

Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan 2020-2021 Annual Report

Site C Clean Energy Project

Reporting period: April 2020 through March 2021

March 31, 2021

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1 Background

1.1 The Site C Clean Energy Project

The Site C Clean Energy Project (the Project) will be the third dam and generating station on the Peace River in northeast BC. The Project will provide 1,100 megawatts of capacity and about 5,100 gigawatt hours of energy each year to the province's integrated electricity system. The Project will be a source of clean, reliable electricity for BC Hydro's customers for more than 100 years.

The key components of the Project are:

- an earthfill dam, approximately 1,050 metres long and 60 metres high above the riverbed;
- an 83 kilometre long reservoir that will be, on average, two to three times the width of the current river;
- a generating station with six 183 MW generating units;
- two new 500 kilovolt AC transmission lines that will connect the Project facilities to the Peace Canyon Substation, along an existing right-of-way;
- realignment of six segments of Highway 29 over a total distance of approximately 30 kilometres; and
- construction of a berm at Hudson's Hope.

The Project will also include the construction of temporary access roads, a temporary bridge across the Peace River, and worker accommodation at the dam site.

1.2 Description of Construction Activities During the Reporting Period

The list below is intended to provide a high-level summary of construction activities that took place during this reporting period; it is not a complete list of all activities undertaken:

- In October 2020, BC Hydro successfully diverted the Peace River through two diversion tunnels and this allows the dam to be built on dry land. This milestone was one of the most important in the construction of Site C and involved building two 750-metre-long tunnels into the north bank of the river, through which the entire Peace River is now flowing.
- The earthfill dam construction continued with two cofferdams, sealing off the main channel of the river, being complete. The main earthfill dam will be constructed between the two cofferdams.
- Work on the generating station and spillways on the right bank of the Peace River continued. This work includes the Site C powerhouse, penstocks, spillways, turbines and generators.
- In the powerhouse, 75 percent of the concrete and 80 percent of steel have been placed.

- The six penstocks, which will funnel the water from the Forebay into the turbines and generators, are more than 50 percent complete. Penstocks are large steel pipes which are 10 metres wide and 80 metres long.
- Two of the six turbine runners have been transported to site from Brazil. The next two runners will be transported to site this summer, and the last two transported in 2022.
- The Site C substation was completed in October 2020 and is now energized.
- The first of two new 500kV, 75-km transmission lines was completed and energized in fall 2020.
- BC Hydro is partnering with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to realign six segments of Highway 29, between Hudson's Hope to Fort St. John.
- Construction is underway for all 30 kilometres of the highway that needed to be realigned to accommodate the future reservoir.
- Clearing of the 87-kilometre-long reservoir area is about 75 percent complete.

More detailed descriptions of construction activities that took place during the reporting period can be found in the quarterly Notices of Construction Activities¹.

2 Objective and Scope

2.1 Objective and Scope of the Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan

The objective of the June 5, 2015 Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan (CRMP) is to fulfill the requirements of Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) condition 63. The CRMP outlines the approach to cultural resources mitigation initiatives for the Project, including forming a Cultural and Heritage Resources Committee (Committee) that will consider elements such as identification and naming of key cultural sites, documenting historical use of the area, commemoration of sites lost to inundation, cultural awareness and orientation of workforce training, and support for cultural camps through financial in-kind support. Other activities or initiatives may be considered as recommended by the Committee.

The CRMP covers the Project Activity Zone (PAZ) as described in the EIS and as defined in the Federal Decision Statement (FDS) section 1.15.

2.2 Reporting Period

This annual report describes BC Hydro's engagement activities with Indigenous groups through the implementation of the CRMP from April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. In some cases, consultation and engagement with Indigenous groups on measures described in the CRMP that took place prior to this reporting period are also summarized here for context.

This is the sixth annual report of the CRMP.

¹ Also referred to as Construction Notification Letters, or Construction Notices. These are available on the project website along with the bi-weekly Construction Bulletins: <https://www.sitecproject.com/construction-activities/construction-bulletins>

2.3 COVID-19

BC Hydro's top priority is the health and safety of our employees, contractors, members of the public, and Indigenous groups. BC Hydro has been monitoring COVID-19 closely since January 2020 and has been taking appropriate action as the situation evolves. To minimize the risk of transmission, and continue to fulfil the requirements of Environmental Assessment Certificate condition 63, BC Hydro has been required to adapt its engagement with Indigenous communities to mitigate the risk of a COVID-19 event occurring.

