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# NEWS

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## **LPEA Awarded Federal Grant to Protect Eagles and Upgrade High-Risk Power Poles**

**Durango, Colo.** – La Plata Electric Association Inc. (LPEA) is the proud recipient of a power pole mitigation grant from the Eagle In-Lieu Fee (ILF) Program. Authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 2018, the Eagle ILF Program is the first of its kind operating under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

LPEA plans to use the grant to implement eagle electrocution mitigation measures on 100 high-risk distribution power poles, ensuring that industry standards for “avian-friendly” criteria are met. In most cases, LPEA’s mitigation efforts will involve retrofitting existing power poles to provide 60 inches of horizontal clearance and 40 inches of vertical clearance, significantly reducing the risk of electrocution for eagles and other wildlife. This initiative not only safeguards local eagle populations but also reduces power outages and wildfire risks.

"This grant underscores LPEA's commitment to environmental sustainability and providing dependable power to our communities," said Chris Hansen, CEO of LPEA. "By protecting wildlife and reducing risks to eagles on our power poles, we are prioritizing both the well-being of our environment and the reliability of our service."

Operators of wind turbines or other infrastructure posing a risk of eagle mortality can seek an incidental take permit from the USFWS and may purchase credits from the Eagle ILF Program. Credit fees support critical mitigation efforts, such as the work LPEA will undertake with this grant, that compensate for unintentional (“incidental”) eagle mortality on permitted infrastructure.

The exact value of the grant will be determined once the scope of work is finalized. LPEA will collaborate with Eagle Electrocution Solutions, the Fort Collins-based operator of the Eagle ILF Program, to complete the project in 2025. To learn more about LPEA's efforts to protect wildlife and ensure reliable power for our community, please visit [lpea.coop](https://lpea.coop).

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### **About LPEA**

LPEA is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral, and San Juan counties. LPEA is the fifth largest cooperative of 22 in Colorado, and aims to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to its approximately 36,500 members. For additional information, contact LPEA at (970) 247-5786 or visit [lpea.coop](https://lpea.coop).