

STAGE 2 OVERVIEW:

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC

During Stage 2, BC Hydro conducted environmental and socio-economic studies, which were informed by input from regulatory agencies, First Nations and the public. Environmental and socio-economic studies — primarily baseline surveys — were completed for fish and aquatic habitat, vegetation and wildlife, water quality, local climate and greenhouse gas, heritage, community services and infrastructure, economic, land use and resources.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on Stage 2 work, BC Hydro has built on its historic understanding of issues and current conditions in the potential project area. Key findings included:

- Site C fish studies identified 31 fish species, of which mountain whitefish is the most abundant species. Other species include bull trout, Arctic grayling, walleye, rainbow trout and goldeye.
- Ecosystem mapping was completed for a wide corridor, comprising 63,965 hectares, along the Peace River and the transmission line. The mapping identified 22 ecological communities and 17 non-vegetated habitats altered by human activities, and provides a useful base for current and potential future vegetation and wildlife studies and analysis.
- Baseline wildlife surveys focused on habitat use and presence in the potential project area. Surveys were conducted for amphibians (frogs and toads), reptiles (snakes), butterflies, dragonflies, bats, fur-bearers, deer, elk, moose, sheep, owls, raptors, songbirds and waterfowl.
- BC Hydro reviewed previous Site C archaeological surveys spanning 27 years. An archaeological-potential model was developed to guide potential future heritage field surveys.
- Preliminary results from GHG modelling found that the Site C project would produce among the lowest emissions, per gigawatt hour, when compared to other electricity options.
- Based on the historic design, it is estimated that Site C will create 7,650 person-years of direct construction employment during the seven-year construction period. In total, it is estimated that Site C will create up to 35,000 direct and indirect person-years of employment through all stages of the project.

WHAT'S NEXT

Should Site C proceed to Stage 3, it would include an independent environmental and regulatory review. An environmental and regulatory review of Site C would include opportunities for consultation and input by the public, First Nations, stakeholders, communities and customers.