These include:

- Strictly following Ministry of Health guidelines and implemented a range of protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Scaled back, or transition to virtual platforms, for certain activities to reduce or eliminate the number of in-person meetings, site visits, training sessions, and community gatherings;
- Restrictions on non-essential travel for BC Hydro employees and consulting service providers; and
- Postponing all non-essential work.

3 Implementation of the Plan – April 2020 through March 2021

This report summarizes the implementation of the mitigation initiatives described in section 5.0 of the CRMP.

3.1 Establish the Committee

In accordance with EAC condition 63, BC Hydro is engaging Indigenous groups on the development and implementation of mitigation measures respecting the potential effects of the Project on Indigenous culture and heritage through the Committee.

On September 24, 2014, BC Hydro invited all Indigenous groups named in the EAC and federal Decision Statement² to participate in the Committee. The Committee considers mitigation measures, which could include identification, naming and commemoration of key cultural sites; documenting historical use of the area, including trails, sites and stories; cultural awareness and orientation of the workforce; and, support for cultural camps through financial in-kind support. BC Hydro offered to provide an honorarium and to cover costs associated with travel to attend Committee meetings.

On October 17, 2014, BC Hydro provided Indigenous groups with the draft CRMP, which included the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Committee, for review and comment. Comments received on the draft CRMP were considered in preparing the final CRMP. Additionally, the ToR has been reviewed by Committee members, including the proposed cultural resources mitigation initiatives detailed in the CRMP.

² Unless otherwise specified, the term Indigenous groups applies to the following "Aboriginal groups" as defined in the Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) and federal Decision Statement (FDS): Sauteau First Nations, West Moberly First Nations, Prophet River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Halfway River First Nation, Fort Nelson First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation British Columbia, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society, Duncan's First Nation, and Dene Tha' First Nation.

To date there have been two revisions to the CRMP:

- Revision 2 (Summer 2017) to include an additional process for (a) discussing, identifying and developing mitigation measures for cultural resources outside of the Committee and (b) incorporating mitigation measures for cultural resources into construction planning. Revision 2 of the CRMP was shared with Indigenous groups on July 25, 2017. The revised plan was presented and discussed at the Committee meeting on July 26, 2017.
- Revision 3 (November 2018) to include the following changes: Providing a definition of “cultural resources” (Section 2.2); Setting out roles and responsibilities for implementation of the CRMP (Section 2.3); Establishing a process for review and revision of the CRMP (Section 2.5); Clarification of the role and structure of the Cultural and Heritage Resources Committee (Section 5.1); Describing the process for developing mitigations measures for cultural resources in collaboration with individual Indigenous groups, including ground-truthing activities and the preparation of site specific mitigation plans (Section 5.3); and, Identifying potential management options for cultural resources, including avoidance, mitigation, and compliance verification as applicable (Sections 6.0). The revisions were shared with the Environmental Assessment Office and Indigenous groups for review and input on October 10, 2018.

BC Hydro will continue to work with the Committee on the implementation of the CRMP and to respond to issues and concerns raised by Indigenous groups on the CRMP.

3.1.1 Frequency, Duration and Location of Meetings

In the CRMP and Terms of Reference for the Committee, it was proposed the Committee meet on a quarterly basis for the first and second years of Project construction. The frequency thereafter would be determined by the Committee members. Starting in the third year of Project Construction the Committee adopted a structure that incorporates a sub-regional approach within the broader Committee meetings.

The Committee held its first meeting on July 30, 2015. To date, representatives from twelve of the thirteen Indigenous groups named in the EAC and federal Decision Statement have attended at least one or more of the Committee meetings during the reporting period. Attendees include representatives from Doig River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nations, Halfway River First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, West Moberly First Nations, Saulneau First Nations, Dene Tha’ First Nation, Duncan’s First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

During this reporting period, the Committee has held 7 meetings. All 7 meetings were held by video conference call due to COVID-19 safety concerns.

3.1.2 Development of Cultural Resources Mitigation Initiatives in Collaboration with the Committee

The Committee continues to work collaboratively on cultural resources mitigation initiatives. This includes identifying measures to commemorate sites that will be lost to inundation, identification

and naming of key cultural sites, documenting historical use of the area, including trails, sites, and stories, and discussing and developing an approach to Indigenous cultural awareness and orientation of the workforce. The Committee is supported in its work by a third party facilitator, through Four Directions Management Services. Initiatives underway include signage shelters at the Project's northbank viewpoint, a calendar of community events, display cases located in communities to showcase artifacts recovered through the Project, exploration of a permanent exhibit at the Fort St. John Museum, and exploration of the feasibility of a cultural centre at or near the Project.

