

Clean Renewable Power



## Let's Talk

Over the past couple of months, The Northern Pass landowner outreach specialists have met and talked with many individuals along the proposed route.

Landowner outreach specialist Jim Wagner recently visited with a couple who owns land on one of the existing rights-of-way for the proposed project. The landowners were not in favor of the project initially but were very courteous and had many questions. By the end of the visit, Jim had answered all their questions—the couple asked that more information be mailed to them. They said they “were very glad they learned more about the other side of the story.”

We'd love to have a conversation with you. If you have any questions or would like to meet with us, please call.

## Landowner Outreach Specialists:

Jen Berry—[berryl@nu.com](mailto:berryl@nu.com),  
603-533-6447

Ashland • Bridgewater • Bristol •  
Campton • Easton • Hill • Holderness •  
Lincoln • New Hampton • Sugar Hill •  
Thornton • Woodstock

Tom True—[truett@nu.com](mailto:truett@nu.com),  
603-232-8222

Allentown • Canterbury • Concord •  
Deerfield • Franklin • Northfield •  
Pembroke

Jim Wagner—[wagnejt@nu.com](mailto:wagnejt@nu.com),  
603-533-1377

Bethlehem • Dalton • Lancaster •  
Northumberland • Whitefield



# Landowner Newsletter

Welcome to the second issue of The Northern Pass Landowner Newsletter. Since the first issue, we've had the opportunity to talk with many of you. We commit to continue the dialogue, answer your questions, and keep you informed as the project progresses. In this issue, we'll update you on the state of the project, address questions about viewsheds, and talk about property values and access to rights-of-ways.

## State of the Project

Over the past several months, The Northern Pass project team has focused its efforts on routing and land acquisition in both northern New Hampshire and near the Concord Airport.

The project goal has been to locate the new transmission line within existing rights-of-way (ROW) as much as possible, and to minimize potential impacts for residents and communities. The Northern Pass project team listened to residents' input and concerns, and determined last spring that an alternative route is appropriate in the area north of Groveton. Working with landowners willing to sell land and/or easements to The Northern Pass, the project has recently secured a significant amount of land and easements necessary for the proposed transmission line and converter terminal.

Much of the land acquired to date is located between Lost Nation substation in Groveton and the Canadian border, where 40 miles of new ROW are needed for the proposed transmission line. As part of our ongoing discussions with landowners in northern New Hampshire, The Northern Pass

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## What the New Line May Look Like on the Rights-of-Way

One of the most common questions asked by landowners is about The Northern Pass project's visual impact compared to the current appearance of the rights-of-ways (ROW). To help you visualize what a Northern Pass transmission line might look like in the ROW, we have made available visual simulations that show “before and after” images in various locations and settings along the proposed route.

Produced by LandWorks, a landscape architecture and planning firm, the computer-generated visual simulations show what the view might look like with two possible high-voltage transmission line designs—lattice style and monopole.

You can view and download the simulations, listed by community, at The Northern Pass website - (<http://www.northernpass.us/project-journal/index.php/2011/10/21/a-view-to-the-northern-pass/>).

If you have any questions after viewing a simulation(s), please contact the landowner outreach specialist for your community.



## Working With You: Rights-of-Way Access

Your property deed grants rights to PSNH and its contractors to access transmission rights-of-way (ROW) on your property, but what are these rights? Here are a few key points to help answer your questions:

- For existing transmission facilities, PSNH's easement rights grant access to PSNH employees, contractors, and tree crews in order to perform inspections, maintenance (including vegetation maintenance), as well as emergency repairs in the event of damage to the facilities that may result from severe weather occurrences. PSNH must comply with mandated regulatory clearances between vegetation and transmission lines. To meet these requirements, PSNH performs routine vegetation maintenance on a cyclical basis, and our easement rights allow us to trim and/or remove vegetation that could grow tall enough to contact the overhead lines resulting in an outage on the electric system or obstruct access along the ROW.
- Many ROWs are accessed at road crossings.
- PSNH has a long history of working with landowners and has fostered many positive relationships. If there is a problem accessing easement ROWs, due to an impediment (such as a livestock pen or hayfield), PSNH will contact you to work out the issue.
- Many landowners have erected barriers or fences in order to limit or discourage recreational activity within the ROW. Generally, these do not pose access issues; however, the easement requires a Joint Use Agreement be executed to ensure that fences and barriers have gates or openings wide enough to accommodate access by maintenance or emergency equipment.

If you want to learn more about ROW access, please contact The Northern Pass landowner outreach specialist for your community (listed on the front), or call us at 1-800-286-7305.

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project made a good faith offer for one of the Balsam's land parcels owned by the Tillotson Foundation. Although the project's offer was not accepted, it was an offer that we felt was consistent with our goal of developing a project route with minimal impact. In the meantime, The Northern Pass has made significant progress in its effort to develop a route in northern New Hampshire that has the support of landowners, and will continue that process.

In the vicinity of the Concord Airport, acquiring additional easements will allow the use of the existing rights-of-way and eliminate the need for the new ROW originally proposed for Concord, Pembroke, and Chichester. The Northern Pass also recently purchased a 118-acre parcel that will be the site of the converter terminal in Franklin.

For up-to-date information on the Northern Pass, please visit <http://www.northernpass.us/project-journal/>.

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## Property Value and The Northern Pass Transmission Lines

Some New Hampshire residents have expressed concern that the installation of new high-voltage transmission lines (HVTL) will have a negative effect on their property values. Since this is a common concern where transmission lines are sited, extensive research assessing the property value impact has been conducted and published in professional literature over the past 25 years.

A recent study analyzed property values in the towns of Littleton and Deerfield along existing HVTLs. From the recent sales of eight such properties, the study showed:

- Significant investment has taken place on properties that are bisected by HVTLs.
- Compared to all other sales transactions within the communities during the same time period, Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data for five sold properties that abutted an HVTL did not reflect a discount or below-market value transaction price.
- In comparing the sale price to equalized assessed value\*, an HVTL-impacted property in Littleton sold for significantly more than the equalized assessed value.
- No deductions were noted on any of the municipal tax assessments cards reviewed for properties that abut or are bisected by HVTLs.
- In transactions where this data was available, there was no evidence that HVTL-impacted properties were on the market longer than the average property for sale during the same period.

This study, *Impact on Value of High Voltage Transmission Lines, Towns of Deerfield & Littleton*, was commissioned by Northern Pass Transmission and conducted in May 2011 by Brian C. Underwood, CRE, a certified general real estate appraiser and chairman of the New Hampshire Real Estate Appraiser Board. To view the report, visit [www.northernpass.us](http://www.northernpass.us) and click on Project Journal, then "Considering Property Value Impact."

The Underwood study is consistent with prior published reports and extensive research on the issue of the effect of high-voltage lines and property values. A notable recent summary, *Assessing the Impacts of High-Voltage Transmission Lines (HVTL) On Property Values*, by economists James Chalmers, Ph.D., and Frank Voorvaart, Ph.D., can also be found at [www.northernpass.us](http://www.northernpass.us). Click on News/Document Library.

\*Equalized assessed value is the result of applying the state equalization factor to the assessed value of a parcel of property.