

5.0 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

5.1 Objective and Approach

Consultation and communication are an important part of the planning and assessment process for projects. The overall objective of the consultation and communication program (consultation program¹) was to provide information to interested parties and to create meaningful opportunities to receive information and views. The consultation program aimed to achieve the following:

- ◆ Provide opportunities for the early involvement of interested parties in order to ensure their involvement throughout the assessment process;
- ◆ Effectively use a variety of mechanisms to provide information, receive feedback, and engage in a meaningful dialogue with stakeholders;
- ◆ Demonstrate an **adaptive approach** so that the consultation program could be adjusted in response to stakeholder issues and concerns;
- ◆ Effectively use the information received through the consultation program to avoid or minimize any negative Project effects and maximize Project benefits; and
- ◆ Communicate to interested parties how the information they provided was used.

The consultation program consisted of update letters, meetings, opinion surveys, key person interviews, a project website, open houses and on-going inquiries from interested parties.

5.2 Summary of Activities

A list of interested parties was developed on the basis of a preliminary assessment of the Project team of the potential for direct or indirect effects of the Project on the parties. The list included government (federal, provincial and municipal), Aboriginal groups, local property and cottage owners, local cottage and other associations, local businesses, the general public, and other interested parties.

The consultation program took place throughout the project planning and assessment and included three components:

- ◆ Pre-commitment consultation on the three principal modernization alternatives;
- ◆ Rebuild Alternative consultation; and
- ◆ Spillway Replacement Project consultation.

¹ The consultation program in this scoping document does not include consultation pursuant to Section 35 of *The Constitution Act*.

The feedback gathered during all three phases of these phases provided information valuable for the Spillway Replacement Project.

5.2.1 Pre-commitment Consultation

Starting in 2006, Manitoba Hydro conducted initial public consultations on the three principal modernization alternatives (Rebuild, Renovate, Repair) to provide an opportunity for interested parties to review and provide their input on the alternatives. The consultation program consisted of letters, meetings and three public open houses. The open houses were held February 12, 13 and 15, 2007 in Pointe du Bois, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg respectively. The total attendance at the open houses was 85 persons, with 23 attendees in Pointe du Bois, 44 attendees in Lac du Bonnet and 18 attendees in Winnipeg. A full summary of the interested parties input on the modernization alternatives is contained in Attachment 5.1.

5.2.2 Rebuild Alternative Consultation

The consultation program for the rebuild alternative consisted of letters and meetings with interested parties, surveys of cottage owners, seasonal users and day-users of the area, key person interviews and three public open houses. The public open houses were held August 26, 27 and September 12, 2007 in Pointe du Bois, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg respectively. The total attendance at the open houses was 126 persons, with 62 attendees in Pointe du Bois, 24 attendees in Lac du Bonnet and 34 attendees in Winnipeg. A full summary of the interested parties input on the rebuild alternative is contained in Attachment 5.2.

5.2.3 Spillway Replacement Project Consultation

Following the decision to proceed with the spillway replacement project, a consultation program was initiated in early 2010. The program included update letters, meetings, public open houses and a project website. Project information was provided and interested parties were encouraged to provide feedback to Manitoba Hydro on the Project.

In addition to the formal communication listed below, interested parties were encouraged to contact project team members with questions / concerns.

5.2.3.1 Update Letters

Update letters on projects in the Pointe du Bois area (Pointe du Bois Spillway Replacement Project, Slave Falls Tramway Conversion, and Pointe du Bois Vehicle Access Bridge) were sent to all stakeholders (over 300) in December 2009 and June and November 2010. The letters provided updates on the three projects in the Pointe du Bois area. In addition, the November 2010 letter provided details of the open houses for the Spillway Replacement Project.

5.2.3.2 Meetings with Government

Meetings were held with federal, provincial and municipal government departments and agencies. The objectives of the meetings were to share project information and obtain feedback on various aspects of the projects including the assessment methods. Meeting format was typically a PowerPoint presentation and questions and answers. A list of key meetings held is outlined below.

