



## Transmission Line Vegetation Management

Resolution 2025 -1  
Adopted Unanimously  
February 20, 2025

### RESOLVED:

Consistent with its vision, *Friends of Blue Ridge Mountains* seeks to educate the general public and specifically landowners and land managers throughout the region of the value of managing Blue Ridge Mountains' lands so as to responsibly maintain and restore sustainable natural ecological conditions on their lands to the greatest extent feasible; and to actively promote the implementation of such practices throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains region.

*Friends of Blue Ridge Mountains* notes with special concern the degraded condition of the land within the transmission line Right of Way (ROW) corridor managed by Dominion Energy and FirstEnergy. This corridor crosses the Blue Ridge, bisecting the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and its biodiverse corridor lands, and the historic rural landscape of Sweet Run State Park. The land within this ROW has been allowed to become eroded, contributing to degraded stream water quality, planted in part in a monoculture, and invaded with exotic plant species, thereby crowding out or eliminating native plant species.

*Friends of Blue Ridge Mountains* further notes that FirstEnergy has recently earned certification from the national Right-of-Way Stewardship Council for its management of other of its transmission line corridor lands but is remiss in its responsibility for exercising good ROW stewardship in the management of this ROW crossing Loudoun, Clarke and Jefferson Counties that it shares with Dominion Energy. While FirstEnergy seems to have not yet coordinated with Dominion Energy on the ecologically responsible management of this ROW, it states that in general, it has the corporate intent and technological ability to manage its ROW lands in an environmentally responsible manner.

Therefore, *Friends of Blue Ridge Mountains* adopts as a policy that for any transmission line located in the Blue Ridge Mountain region, its Right of Way (ROW) should be managed and maintained in accordance with the following principles of responsible stewardship:

1. prevention of soil erosion and maintenance of water quality is essential.
2. establish and maintain vegetative covers that are appropriate to the terrain, soil characteristics and micro-climates, as a critical factor in achieving sustainability.
3. selected and maintained vegetative ecosystems should incorporate native species to the full extent feasible and should exclude exotic invasive species entirely.

4. the structure and functioning of selected and maintained vegetative ecosystems should be sufficiently diverse so as to provide habitats for a full range of native fauna species, including pollinators, ground-nesting birds, small mammals and amphibians, as well as critical soil organisms.

5. selected and maintained vegetative ecosystems should integrate seamlessly with the vegetative cover of lands adjacent to the ROW; and

6. other aspects of Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)\* that are appropriate to each of the varied ecological niches found in this ROW should be identified and followed in the management of its vegetative cover to the extent that following these aspects would promote the establishment and sustainability of robust ecosystems composed of naturally occurring local flora and fauna.

Further, *Friends of Blue Ridge Mountains* requests that Dominion Energy and FirstEnergy act to cooperatively coordinate with the several landowners, who have eased their land to establish this ROW, for the purpose of repairing the degraded lands within this ROW and enhancing their ecological integrity, and to do so taking into full account the principles of responsible land stewardship outlined in this resolution.

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\*where the relevant concept of IVM is described in Nowak, C. and Ballard, B. A Framework for Applying Integrated Vegetation Management on Right of Ways. 2005. *J. Arboriculture*. 31(1):28-37

Resolution submitted to the **Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains** Board of Directors for consideration by Lowell Smith