

# *Aboriginal Plant Use Mitigation Plan 2023-2024 Annual Report*

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*Site C Clean Energy Project*

*Reporting period: April 2023 through March 2024*

*March 28, 2024*

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## Table of Acronyms

<b>BRFN</b>	Blueberry River First Nations
<b>DFN</b>	Duncan's First Nation
<b>DRFN</b>	Doig River First Nation
<b>DTFN</b>	Dene Tha' First Nation
<b>FNFN</b>	Fort Nelson First Nation
<b>HLFN</b>	Horse Lake First Nation
<b>HRFN</b>	Halfway River First Nation
<b>KLMSS</b>	Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society
<b>MLIB</b>	McLeod Lake Indian Band
<b>MNBC</b>	Métis Nation British Columbia
<b>PRFN</b>	Prophet River First Nation
<b>SFN</b>	Saulteau First Nations
<b>WMFN</b>	West Moberly First Nations

# 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 B.C. 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 kilometers; and
- construction of a berm at Hudson's Hope.

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

## 1.2 Construction Activities during the Reporting Period

Considerable progress was made and significant milestones were reached both on and off the dam site in 2023. BC Hydro remains on track to achieve the approved in-service date of December 2025.

With the completion of tunnel conversion in September 2023, there was the possibility that reservoir filling could start in late fall 2023, one year earlier than the approved schedule. However, as of early November 2023, some critical work areas still needed to be completed before reservoir filling could begin, including the approach channel, spillway gates and powerhouse intake gates. With winter weather and colder conditions setting in, the window to safely begin reservoir filling was coming to close. As a result, in mid-November 2023, BC Hydro decided to stay on track with the approved Project schedule. Work on the Site C Project continues to advance on schedule with reservoir filling planned to begin in fall 2024.

Key activities during 2023 included:

- Completion of the earthfill dam to the elevation required to enable reservoir filling. The earthfill dam is approximately 60 metres tall, stretches more than one kilometre across the Peace River and is about 500 metres wide at its base. As of December 31, 2023, the capping of the earthfill and the construction of the dam crest road and the dam face road were both completed. The conveyor system that transported glacial till material used in the construction of the core of the earthfill dam ceased operations and its decommissioning is in progress.
- Completion of the Highway 29 Realignment, improving safety and travel times for those travelling along the corridor. This work involved the realignment of six highway segments and five new bridges. The new alignment reduces curves along the road and improve sightlines. Additionally, wider vehicle travel lanes and paved shoulders improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and all roadway users.
- Completion of tailrace filling in October 2023. This process used pumps to move water from the Peace River into the tailrace area, to equalize the water level on both sides of the cofferdam in advance of breaching the right bank cofferdam. Once the filling was completed, the cofferdam was removed and completed in December 2023.
- Substantial completion of concrete placement. Concrete placements for the generating station and spillways are essentially complete. A small amount of concrete will be placed behind generating units 5 and 6 in spring 2024 for access to the flexible couplings (penstock sections that allow the penstocks to expand and contract). All of the concrete placements for the spillways were complete as of December 31, 2023.
- Redesign of the penstock flexible couplings fully meet BC Hydro's specifications. The installation of the redesigned flexible couplings began in February 2024. The coatings for the penstocks are forecast to be complete in summer 2024 to optimize the interfaces with the installation of the upper and lower flexible couplings.
- Substantial completion of right bank foundation enhancements, addressing the geotechnical issues that were identified in the bedrock foundation on the Project's right bank. As of December 31, 2023, enhancements to the approach channel were substantially complete, including the excavation and cleaning of the bedrock surface, the installation of waterproofing lining materials, grouting, and the placement of reinforced concrete and granular fill. Earlier in 2023, 96 concrete-filled, vertical steel piles were installed beneath the right bank structures to further extend the foundation deeper into the bedrock. Ongoing reviews by the Technical Advisory Board and the two independent, world-leading dam experts continue to confirm that the design of the foundation enhancements meets the highest safety standards and international best practices.