- ◆ January 26, 2010 – Meeting with Federal and Provincial authorities to present information on the Spillway Replacement Project, provide overview of environmental studies and present the anticipated regulatory review and construction schedules.
- ◆ March 25, 2010 – Progress meeting with representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Manitoba Conservation (Fisheries). Information was provided on methods of assessment and results of the environmental studies focussing on the aquatic environment.
- ◆ May 11, 2010 – Meeting with representatives from Manitoba Conservation (Parks) and Manitoba Innovation, Energy and Mines. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project update and review potential material source areas.
- ◆ May 17, 2010 – Site visit to Pointe du Bois attended by representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Manitoba Conservation (Fisheries).
- ◆ July 13, 2010 – Meeting and site visit with representatives from Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation and Manitoba Conservation (Parks). The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project overview.
- ◆ July 14, 2010 – Project Administrative Team meeting coordinated by Manitoba Conservation. In attendance were representatives from Manitoba Conservation, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, Transport Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. A project overview was provided by Manitoba Hydro and this was followed by the anticipated federal and provincial environmental assessment processes.
- ◆ January 14, 2011 – Meeting with representatives from Manitoba Conservation (Parks) to provide updated project information, including the construction sequencing.
- ◆ January 19, 2011 – Project overview was provided at a joint RM and Town of Lac du Bonnet meeting. Representatives from the Town of Pinawa also were in attendance.
- ◆ February 14, 2011 – Progress meeting with representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Manitoba Conservation (Fisheries). Also in attendance were representatives from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the Major Projects Management Office.

- ◆ February 24, 2011 – Meeting with representatives from Transport Canada to provide a project update. Also in attendance was a representative from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.
- ◆ April 21, 2011 – Meeting with representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Manitoba Conservation (Fisheries). Also in attendance was a representative from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish assessment and the **fish habitat** compensation plan.
- ◆ April 26, 2011 – Meeting with the provincial Integrated Resource Management Team (IRMT). The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project update including the general arrangement and construction sequencing.

5.2.3.3 Meetings with Aboriginal Groups

Project update presentations concerning the Spillway Replacement Project were held with Sagkeeng First Nation (SFN), the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) and the Black River First Nation. Meeting format was a PowerPoint presentation and questions and answers. A summary of the meetings and objectives is provided below.

Sagkeeng First Nation

Meetings were held with representatives of SFN on February 24 and June 11, 2010 to present information on the Spillway Replacement Project and to further discussions on a proposed agreement for a traditional knowledge use study by SFN to provide information for the EIS. On March 14, 2011, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada organized a meeting with the Chief and Council of SFN. Representatives of Manitoba Hydro attended to present project details.

Manitoba Metis Federation

A meeting was held with representatives of MMF on May 21, 2010 to present information on the Spillway Replacement Project and to discuss a proposed traditional use study by the MMF to provide information for the EIS. Subsequently, meetings were held on October 29, November 2 and November 12, 2010 to discuss a detailed workplan for the proposed traditional use study.

Black River First Nation

Manitoba Hydro presented a project overview of the Pointe du Bois Spillway Replacement Project to the Black River First Nation on May 13, 2010.

Proposals for Traditional Use Studies

A number of additional meetings were held with SFN and the MMF to discuss the potential of conducting traditional use studies in the Project **study area**. The latest proposals were provided in 2010; however, agreements were not concluded prior to completion of the EIS.

5.2.3.4 Meetings with Cottagers Associations

Project information has been shared with representative from the Pointe du Bois Cottagers Association Modernization Committee and the Whiteshell Cottagers Association on April 6, 2010 and May 5, 2011. A representative of a local lodge and outfitter was present at the May 5, 2011 meeting. The meeting format was a combination of PowerPoint presentation, round table discussion, questions and answers.

5.2.3.5 Open Houses

Advertisements announcing the public open houses were placed in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Winnipeg Sun*, *Canstar Community News (The Headliner, The Herald, The Lance, The Metro, The Sou'Wester, and The Times)*, *The Clipper Weekly*, the *Lac Du Bonnet Leader*, the *Beausejour Review*, the *Winnipeg River Echo*, *The Paper (Pinawa)*, and the *Lake of the Woods Enterprise (Kenora)*. As well, a letter of invitation to attend the open houses was sent to all identified stakeholders.

The public open houses on the Spillway Replacement Project were held on November 24, 2010 in Pointe du Bois and November 29, 2010 in Winnipeg. The open houses consisted of the traditional format of informational storyboards and project materials. Manitoba Hydro representatives were available to answer questions. There were 15 attendees in Pointe du Bois and 32 attendees in Winnipeg. A summary of the open house feedback is found in Attachment 5.3.

