



# Swan-Tyee Intertie Electric Transmission Line Easement

## Issue

The Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) completed construction of the Swan-Tyee Intertie (STI) transmission line in August 2009. This 57-mile-long, 138-kV electric transmission line connects Ketchikan's Swan Lake hydroelectric station to Petersburg-Wrangell's Tyee Lake hydroelectric station. Nearly 47 miles of the 200-foot wide corridor lies on National Forest System lands. The Tongass National Forest issued a special use permit to SEAPA for construction of the transmission line, and the construction permit expired at the end of 2009. On October 28, 2010, the Forest Service issued a 50-year easement for operation and maintenance. Power is now flowing through the Swan-Tyee Intertie transmission line.

Since the corridor is located almost entirely in unroaded areas of the forest, approval from the Secretary of Agriculture was required before the easement could be issued. The 50-year easement also authorized installation and use of helicopter landing pads, 91 of which are within inventoried roadless areas. Given the remote terrain, the power line will be accessed by helicopter to perform critical maintenance.

## Background

Reliable power is needed to attract economic opportunities to the communities of Southeast Alaska. The Swan-Tyee Intertie will increase the reliability of electrical service, and reduce community dependence on diesel fuel for power generation, thereby reducing air emissions and the risk of spills.

Existing hydroelectric power has not been adequate to meet Ketchikan's needs; while Wrangell and Petersburg have not used all of Tyee Lake's generating capacity. The Intertie will help meet Ketchikan's present shortage of hydroelectric power. The Southeast Conference's Electrical Intertie System Plan calls for links among existing electrical systems serving 19 communities throughout Southeast Alaska. The Swan-Tyee Intertie is Phase I of this planned grid.

In August 1997, the Forest Service completed an EIS on the project and issued a decision approving an overland route. The Forest Service issued a special use permit to Ketchikan Public Utilities in September 2001 for construction. Clearing of the corridor began in 2003; line construction began in 2004 and was completed in 2009 when the line was energized.

## More Information

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