

Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan 2023-2024 Annual Report

Site C Clean Energy Project

Reporting period: April 2023 through March 2024

March 28, 2024

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Table of Contents

1	Background	1
1.1	The Site C Clean Energy Project.....	1
1.2	Description of Construction Activities During the Reporting Period.....	1
2	Objective and Scope.....	3
2.1	Objective and Scope of the Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan	3
2.2	Reporting Period	3
3	Implementation of the Plan – April 2023 through March 2024 Error! Bookmark not defined.	
3.1	Background	3
3.1.1	Frequency, Duration and Location of Meetings.....	4
3.1.2	Development of Cultural Resources Mitigation Initiatives in Collaboration with the Committee	4
3.1.3	Site C Cultural Center Development Project.....	6
3.2	Development of Mitigation Measures in Collaboration with Individual Indigenous Nations	7
3.2.1	Identifying and Mapping the Locations of Cultural Resources within Planned Construction Areas	7
3.2.2	Identification of Feasible Avoidance or Mitigation Measures for Cultural Resources	10
3.2.3	Site-Specific Mitigation Plans	10
3.3	Cultural Monitoring	11
3.4	Schedule	12

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

3 Implementation of the Plan – April 2023 through March 2024

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

3.1 Background

In accordance with EAC condition 63, BC Hydro is engaging Indigenous Nations 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 Nations named in the EAC and Federal Decision Statement (FDS)¹ 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 in-

¹ 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.

person Committee meetings. Starting in September 2021, this offer has been extended to also include support to attend in-person Cultural Centre Working Group meetings.

On October 17, 2014, BC Hydro provided Indigenous Nations 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. To date there have been two revisions to the CRMP in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

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 Nations 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. As the Committee has progressed initiatives that mitigate Project impacts to cultural resources (such as the travelling exhibit, educational videos and community display cases of artifacts), the focus of the Committee in 2021/2022 shifted to advancing the Site C Cultural Centre Development Project (the “Development Project”). The Development Project was initiated by the Committee as a legacy project to further offset project impacts to cultural resources.

In March 2022 the Committee agreed to shift to annual Committee meetings and formed a Cultural Centre Working Group that will meet on a monthly basis or as often as needed until completion of the Development Project which is anticipated for fall 2027.

From 2015 to present, representatives from each of the thirteen Indigenous Nations named in the EAC and FDS have attended at least one or more of the Committee meetings or Cultural Centre Working Group meetings. Attendees include representatives from Doig River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nations, Halfway River First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, West Moberly First Nations, Fort Nelson First Nation, Saulteau 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, there were 3 Cultural Centre Working Group meetings, and one of the meetings was held by video conference. While there will be more Cultural Centre Working Group meetings scheduled in the coming year, the final Committee meeting is scheduled in May 2024.

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.

Culture and Heritage Resources Committee Projects Completed to Date

Travelling Artifacts Exhibit & Commemoration Videos

The Committee has successfully completed an exhibit that travels to Indigenous and local communities displaying artifacts, stories and visuals that reflect the history and culture of Indigenous Nations in the Peace region, as well as a series of commemoration videos on the impacts of the Project from the perspective of Indigenous Nations. During this reporting period, the travelling exhibit has been displayed by the following Nations:

- McLeod Lake Indian Band : August 1-31, 2023
- Duncan's First Nation: August 2 - October 25, 2023
- Blueberry River First Nations: September 14 - October 26, 2023

The exhibit was also displayed in the lobby of BC Hydro's Dunsmuir office in Vancouver during the reporting period to further educate BC Hydro employees and contractors. The exhibit has been displayed in the BC Hydro office since November 2023 and will remain on display until the end of April 2024.

Commemoration & Cultural Activities Support

The Committee has allocated funding from the overall committee budget to support commemoration and cultural activities that will be implemented individually by each of the 13 Indigenous Nations. The funding could include activities such as trail mapping, ceremonies and documentation of stories.

Cultural Awareness Training

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 recommended Nation-specific local content be developed to enhance the cultural awareness training for employees.

Calendar of Community Events

The Committee developed a calendar of community events to provide cross cultural awareness to employees and the public. The calendar covered events over the summer of 2019, 2022 and 2023 and was shared with BC Hydro employees, contractors and within participating Indigenous communities.

Culture and Heritage Resources Committee Projects Underway

Initiatives underway include:

- Signage shelters at the Project's northbank viewpoint to document historical use of the area and further educate the visiting public and workforce in the region;
- Display cases located in communities to showcase artifacts recovered through the Project.

As the Project nears reservoir filling and as Committee projects near completion, the Committee is scheduled to gather in person on May 15, 2024 for a final meeting and overview of their accomplishments. No Committee meetings were held during this reporting period.

- As mentioned above, the final Committee meeting (Meeting #35) will be scheduled in May 2024.

3.1.3 Site C Cultural Center Development Project

The Site C Cultural Centre (the "**Cultural Centre**") is a proposed facility to commemorate, educate and celebrate the culture and heritage of the Indigenous Nations impacted by the Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C). This facility will be located at or near Site C and it is intended to support truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Nations impacted by Site C and to provide a respectful space to store and display artifacts recovered during Site C construction. Central to this effort is the sharing of stories and history of the original inhabitants of the region and to meet recommendations for preserving cultural heritage provided by the Site C Culture and Heritage Resources Committee (CHRC).