5.2.3.6 Project Website

A web site for the Project was set up and can be found at: www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/pointe_du_bois. The website provides an overview of the components of the Project, environmental assessment activities, public consultation feedback and a contact regarding questions and/or concerns. Manitoba Hydro received nine e-mail enquires through the website contact since December 2009. These enquires were responded to by project team members.

5.3 Consultation Feedback

A summary of the feedback from the consultation program is contained in Table 5.1. The feedback was useful for Project design and environmental assessment considerations. The feedback will also be considered in the construction of the Project.

Table 5.1: Consultation Feedback

Category	Comment/Concern
Need for the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clear recognition of the need to modernize facilities at Pointe du Bois ◆ Strong support for continued power production at Pointe du Bois
Economic Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Potential for positive local economic opportunities, including employment ◆ Concern expressed with regard to the loss of operating jobs following construction of the Project.
Local Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increase traffic volumes as a result of the project. ◆ Public safety / Security. ◆ Minimize the construction schedule to limit the number of years of disruption to the local area. ◆ Minimize construction related noise on weekends and in the evenings. ◆ Improve existing boat launch facilities including more parking. ◆ Accommodations for workers. ◆ Disruption to quiet enjoyment. ◆ Change in views/aesthetics from old to new. ◆ Future of the townsite at Pointe du Bois. ◆ Interest in public access to the east side. ◆ Interest in incorporating a boat lift in the design of the new spillway. ◆ Interest in preserving heritage elements of the facilities. ◆ Decrease in property values.
Terrestrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Impact to natural landscape as a result of clearing.
Fish and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Comments regarding the variety and abundance of fish in the area. ◆ Potential impacts on fish, fish habitat and spawning in both construction and operation, focussing on lake sturgeon. ◆ Concern regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat in the area.
Traffic and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Concern regarding construction traffic and the impacts it would have to: ◆ Condition of PR 313 ◆ Safety on PR 313, minimize heavy truck traffic on the weekends and after dark. ◆ Noise ◆ Increased traffic through townsite and cottage areas.
Water Level, Flow Patterns and water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strong interest in maintaining the present water regime, both upstream and downstream. ◆ Concern regarding potential on downstream ice conditions, safety for winter ice crossings and fluctuations in water levels in winter. ◆ Concern regarding potential for erosion from fluctuating water levels and flow rates. ◆ Concern regarding a change to water currents and flow patterns. ◆ Concern regarding impacts on local water quality, both short and long-term.

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What We Heard – A Report on the Public Consultation on Modernization Alternatives for the Pointe du Bois Generating Station

Your Feedback

Manitoba Hydro would like to express appreciation to all those who participated in the public open houses in February 2007 in Pointe du Bois, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg on modernization alternatives for Pointe du Bois and shared with us with their comments, interests and concerns.

The information we have received in this public consultation process will help in our selection of our modernization alternative, the development of detailed project plans and our examination of environmental and socio-economic impacts and proposed mitigation for the selected alternative.

What We Heard

- **The Need to Modernize**
 - There is a clear recognition of the need to modernize Manitoba Hydro's facilities at Pointe du Bois. Indeed, many felt modernization was long overdue and concern was expressed that the modernization might not proceed.
 - Very strong support was shown for continuing power production at this location, with the Rebuild alternative strongly favoured as the other alternatives were viewed as short-term and not cost-effective.
 - The Rebuild alternative was also regarded as offering the best potential to make the operation more efficient and safe.
 - The benefits and importance of continuing power production in this southern location were also noted.
 - The fact the area is a desirable recreation area because of hydropower generating facilities was also mentioned, urging that modernization proceed to ensure this recreational environment continues to exist for future generations.
- **Water and Water Levels**
 - The impact of modernization on water levels was the most frequent question raised, with a very strong interest expressed in maintaining the present water regime, both upstream and downstream. Also of interest was the potential for water level fluctuations during construction and operations once the modernized facilities are in place. Potential impacts on downstream ice conditions and safety for winter ice crossings were also of concern, as were fluctuations in water levels

in winter that could lead to ice damage to property. Potential for erosion from fluctuating water levels and flow rates was also a concern, as was water safety. Public notification of possible water level changes was suggested.

- Other water related interests raised included water quality, water flow patterns, potential siltation during construction and impacts on local water supply, both short and long-term.

