

INFORMATION SHEET

TOPSOIL MANAGEMENT ALONG HIGHWAY 29 REALIGNMENT

Removing topsoil – the uppermost layer of soil – is necessary in advance of road construction, and is often one of the first stages of Highway 29 realignment work.

Topsoil is removed because it is not a suitable material upon which to construct highway infrastructure. It needs to be removed early so construction contractors can access competent subgrade materials and develop the solid and stable work surfaces necessary for construction.

In general, more topsoil will be stripped from Highway 29 construction sites than is needed for final Highway 29 corridor restoration. Because much of the new corridor will be paved or highway shoulder, only a limited area requiring revegetation will remain.

Topsoil required for restoration is stockpiled near the construction area until it is used. Surplus topsoil in excess of these amounts is usually removed for disposal in an adjacent area or made available to the general public.



During archaeology site soil stripping, soil is piled in rows to enable inspection by archaeologists prior to relocation away from the construction site.

For surplus topsoil enquiries, please email sitec@bchydro.com.

Managing topsoil in protected heritage sites

When highway construction works overlap a protected heritage (archaeological) site, topsoil stripping and stockpiling become activities legislated by the *Heritage Conservation Act*, and potentially subject to consultation with First Nations.

Stripped sediments from heritage sites cannot be retained for Highway 29 corridor restoration. Doing so would mean designating those portions of the highway as heritage sites, complicating highway maintenance. It would also subject these heritage areas to a higher risk of future disturbance.

The B.C. Archaeology Branch authorizes where stripped material from heritage sites can be placed. For Site C, we have developed an approach, in cooperation with the Archaeology Branch, that allows stripped material to be placed into permanent stockpiles, as close to the original location as possible. These new stockpile locations become new heritage sites that are registered with the Province, and protected from future disturbance by the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

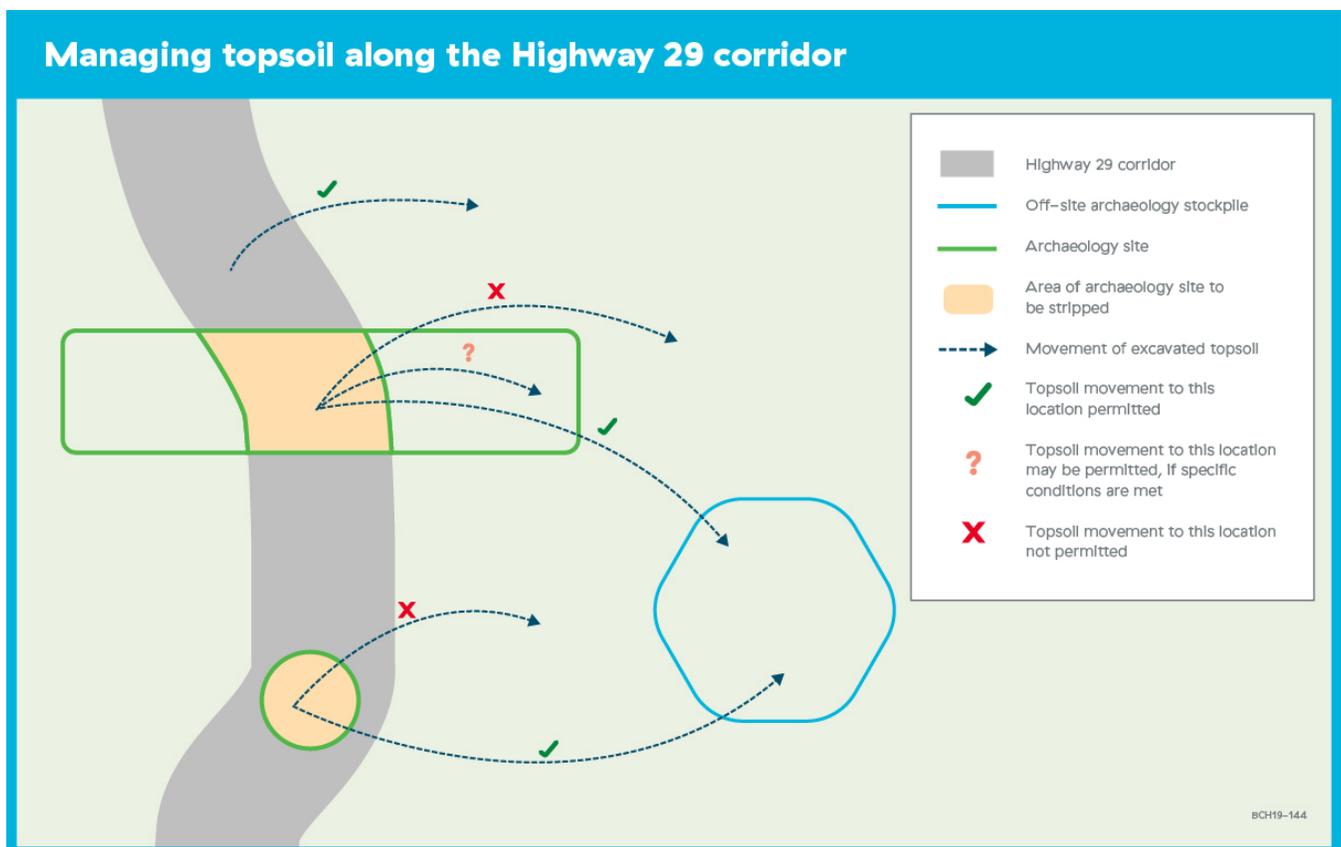
This approach to management of materials stripped from protected heritage sites prevents additional disturbance of heritage site materials during construction, potential work stoppages due to heritage chance find identification, and prevents inadvertently transporting site material to locations that do not presently contain heritage sites.

TOPSOIL MANAGEMENT ALONG HIGHWAY 29 REALIGNMENT

If a number of requirements are met, and on a case by case basis, it may be possible to retain stripped, protected heritage site material for agricultural purposes on lands adjacent to the highway right-of-way. The following are some of the requirements that need to be met for this to be considered:

- Confirmation that the land that overlaps with the heritage site is already being farmed, or otherwise being used for agricultural purposes (i.e., cultivation) on an ongoing basis;
- Confirmation that the adjacent land is part of the originating archaeological site, and that this area has previously been subjected to an [Archaeological Impact Assessment](#);
- Acknowledgement by the land owner and agricultural operator that these sediments consist of archaeological site material, with a commitment to not spread the topsoil beyond the boundaries of the archaeological site;
- Approval of the proposal by relevant First Nations; and
- Approval of the proposal by the Archaeology Branch.

If a land owner is interested in pursuing this, and if it appears that these conditions can be met, BC Hydro can work with the regulator and First Nations to obtain approval. If approval is granted, BC Hydro would then work with the land owner on logistics for receiving this stripped material.



An illustration depicts the permitted movement of archaeological and non-archaeological topsoil along the Highway 29 corridor.