

# BC Hydro Reservoir Archaeology Program

## Information sheet



Photo Eva Brooke

BC Hydro established the Reservoir Archaeology Program in 2008 to ensure that reservoir operations comply with the B.C. *Heritage Conservation Act*. Through the Program, we work with the Archaeology Branch of the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and affected First Nations to assess and manage impacts to protected archaeological sites in the active erosion zones of 26 reservoirs.

Protected archaeological sites are objects and heritage sites protected under Section 13(2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act*, specifically those from 1846 or older, as well as burial places and wreck sites.



Crew testing a cultural depression. Photo Ian Cameron

An active erosion zone is the area between the lowest and highest water levels in a reservoir and includes land above the normal high pool that could erode as a result of reservoir operations.



Recording an archaeological site in the active erosion zone of a reservoir. Photo Eva Brooke

The Reservoir Archaeology Program has two phases:

- Phase 1: Inventory and assess sites and then develop a management plan
- Phase 2: Implement the management plan

## PHASE 1: INVENTORY, ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN

This phase begins with an inventory where we work to identify protected archaeological sites in the active erosion zone of each reservoir. We do this work under the terms of a Heritage Inspection Permit issued by the Archaeology Branch. First Nations provide input into inventory design through Technical Working Groups. Inventories are usually multi-year programs and a report is prepared each year and sent to First Nations and the Archaeology Branch.

If archaeological sites are identified, we do site specific assessments to evaluate the scientific, ethnic, public, economic, and historic significance of each site. The assessments identify potential impacts to the sites from reservoir operations, where they can be determined.

After we finish the assessment, a reservoir specific Archaeological Management Plan is developed with input from First Nations and in cooperation with the Archaeology Branch. The Plan describes the site specific monitoring or mitigation activities proposed.

## PHASE 2: MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

We implement the Plan with input from First Nations to ensure that the activities being undertaken are achieving the Plan's objectives. We review the Plan periodically and adjust it as required, based on results. A report outlining the activities undertaken each year is prepared and sent to First Nations and the Archaeology Branch.



Archaeological Management Plan work at a reservoir. Photo Duncan McLaren



Surveying in a reservoir. Photo Eva Brooke

### For more information

To learn more about the Reservoir Archaeology Program or the Water Licence Renewal Project, please contact us at [projects@bchydro.com](mailto:projects@bchydro.com). We look forward to hearing from you.