

Public Power's Progress

Nuturers of Nature

Environmental stewardship isn't just a phrase in NPPD's mission statement. It's not a placeholder for pretty words in the District's annual report.

It is, however, something NPPD teammates strive for each day. Specialists, coordinators, compliance folks – it takes everyone. And, everyone takes it really seriously. They have to. NPPD serves customers in 86 of Nebraska's 93 counties. The District builds infrastructure that covers in excess of 75,000 square miles. That's a lot of ground, air and water to look after. But teammates do, because they are determined to

operate responsibly, and with integrity. **Why? Because they care.**

They care about clean air and clean water. They care about preserving our natural resources and the prosperity of our land. And, they care about protecting wildlife.

They know it's never enough. But, they are determined to set the standard in protecting the environment. They invest in the environment because they want to ensure the best quality of life for Nebraskans.

And, on these two pages, it shows.



The American Burying Beetle (ABB) has a lot of people talking. The endangered beetle can be found in areas NPPD is planning to construct its R-Project, a 225-mile transmission line project. To protect the ABB, NPPD is acquiring 500-plus acres of land as additional habitat for them. To evaluate the density of the nocturnal beetle – which breeds in May – NPPD places more than 70 traps near the project site in a scientifically designated manner. Traps consist of five-gallon buckets buried in the ground and baited with carrion. Once captured, NPPD identifies and documents the age and gender of the ABBs before marking them and releasing them unharmed.



▲ May is prime time for the threatened piping plover to build nests amid sand pits created by NPPD along the Platte River. NPPD monitors nests and counts birds for annual reporting, as well as ensures predator control measures, like fences, are in place. This dedication has resulted in more than 300 successful nests observed in the area since its development. Pictured, a team from the U.S. Geological Survey conducts research at an NPPD site.



Almost 4,400 bird flight diverters, which help birds identify and avoid power lines, will find homes on NPPD's transmission lines throughout the state this spring. A new diverter design (right), which snap easily onto shield wire – the thinnest cable at the top of transmission lines – contains reflective and glow strips. ▼



Milkweed is the Monarch larvae's sole source of food, and the only plant on which Monarchs lay eggs. To encourage proliferation of the Monarch and other pollinators, NPPD last year designated 50 acres near Beatrice Power Station as habitat, and is identifying more habitat areas this year, including at Cooper Nuclear Station.



▲ It's common for NPPD to go a step (or two or three!) further in complying with state, national and federal environmental regulations, and all NPPD power plants meet current limits and standards for emissions. Teammates continuously test and monitor air, water and soil at facilities and throughout the Nebraskan landscape. Right, Columbus Environmental Specialist **Justin King** conducts water quality sampling on the Loup River.

Special composite matting was used successfully this spring to build NPPD's Muddy Creek to Ord transmission line. The matting allows NPPD to move large, heavy machinery over ground, particularly during wet conditions, preventing rutting or damage to local flora and fauna. (Right to left: Land prior to using composite matting, with matting during use, and after matting. ▼



The threatened Small White Lady's Slipper Orchid (left), one of Nebraska's many orchids known for its delicate beauty, pops up north of Columbus in a control population, an identified area of plant species NPPD uses to determine when they are blooming. This allows NPPD to complete proper land survey protocols during bloom periods to ensure work being done doesn't hinder rare flowers like Hayden's Blowout Penstemon (right) and the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (center), two perennials found in the Sandhills. ▼



▲ Thousands of cranes, geese and other birds regularly flock to NPPD's Cottonwood Ranch Property – 2,650 acres along the Platte River purchased by NPPD to enhance whooping crane habitat – during migration each year. Sixteen whooping cranes made their home there last fall. Nine have been spotted roosting there this spring.