In addition, "balance of plant" construction activities continued within the powerhouse, including mechanical and electrical work, architecture installation/construction, and installation of heating,

ventilation and air conditioning systems, and installation of fire protection systems. Construction also continued on the permanent upstream fishway, which is on schedule for completion in spring 2024.

## **2 Objective and Scope**

### **2.1 Objective and Scope of the Aboriginal Plant Use Mitigation Plan**

The objective of the June 5, 2015 Aboriginal Plant Use Mitigation Plan (APUMP) is to fulfill the requirements of Decision Statement condition 14 and Environmental Assessment Certificate conditions 25 and 26. The APUMP outlines the approach to mitigation that will be followed during the construction phase, and as site specific opportunities are identified within the project activity zone for reclamation activities that support plants of traditional Indigenous value as well as relocation of rare plants of traditional Indigenous value. The mitigation measures related to Indigenous plant use are summarized in Volume 3, Chapter 19, Table 19.15 of the EIS and set out in [Appendix D of the APUMP](#).

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

### **2.2 Reporting Period**

This annual report summarizes the implementation of the mitigation measures described in section 4.0 of the APUMP from April 2023 through March 2024. In some cases, consultation and engagement with Indigenous Nations on measures described in the Plan that took place prior to this period are also summarized here for context. This is the ninth annual report of the APUMP.

## **3 Ground Truthing Activities from April 2023 through March 2024**

Starting in 2014, BC Hydro initiated ground truthing programs with the purpose of engaging with Indigenous land users, including registered trapline holders, to verify and accurately locate Indigenous land use information, 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) and ecological communities that support species of high traditional plant use, the location of burial sites, and the location of cultural and habitation sites, including when and how they are used by Indigenous Nations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the term Indigenous Nations 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.

The APUMP describes the scope of the ground truthing program and how the information gained during ground truthing is used to inform mitigation measures related to plants of traditional Indigenous value.

Unless otherwise indicated, the communications summarized below are sent out to all Indigenous Nations.

### 3.1 Invitations and Participation in Ground Truthing and Field Activities

BC Hydro maintains a standing invitation to Indigenous Nations to meet and discuss issues or concerns regarding the Project as construction proceeds. This may include other field activities such as site visits in the project activity zone with interested groups and boat tours of the Peace River.

Ground truthing did not occur during this reporting period. As the Project nears completion, there are few unimpacted areas remaining within the project footprint. There has also been limited interest in ground truthing and harvesting in areas that have already been impacted by the Project. BC Hydro will continue to be responsive to any ground truthing requests and continue to work with interested Indigenous Nations to plan and coordinate ground truthing, harvesting and other field activities.

During this reporting period, BC Hydro followed up with interested Indigenous Nations to coordinate and host other field activities in the dam site area and within the future reservoir. Due to the sensitive nature of the cultural information gained during ground truthing, BC Hydro does not provide site-specific details in publicly available reports such as this one.

**Table 1: Ground Truthing and other Field Activities**

<b>Indigenous Nations</b>	<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Results</b>
Saulteau First Nations	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On May 29, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour to provide SFN TREP/Lands Department with the opportunity to view the future reservoir, including Hwy 29 re-alignment work, decommissioning; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
Blueberry River First Nations	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On May 30, 31st and June 1st, 2023, BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a bus tours of Highway 29 and a boats tours on the future reservoir. The tours provided community members with a view of the project changes from the Highway 29 and the Peace River; and to support the Nation's understanding of construction and mitigation activities in the valley, including reclamation. Information was shared to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.



