

1.0 Introduction and background

1.1 Purpose of the document

This Environmental Assessment Report (EA Report) for the proposed Poplar Bluff Transmission Project (the “Project”) is in support of an application to obtain a license for a Class 2 development under *The Environment Act* (Manitoba). For Class 2 developments, proponents are required to submit an Environment Act Proposal Form (EAPF) and EA Report to Manitoba Sustainable Development’s Environmental Approvals Branch. This provides the public, Indigenous communities, and government agencies with an opportunity to examine the details of the Project, its anticipated impact on biophysical and socio-economic aspects of the environment, and measures that Manitoba Hydro intends to use to mitigate potential adverse effects. The purpose of this EA Report is to identify, assess and mitigate any adverse environmental effects associated with the proposed Project and forms part of *The Environment Act* proposal.

1.2 Project scope and location

The Project involves the construction, operation and maintenance of a new 16.5 km 230 kV AC transmission line to a customer (Roquette Canada Ltd.) with a proposed pea processing facility in the Poplar Bluff Industrial Park area west of Portage La Prairie, in the RM of Portage La Prairie, Manitoba (Map 1-1). It requires a connection to the existing 230 kV Portage to Cornwallis (P81C) transmission line located approximately 11 km due south, southeast of Edwin, Manitoba (north of Long Plain First Nation), and is located primarily on agricultural lands. Areas of Crown land are located to the southeast of the proposed transmission line and First Nation and Treaty Land entitlement areas are located around it in the south. The line crosses several small areas of more natural wooded vegetation, including some areas along an abandoned rail bed. The existing line P81C connects the Portage South Station, located 16 km to the east and the Cornwallis Station, located 105 km to the west. The Project in-service date is scheduled for March 2019.

1.3 Project need and justification

As a Crown Corporation, Manitoba Hydro is under statutory obligation to provide an adequate supply of power to meet the needs of the Province. Without improvements to the southern Manitoba transmission and distribution network, the system would reach capacity, which would result in limited power availability that could potentially limit economic activities. The Project is required to meet the needs of a new customer

(Roquette Canada Ltd.) that requested an electricity supply for up to 40 megawatts (MW) in the Portage La Prairie Poplar Bluff Industrial Park area. An analysis of the existing transmission and sub-transmission systems in the area found that a 40 MW load addition combined with projected load growth in the area could not be served with existing infrastructure. Due to the size and location of the customer's load, the best long term solution was determined to be the construction of a new 230 kV transmission line.

1.4 Project funding

Manitoba Hydro is assuming full responsibility for the design, construction and commissioning of the 230 kV transmission line extension needed to provide electrical service to the Roquette Pea Processing facility planned for a location near Portage la Prairie. The capital cost of the Poplar Bluff Transmission Project will be recovered by the Corporation through the sale of electric energy to Roquette once the facility is completed and operational in 2019.

1.5 Environmental regulatory framework

1.5.1 Manitoba Hydro mission, vision and goals

Established in 1961 Manitoba Hydro is a Crown Corporation, headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is the province's major energy utility serving electric customers throughout Manitoba and natural gas customers in various communities throughout southern Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro is administered by the Manitoba Hydro-electric Board appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The Board reports to the Minister responsible for the *Manitoba Hydro Act* (1987) who, in turn, reports to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Manitoba Hydro's Mission is to "provide for the continuance of a supply of energy to meet the needs of the province and to promote economy and efficiency in the development, generation, transmission, distribution, supply and end-use of energy."

For more than 50 years Manitoba Hydro's projects have primarily focused on the development of renewable hydroelectric power, and have played a major role in the development of the provincial economy and the Province as a whole. Manitoba Hydro's Corporate Vision is to "be recognized as a leading utility in North America with respect to safety, reliability, rates, customer satisfaction and environmental leadership."

