



## Organizational Impact Statement

1. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
2. Contact: Trinity Mills, Conservation Advocacy Specialist: [tmills@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:tmills@loudounwildlife.org)
3. Mission: To inspire, motivate and engage people to protect, preserve and restore wildlife habitat.
4. Constituency: Loudoun County, and Loudoun County wildlife
5. Summarize the key issues related to the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Project as they affect your organization's mission and constituency:

Our primary concern with the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Project is the threats it poses to wildlife habitat. As we understand that a priority for utility construction is avoiding impact to built areas, with an emphasis on homes and businesses, greenspace is most often what is carved up as a result of power demand. The manner in which transmission lines are constructed can be extremely ecologically damaging, even if it does not outwardly appear so.

The actual footprint of the construction itself is not an insignificant consideration. Even concessions such as native plantings underneath transmission lines do not serve to remedy the habitat that is lost by constructing transmission lines through natural areas. Additionally, the intensity of the construction process itself is intrusive and poses further threats to wildlife beyond habitat destruction from impacts such as excessive noise, debris, etc. Additionally, invasive species are known to be introduced and allowed to proliferate as a result of the construction process from seeds dispersed via construction equipment and taking root from soil disturbance.

To meet the goal of getting power from point A to point B, simple mathematics suggests that the most efficient route is the straightest line. When this line does not cut through a home or business, this seems the most straightforward answer for where to place a utility corridor. However, when this right of way bisects greenspace, it creates an edge effect on the habitat.

Edge effects occur when an unnatural interrupter (such as a road or utility corridor) disrupts contiguous habitat. This disruption can have serious ecological consequences, such as limiting population dispersal, constricting gene flow, and creating community imbalances from increased mortality. In a rapidly developing

county such as Loudoun, edge effects are increasingly common. Edge effects are also known to be directly linked to population imbalances in deer- as is seen in Loudoun County as the 1st in the state for deer collisions due to habitat disruption. Contiguous habitat, such as that found in western Loudoun, is vital to the health of Loudoun's ecosystems as a whole.

The most vital habitat which remains contiguous in Loudoun is that found along riparian corridors. Power lines that cross streams bisect riparian corridors which often correspond to vital ecological cores. This bisecting of riparian areas further increases edge habitat and lowers the quality of the habitat that is left following construction. Transmission lines that cross creeks and streams pose threats to a larger community of wildlife by disrupting both terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

6. Describe specific results/outcomes to your mission and constituency that will arise if the transmission lines are built in Loudoun County Greenspace. Be as specific as possible, including any statistics that are available to you:

Impacts of the constructed transmission lines have a potential to impact several of our organizational programs. We host regular bird walks, nature walks, and amphibian and bat monitoring in areas which could be traversed by the transmission lines. The negative effect of the loss in habitat from the transmission lines is likely to have an effect on the engagement of our members with wildlife at these locations in close proximity to any lines that may be constructed.

7. List any research sources that support your projections of the impact on your mission and constituency:

Xia Shangguang Zhao Yuan. "Influences of 500kV Transmission Lines on Wetland Ecosystem and Its Protective Countermeasures——A Case Study of the Lake Wetland

Natural Reserve along the Yangtze River in Anqing City.” 气象与环境研究:英文版 4 (2016): 17–22. Print.

[https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/5750mbhydrombminnesota/cec\\_docs/ssccecrownd2\\_ir397part2.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/5750mbhydrombminnesota/cec_docs/ssccecrownd2_ir397part2.pdf)

\*2 additional attached pdfs\*

8. Share individual case studies of people, places, or things that will be affected by this project (no more than three):

Our concerns with the impact of the transmission lines on habitat come to a head with specific species of concern. We understand that NextEra will be conducting a due diligence assessment of established data of endangered and threatened species that may have nesting grounds near the chosen route as is required by law. However, due to the vast swaths of private property which the transmission line may traverse, we believe that the actual number of nesting and breeding rounds for endangered, threatened, and species of concern is higher than that which is reflected in established databases. Indications from our constituency suggests that data from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s database of Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Virginia The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation database as would be drawn on for the required Environmental Impact Assessment for species such as wood turtles, bald eagles, and others is inaccurate due to limited monitoring efforts as a result of private property constraints. We have been informed of species of concern sightings including wood turtles along Sweet Run at Sweet Run State Park as well as bat data from Sweet Run State Park.

9. Upload any visuals available that illustrate or support your impact statement.

Attached photo is of Jefferson Salamander (species of conservation need in Virginia) at Sweet Run State Park.