

Peace River Site C Hydro Project

Stage 2 - Socio-Economic Studies

Study Outline: Heritage Review Study

Introduction

The Peace River Valley is rich with tradition, culture and history and is known for its fossils. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of living, hunting, fishing, gathering and travelling in the valley. Artifacts and features from archaeological sites provide a record of pre-historic and more recent use and many areas continue to be valued by First Nations for traditional and cultural purposes.

Europeans established fur-trade posts in the late 1700's and were followed by other newcomers seeking resources and agricultural lands. Historic artifacts and features remain throughout the valley and are valued by present communities for their intrinsic and tourism potential.

Archaeological and historic heritage resources and other cultural resources would be affected by the flooding of the river, tributaries and land, the ongoing erosion of the reservoir banks, and by construction and road-building activities. While some sites have already been disturbed or destroyed by previous activity (agriculture, road construction and maintenance, gravel quarrying or natural erosion), the effects of flooding would further impact these sites and so require investigation. The surface of these sites could also be disturbed during reservoir forestry clearing, construction and road building activities.

Study Objectives

During Stage 2, Project Definition and Consultation, the overall objective is to learn more about the heritage resources in the area and to develop an approach for assessing the possible effects of the potential Site C project on those heritage resources. The specific program components will:

- Assess the current state of knowledge regarding archaeological, historical and paleontological resources possibly affected by the potential Site C project and identify the data gaps that would need to be filled to complete a potential future heritage impact assessment.
- Engage regional heritage specialists, First Nations and regulatory agencies to identify legal and regulatory requirements, identify community interests and concerns, and review potential approaches for a heritage resource impact assessment.

- Provide recommendations for completing a heritage impact assessment and review if the project proceeds to Stage 3, Regulatory – Environmental Assessment.
- Develop an archaeological potential model (2009) based on known archaeological sites, spatial mapping, and other relevant information.

Scope of Work

The geographic scope of the Stage 2 work includes:

- The flooded area of the potential reservoir, as well as the areas within the stability impact line and the erosion impact line around the reservoir rim.
- The potential re-alignment options for four sections of Highway 29.
- The transmission line corridor between Hudson's Hope and the potential Site C powerhouse.
- Additional project components will be reviewed as information is available, using consistent methods and models.

Past Research

The majority of the field investigations related to the impact of Site C on heritage resources were conducted in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Additional BC Hydro Peace River heritage studies, not related to Site C, have also been completed.

- Site C field investigations in the late 1970's and early 1980's identified four kinds of heritage resources in the Site C project area:
 - **Historic sites**, including forts and other log structures from the early fur trading and gold rush eras
 - **Prehistoric sites**, some dating back as far as 10,500 years
 - **Paleontologic** or fossil bearing sites
 - **Ethnographic** or traditional social and religious sites
- Excavation work done from 1985-1987 by Simon Fraser University archaeologists focused on fur-trade era forts and settlements in the valley. Earlier research analysed aboriginal use of the valley over time. Local museums display this rich history and some artifacts in current exhibits.
- In 1990 a Site C Heritage Resources review was initiated and partly completed.
- In 2002 a First Nations' Traditional Use and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summary and Data Gap Analysis was completed for the Peace Water Use Plan process.

Additional Studies

In addition to the Site C Stage 2 heritage studies described above, BC Hydro has implemented additional heritage programs in the Peace River area:

- Archaeological and traditional use monitoring, as a component of the environmental monitoring done during Stage 2 engineering investigation studies.
- Through BC Hydro's existing operations on the Peace River and implementation of the recently approved Peace Water Use Plan, BC Hydro will conduct:
 - An Archaeological Overview Assessment (2008/2009): a 1-year archaeological overview assessment of the drawdown zones of Williston and Dinosaur reservoirs and within the Peace River channel between the Peace Canyon Dam and the confluence with the Alces River.
 - An Erosion Monitoring of Archaeological Resources: a 9-year non-intrusive erosion monitoring of archaeological resources located in each of the drawdown zones of Williston and Dinosaur reservoirs and within the Peace River channel between the Peace Canyon Dam and the confluence with the Alces River.

Reporting

The Site C Heritage Gap Analysis will be available at the end of Stage 2 of the potential Site C project.