<b>Indigenous Nations</b>	<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Results</b>
Saulteau First Nations	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On June 6, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour with the Nation to provide with an opportunity to view the future reservoir, including Hwy 29 re-alignment work, decommissioning; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
Saulteau First Nations	Site C Dam	On June 15, 2023 BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a Site C Dam tour. The primary stop for the tour was the Temporary Upstream Fish Passage facility, where fish are captured, processed, transported, and released upstream of the dam. Members were also able to view ongoing construction activities, including viewpoints and discussions of the earthfill dam, the intake channel (construction, and environmental features) and to learn about upcoming project milestones (reservoir filling).
Blueberry River First Nations	Site C Dam	On June 15, 2023 BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a Site C Dam tour. The primary stop for the tour was the Temporary Upstream Fish Passage facility, where fish are captured, processed, transported, and released upstream of the dam.
Prophet River First Nation	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On June 20, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour with the Nation to provide with an opportunity to view the future reservoir, including Hwy 29 re-alignment work, decommissioning; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
McLeod Lake Indian Band	Site C Dam	June 22, 2023, BC Hydro hosted MLIB Community members on a Site C Dam tour to observe ongoing construction and to learn about upcoming project milestones (reservoir filling).
McLeod Lake Indian Band	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On June 23, 2023, BC Hydro hosted MLIB Community members on a boat tour to provide community members with a view of the project changes from the highway and river and share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
Dene Tha' First Nation	Site C Dam	On June 26, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a group of the Nation's youth on a Site C Dam tour to observe the Temporary Upstream Fish Passage facility, ongoing construction activities, including viewpoints and discussions of the earthfill dam, the intake channel (construction, and environmental features) and to learn about upcoming project milestones (reservoir filling). Tour guest speakers shared information about BC Hydro careers and Indigenous employment opportunities.

<b>Indigenous Nations</b>	<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Results</b>
Saulteau First Nations	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On June 29, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour to provide the Cultural Monitors with the opportunity to provide an overview of future reservoir, including Hwy 29 re-alignment work, decommissioning; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
Site C Environmental Forum	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On July 18, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour to provide Environmental Forum members with the opportunity to see the future reservoir, including Hwy 29 re-alignment work, decommissioning; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023. A total of 6 Nations were represented by 13 Environmental Forum members (BRFN, MLIB, HRFN, HLFN, DRFN, MNBC).
Site C Reclamation Sub-Committee	North Bank Reclamation	On July 20, 2023, BC Hydro Reclamation Sub-committee hosted a Northbank planting inspection meeting #11 to provide members with the opportunity to view reclamation areas on the north bank of the Site C Construction area.
Site C Environmental Forum	Site C Dam	On September 12, 2023, Environmental Forum meeting #32 was held in Fort St. John. The field component of the meeting consisted of a tour of the following sites: Northbank Viewpoint; Area 11 Reclamation; Fisheries enhancement channels and sites; Permanent Fishway and the Intake Channel. . A total of 7 Nations were represented by 11 Environmental Forum members (BRFN, DFN, HRFN, HLFN, KLMS, MNBC, SFN).
Doig River First Nation	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On September 13, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a boat tour to provide community members with a view of the project changes from the highway and river; and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2023.
McLeod Lake Indian Band	Site C Dam	On September 18, 2023, BC Hydro hosted a group of youth members on a Site C Dam tour to observe the Temporary Upstream Fish Passage facility, ongoing construction activities, including viewpoints and discussions of the earthfill dam, the intake channel (construction, and environmental features) and to learn about upcoming project milestones (reservoir filling). Tour guest speakers shared information about BC Hydro careers and Indigenous employment opportunities.
Doig River First Nation	Site C Dam	On October 4, 2023, BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a Site C Dam tour of the Temporary Upstream Fish Passage facility, and included viewpoints and

Indigenous Nations	Project Component	Results
		discussions of the earthfill dam, the intake channel and construction, and environmental features.
Halfway River First Nation	Site C Dam	On October 20, 2023, BC Hydro hosted HRFN Lands & Office Staff on a guided tour of the Site C dam site to observe ongoing construction progress, learn about upcoming project milestones (reservoir filling), and tour the temporary fish passage facility.

### 3.2 Ground Truthing Reports

In previous years, ground-truthing results including final ground-truthing reports were shared with relevant members of the Project team (e.g., Environment, Transmission Line Design, Roads, Properties, Construction Management) to be incorporated into mitigation measures as described in Section 4.0 below. BC Hydro followed up with respective Indigenous Nations to share how their information had been considered and incorporated into Project planning and the development of mitigation measures. In this reporting period, no new ground truthing reports were received from Indigenous Nations.

