



# *Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan 2015-2016 Annual Report*

Site C Clean Energy Project

Reporting period: June 5, 2015 to May 31, 2016

Date: July 5, 2016

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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 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 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 kilometers; 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

Construction of the Site C Clean Energy Project has been underway since late July 2015. During this period, construction crews have been undertaking site preparation activities in advance of the main civil works contractor's mobilization to site. These activities included the following: clearing trees and vegetation at the dam site, upgrading public roads, building construction access roads at the dam site, constructing a 1,600-person worker accommodation facility, excavation and slope stabilization, and completion of a temporary construction bridge.

The reporting period for this annual report coincides generally with the first year of Project construction.

# 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 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 in the first year of the plan's implementation; June 2015 through May 2016.

## **3 Implementation of the Plan – June 2015 through May 2016**

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 a Culture and Heritage Resources Committee.

On September 24, 2014, BC Hydro invited all Aboriginal groups named in the Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) and federal Decision Statement<sup>1</sup> to participate in the Cultural Heritage Resources 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, and indicated it would like to schedule the first Committee meeting in early November 2014, BC Hydro received no response to its request for names of nominees to participate in the Committee, and therefore was not able to hold the proposed November 2014 meeting.

On October 17, 2014, BC Hydro provided the 13 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 CRMP. Additionally, the Terms of Reference have been reviewed by Committee members, including the proposed cultural resources mitigation initiatives detailed in the CRMP.

On May 20, 2015, BC Hydro again wrote to each of the 13 Aboriginal groups identified as part of the Committee asking each of them to provide the names of two community members to participate in Committee meetings, and that BC Hydro would provide an honorarium and cover travel costs. BC Hydro indicated it would like to schedule a meeting in July 2015, in Fort St John.

The Committee held its first meeting on July 30, 2015. Since July 2015, the Committee has met five times in Fort St John. To date, representatives from 8 of the 13 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, Halfway River, McLeod

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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

Lake, Dene Tha', Duncan's, and Horse Lake First Nations, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

Blueberry River First Nations, Sauteau First Nations, West Moberly First Nations, Prophet River First Nations and Fort Nelson First Nation have yet to nominate representatives to the Committee. BC Hydro remains interested in their participation and will continue to send invitations to all Aboriginal groups named in the Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) and federal Decision Statement 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. The Committee has requested to meet more frequently and during the reporting period has held five meetings in Fort St John starting in July 2015. The Committee is open to holding meetings in other areas or communities outside of Fort St John, but has agreed to remain near the Project area and central to the Aboriginal communities participating on the Committee.

### **3.3 Develop Cultural Resources Mitigation Initiatives in collaboration with the Committee**

The Committee continues to work collaboratively and is focused on identifying measures to commemorate sites associated with removal and installation of eagle nest platforms. The Committee is also interested in discussing and developing an approach to Aboriginal cultural awareness and orientation of the workforce.

Below is a summary of the meetings held to date by the Committee:

- On **July 30, 2015**, the Committee held its first meeting and reviewed the draft Terms of Reference, including the purposes of the Committee, and potential initiatives that could be developed. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Dene Tha' First Nation.
- On **October 27, 2015**, the Committee met and discussed a broad range of topics including: history of the Aboriginal groups in the Peace area, burials sites in the Peace Valley, important cultural stories and prophecies, and need for and consultation with Aboriginal groups respecting the Project. It was requested of BC Hydro to provide more information about the archaeology and heritage program, and BC Hydro's mitigation plan for eagles. 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, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.
- On **January 14, 2016**, the Committee met to discuss BC Hydro's bald eagle nest program for Site C and its heritage and archaeology program. BC Hydro provided detailed information about the eagle nests surveyed along the Peace River, the process for removing nests and alternate nest platforms installed in 2015, and the location of nests planned for removal. BC Hydro also presented information about the Site C heritage program, including activities done to date, ongoing programs and key findings. BC Hydro also reviewed the procedures in the event an unknown burial is found during construction. The Committee raised a number of questions throughout the meeting, which BC Hydro responded to either during or following the meeting. The Committee meeting was attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Doig River First Nation,

McLeod Lake Indian Band, Dene Tha' First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

- On **March 2, 2016**, the Committee met to continue its discussion on bald eagle nest removals and alternate platforms planned for 2016, provide an overview for re-establishing native vegetation on disturbed grounds during Project construction, and discuss an opportunity to create an interpretive sign board for the north bank viewpoint. The Committee advised it would seek advice from elders in their respective communities on these initiatives and provide feedback to the Committee. As part of the meeting, the Committee visited an alternate eagle nest platform installed on BC Hydro owned property. At site, BC Hydro provided an overview of the design structure, and explained that the platform had been installed to provide an alternate location for Bald Eagles to construct nests along the (future) Site C reservoir. 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, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

**Photo 1. Site visit to location of alternate eagle nest platform installed on BC Hydro property.**



- On **April 20, 2016**, the Committee participated in an all-day site visit which included a boat tour to Rocky Mountain Fort to observe the heritage investigations occurring at the site, as well as a visit to the Site C north bank viewpoint. The Committee meeting was



attended by BC Hydro and representatives from Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Métis Nation BC, and Kelly Lake Métis Settlement Society.

**Photo 2. Culture and Heritage Resources Committee at Site C north bank viewpoint**



### **3.4 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.

## **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.