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Industry and Conservation Partners Announce New Guidelines to Prevent Bird Electrocutions on Power Lines

WASHINGTON—Conservation and industry leaders today announced updated guidelines aimed at helping electric utility industries prevent bird electrocutions and ensure reliable power delivery.

The Avian Power Line Interactive Committee -- comprised of members from the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Edison Electric Institute and nearly twenty electric utilities -- released *2006 Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines*. The publication contains state-of-the-art guidance to help electric utilities protect birds from electrocution on power lines.

Participating in the press event were Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett; Tom Kuhn, President, Edison Electric Institute; Jamie Rappaport Clark, Executive Vice President, Defenders of Wildlife; Tim Male, Environmental Defense Fund; Doug Inkley, National Wildlife Federation; and other members from the conservation community and electric utility industry.

"For nearly three decades, this group of industry and conservation partners has been working in earnest to minimize bird and power line conflicts," Scarlett said. "The publication offers the latest techniques to both protect birds and ensure reliable electricity distribution at the same time. This is cooperative conservation in action."

"The 2006 *Suggested Practices* manual, while a significant tool and advancement of our collective knowledge, is just the latest success from this long-term partnership involving utilities, conservation interests and regulatory groups," said, said Brad Loveless of Westar Energy in Kansas and president of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee. "When we share information and concerns, we find our best solutions."

"Last year, power companies significantly stepped up their commitments to avian protection by agreeing to develop and implement new conservation measures," Edison Electric Institute President Tom Kuhn said. "The 2006 Suggested Practices guide reflects the most effective engineering practices available and provides detailed technical guidance to help utilities reach their conservation and system reliability goals."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first began working with the electric utility industry in the early 1970s. Officially the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee was formed in 1989. Committee membership now includes representatives from the Edison Electric Institute, 18 investor-owned utilities, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Electric Power Research Institute, two federal utility agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In 2005 this partnership produced voluntary guidelines for companies to use in the development of Avian Protection Plans. These plans can help a utility tailor a site-specific solution that fits its individual needs, while furthering the conservation of birds and improving customer service.

The updated suggested practices volume now provides utilities with step-by-step technical instructions that can help them implement some of the electrocution avoidance measures that might be called for in their Avian Protection Plans. It reflects the latest and best expert knowledge of engineers, industry specialists, and our best understanding of the biology and behavior of birds.

An interactive web site for the 2006 Suggested Practices volume can be found at <www.aplic.org>.

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