### 3.3 Plants of Traditional Indigenous Value identified through Ground Truthing and Consultation

Previous years' ground truthing activities had identified a number of plants with medicinal and food values. The majority of the species proposed for reclamation on the Project have traditional Indigenous value and are suited to revegetation of disturbed sites. Table 2 shows the food plants and medicinal plants that were identified as plants typically harvested by land users during ground truthing prior to 2018 or shared by Indigenous Nations through consultation.

**Table 2: Plant Species with Cultural, Food, and Medicinal Value identified through Ground Truthing and consultation**

<u>Trees</u>	<u>Shrubs</u>	<u>Herbs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alder – Green, Mountain, Sitka, Red</li> <li>• Ash - Mountain</li> <li>• Aspen - Trembling</li> <li>• Birch – Paper, Water</li> <li>• Black spruce</li> <li>• Cedar</li> <li>• Cottonwood</li> <li>• Fir - Balsam (Subalpine)</li> <li>• Hemlock – Water, Western</li> <li>• Lodgepole Pine</li> <li>• Mountain Ash</li> <li>• Pin Cherry</li> <li>• Poplar, Balsam, Black, Silver-leaved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bearberries (Kinnikinnick)</li> <li>• Beaver Ears (Wintergreen)</li> <li>• Blackberries</li> <li>• Blackcurrant,</li> <li>• Gooseberry – Black, Northern</li> <li>• Black Twinberry</li> <li>• Blueberries – lowbush, high-bush (mountain)</li> <li>• Bog Laurel</li> <li>• Bog Rosemary</li> <li>• Chokecherry</li> <li>• Cranberries – highbush, lowbush</li> <li>• Crowberry</li> <li>• Dewberry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arnica orchid</li> <li>• Aster</li> <li>• Baneberry</li> <li>• Bluebell (Lungwort)</li> <li>• Buckbean</li> <li>• Bunchberry</li> <li>• Buttercup</li> <li>• Cabbage - Wild</li> <li>• Canada Golden Rod</li> <li>• Cattail</li> <li>• Chamomile (wild)</li> <li>• Cloudberry</li> <li>• Clover</li> <li>• Coltsfoot</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spruce - Black, White, Swamp</li> <li>• Tamarack</li> <li>• Willow – Coyote, Pacific, Red</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Algae, Fungi, Lichen, and Moss</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algae</li> <li>• Black Tree Lichen</li> <li>• Birch Fungus (Chaga, Cinder Conk)</li> <li>• Diamond Willow Fungus</li> <li>• Flat Lichen</li> <li>• Lichen (Old Man's Beard, Witches Hair, Flat)</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Puffballs</li> <li>• Reindeer Lichen (Caribou Moss)</li> <li>• Rock Tripe Lichen</li> <li>• Shaggy Mane</li> <li>• Sphagnum Moss</li> <li>• Tamarack Moss</li> <li>• Tinder polypore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devil's Club</li> <li>• Dogwood (Red-Osier)</li> <li>• Dwarf Birch Scrub</li> <li>• Gooseberry – Black, Northern</li> <li>• Huckleberry</li> <li>• Juniper</li> <li>• Labrador tea</li> <li>• Mountain Alder</li> <li>• Prickly Rose (Wild Rose)</li> <li>• Raspberry</li> <li>• Red Swamp Currant</li> <li>• Rosehips</li> <li>• Saskatoon berries</li> <li>• Shrubby Cinquefoil</li> <li>• Silverberry (Wolf Willow)</li> <li>• Soapberries</li> <li>• Snowberry</li> <li>• ThimbleBerry</li> <li>• Trapper's Tea (Muskeg Tea)</li> <li>• Western Mountain Ash</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Others</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fern – Lady, Spiny Wood, Spiny Root</li> <li>• Horsetail – Common, Marsh</li> <li>• Sedges</li> <li>• Tlechuck wea?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cow Parsnip (Indian Rhubarb, Indian Parsnip)</li> <li>• Dogbane</li> <li>• Goldenrod</li> <li>• Goosegrass</li> <li>• Horseroot</li> <li>• Indian Carrot</li> <li>• Dandelion</li> <li>• Deadweed</li> <li>• Douglas Water Hemlock</li> <li>• False Solomon Seal</li> <li>• False Toadflax</li> <li>• Field Mint</li> <li>• Fireweed</li> <li>• Frog's Blanket (Bastard Toadflax, Coltsfoot, Comandra)</li> <li>• Harebell</li> <li>• Indian Hellebore</li> <li>• Ladyslipper Orchid,</li> <li>• Lily plants</li> <li>• Meadow Rue</li> <li>• Nagoonberry</li> <li>• Peppermint</li> <li>• Pink Wintergreen</li> <li>• Plantain</li> <li>• Potentilla</li> <li>• Sage – Pasture, Whit</li> <li>• Sagebrush Stinging Nettle</li> <li>• Strawberry</li> <li>• Sweetgrass</li> <li>• Sweetvetch – Alpine, Northern</li> <li>• Tall Larkspur</li> <li>• Tarragon</li> <li>• Twinflower</li> <li>• Rat Root (Sweet Flag)</li> <li>• Vetch</li> <li>• Wild Onion</li> <li>• Water Parsnip</li> <li>• Wild Peas</li> <li>• Wild Rhubarb</li> <li>• Wild Sarsaparilla</li> <li>• Yarrow</li> </ul>
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### 3.4 Identification of Rare Plant Species