The Site C Cultural Centre Development Project (the "**Development Project**") includes the participating Indigenous Nations in decision-making processes to support the site selection, design, content and construction through to the opening of the Cultural Centre. The timeframe for this process is anticipated to be from Spring of 2021 to 2027.

Below is a summary of the meetings held by the Cultural Centre Working Group within the reporting period of this annual report:

- May 4, 2023 (Meeting #10) the project team provided an overview and project update; and reviewed the conceptual design and site selection. . There was a site visit to Site C Office, Area 11 and Site C North Bank viewpoint. The Cultural Centre Working Group meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from the Cultural Centre project team (Colliers Project Leaders, WSP Global Inc., Architecture 49), and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Prophet River First Nation, and Saulteau First Nations.

- January 23, 2024 (Meeting #11) the project team provided an overview and project update and exhibit design plan. GreenCoast Media provided an update on 3 exhibit prototypes they had been working on. The Cultural Centre Working Group meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from the Cultural Centre project team (Colliers Project Leaders, GreenCoast Media, WSP Global Inc., Architecture 49), and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Duncan’s First Nation, Dene Tha’ First Nation, Fort Nelson First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society, McLeod Lake Indian Band, and Saulneau First Nations.

3.2 Development of Mitigation Measures in Collaboration with Individual Indigenous Nations

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

The Project continued to consult with individual Indigenous Nations regarding construction plans and offered opportunities for site visits within the PAZ prior to and during construction.

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 .

Ground truthing did not occur during this reporting period. 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. Field activities such as site visits and boat tours undertaken during the reporting period are summarized in Table 1. For the purposes of this report, these activities relate to cultural resources.

Table 1: Site Visits Undertaken During the Reporting Period

Indigenous Nation	Project Component	Results
Saulneau 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

Indigenous Nation	Project Component	Results
		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.
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

Indigenous Nation	Project Component	Results
		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.
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 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, KLMSS, 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.

Indigenous Nation	Project Component	Results
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 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.

BC Hydro has reviewed existing information submitted by Indigenous Nations 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 Nations 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 has sought input from Indigenous Nations 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 Site-Specific Mitigation Plans

In accordance with Section 5.3, BC Hydro has prepared Site Specific Mitigation Plan (“SSMP”) for each location or object that falls within the definition of a “cultural resource” which has been identified to BC Hydro by Indigenous Nations and will be adversely affected by Project activities. As described in the CRMP, these plans identify and describe the management options selected for each cultural resource. Some of these Management options include the following:

- Partial or complete avoidance through changes to the design or placement of project components, or to the locations of construction activities, where feasible under existing project constraints; and
- Mitigation measures including site protection, cultural monitoring, altered work practices such as hand falling within cultural sites, relocation of cultural resources where this is feasible and culturally appropriate, implementation of chance find procedures and other measures proposed by Indigenous Nations.

Below in Table 2 is a summary of the management options that have been identified to address the adverse effects of the Project on cultural resources.

Table 2: Site C Management Options for Cultural Resources

Management Option	Management Option Description
Avoidance	Change in the alignment of HWY 29
Mitigation	Construction signage - No Work Zones near cultural resources Cultural Monitoring Program
Other	Ground-truthing program Boat and Hwy 29 tours to allow members to visit sites that will be impacted by the Project. Documentation initiatives including the Culture and Heritage Resources Committee Video project, artifact display case in community project, and drone footage.
Ceremonies	BC Hydro to support request for ceremonies
Commemoration	HWY 29 Signage: Traditional place names Boat launch signage North Bank Viewpoint Signage
Legacy	Site C Cultural Centre Development Project Site C Traveling exhibit

Since 2020, BC Hydro has been engaging with seven First Nations on the development of SSMPs for identified cultural resources. BC Hydro completed consultation on forty-three SSMP documents in the 2022/2023 reporting period. During this reporting period BC Hydro has continued to work with key Nations on the advancement and resolution of project impacts on significant cultural resources.

As mitigation initiatives continue to be identified and advanced, BC Hydro understands that each of the SSMPs will be subject to revision and improvement with the involvement of Indigenous Nations.

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 Nations 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 Nations 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, and within the future reservoir areas. Additionally, the cultural monitors attended, field visits to learn about

the rare plant translocation program and fish monitoring activities. As of December 2023, members from 7 of the Indigenous Nations have been participating in cultural monitoring, and 7,317 person-days of cultural monitoring have been undertaken since the program began.

Additionally, during this reporting period, BC Hydro continued to implement a Professional Development Program for the Cultural Monitors, where they participated in professional development opportunities connected to the water, land, and wildlife. The collection of training sessions will culminate with one or more credentials, including an opportunity to apply for an Applied Biologist Technician designation through the College of Applied Biologists in Victoria, BC. Courses included the following:

- Aquatics and Wetlands;
- Vegetation Identification and Classification;
- Seed Collection;
- Wildlife Management, Identification and Habitat; and
- Avian Identification and Habitat.

The Indigenous Nations completed their required courses and work hours and participated in a graduation ceremony on October 26, 2023.

Due to reservoir filling being scheduled to start in summer/fall of 2024, the cultural monitoring program has been paused and will resume in summer 2024 and continue until filling is complete. The Cultural Monitors will participate in wildlife monitoring activities during reservoir filling.

3.4 Schedule

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