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**Vegetation management along high-voltage power lines will help ensure safe and reliable power supply for Saanich Peninsula**

VANCOUVER -- In order to maintain electrical system reliability and public safety in the Saanich Peninsula, BCTC has been planning and carrying out some of the more immediate Edge Tree vegetation management program requirements over the last year. This month, BCTC will complete the work to remove or prune hazard trees growing under and adjacent to the two transmission lines that service the Peninsula. The final phase of the work began this week at Interurban Road and will proceed along Wallace Drive towards Sidney.

"We have contacted property owners along the transmission circuits to discuss the work and they are understanding of the need for vegetation management in order to ensure public safety and reliable power," says BCTC Regional Vegetation Biologist, Ray Read. "The next step will be to remove identified tree growth and in some cases entire trees that are beside, and directly below the transmission lines."

Identified hazard edge trees have a low resistance to wind and become a system reliability and safety risk because of their height and flaws such as a damaged root system, disease or other defect. In some case, marked trees may be healthy, but are getting too close to the power lines. Trees or branches that enter the limits of approach or contact power lines cause not only power outages, but can cause fires or conduct electricity to the ground creating a public and worker safety risk.

"In 2004, trees along these lines caused two power outages within a two-month period," added Read. "Approximately 9,500 BC Hydro customers on the Saanich Peninsula, including the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal and the Victoria International Airport, depend on these two 60,000-volt transmission lines."

During and after the vegetation maintenance work, BCTC will be working with property owners to encourage the growth of more appropriate, low-growing vegetation. "While we have a job to maintain reliability of the system, we also recognize the value the communities of Peninsula place on greenery and maintaining the natural beauty of the area," said Read. "That is why BCTC will be leading and working with the both the District of Saanich and the District of Central Saanich to undertake a community re-greening tree planting initiative this fall."

The British Columbia Transmission Corporation is a Crown corporation that began operations in August 2003. It is an independent electric transmission company that operates, maintains and plans BC Hydro's high-voltage electric transmission system. BCTC ensures fair and open access to the electricity grid, and creates value and new opportunities for our customers and stakeholders by providing safe, reliable and cost-effective transmission services.

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