The Committee has successfully completed a traveling exhibit that travels to Indigenous and local communities displaying artifacts, stories and visuals that reflect the history and culture of Indigenous groups in the Peace region, as well as a series of commemoration videos on the impacts of the Project from the perspective of Indigenous groups. The Committee has also allocated funding from the overall committee budget to support commemoration and cultural activities that will be implemented individually by each of the 13 Indigenous groups.

The Committee has reviewed and endorsed BC Hydro's INDIG-201 training session for employees, acknowledging its importance in reconciliation. The Committee has recommended the training be mandatory for all Site C employees and also recommended Nation-specific local content be developed to enhance the cultural awareness training for employees.

Below is a summary of the meetings held by the Committee within the reporting period of this annual report:

- On May 5, 2020, (meeting #24) the Committee met and discussed progress on the Travelling Exhibit including feedback on the bison skeleton replica, artifact replica case, text and graphics. The Committee discussed EAC Condition #64 and locally accredited facilities to permanently house the artifacts uncovered during the project. This included an update on exploring the feasibility of developing a cultural heritage centre for long term storage of artifacts. The Committee also reviewed an overview BC Hydro's Indigenous Awareness Training and requested a more detailed presentation at a future meeting. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society and McLeod Lake Indian Band.
- June 9, 2020, (Meeting #25) the Committee discussed next steps for the Travelling Exhibit printed and digital content and fabrication. The Committee further reviewed and discussed EAC Condition #64 and the long term management of recovered cultural resources. The Committee also discussed the creation of a one page communication tool to report out to communities and build interest in CHRC initiatives. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Sauleau First Nations.
- July 8, 2020, (Meeting #26) the Committee met and discussed updates on the Site C Archeology Program, progress on development of the Travelling Exhibit and initial travel

logistics for the exhibit. Discussions also centred around approaches to repatriation as well as project phases and key activities related to development of the proposed cultural Centre. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from the BC Museum Association, Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Métis Nation BC, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Sauleau First Nations.

- October 15, 2020, (Meeting #27) the Committee met and discussed archeology updates on Farrell Creek finds, reviewed the status and process to date for the CHRC video project and the north bank viewpoint signage. The Committee briefly discussed the future structure of the CHRC and celebrated completion of the Travelling Exhibit by reviewing the process and project components. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Sauleau First Nations.
- November 18, 2020, (Meeting #28) the Committee met and discussed the first community visit for the travelling exhibit, the status of the video project and updates on the 2020 archeological field season. The Committee also received an overview of BC Hydro's Indigenous Awareness Training and provided feedback. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Doig River First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Prophet River First Nation, Sauleau First Nations and Métis Nation BC.
- January 19, 2021, (Meeting #29) the Committee continued the discussion on various areas of focus including: the Site C archeology program, the future structure and strategy of the CHRC and artifacts storage. Doig River First Nation also presented their proposed concepts for cultural centre context development. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band and Sauleau First Nations.
- March 10, 2021, (Meeting #30) the Committee met and continued discussions on north bank viewpoint signage, the long-term display and storage of artifacts, a communications roll-out plan for the completed video project, the strategy of the CHRC moving forward and the proposed governance structure and next steps for development of the potential cultural centre. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Sauleau First Nations, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Horse Lake First Nation and Duncan's First Nation.

Committee meeting minutes are shared with participants and leadership of the represented Indigenous groups for review and comment prior to being finalized. Meeting minutes are sent by email following the meeting dates. Additional information exchanged during meetings, such as presentations, photos and follow-up responses, are also provided to participants by email.

3.2 Development of Mitigation Measures in Collaboration with Individual Indigenous Groups

3.2.1 Identifying and Mapping the Locations of Cultural Resources within Planned Construction Areas

The Project continued to consult with individual Indigenous groups regarding construction plans, and offered opportunities for site visits, boat tours on the Peace River, and ground truthing³ of traditional land use areas within the PAZ prior to construction.

BC Hydro remains open to ground truthing additional areas of interest related to cultural resources⁴ with Indigenous groups where ground truthing has not already occurred. As such, on May 11, 2020, BC Hydro sent letters to Indigenous groups with updates on upcoming construction activities and invitations to conduct ground truthing.

During this reporting period, BC Hydro followed up with interested Indigenous groups to coordinate ground truthing activities with BC Hydro field support, facilitate independent ground truthing activities, offer site visits, and organize boat tours of the Peace River. Ground truthing and other field activities such as site visits and boat tours, undertaken during the reporting period are summarized in Table 1, organized by Indigenous group. For the purposes of this report, these activities relate to cultural resources.