The plant species of traditional Indigenous value identified through ground truthing and other field activities were reviewed against the Red/Blue listed species identified by the BC Conservation Data Centre as well as species listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

Of the species identified through ground truthing and other field activities to date, “Rat root” (*Acorus americanus*) is the only rare plant. Rat root is a cattail-like plant that grows in ponds, streams and wetlands. It is currently Blue listed in BC by the BC Conservation Data Centre.

## 4 Mitigation Measures

The APUMP describes mitigation measures, and measures to be developed in consultation with Indigenous Nations, that meet conditions of the EAC and FDS related to plants of traditional Indigenous value over the duration of Project construction. BC Hydro will continue to consider mitigation measures identified by Indigenous Nations through future ground truthing, field or other consultation activities.

### 4.1 Identification of Opportunities for Plant Relocation and Ecological Community Restoration

The CEMP describes the environmental requirements related to soil management, site restoration, and revegetation activities to be implemented by contractors. Reclamation activities during the reporting period have occurred along HWY29, at Portage Mountain Quarry and at the main dam site. Reclamation activities for other project components will be undertaken in the period following construction.

Plant species of traditional Indigenous value identified through ongoing ground truthing activities will be incorporated into reclamation plans, as appropriate. During this reporting period, BC Hydro consulted on the reclamation plans for Portage Mountain Quarry and Area A with Indigenous Nations.

The Reclamation Sub-Committee of the Environment Committee reviews and provides input into reclamation planning. Table 3 provides a summary of information shared and discussed during the Reclamation Sub-Committee meetings during the reporting period.

**Table 3: Summary of Site C Reclamation Sub-Committee meetings from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024**

Summary of Site C Reclamation Sub-Committee	
Date	Agenda items/Summary
June 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Area A Progressive reclamation plan presentation meeting #10 (Virtual)
July 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Northbank planting inspection meeting #11 (Field)
November 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	End of year review #12 (Virtual)

## 4.2 Indigenous Plant Nursery

BC Hydro has entered into a contract with an Indigenous plant nursery for supply and delivery of seed and seedlings to support re-vegetation and reclamation activities. In accordance with EAC condition 26, BC Hydro will make reasonable efforts to source plants and plant seeds of high traditional Indigenous value from Indigenous plant nurseries for use in reclamation activities. The actual sourcing of seeds, seedlings and stakes for use in reclamation occurred after detailed reclamation planting prescriptions are developed through the development of reclamation plans. During this reporting period, seedlings and stakes were ordered for planting on the damsite in spring of 2023, at Peace View Island in fall of 2023 and at Portage Mountain Quarry in spring of 2025.

