLIAGE BROWNOUT

While selective spraying helped to increase New Hampshire's wildlife population, it did not solve one of our major complaint producers — foliage brownout. That's why we leave a 100 foot-wide "buffer strip" or "screen" on every right-of-way road crossing.

Screening rights-of-way has all but eliminated public complaints. The same holds true for substations which are either screened or, if that's not practical, landscaped to present a more pleasing appearance. A case in point is the projected generating station at Newington, New Hampshire. Here every environmental factor is being considered, including both the architectural and landscaping treatment of the facility.

### NO FUEL OIL, NO COMPLAINTS

Finding a way to control sprouting stumps without fuel oil solved two major problems — fire hazard and public complaints. A carelessly thrown match cost us equipment losses in the past and State Forest Fire Officials often called a halt to our spraying during dry spells. Moreover, we were constantly answering complaint calls because of the oil's heavy, lingering odor.

Our search for a better way to control sprouting stumps ended last



By encouraging easement landowners to raise Christmas trees under transmission lines, PSNH reduces maintenance costs and improves scenic quality. About 700 acres of land are now in trees which yield about \$1,000 per acre when trees are harvested.

season following test applications of Hyvar XL bromacil weed killer. We tried the liquid herbicide on 680 acres and results were even better than anticipated. Hyvar XL provided better control than oil-chemical mixtures. And, we didn't have a single complaint in treating these acres. What's more, the new material allowed us much greater latitude in timing our applications. (We achieved nearly 100 percent control by applying Hyvar XL) 6 months after the clearing operation was completed and yet still contained control of all species. Oil-chemical mixtures had to be sprayed within days after clearing to be effective.

### CONTROLS BRUSH THROUGH THE SOIL

Unlike stump-absorbing treatments, Hyvar XL is soil active, controlling brush through the plant's root system. This accounts for the herbicide's control of both seedlings and sprouting stumps. It is also the reason why we were able to obtain excellent control with very little chemical. We mixed six pounds of bromacil (3 gallons of Hyvar XL) in 100 gallons of water and sprayed at the rate of 7 to 10 ounces of mix per 2-inch stem. The amount required per acre is determined by the brush density.

**PUBLIC USE GAINS  
PUBLIC SUPPORT**

Besides developing brush control programs that do the job without raising the public's concern, Public Service Co. of New Hampshire has gained additional community support by encouraging people to take advantage of its rights-of-way.

Some people in the State such as farmers and hunters need little encouragement. They already appreciate the open land for pastures, game and fun. But, for others as well, the Company has taken positive steps toward creating multi-purpose rights-of-way.

**CHRISTMAS TREES ON  
RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

One program encourages easement landowners to raise Christmas trees under transmission lines. It's a co-operative venture with participation by the landowner, the Company and the New England Forestry Foundation.

The landowner simply signs an agreement to maintain that section of land for the cultivation of trees in return for the Company's agreement to help raise the trees. New England Forestry Foundation agents manage the entire operation. They provide tips on spraying, cultivating, harvesting and marketing trees.

By encouraging and establishing a Christmas tree management program, the Company practically eliminates right-of-way maintenance and adds to their scenic quality. But, the big plus is in neighbor relations. Landowners are realizing a profit they never had. Of the 700 acres of easement land now in trees, most will yield about \$1,000 per acre (about \$1 per tree) when trees attain Christmas size of six to eight feet in anywhere from five to ten years.

Establishment of public recreation areas is yet another attempt to minimize the impact of electric power lines on the landscape. So far Public Service Co. of New Hampshire has three such areas, including a boat launching facility where lines traverse a great spot for fishing. Picnicking, hiking and horse back riding draw most people to the other two right-of-way "public parks."

But, public access is not without problems, one of which is increase in trash. That's why all of Public Services' present recreational areas are located near stations where manpower is available to supervise and patrol the facilities. Regardless of potential problems in such sites, public appeal and support far outweighs the problem of public indignation. □

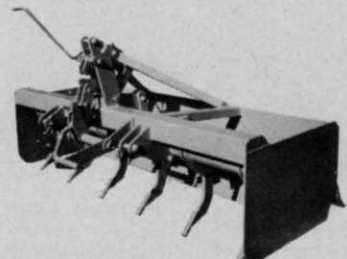


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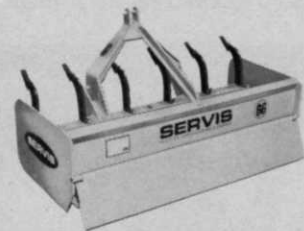
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