- **Fish and Wildlife**

- Numerous comments were received about the variety and abundance of fish in the area and the potential impact on aquatic species that may be endangered or under threat.
- As well, potential impacts on fish, fish habitat and spawning in both construction and operation were also frequently mentioned.
- Concern was also expressed for wildlife and wildlife habitat in the area.

- **Construction**

- In relation to construction, impacts on the road into Pointe du Bois were mentioned frequently. Concerns included not only the physical deterioration of the road during construction and post-construction condition, but also traffic volumes, safety, noise, dust and potential use of a gravel surface. Concern was expressed about being able to continue to have access through the townsite to access cottages.
- Interest was expressed in local use of the river to transport materials to the construction site and the improvement of existing and development of new boat launch facilities and their availability for public use.
- Other concerns included clearing of forest for construction, use of temporary dams during construction, timing of work (both throughout the day and seasonally), noise and light impacts, location of rock and gravel sources, and potential employment and business opportunities.
- Other questions and comments related to construction focused on the social impact of an influx of construction workers into a rural recreation area including crime and public safety, housing of construction workers, location of a construction camp, and adequacy of the town sewage treatment plant.
- Interest was expressed in the potential to shorten the construction schedule to reduce the number of years of disruption in the local area.

- The ability to undertake a large scale construction project within the existing restrictions for the Provincial Park was of interest, as was Manitoba Hydro's intention to seek exemption from rules that apply to Park users.
- **Economic Impacts**
 - Comments also suggested a modernization project would have positive economic impacts for the region.
 - Concern was also expressed that the reduction of Manitoba Hydro jobs in operations would reduce opportunities for young people in the region.
 - Concern was expressed that modernization may adversely impact the desirability of individual properties and property values
- **Future Facilities**
 - A number of questions concerned the specific location in the river of the modernized facilities (not yet determined).
 - Interest was expressed in whether the modernization would provide public access to the east side of the river, with some in favour and many opposed.
 - Concern was expressed that the snowmobile trail along the existing transmission line be considered during construction and development of any new transmission facilities that may be required.
- **Town Site**
 - Comments included concern about the aesthetics of a nearly 100 year old plant and town site.
 - Many felt structures were in a state of disrepair and should be dismantled if no longer required.
 - Others expressed interest in purchasing houses no longer required by Manitoba Hydro.
 - Others questioned if there would be new cottage development.
 - The general aesthetics and appearance of the town site and local infrastructure facilities and services after the modernization project was completed were of interest.

- **Future of Existing Facilities**
 - The future of facilities decommissioned through the modernization project was of interest, particularly if the Rebuild alternative is pursued.
 - Many commented on the history of the Pointe du Bois facilities, suggesting various ways to capture this including maintaining the existing generating station as a museum, salvaging key components as part of a historical display, and capturing the plant's heritage in the architectural design of the modernized plant.
 - Some suggested that if the Rebuild alternative is pursued, the existing plant be demolished as it would continue to deteriorate, becoming an eyesore and a target for vandalism.
 - Increased availability of plant tours prior to modernization was also suggested.
- **Continued Information**
 - Numerous comments expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about Manitoba Hydro's plans for the future of Pointe du Bois and the opportunity to comment and provide input before a project decision is made.
 - There was strong interest expressed in continuing to receive information and be 'kept in the loop' as the project proceeds, including suggestions that a local advisory committee be established to discuss any issues and to share information as construction progresses and that Manitoba Hydro attend meetings of the Pointe du Bois Cottagers Association.
- **Slave Falls Tramway**
 - Although this potential project to convert the existing tramway to a private road is not part of the Pointe du Bois modernization, as part of an effort to inform stakeholders about other potential Manitoba Hydro projects in the area, the public open houses on Pointe du Bois modernization alternatives included brief information on the conversion of the tramway between Slave Falls Generating Station and the Pointe du Bois Generating Station to a private road. The purpose of this project would be to improve access to the Slave Falls Generating Station for emergency response, maintenance and operations.
 - Numerous comments were received urging that use of the road be restricted to Manitoba Hydro and how access would be controlled.
 - A high degree of concern was expressed that the road would become open to public use and lead to cottage development and other resource uses such as hunting and forestry in the area.

- Other comments suggested the improvement of reliable access to the Slave Falls Generating Station was overdue.
- Construction of an access road on an alternative route from the south via the Bannock Point road and existing transmission line right of way was suggested
- Concern about construction was expressed by property owners who have wells adjacent to the existing tramway.
- These comments will be taken into account as planning for this proposed road project proceeds.