Manitoba Hydro respects the need to protect and preserve natural environments, social, economic and heritage resources affected by its projects and facilities and it does so through the following practices that form its Environmental Management Policy (Manitoba Hydro 2014):

- Preventing or minimizing any adverse effects to the environment, and enhancing project benefits;
- Continually improving its Environmental Management System (EMS);
- Meeting regulatory, contractual and voluntary requirements;
- Considering the interest and utilizing the knowledge of its customers, employees, communities, and stakeholders who may be affected by its actions;
- Reviewing its environmental objectives and targets annually to ensure improvement in its environmental performance; and
- Documenting and reporting its activities and environmental performance.

Manitoba Hydro has developed and implemented an EMS and has registered the system to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 EMS standard. The Manitoba Hydro EMS enables the identification of environmental effects, setting of goals to manage effects, implementation of plans to meet the goals, and evaluation of performance. The EMS enables Manitoba Hydro to make continual improvements to its EMS and its environmental performance. As a member of the Canadian Electrical Association, Manitoba Hydro participates in the Sustainable Electricity Program. Under this program every member utility must implement an EMS consistent with ISO standards.

1.5.2 Provincial regulatory framework

With a voltage capacity of 230 kV, the Project is a Class 2 Development as defined by the Classes of Development Regulation 164/88 under Manitoba's *The Environment Act*. The Project will therefore require a licence under this act prior to the initiation of construction. In addition to a licence under *The Environment Act*, the Project is subject to all applicable provincial legislation, guidelines, codes and standards for Project activities.

1.5.3 Federal regulatory framework

As the Project involves a transmission line less than 345 kV and less than 75 km in length it would not be a *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012* Designated Project as defined in the Regulations Designating Physical Activities SOR/2012-147, and therefore not require approvals under this act. However, the Project is subject to all applicable federal legislation, guidelines, codes and standards for Project activities.

1.6 Environmental assessment report outline

The sections of this report that follow begin with a Project description in Section 2 that discusses Project planning and alternatives, and the various Project components. This is followed by an overview of the routing process and the procedures to procure and compensate for easements. The Project description ends with descriptions of the various activities for construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases.

After the Project description, the report includes sections on the engagement process, with both the public (Section 3) and Indigenous communities and organizations (Section 4). For both sections there is discussion on the purpose, goals and objectives, methods, and a summary of feedback received.

Following the engagement sections the report includes a description of the existing biophysical and socioeconomic environment in Section 5. Biophysical topics include climate, noise and air quality, geology and hydrogeology, terrain and soils, aquatic environment, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and species of conservation concern. Socioeconomic topics include population, employment and economy, designated lands and protected areas, public safety and emergency services, recreation and tourism, regional infrastructure, land tenure and property ownership, agriculture, other commercial resource use, traditional land use and heritage resources.

Section 6 provides a description of the environmental assessment of the Project. After an initial section on the scope of the assessment and methodology it follows the various topics described in the existing environment section, and provides an assessment conclusion for each component.

Section 7 summarizes an assessment of cumulative effects and effects of the environment on the Project. This is followed by an analysis of potential accidents, malfunctions and unplanned events in Section 7.

Section 8 describes the environmental protection program developed for the Project, including the various roles and communication protocols, and the various plans for environmental protection to mitigate Project activities and effects.

The document ends with appendices providing details on the routing process, engagement materials, and documents associated with the environmental protection program.

Poplar Bluff Transmission Project

Project Infrastructure

- Roquette Portage Pea Project
- Final Preferred Route
- Regional Study Area

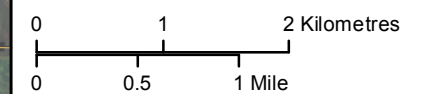
Existing Infrastructure

- Trans Canada Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Provincial Road
- Municipal Road
- Railway
- Existing Transmission Line
- Trans Canada Pipeline