Table 1: Site Visits, Boat Tours of the Peace River, and Ground Truthing Activities Undertaken

Indigenous Group	Project Component	Results
Doig River First Nation	Reservoir	A boat tour occurred on August 4, 2020 with harvesting activities.
Halfway River First Nation	Highway 29, Reservoir	A site visit occurred along Highway 29 on September 3, 2020

For an update on ground truthing and other field activities that occurred in relation to plant harvesting areas (specifically medicinal and food plants), please refer to the Aboriginal Plant Use Mitigation Plan 2020-2021 Annual Report⁵.

³ “Ground truthing” activities with Indigenous groups, including Indigenous registered trapline holders, is intended to provide BC Hydro with the information needed to verify and accurately site Indigenous land use sites or areas, and to identify concerns related to specific features, or sites that may be affected by the Project. In particular, BC Hydro is seeking to verify features such as plant harvesting areas (specifically medicinal and food plants), the location of burial sites, and the location of structures including when and how they are accessed by Indigenous groups.

⁴ Cultural resources are defined in Section 2.2 of the CRMP to be a site, location or feature of cultural importance to an Aboriginal Group and identified as such by an Aboriginal Group. Cultural resources may include, but are not limited to: prayer flags, trails, camps (including sites for cultural gatherings), habitation sites, and spiritual sites, including sweat lodges, and reported but unconfirmed burials.

⁵ Annual reports of activities conducted under mitigation and monitoring plans are available under the heading Site C Project Reports in the [Environmental Management document library](#).

BC Hydro has reviewed existing information submitted by Indigenous groups describing cultural resources which may be adversely affected by Project construction, including traditional land use studies, community baselines profiles, and existing ground truthing reports or investigative study reports. BC Hydro remains open to Indigenous groups providing further information, which could include identifying the location of the cultural resources(s) with greater specificity or providing further details in respect of the cultural resources.

3.2.2 Identification of Feasible Avoidance or Mitigation Measures for Cultural Resources

As per Section 5.3 of the CRMP, BC Hydro will seek input from Indigenous groups and with applicable contractors as appropriate, to identify feasible avoidance or mitigation measures, including monitoring where appropriate, for cultural resources identified to BC Hydro that will be adversely affected by Project activities..

3.2.3 Preparation of Site Specific Mitigation Plans

For cultural resources identified to BC Hydro that may be adversely affected by Project activities, BC Hydro will work with Indigenous groups to prepare Site Specific Mitigation Plans identifying avoidance and mitigation activities that have been completed, are in-progress, and that are planned and proposed prior to construction activities or key project milestones. Cultural resource information has been identified to BC Hydro through Traditional Land Use and Knowledge studies, ground-truthing, and on-going consultation.

Where appropriate and subject to protecting the confidentiality of information provided by Indigenous groups, copies of the Site Specific Mitigation Plans will be appended to the annual reports in future reporting periods.

3.2.4 Addendum to Chance Find Procedures

An addendum to the Project's Chance Find Procedures was developed outlining a revised procedure to be followed in the event of a chance find of human remains. The purpose of the addendum is to ensure that the procedures in place for responding to chance finds of human remains are culturally appropriate and sensitive, include appropriate communication protocols respecting Indigenous groups' interests, and provide for effective protection and management measures to be implemented given the associated cultural and spiritual implications. In February 2018, the draft addendum was sent to Indigenous groups seeking their input. Input received since that date has been incorporated.

3.3 Cultural Monitoring

As per section 7.0 of the CRMP, BC Hydro is employing mitigation measures to mitigate or reduce adverse effects on cultural resources. This includes cultural monitoring of construction activities by Indigenous groups to ensure culturally appropriate management and protection of cultural resources. The cultural monitoring program is intended to: contribute towards construction work planning and compliance verification, provide additional opportunities for Indigenous groups to engage in conservation, and site protection measures, and build community capacity through communications, education, and the intergenerational transfer of culture.

During this reporting period, cultural monitors were on-site monitoring various pre-construction and construction activities at the dam site, Highway 29 realignment segment areas, along the transmission line, and within the future reservoir areas. As of March 2021, members from 7 of the Indigenous groups have been participating in cultural monitoring, and more than 3626 person-days of cultural monitoring have been undertaken since the program began.

BC Hydro continues to work with Indigenous groups on the on-going development of the cultural monitoring program.

3.4 Schedule

BC Hydro will continue to work with the Committee and individually with Indigenous groups to plan and carry out activities described in the CRMP, as appropriate, on an ongoing basis throughout the construction phase of the Project.