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What We Heard – Environmental Assessment Consultation on the Rebuild Alternative for the Pointe du Bois Generating Station

Your Feedback

Manitoba Hydro would like to express appreciation to all those who participated in the public open houses in August and September 2007 in Pointe du Bois, Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg and shared their comments and concerns respecting the Rebuild Alternative for the Pointe du Bois Generating Station.

In view of cost considerations, Manitoba Hydro has decided to proceed with replacement of the spillway only at the site rather than rebuilding the entire facility.

What We Heard

- **PR 313** – Respondents were of the view that PR 313 is unsafe were concerned that the increase in use of PR 313 by construction vehicles and commuting workers would add to the safety of travel on the road
- **Worker Accommodations** – Respondents wished to know where workers would be accommodated. Some suggestions were made as to possible locations – either at the Pointe du Bois site or elsewhere
- **Disruption to Quiet Enjoyment: Noise, Light and View** – Respondents were concerned about the disruption construction activities would likely cause to the quiet enjoyment of their properties, as well as any disruption resulting from lighting of the new structure and also indicated a concern regarding the loss of the existing view of the spillway/rapids
- **Heritage** – Respondents indicated a desire to see some heritage elements of the original dam highlighted or displayed in some fashion
- **Environmental Effects** – Respondents expressed concern regarding the disruption the project may have on wildlife (birds and fish), as well as the environmental costs associated with the consumption and disposal of construction materials
- **Efficient Use of the Water Resource** – Respondents cited the benefits of making full and efficient use of the existing water resource by modernizing the dam
- **Security During Construction** – Respondents expressed concern regarding the potential for an influx of workers to create security concerns and issues during the construction period

- **Water levels and currents** – Respondents cited a concern that water levels would fluctuate more than they currently do and that existing water current patterns would be varied. Suggestions were made that MB Hydro should notify residents in advance of these kinds of changes
- **Existing Access Roads** – Respondents commented on access roads (to cottage areas), concerned either regarding disruption to the quality of the access roads or routing. Suggestion was made to construct an alternate access road to the existing cottages south of the site, in order to divert traffic from the town site area during and after construction
- **Project Mapping** – Better project mapping was requested
- **Cost** – Concern was noted regarding the cost of the project
- **Disruption to Business** – Concern was noted regarding the potential for disruption to business during the construction period (outfitting)
- **Safety: Winter Crossing of River** – Concern was noted that winter crossing of the river would be unsafe as a result of the project
- **Intake Channel Draining** – Concern was noted that the draining of the intake channel would result in an aesthetically displeasing area unless the area was rehabilitated
- **Town Site** – Questions were noted regarding the intended disposition of the current town site

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What We Heard – Environmental Assessment Consultation Open Houses on the Spillway Replacement Project for the Pointe du Bois Generating Station

Your Feedback

Manitoba Hydro would like to express appreciation to all those who participated in the November 24 and 29, 2010 public open houses in Pointe du Bois and Winnipeg and shared their comments, interests and concerns respecting the Spillway Replacement Project for the Pointe du Bois Generating Station.

The information we have received in this environmental assessment consultation process will assist us in addressing and mitigating the potential environmental effects of implementing the replacement of the spillway at Pointe du Bois.

What We Heard

- **Water Flows** – Better regulation of water flows was noted as important
- **East Side Access** – Suggestion was made to develop access to the east side by walking or biking for hiking and camping
- **Local Economy** – Positive effects for the local economy and business opportunities were noted
- **General Disruption** – Concerns were noted related to excessive traffic volumes, the accuracy of traffic data presented, noise, security and police presence, and general disruption to the usual enjoyment of the area
- **Change in Views/Aesthetics** – Concern that views and rapids will change with the project and that property values will decrease as a result of the change
- **PR 313** – Comment was made that the Province needs to invest in the upgrade of PR 313 rather than the new football stadium and that power production for southern Manitoba is a priority
- **Boat Lift** – Suggestion was made to incorporate a boat lift in the project
- **Traffic** – Support was noted for busing workers to the site and getting on with the project
- **Rehabilitation and Boat Launch** – Questions were asked on how area would look after construction and the location and parking capacity for boat launches

- **Construction Schedule** – Interest was expressed in the potential to shorten the construction schedule to reduce the number of years of disruption in the local area