Landbase

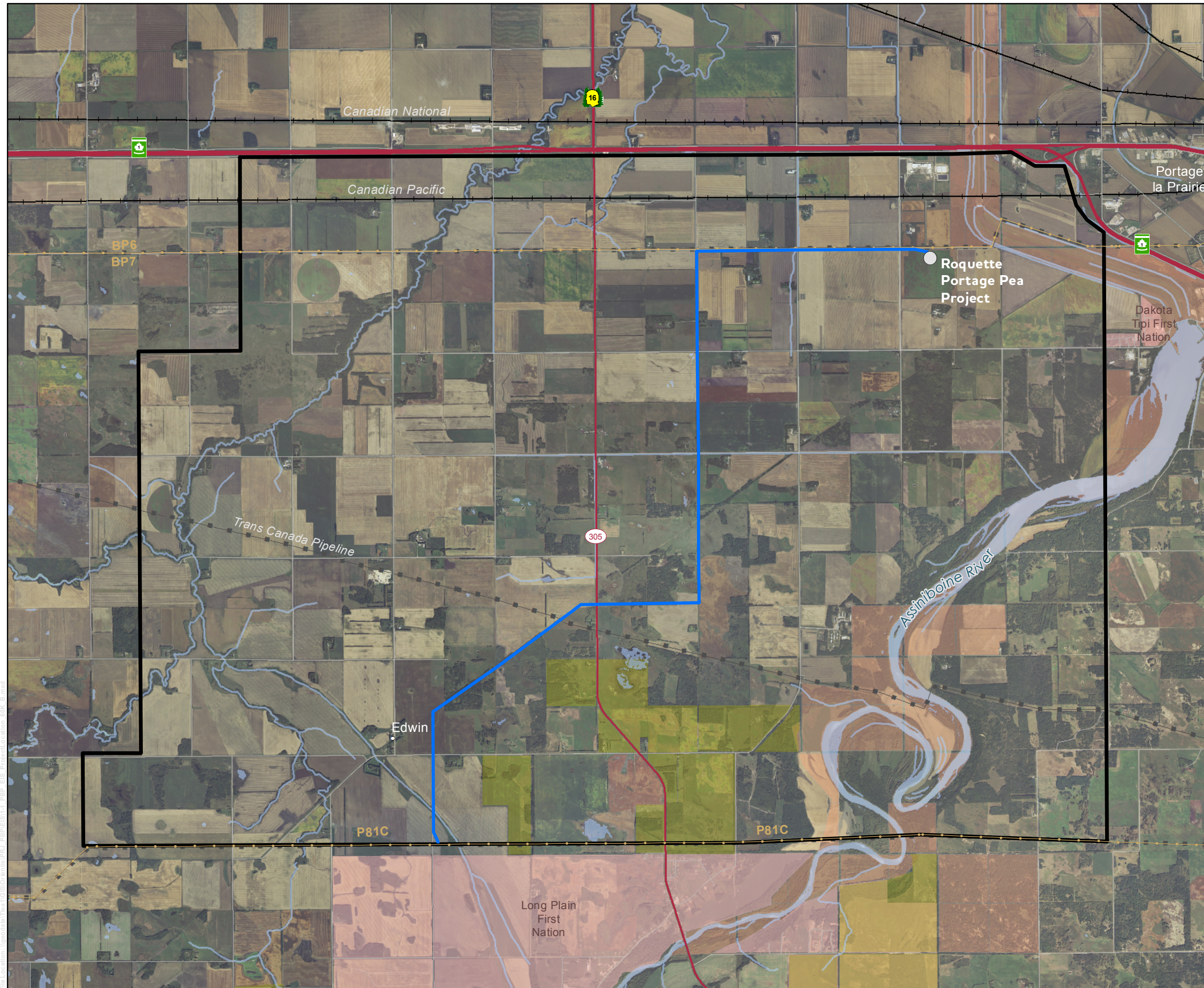
- Treaty Land Entitlement
- First Nation Land
- Crown Land
- Water Body
- Watercourse

Coordinate System: UTM Zone 14N NAD83
 Data Source: MBHydro, ProvMB, NRCAN
 Date: June 28, 2017



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Project Location



File Location: \\gpc\proj\GIS\Projects\Poplar Bluff\Map1-1_Poplar Bluff\Map1-1_Poplar Bluff - Project Location.mxd