## 4.3 Information shared with Indigenous Nations

FDS condition 14.2 requires BC Hydro to inform Indigenous Nations about Project activities that may affect the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes. This condition is fulfilled through the implementation of the Aboriginal Group Communication Plan (AGCP). Please refer to the AGCP and its annual reports<sup>2</sup> for more information on how BC Hydro is complying with this condition.

In addition, BC Hydro engages and shares information with Indigenous Nations through regularly scheduled Environmental and Permitting Forum, EAC Working Groups, or through other project and community engagement meetings.

## 4.4 Use of Herbicides and Pesticides

BC Hydro consults with Indigenous Nations as required by the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (MOECCS) during their review and confirmation of BC Hydro's Integrated Vegetation Management Plans (IVMPs).

BC Hydro manages vegetation around facilities and transmission/distribution lines according to two Integrated Vegetation Management Plans (IVMP):

- For Control of Vegetation at BC Hydro Facilities (# 105-0985-21/26) that describes the selection of vegetation control methods found [here](#)
- For herbicide applications along the transmission line will be conducted in accordance with the IVMP for BC Hydro Transmission and Distribution Power Line Corridors ( # 105-0982-16/21) found [here](#) .

Section 4.3.2 of the APUMP describes the considerations involved in the avoidance or minimization of herbicide and pesticide use during BC Hydro's vegetation management practice.

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<sup>2</sup> See [note 3](#).

The draft plan was submitted to Indigenous Nations for review and comment in October 2014. Comments received were considered in preparation of the July 5, 2015 version of the APUMP.

### **Notice of Intent to Treat**

Proponents are required to submit an Annual Notice of Intent to Treat (NIT) to MOECCS each year before commencing herbicide use. [Section 42 of the Integrated Pest Management Regulation](#) stipulates what is required for a NIT; click the hyperlink to view this section of the Regulation on the BC Laws website.

Prior to any use of herbicides described in that year's NIT, an information package is sent to Indigenous Nations with maps of the proposed treatment locations and details on the treatment program. The information package requests feedback from Indigenous Nations in order to identify plant harvesting areas or other areas of cultural or spiritual importance for consideration in the development of treatment plans or to avoid those areas, where practicable. The 2024 NIT will be sent to Indigenous Nations in April 2024 and will be described during the next reporting period.

### **4.5 Opportunities to Harvest Traditional Medicinal Materials**

Various Indigenous Nations have expressed interest in being able to harvest traditional medicinal materials from certain non-merchantable tree species prior to vegetation clearing, or alternatively, to have the material stockpiled after clearing so that the medicinal materials could be harvested prior to the removal of the non-merchantable material.

During ground truthing and other field activities, Indigenous Nations are invited to conduct harvesting or identify areas for future harvesting. No harvesting occurred during this reporting period.

## **5 Future Ground Truthing, Field Activities and Harvesting**

In the Spring of 2023, BC Hydro worked closely with interested Indigenous Nations to support opportunities for the harvesting of beaver that are anticipated to be impacted by the creation of the Site C Reservoir. This was an Indigenous led initiative and an opportunity for Treaty 8 Nations to practice their traditional right to hunt. Harvesting activities occurred in the Spring 2023 with Saulteau First Nation, Blueberry River First Nations and McLeod Lake Indian Band participating.

BC Hydro will continue to work with interested Indigenous Nations to plan and coordinate ground truthing, harvesting and other field activities. However, as the Project nears completion, there are few unimpacted areas remaining within the project footprint. BC Hydro will continue to be responsive to any ground truthing requests and continue to work with interested Indigenous Nations to plan and coordinate ground truthing, harvesting and other field activities. Any information received through future ground truthing, harvesting and other field activities will further inform the development of mitigation measures.