

Klickitat PUD Sets Up a Perch For the Birds

Utility helps
preserve
osprey nest

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The osprey has a body length of 21 to 24 inches and a wing-span of 5 to 6 feet.

Its white head has a broad, black cheek patch and its tail is barred with brown.

The bald eagle, often confused with the osprey, has a completely white head and tail when mature, which contrasts strikingly with its dark-brown body. The eagle's large bill, feet and eyes are yellow.

Ospreys are seen frequently along the waters in Klickitat County, considering about 99 percent of its diet consists of live fish.

Ospreys build their nests atop dead or living trees, on power poles or on other human-made structures. The nests are made of big sticks and lined with grasses and pond weeds.

They commonly repair and use the same nest year after year, which is exactly what has been happening in the town of Lyle.

When football season rolls around every year, a crew from Klickitat PUD has to remove an osprey nest from the top of a light pole at Lyle High School's football field.

The osprey builds a nest directly on top of the light fixtures, posing a risk of catching on fire when the lights are in use. An outage is unlikely to occur at this site, but the KPUD has incurred power outage problems from osprey nests in other areas of the system.

KPUD's tree-trimming crew stepped in this year to assist with the osprey nesting dilemma. In a cooperative effort with Lyle High School, the crew installed an osprey perch on top of the light pole above



Journeyman Tree-Trimmer Jeff Speelman places a new osprey perch on a light pole at the Lyle High School football field.

the lamps.

Lyle High School teacher Doug Lambert supervised construction of the platform, under the direction of David Anderson of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

This cooperative effort provides the osprey with a permanent nesting perch, and eliminates the possibility of a fire.

KPUD is looking into other areas of the system where man-made perches could be a benefit to both ospreys and to the utility's electric transmission and distribution systems. ■



Klickitat PUD
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