

Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan 2024-2025 Annual Report

Site C Clean Energy Project

Reporting period: April 2024 through March 2025

March 28, 2025

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1 Background

1.1 The Site C Clean Energy Project

The Site C Clean Energy Project (the Project) is a third dam and generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. As the third project on one river system, Site C will rely on water already stored in the Williston Reservoir. Site C will generate about 35% of the energy produced at W.A.C. Bennett Dam, with only five per cent of the reservoir area. Once complete, Site C will provide enough clean electricity to reliably power nearly 500,000 homes, or 1.7 million electric vehicles, and will increase BC Hydro's current supply by eight 8%.

1.2 Construction Activities During the Reporting Period

Construction on the Site C Project is more than 90 per cent complete. On August 25, 2024, BC Hydro safely began filling the Site C reservoir following the completion of all necessary construction areas of the project. Reservoir filling was completed on November 7, 2024, and the reservoir has reached its normal operating range of 460 metres to 461.8 metres elevation above sea level. Key project structures such as the earthfill dam, powerhouse, spillways, and approach channel continue to perform safely.

In October 2024, the first of our generating units came online. As of March 31, 2025, three generating units are providing electricity to BC Hydro customers. The remaining generating units are anticipated come into operation by fall of 2025. In the final year of construction, project work will focus on completing the powerhouse and generating station. This includes completing the assembly of the remaining generating units, commissioning the generating units, and bringing them into service. Work has also started to revegetate areas no longer required for construction.

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 2024 through March 2025. 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 tenth annual report of the CRMP.

We have now entered the operations phase of the Project and the CRMP annual reports are expected to continue for the next five years, with the final report scheduled for submission in March 2030.

3 Implementation of the Plan – April 2024 through March 2025

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-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 Indigenous Nations on the implementation of the CRMP and to respond to issues and concerns raised by Indigenous Nations on the CRMP.

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.

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, Sauleau 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. The final Committee meeting was held on May 15, 2024.

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

As the Project grew closer to reservoir filling and as the Committee completed projects, the Committee met for the final time on May 15, 2024 to celebrate their accomplishments and collaboration on cultural resources mitigation initiatives. This included 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 completed the following projects:

- Traveling Artifacts Exhibit
- Commemoration Videos
- Commemoration & Cultural Activities Support
- Cultural Awareness Training – endorsement of BC Hydro’s INDIG-201 training
- Annual Calendar of Community Events – posted on the Site C Project website

- Signage Shelters at the Site C Northbank Viewpoint
- Artifact Display Cases to be displayed in the Site Cultural Centre.

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 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 Committee.

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 from Spring of 2021 to 2027.

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

- BC Hydro continued to work with Indigenous Nations on the development of the future cultural centre. During the reporting period, BC Hydro hosted 5 Working Group meetings, 2 Elders and Chiefs Committee meetings, 3 workshops, and 3 community meetings. The discussions focused on further development of the design of the cultural centre building, layout, exhibit themes and content gathering coordination. While attendance varied at the meetings and workshops, representatives from the following groups participated: BC Hydro and representatives from the Cultural Centre Project Team (Colliers Project Leaders, WSP Global Inc, Architecture 49, W3 Design Group) as well as representatives from Blueberry River First Nations, Dene Tha’ First Nation, Doig River First Nation, Duncan’s First Nation, Fort Nelson First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Kelly Lake Metis Settlement Society, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Metis Nation BC, Prophet River First Nation and Saulteau 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

We have now entered the operations phase of the Project, and BC Hydro maintains a standing invitation to Indigenous Nations to meet and discuss issues or concerns regarding the Project.

Ground truthing did not occur 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 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
Doig River First Nation	Site C and Dam site tour	On April 16, 2024 BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a Site C Dam Site Tour, including a tour of the Powerhouse. The tours provided community members with a view of the Site components including spillways and gates, powerhouse and permanent fishway.
Blueberry River First Nations	Site C and Dam site tour	On April 17, 2024 BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a Site C Dam Site Tour, including a tour of the Powerhouse. The tours provided community members with a view of the Site components including spillways and gates, powerhouse and permanent fishway.
Site C Environmental Forum	Environmental Forum	On May 29, 2024, BC Hydro hosted a field tour to provide Environmental Forum members with the opportunity to see the future reservoir, and to share information to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2024. Forum members also had the opportunity to visit newly constructed Lynx Creek boat launch; reclamation sites (Lynx Creek, Portage Mountain Quarry); and learn about bat mitigation & monitoring. Lunch and a discussion was held at the to visit Métis Nation BC's gathering space in Hudson Hope, which was funded through BC Hydro's Indigenous Traditional use fund (ITUF). A total of 10 Nations were represented by 17 Environmental Forum members (BRFN, MLIB, HRFN, HLFN, DRFN, MNBC, KLMSS, WMFN, SFN, DFN).
Saulteau First Nations – Chief and Council	Site C and Dam site tour	On May 30, 2024 BC Hydro hosted Saulteau First Nations Chief and Council on a Site C Dam Site tour including a tour of the Powerhouse. The tour provided a view of the site components including spillways and gates, powerhouse and permanent fishway.

Blueberry River First Nations	Hwy 29 and the Peace River	On May 30, 2024, BC Hydro hosted the Nation on a bus tour of Highway 29. The tour 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. Nation members also had the opportunity to visit newly constructed Lynx Creek boat launch; reclamation sites (Lynx Creek, Portage Mountain Quarry). Information was shared to prepare members for reservoir filling in fall 2024.
Saulteau and other northern BC participating Nations in the BC Energy Regulator Liaison Program	Site C Reclamation	On September 11, 2024, BC Hydro presented an overview of the Site C Reclamation Program at the BC Energy Regulator's Liaison Program Event in Chetwynd, BC to the BC Energy Regulators Liaisons, included representatives from Saulteau, West Moberly, Halfway River First Nations.
Site C Reclamation Sub-Committee	Site C Construction Area Reclamation	On October 2, 2024, BC Hydro Reclamation Sub-committee hosted a meeting #15 to provide members with the opportunity to view reclamation areas in the Site C Construction area. Areas viewed included north bank reclamation sites the P3 / P8 fish habitat enhancement area and northeast Area A.
Blueberry River First Nations	Site C Reservoir, WAC Bennett Dam, Peace Canyon Dam	On October 16, 2024 BC Hydro hosted a highway 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 2024. Nation members also had the opportunity to visit the WAC Bennett Dam and Peace Canyon Dam.

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.

BC Hydro will continue to be responsive to questions or concerns raised and coordinate field activities if needed.

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 construction activities at the dam site, Highway 29 realignment segment areas, Hudson's Hope Berm and played a key role in monitoring the future reservoir during the filling period. As of November 2024, members from 7 of the Indigenous Nations have been participating in cultural monitoring, and 10,151 person-hours of cultural monitoring have been undertaken since the program began.

A meeting was held with the cultural monitors on the final day of the program on November 15, 2024. An overview of their work, professional development and overall key contributions to the Site C Project were presented and celebrated.

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 operations phase of the Project.