



# *Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan 2016-2017 Annual Report*

Site C Clean Energy Project

Reporting period: June 2016 through June 2017

Date: October 31, 2017

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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 and cost-effective 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 Site Preparation and Construction Activities During the Reporting Period

The reporting period for this annual report coincides generally with the second year of project construction.

Below is a high-level summary of construction activities that took place during this period:

- the 1600-person worker accommodation facility was completed and is fully operational;
- early works / site preparation was completed on the dam site area's north bank;
- site preparation work was completed on the dam site area's south bank, with the exception of some clearing work in the lower reservoir;
- the main civil works contractor began physical works in the dam site area;
- construction of the temporary Moberly River construction bridge was completed;
- upgrades to public roads on the north bank were advanced;
- excavation and slope stabilization on the north bank;
- transmission line clearing and access road construction commenced and is ongoing;

- the turbines and generators contractor mobilized to site and commenced construction of facilities and works; and
- the south bank cofferdam and cut-off wall was completed.

## **2 Objective and Scope**

### **2.1 Objective 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 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.

### **2.2 Scope and Reporting Period**

This annual report describes BC Hydro's engagement activities with Aboriginal groups through implementation of the CRMP from June 2016 through June 2017. This is the second annual report of the CRMP.

## **3 Implementation of the Plan – June 2016 through June 2017**

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 Environmental Assessment Certificate condition 63, BC Hydro is engaging Aboriginal groups on the development and implementation of mitigation measures respecting the potential effects of the Project on Aboriginal culture and heritage through the Committee.

On September 24, 2014, BC Hydro invited all Aboriginal groups named in the Environmental Assessment Certificate and federal Decision Statement<sup>1</sup> 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 the thirteen Aboriginal groups noted above with the draft CRMP, which included the proposed terms of reference for the Committee, for review and comment. Comments received on the draft CRMP were considered in preparing the final

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<sup>1</sup> Saulteau 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

CRMP. Additionally, the Terms of Reference have been reviewed by Committee members, including the proposed cultural resources mitigation initiatives detailed in the CRMP.

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

As of the end of the reporting period, Sauleau First Nations, West Moberly First Nations, Prophet River First Nations and Fort Nelson First Nation had yet to nominate representatives to the Committee. BC Hydro remains interested in participation from all thirteen Aboriginal groups named in the Environmental Assessment Certificate and federal Decision Statement and will continue to send invitations to all for future Committee meetings.

### **3.2 Frequency, Duration and Location of Meetings**

In the CRMP and Terms of Reference for the Committee, it was proposed the Committee meet quarterly for the first two years of Project construction. During the reporting period, the Committee has held four meetings between June to December 2016, with three meetings held in Fort St. John and one meeting in Doig River First Nation community.

### **3.3 Develop 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 Aboriginal cultural awareness and orientation of the workforce.

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

- On **June 14, 2016**, the Committee met and discussed a broad range of topics including: a working group for reviewing permit applications, downstream impacts and how these were being considered, supporting elder participation in environmental monitoring, and loss of rare and medicinal plants. The group shared stories and historical ties to the Peace River, and discussed potential mitigation initiatives including work with the Fort St John Museum. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Doig River First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Horse Lake First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Dene Tha' First Nation, Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society and Métis Nation BC.
- On **August 25, 2016**, the Committee met and discussed the viewpoint being constructed on the north bank of the dam site and options for interpretive signs to share historical information about the region and Aboriginal groups. The Committee also discussed developing a partnership with the Fort St John Museum to support a traveling exhibit. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro, a representative from the Fort St John Museum, and representatives from Doig River First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

- On **October 20, 2016**, the Committee continued discussions around the north bank viewpoint and discussed updates on community participation and development of interpretive signage. The Committee also discussed next steps for the traveling exhibit with the Fort St John Museum. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro, representatives from the Fort St John Museum, and representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Dene Tha' First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.
- On **December 8, 2016**, the Committee participated in a site visit to the Site C north bank viewpoint location to see the work undertaken to date and discuss prospective placements and content of the interpretive signs. The Committee agreed to suspend discussions on the travelling exhibit. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Doig River First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

**Photo 1. Signage shelters at the Site C north bank viewpoint**



**Photo 2. Sample interpretive sign design at the viewpoint location**



In early 2017, in an effort to make Committee meetings more effective, BC Hydro decided to seek a facilitator to support the Committee. BC Hydro secured Dan George as a facilitator in April 2017 and began discussions with him on measures to improve upon the Committee meetings.

### **3.4 Other Cultural Resources Mitigation Initiatives**

In addition to work with the Committee, the Project continued to consult with Aboriginal groups regarding construction plans, and supported Aboriginal groups in ground truthing of traditional land use areas within the Project activity zone prior to construction.

For an update on ground truthing activities that occurred in relation to plant harvesting areas (specifically medicinal and food plants), the location of burial sites, and the location of habitation sites, please refer to the Aboriginal Plant Use Mitigation Plan 2016-2017 Annual Report.

For an update on ground truthing activities involving heritage resources, including palaeontological, archaeological and historic resources, please refer to the Heritage Resources Management Plan 2016-2017 Annual Report.

During the reporting period of this annual report, none of the Aboriginal groups who conducted ground truthing, shared or discussed the results of their work at the Committee meetings.

### **3.5 Information Sharing**

Committee meeting minutes are shared with participants and leadership of their represented Aboriginal communities for review and comment prior to being finalized. Meeting minutes are posted to the Site C Information for Aboriginal Groups SharePoint. Additional information exchanged during meetings, such as presentations, photos and follow-up responses, are also made available on the Site C Information for Aboriginal Groups SharePoint site, and can be accessed with a login and password.

### **3.6 Inspection by the Environmental Assessment Office**

In April 2017, the Environmental Assessment Office initiated an inspection in response to a complaint from West Moberly First Nations and Prophet River First Nation regarding the effects of the Highway 29 realignment on cultural and heritage resources in the area of Bear Flats (near the confluence of Cache Creek and the Peace River). The inspection included a review of BC Hydro's compliance with Environmental Assessment Certificate condition 63. The inspection was ongoing as of June 2017 and will be discussed further in the Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan Annual Report for 2017-2018.

## **4 Schedule**

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