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NEWS

MINNESOTA POWER AIDS 2 STATES' OSPREY RECOVERY EFFORTS

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DULUTH, Minn. -Minnesota Power line crews will be plucking osprey chicks from their nests on transmission structures on Thursday, July 10, and Tuesday, July 15, for transport to South Dakota and Iowa, to aid in those states' efforts to rebuild their osprey population.

Chicks must be collected from their nests after they are well-developed but before they are able to fly. Once in their new home states, the chicks will be installed in secured hack boxes on constructed towers, where they will be provided food until they are able to fly and hunt on their own. Flying and hunting are instinctive, and the young ospreys develop the skills without adult training. The hunting behavior will imprint the young osprey to the area so they will return in subsequent years and eventually nest and raise their own young.

Osprey populations nation-wide were drastically reduced by pesticide use during the mid-1900s, but have rebounded particularly well in northern Minnesota, commonly using Minnesota Power transmission structures for nesting. The Company has been involved in osprey re-introduction programs since 1984, when it provided chicks for the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Other states have since requested and received chicks from Minnesota Power.

Iowa is to receive six chicks this year and South Dakota 12. Some of the chicks destined for South Dakota will be provided by the Crow Wing Power Cooperative, Brainerd, Minn.

The collection will be overseen by Mark Martell, a biologist formerly of the Minnesota Raptor Center, who will supervise the removal and evaluate each chick's health.

Bill Fraundorf, Minnesota Power's osprey program coordinator, will work with personnel from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, an endangered species biologist for the State of South Dakota and a non-profit organization called Wildlife Experiences in the relocation effort.

Ospreys are predators that live exclusively on fish. Full-grown, they are about 24 inches long, have a wingspan of about 5 feet and weigh approximately 3 pounds.



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