

CURRENT USE OF LANDS AND RESOURCES FOR TRADITIONAL PURPOSES

VOLUME 3, SECTION 19

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) details the environmental assessment undertaken for the Site C Clean Energy project. The EIS includes the project rationale, identifies potential effects and proposes measures to avoid or mitigate these effects. The EIS also describes the benefits Site C would provide for customers, Aboriginal groups, northern communities and the province as a whole.

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

The project has the potential to change the lands, water, or resources, or access to lands, water or resources used by Aboriginal groups for traditional purposes. The assessment considers changes to:

- Current use of lands and resources for hunting, fishing, and trapping activities, including the location of the activity, the species targeted, access to the activity, and the traditional uses of the harvested animals
- Current use of lands and resources for activities other than hunting, fishing, and trapping by Aboriginal groups, including the nature, location, access to the resource, and traditional use purpose

ASSESSMENT AREA

The local and regional assessment areas for the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes are based on the spatial boundaries set out in other sections of the EIS, as follows:

- Fishing opportunities and practices are based on the assessment area for the fish and fish habitat valued component.
- Hunting and trapping opportunities are based on the assessment area for the wildlife resources valued component.
- Cultural and traditional use of the land is based on the assessment area for the vegetation and ecological communities valued component.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

POTENTIAL EFFECTS	KEY MITIGATION MEASURES
Changes in fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider developing fish and wildlife habitat compensation programs that align with BC Hydro compensation programs • Develop mitigation measures intended to decrease impacts on First Nation trap lines in the project activity zone • Develop a communications program to inform harvesters of planned or unplanned events related to construction activities that may affect fishing and hunting opportunities or access

<p>Changes in fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities and practices (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications program to inform harvesters of longer-term changes in fish community composition • Implement all mitigation measures set out in the Wildlife Resources, Fish and Fish Habitat, Navigation and Harvest of Fish and Wildlife Resources sections of the EIS
<p>Changes in other cultural and traditional uses of the land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Aboriginal groups to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ground truth traditional land use information for specific areas within the project activity zone prior to commencing construction ○ Identify permanent habitation structures used in the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes that may be lost to inundation ○ Identify potential sites for re-location of medicinal and food plants to compensate for areas that will be inundated ○ Use only indigenous and/or non-invasive plants and grasses in re-vegetation programs associated with the project • Consider developing habitat compensation programs that align with BC Hydro compensation projects • Develop a communications program to inform harvesters of planned or unplanned events that may affect opportunities to harvest plants, berries, and other resources • Engage with Aboriginal groups around any reclamation phase that may present opportunities to restore ecological communities that support species of high traditional use value • Be prepared to provide support for the indigenous plant nursery owned by West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations located at Moberly Lake • Establish a Culture and Heritage Resources Committee • Consider implementing, in consultation with Aboriginal groups and British Columbia where appropriate, the following potential initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The identification and naming of key cultural sites and the potential to integrate Aboriginal names into project operations and sites ○ Recording of stories and history associated with key cultural sites that may be affected by the project ○ The protection and documentation, including mapping, of important Aboriginal trails and sites ○ Contribute funding to support a youth culture camp that includes transfer of knowledge around medicinal and food plants ○ Engage with Aboriginal groups to commemorate lost and submerged places; around potential plans to undertake ceremonies prior to construction of key elements of the project; and to develop and implement an education program respecting Aboriginal culture, history and use of lands and resources in the project area for all workers • Implement all mitigation measures set out in the Vegetation and Ecological Communities, Heritage Resources, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism and Navigation sections of the EIS

KEY FINDINGS

Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes - fishing

- The project may result in potential residual effects on the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes of Blueberry River First Nations, Saulneau First Nations, Treaty 8 Tribal Association, McLeod Lake Indian Band, the Métis harvesters interviewed for the Métis Nation British Columbia's Métis Use and Occupancy Study (MUOS), Dene Tha' First Nation, Duncan's First Nation and Horse Lake First Nation. BC Hydro is prepared to address and accommodate the potential for the project to do so by entering into arrangements set out in Impact Benefit Agreements.
- The transformation of the river into a reservoir would create a new and productive aquatic ecosystem. This new aquatic environment is expected to support a community of equal or greater productivity however the composition of fish species would change.

Although some aspects of the traditional purpose of the activity may be altered by transferring them to another location, fishing practices of Aboriginal people are adaptable, spatially and temporally.

Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes – hunting and trapping

- Hunting and trapping opportunities and practices of Blueberry River First Nations, Saulneau First Nations, Treaty 8 Tribal Association, Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, Dene Tha' First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band and the Métis harvesters interviewed for the MUOS may be adversely affected due to temporary reductions in availability of targeted species and temporarily reduced access to hunting areas during construction.
- As the effect would be temporary in nature and may be accommodated in other areas of the local assessment area, the traditional purpose of the activity would not be undermined.

Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes – other cultural and traditional uses

- Due to permanent loss of use of, and access to certain culturally important places and valued landscapes within the local assessment area, the use of those areas by Blueberry River First Nations, Saulneau First Nations, Treaty 8 Tribal Association, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and the Métis harvesters interviewed for the MUOS will be permanently impacted.
- For Blueberry River First Nations, Saulneau First Nations and Treaty 8 Tribal Association, the effect on other cultural and traditional uses is expected to be significant at particular high value places along the Peace most notably at Bear Flat, Farrell Creek and Attachie. The effect on other cultural and traditional uses would be significant for McLeod Lake Indian Band at the confluence of the Peace River with the Halfway River. These spaces, identified by these Aboriginal groups to be of high value, will be inundated and access to them will be permanently changed.
- For these reasons, a determination of significance has been made for the potential adverse effect of the project on current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes for these groups.

ABOUT THE SITE C CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT

Site C is a proposed third dam and hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. Site C would provide 1,100 megawatts (MW) of capacity, and produce about 5,100 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity each year – enough energy to power the equivalent of about 450,000 homes per year in B.C.

Site C is undergoing a cooperative environmental assessment by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEA Agency) and the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (EAO). The environmental assessment process commenced in August 2011 and is anticipated to take approximately three years to complete.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit bchydro.com/sitec

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