

Biodiversity is essential to ecosystem health, and it is under threat by the impacts of climate change and land use. At Eversource, we see the preservation of resilient ecosystems within our service territory as part of our responsibility and an important aspect of our ability to deliver reliable services to our customers. We do this through strategic initiatives to reduce our overall environmental impact and implement best practices in vegetation management, construction, and habitat conservation.

## Biodiversity Governance

The governance of biodiversity falls under our Executive Vice President of Corporate Relations and Sustainability and by the Vice President of Sustainability and Environmental Affairs, whose team works to help promote biodiversity, conservation, and protection of wildlife and natural resources throughout our business operations. Among the team's responsibilities are:

- Guiding and monitoring environmental interactions of our operations and using observations to address performance improvements.
- Communicating applicable regulations and standards to employees and vendors and establishing training programs on relevant requirements, work practices and procedures.

## Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate

In areas of ecological importance, we apply a mitigation hierarchy to:

1. Avoid environmental impacts where possible, starting with conceptual design.
2. Minimize environmental impacts where they cannot be avoided.
3. Mitigate and restore environmental impacts where necessary.

Implementation of this hierarchy enables our team to:

- Utilize design approaches to avoid impacts to known populations of state and federally listed animal and plants and other environmental resource areas.
- Limit permanent impacts using temporary access measures where feasible for access road and work pad construction.
- Perform mitigation planning and permitting with appropriate agencies when interactions with protected species habitat cannot be avoided.

- Where practicable based on operational requirements, implement time-of-year restrictions to help avoid impact to sensitive resources.

In accordance with our **Environmental Policy** and local, state, and federal regulations, construction and maintenance projects use best management practices (BMPs) to minimize or eliminate environmental impacts that may result from temporary construction-period activities. These BMPs address interactions with soil, sediment, surface water, and vegetation incidental to construction within on- and off-road utility corridors, substations, including the establishment of access roads and work pads, in and near wetlands, watercourses, or other sensitive natural resource areas. Regardless of whether a specific permit is needed, construction and maintenance projects must follow internal environmental performance standards.

## Project Evaluations

Operating in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, we interface with diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, waterways, and rare species' habitats. Projects undergo a screening review supported by Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to reference current environmental spatial data for the project. If sensitive areas are anticipated or identified, the project is reviewed by our Environmental Licensing and Permitting team, where thorough research and on-the-ground field investigations are conducted to help guide project planning and design, and inform agency permitting at the local, state, and federal levels.

## Vegetation Management

Our integrated vegetation management practices focus on creating and maintaining low-growing plant communities that support a range of species to thrive, particularly in transmission and distribution ROWs. The approach to managing our ROWs helps promote diverse, native, compatible low-growth ecosystems that support pollinators and a wide range of wildlife. By focusing on low-growing

grass and shrub habitat, our vegetation management practices help establish new and enhanced biodiversity within utility corridors that formerly did not flourish nor exist.

Our four utility arboretums play a key role in promoting biodiversity and environmental education across our service territory, serving as living demonstrations of tree species compatible with utility infrastructure. By adhering to the “right tree, right place” principle, these arboretums, located in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, showcase vegetation that supports biodiversity while minimizing disruptions to power lines. This strategy not only helps maintain system reliability but also fosters habitats for wildlife by supporting low-growing plant communities and early successional habitat beneficial to various native species.

### Land Preservation

The Eversource Land Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation that was established in 2012 to promote the preservation of open spaces in New England. Nearly 1,000 acres have been placed in the Trust and continue to be maintained as open space.

We manage approximately 40,000 acres of land, with 22,000 acres dedicated to protected watersheds. Our partnerships with environmental organizations and communities support conservation and public access to open spaces we manage,

reinforcing our commitment to protecting natural habitats while adding value to our communities.

### Wildlife Protection

As stewards of New England’s ecosystems, we are committed to safeguarding the diverse wildlife that inhabit and migrate through our rights-of-way and service areas. We are an active member of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), an industry workgroup focused on understanding the causes of bird/powerline interactions and developing measures to help reduce bird injuries and mortality. We maintain an Avian Protection Plan that is based on input from APLIC’s Suggested Practices which provides guidance to help reduce avian-related power outages and service interruptions, and nesting on electric infrastructure.

We have also developed a detailed turtle protection plan and training program, which often involves active-season turtle monitoring and turtle-tracking telemetry when required by various agencies.

### Collaboration for Conservation

Through collaboration with regulatory agencies, researchers, non-governmental organizations, local groups and ROW property owners, we aim to do our part in protecting biodiversity and demonstrate best practices with our conservation initiatives.

