

WHAT DOES SWEPCO WANT WITH THE OZARKS?

The Ozarks have provided safe haven for plants and animals for more than 200 million years. Today this region is recognized as one of the most beautiful forested regions in the U.S. and as the home of more than 160 species that occur nowhere else in the world.

SWEPCO wants to –

- **Clear-cut and bulldoze 800-900 acres -- a 50-mile long, 150-foot wide strip through the heart of the Ozarks;**
- **Drill, blast and dig along the clear-cut strip to make about 300 boreholes, 7-10 feet deep and 30-40 feet wide, removing some 300,000 pounds of rock and dirt at each borehole;**
- **Pour about 450,000 pounds of concrete into each borehole;**
- **Bolt a 40,000-pound steel pole that is 150 feet tall to the concrete in the borehole; and**
- **Run a 345 kV electrical transmission line from pole to pole now and add a second 345 kV line later.**

If not stopped, SWEPCO will create a permanent scar across the heart of the Ozarks -- a massive eyesore that will be visible from space, the air, every major entryway to the Ozark Highlands region, many of the region's prominent tourist attractions and destinations, and hundreds of homes and businesses. Besides clear-cutting 800-900 acres for the transmission line, SWEPCO will bulldoze and level more than ¼ acre of land around each of the boreholes. Outside the line right-of-way, SWEPCO will clear-cut and bulldoze still more acreage to construct roads that allow access to the right-of-way during line construction as well as on-going maintenance.

DO THE OZARKS NEED MORE ELECTRICITY?

In its latest ruling of June 9, 2014, the **Arkansas Public Service Commission concluded that SWEPCO had failed to prove there is a public need for the proposed 345 kV transmission line project.** Rather than deny SWEPCO's application, the Commission chose to give SWEPCO another chance to prove the project is needed.

In June of 2013, Save the Ozark's expert witness, Dr. Hyde Merrill advised the Arkansas Public Service Commission to *"deny approval and certification of the proposed project"* because the applicant, SWEPCO, and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a Regional Transmission Organization, *"have not demonstrated the need for this project."* Dr. Merrill said, *"... the claimed needs, if they are real, have alternative solutions that apparently were not considered that:*

- *Are much less expensive, and*
- *Much less environmentally intrusive."*

Dr. Merrill proposed six alternatives to SWEPCO's proposal. None of the alternatives requires the construction of a 345 kV transmission line across the Ozark Highlands or a new Kings River substation on the banks of the Kings River, which has been designated as an Extraordinary Resource Waterbody. SWEPCO has not given full consideration to any of these alternatives.

WILL SWEPCO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE OZARKS?

Save the Ozarks expert witness Tom Aley, President of the Ozark Underground Laboratory Inc., concluded that SWEPCO's Environmental Impact Statement *"is extremely superficial and ... has failed to identify and assess environmental impacts on cave and karst features, cave fauna, and federally listed threatened and endangered species."* He cautioned **that construction and operation of the transmission line will result in degradation of water quality "in receiving springs, caves, and private wells. In addition, aquatic cave and groundwater habitats will be degraded."** He also noted, *"It is very*



likely that the transmission line will pass very close to caves that provide habitat for the gray bat and the Indiana bat, both of which are federally listed endangered species. The potential adverse impacts of the transmission line EIS and its maintenance on these species has not been professionally evaluated in the EIS and could be significant."

WILL SWEPCO IMPROVE THE ECONOMY OF THE OZARKS AND ARKANSAS?

In his weekly column of June 6, Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe wrote, "Arkansas has a history of protecting and nurturing our natural resources upon which much of our economy and culture are based. **The Natural State's pristine forests, lakes and streams have helped make tourism our third largest industry.** ... **The more that citizens of a community show their dedication to the natural beauty that surrounds them, the less likely their neighbors will be to damage that environment.** ... I'm proud of Arkansas's achievements to maintain our State's natural aesthetic over the past 25 years, but we must remain equally vigilant during the next 25 years and beyond."

Richard Davies, Executive Director of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, expressed concerns over the negative impact of SWEPCO's plan on "the scenic quality of Arkansas and especially the area this line would cross." Mr. Davies pointed out that this **scenic quality is the number one reason people visit our state, netting over 100,000 jobs and generating \$5.7 billion dollars in in-state spending last year.**

Mike Bishop, President/CEO of the Greater Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce, said, "People come from all over the United States to do many different things in our region but **the scenic undisturbed beauty and tranquility of the Ozark Mountains is always a main component in their decision to visit.** ... I believe, given the magnitude of the clear-cutting, the size of the poles to be constructed and the end result obtrusiveness to our Ozark terrain and scenery, it could be nothing but bad for our tourism industry. Any route is going to be unsightly and imposing on visitors no matter which direction they approach our area." Mr. Bishop also reported some useful facts and figures:

- "Tourism is ... very important to Northwest Arkansas. It is the only viable industry in western Carroll County. The four counties of Northwest Arkansas (Benton, Washington, Carroll and Madison) are second in the state in travel related expenditures reporting over \$744 million."
- "State tax revenue generated by travel and tourism in Northwest Arkansas totaled over \$45.5 million. Local tax in Carroll County generated by travel and tourism totaled over \$3.2 million. Eureka Springs' tax collections was over \$1.2 million."
- "Northwest Arkansas reported 9,742 travel generated jobs for a payroll of over \$163 million. Carroll County (predominantly the Greater Eureka Springs area and the western district of the county) reported over 2600 jobs with a payroll of over \$34.7 million."

The scenic beauty of the Ozarks is the foundation of our economy.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE THE OZARKS!

NO Extra-High Voltage Transmission Lines!

