

Peace River Site C Hydro Project

Stage 2 - Environmental Studies

Study Outline: Peace River Fish Movement/Telemetry Study (2009)

Introduction

Bull trout, rainbow trout, Arctic grayling and mountain whitefish are important sport fish in the Peace River system. These fish species are migratory and may move long distances throughout their life cycle for spawning, rearing and overwintering. As such, the movement of these fish species will be studied to assess the possible impacts on migratory fish, associated with the potential Site C project.

There has been numerous telemetry tracking studies in the Peace River and its tributaries over the last two decades, extending from Peace Canyon Dam downstream into Alberta. The most recent are BC Hydro telemetry studies between 2005 and 2008, which provide detailed information on movements of bull trout, rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, walleye and mountain whitefish. To date, BC Hydro has compiled radio tracking data from 550 radio tagged fish.

The 2009 Peace River Telemetry Studies will track 81 active radio tagged fish (42 bull trout, 14 rainbow trout and 25 Arctic grayling) in the Peace River and its tributaries.

Study Objectives

The objectives of the 2009 fish movement studies include:

- Monitoring the magnitude and the direction of fish movements, and the seasonal variability of these movements, for Pine River bull trout, Arctic grayling and rainbow trout; and
- Determining the extent of fish movements into the Peace River mainstem and its tributaries upstream of the potential Site C dam.

Scope of Work

The spatial extent of the 2009 component of the telemetry study includes tracking fish in the following areas:

- Peace River mainstem from the Peace Canyon Dam to Peace River, Alberta;
- Halfway River from the mouth to the upper headwater tributaries; and
- Pine River from the mouth to the upper extent of the Sukunka and Burnt rivers, and the Murray River to Kinuseo Falls

Seven fixed telemetry stations collect precise time and direction information for radio tagged fish moving past the fixed locations. In addition, aerial telemetry surveys collect precise locations for radio tagged fish at the date and time of surveys.

The Peace River Telemetry Study will continue tracking active tags between March and October 2009.

Reporting

Final reports of the 2008 fish movement studies will be available at the end of Stage 2. Final reports of the 2009 fish movement studies will be available in early 2010.