

# Central Vermont Public Service Corporation's 2006 Strategy

## Strategic Approach

It is only through an well-integrated program of mechanical pruning and selective herbicide application that Central Vermont's Transmission & Distribution Forestry Department will achieve its objectives.

### T & D Forestry Objective

The objective of the T & D Forestry Department is to administer a program of long-term integrated vegetation management which will provide for the safe and efficient operation of Central Vermont Public Service Corporation transmission and distribution system in a cost-effective manner. The ultimate goal is the reduction of vegetation-related safety hazards, service interruptions, and disturbances to a level consistent with a high degree of customer satisfaction, and at a minimum cost to customers, stockholders and the environment.

The realization of this goal is only possible through the application of the most up to date vegetation management.

### T & D Forestry Goals

T & D Forestry will maintain a focus of Integrated Vegetation Management. Continue to selectively remove undesirable tree species and maintain as many healthy compatible trees as possible.

T & D Forestry will maintain a selective herbicide application program to help promote desirable low growing vegetation and reduce the future stem density of tall growing species and to increase plant bio-diversity on right-of -ways. Forestry will continue to research new technologies and techniques that minimize environmental impacts.

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### Progress on 2005 Activity 1

*Promote an IVM approach within our Rights-of-Way. Integrated Vegetation Management programs are effective in optimizing inputs to efficiently control targets. IVM incorporates monitoring, identifying, quantifying, and planning.*

In 2005 CVPS inventoried vegetation management needs on the Transmission system. Prescriptions were assessed on a case by case scenario with the “right tool in the right place” philosophy. Sensitive areas were noted and proper resources applied by notes on

the “brush patrol report” as well as site being flagged for crew members. Reliance on Ultra Low Volume foliar applications on the majority of CVPS system virtually avoided non-target damage in vicinity of targets. Percentage of damage within ROW not available.

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### **Progress on 2005 Activity 2**

*Conduct Pesticide Applicator’s Safety and Training Session. A formal training forum for certified and non-certified applicator’s working within CVPS service territory.*

CVPS conducted our annual Pesticide Applicator’s Safety & Training Session on May 6th, 2005. Approximately 68 people attended including Plant Industry Agents from Vermont Agency of Agriculture. Prior to session, the agenda was reviewed and 6 contact credits were earned as a result. Vegetation Management Plans were reviewed for both Transmission and Distribution with objectives and goals identified. CVPS Foresters conducted site visits to ensure compliance to management plan and regulatory requirements. There were no violations in 2005. Review of field applications were also completed by Plant Industry Agents from the State Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets with full compliance.

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### **Progress on 2005 Activity 3**

*A Reliance of Low Volume and Ultra Low Volume applications will be incorporated within CVPS’ Right-of-Ways.*

CVPS’ herbicide rates per acre continued to be inline with trends and Vermont Pesticide Advisory Counsel (VPAC) goals. VPAC consists of representatives from various state agencies as well as the public. VPAC weighs in on our annual permit to apply and makes recommendations accordingly to the Secretary of Agriculture. Both T & D systems showed a level rate per acre for all application methods from the previous season of 2004.

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### **Progress on 2005 Activity 4**

*CVPS will pursue the feasibility of alternative methods and tools to control undesirable woody vegetation within Rights-of-Ways.*

We are currently working with a representative from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on a Myco-Tech (*Chondrostereum purpureum*) test plot. This bio-control test area was applied in late summer of 2004. Follow up studies were conducted by interns and information is being compiled and ongoing. The test plot was initiated on a portion of

a CVPS Transmission line that has a history of manual control due to wetlands, streams and drilled wells in the vicinity. Our goal is this will be a viable tool to use in sensitive areas including current no-spray buffers to lessen environmental impacts from manual or mechanical means of control. Numbers will be reported to PESP as soon as they are analyzed and compiled. This will be an ongoing activity for CVPS.

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## **Progress on 2005 Activity 5**

*By collaboration among groups, our objectives and goals may be shared and provide a networking of resources to allow each organization to benefit.*

CVPS Forestry Department & National Wild Turkey Federation initiated a meeting with the Green Mountain National Forest Service. We met with several staff people of the USFS with focuses of botany, soils, fisheries, wildlife biologists, and timber management. USFS staff committed to identify wildlife openings within the Forest Service lands that are in proximity to CVPS Transmission corridors. CVPS will incorporate within our normal maintenance schedules assistance in reclamation of identified wildlife openings and natural apple orchards. Within the openings, assessments of sensitive plant species will be included. A goal has been set to complete at least two projects in a calendar year. This partnership is still in progress and will be an ongoing activity.

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## **Activities for the Coming Year**

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### **Activity 1**

Promote an IVM approach within our Rights-of-Way. Integrated Vegetation Management programs are effective in optimizing inputs to efficiently control targets. IVM incorporates monitoring, identifying, quantifying, and planning.

#### **How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?**

CVPS monitors every ROW corridor prior to vegetation management activities commencing. Every acre is documented and a management tool is prescribed. With thorough assessments of Right-of-Ways the applicator will have sensitive buffers pre-identified and allow for maximum protection to those resources.

#### **How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?**

Measurements will be the protection of buffer zones and residual damage of non-target plants given in percentages.

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## **Activity 2**

Conduct Pesticide Applicator's Safety and Training Session. A formal training forum for certified and non-certified applicator's working within CVPS service territory.

### **How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?**

CVPS reviews label comprehension, application techniques, technology changes and wetlands training. A thorough review of both Transmission & Distribution Management Plans are done to ensure all applicators and supervision understands short term and long term goals for vegetation management activities. Exposing field personnel to information core to their profession allow for the latest trends to be exercised in the utility corridors.

### **How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?**

Measurements will be assessed by routine visits by CVPS Utility Foresters whom are Vermont Certified Applicators. Review of application techniques, processes, data reporting and accuracy, permitting, and thorough regulation understanding. Vermont Agency of Agriculture inspections will determine field compliance.

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## **Activity 3**

A Reliance of Low Volume and Ultra Low Volume applications will be incorporated within CVPS' Right-of-Ways.

### **How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?**

Scheduled treatments at designated intervals will aid in allowing vegetation managers to control brush densities thus keep pesticide rates in line with CVPS' trend.

### **How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?**

CVPS monitors rates of herbicide used per acre and will report on trend of application rates vs. prior application season.

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## **Activity 4**

CVPS will pursue the feasibility of alternative methods and tools to control undesirable woody vegetation within Rights-of-Ways.

**How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?**

Exploring alternatives to herbicides may lead to an alternative with acceptable efficacy for reducing woody vegetation. A tool that will allow long term control within sensitive buffers will enable CVPS to bring more acreage into IVM.

**How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?**

CVPS will develop test plots to measure the efficacy of an alternative. Stem densities prior to alternative application will be measured and follow up measurements will take place to find percentage of control and impacts to local environment in and around the Right-of-Way.

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**Activity 5**

By collaboration among groups, our objectives and goals may be shared and provide a networking of resources to allow each organization to benefit.

**How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?**

Work with third party entities to enhance wildlife habitats within CVPS Right-of-Ways while achieving short and long term goals. Promote bio-controls within designated joint projects.

**How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?**

Measurements will be assessed by engaging into a minimum of two projects with third party organizations. Conducting plant surveys of sensitive species and percentage of compatible vegetation present within project areas.