

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ALONG SO-CALLED “PREFERRED” ROUTE

### The Myth:

*There is no natural environment along EPCOR’s and AltaLink’s preferred route that would be impacted by overhead high voltage power lines.*

### The Facts:

● Significant sections of EPCOR’s and AltaLink’s preferred route for the Heartland Transmission Line lie within the Cooking Lake Moraine. This area contains many waterbodies and has been referred to as the Prairie Parkland “Duck Factory” because so many ducks and other waterfowl breed, nest, rear their broods here and stop over during Spring and Fall migration (Kristensen 1993a). Nowhere else in Alberta, except the Peace-Athabasca Delta and Hay-Zama Lakes area, contains such a large block of high-quality waterfowl habitat (Kemper 1976).

- Some of the waterbodies and natural spaces in this area that are important habitat for waterfowl, many other bird species and mammals, which would be directly impacted by an overhead high voltage power line, include: North Saskatchewan River, Strathcona Science Provincial Park, Bretona Pond Buck-for-Wildlife Area, Mill Creek, Fulton Creek Marshland, Fulton Pond, Fulton Creek, Sherwood Park Natural Area, Crosswhite’s Pond, Bretona ConservAction Area, Baseline Slough, Sturgeon River, and many other natural ponds, sloughs and wetlands.

- Bretona Pond is a popular wetland for hundreds of birdwatchers and natural historians annually (Kristensen 1993b). Significant research has been conducted at Bretona Pond and area. Green and Koski (1984) recommended the establishment of a Buck-for-Wildlife project at this site. In 1985, the Alberta Govern-

ment and Strathcona County entered into a joint Buck-for-Wildlife project and established interpretive facilities at Bretona Pond (Kristensen 1990). The pond was identified as having “good opportunities for wildlife viewing and wetland interpretation” (Westworth and Knapik 1987) and as critical wetland habitat (Griffiths 1987). As a result, the Strath-

cona County Recreation and Parks Outdoor Master Plan (1987) listed Bretona Pond as a significant natural feature, primarily as a productive wetland for nesting, moulting, staging and migrating waterfowl.

In 1989, Strathcona County and the Alberta Government further recognized the ecological significance of the Colchester area by designating the Bretona ConservAction Area just south of Bretona Pond (Kristensen 1990).

- Several hundred plant species, 3 fish species, 3 amphibian species, 181 bird species and 26 mammal species have been recorded at Bretona Pond (Kristensen 1981, 1982, 1993a, 1997, 1998, pers. comm.). A few of the more interesting bird species are: eared grebe, American white pelican, tundra swan, trumpeter swan, snow goose, ruddy duck, Barrow’s goldeneye, bald eagle, peregrine falcon (species at risk), great blue heron, sandhill crane, American avocet, Wilson’s phalarope, and short-eared owl (species of special concern pictured above).



See other RETA Fact Sheets for impacts on birds and other parts of the environment.



American White Pelicans

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