

Poplar Bluff Transmission Project Environmental Assessment Report

Prepared by Manitoba Hydro

Transmission Planning & Design Division
Licensing & Environmental Assessment
June 2017

Prepared for:
Environmental Approvals Branch





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July 5, 2017

Director
Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch
Manitoba Conservation
Suite 160, 123 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A5

Dear Ms. Braun:

Re: Poplar Bluff Transmission Project Environmental Assessment Report

Enclosed is Manitoba Hydro's application (four paper copies and one electronic copy) to Manitoba Sustainable Development for approval to construct and operate the Poplar Bluff Transmission Project, a 16.5 km 230 kV transmission line.

The enclosed Environmental Assessment Report provides the information requested in the Environment Act Proposal Form and documents the environmental assessment activities, including engagement, leading up to this application.

In closing, should you require more information or have any questions, please contact me at 360-4394.


Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Shannon Johnson'.

Shannon Johnson, Manager
Licensing & Environmental Assessment Department,
Transmission Planning & Design
Transmission

Environment Act Proposal Form



Name of the development: Poplar Bluff Transmission Project		
Type of development per Classes of Development Regulation (Manitoba Regulation 164/88): Class 2 - 230 kV Transmission Line		
Legal name of the applicant: Manitoba Hydro		
Mailing address of the applicant: 820 Taylor Avenue		
Contact Person: Shannon Johnson		
City: Winnipeg	Province: Manitoba	Postal Code: R3M 3T1
Phone Number: (204) 360-4394 Fax: (204) 360-6176 email: sjohnson@hydro.mb.ca		
Location of the development: RM of Portage La Prairie		
Contact Person: Shannon Johnson		
Street Address:		
Legal Description:		
City/Town:	Province: Manitoba	Postal Code: R3M 3T1
Phone Number:	Fax:	email:
Name of proponent contact person for purposes of the environmental assessment: Shannon Johnson		
Phone: (204) 360-4394	Mailing address: As above	
Fax:		
Email address:		
Webpage address:		
Date: July 5/17	Signature of proponent, or corporate principal of corporate proponent: 	
	Printed name: Shannon Johnson	

PRINT

RESET

A complete **Environment Act Proposal (EAP)** consists of the following components:

- Cover letter**
- Environment Act Proposal Form**
- Reports/plans supporting the EAP** (see ["Information Bulletin - Environment Act Proposal Report Guidelines"](#) for required information and number of copies)
- Application fee** (Cheque, payable to Minister of Finance, for the appropriate fee)

Per Environment Act Fees Regulation (Manitoba Regulation 168/96):	
Class 1 Developments	\$1,000
Class 2 Developments	\$7,500
Class 3 Developments:	
Transportation and Transmission Lines ..	\$10,000
Water Developments	\$60,000
Energy and Mining	\$120,000

Submit the complete EAP to:

Director
Environmental Approvals Branch
Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Suite 160, 123 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1A5

For more information:

Phone: (204) 945-8321

Fax: (204) 945-5229

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal>

Executive summary

This Environmental Assessment 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). The Project involves construction, operation and maintenance of a new 16.5 km 230 kV AC transmission line to meet the needs of a customer (Roquette Canada Ltd.) with a proposed new facility in the Poplar Bluff Industrial Park, west of Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. The Project in-service date is anticipated to be in March 2019.

An analysis of the existing transmission system in the area found that there is insufficient local capacity to meet the needs of the customer and so the Project involves a connection to the existing 230 kV (P81C - Portage to Cornwallis) transmission line located approximately 11 km due south of the Poplar Bluff Industrial Park.

Manitoba Hydro used a routing process that included engagement with Indigenous groups, the RM of Portage La Prairie and affected landowners, and identified areas of concern. The route location was modified based on input and environmental conditions, and the structure type was also modified based environmental conditions. The final route is located primarily on or adjacent to agricultural lands and an abandoned railway bed, and crosses several small areas of natural vegetation.

The environmental assessment is organized into biophysical and socioeconomic components. Biophysical components assessed 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 components assessed include population, employment and economy, traditional land use, designated lands and protected areas, public safety and emergency services, recreation and tourism, regional infrastructure, land tenure and property ownership, provincial and federal crown lands, commercial and residential development, agriculture, commercial resource use, and heritage resources.

The environmental assessment includes an evaluation of potential cumulative effects and effects of the environment on the Project, as well as an analysis of potential accidents, malfunctions and unplanned events. It also includes a description of the environmental protection program developed for the Project, including the various roles, communication protocols, and commitments to monitor Project activities and manage potential effects.

Potential effects were mitigated through the routing process and the short construction period (6 months) during the fall and winter. Mitigation measures were developed to address effects that were not avoided by routing.

In terms of physical environment effects, such as those relating to soil erosion, air quality and noise, the assessment determined that they will typically be localized and short in duration. Effects to the natural environment in the Project region consist mainly of agricultural land and there are few areas of natural habitat that would be crossed by the Project. Terrestrial habitat is limited to shelterbelts and a rail bed that was highly disturbed historically. There are several wildlife species of conservation concern that may occur in the region, but few natural areas near Poplar Bluff Transmission Project

Environmental Assessment Report

Glossary

Term	Definition
Adaptive management	The process of updating management practices in response to ongoing observations
Adverse effects	Negative effects on the environment and people that may result from a proposed project.
Affected Landowner (ALO)	ALOs were those whose property contained a portion of the Preferred Route.
Agricultural biosecurity	The protection of crops and livestock systems against the threats to production from disease, pests and invasive species.
Annual average daily traffic (AADT)	Is defined by Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation (MIT) as the number of vehicles passing a count station on an average day of the year.
Areas of Least Preference	Features to avoid when siting a transmission line due to physical constraints (extreme slopes, long water crossings), regulations limiting development (protected areas), or areas that would require extensive mitigation or compensation to minimize impacts
Built Environment	An area of existing or proposed development found within the landscape, typically dominated by commercial, industrial, residential, and cultural structures.
Cumulative effect	The effect on the environment, which results when the effects of a project combine with those of the past, existing, and future projects and activities (CEAA, 2012). OR the incremental effects of an action on the environment when the effects are combined with those from other past, existing and future actions (Cumulative Effects Assessment)
Decommissioning	Planned shut-down, dismantling and removal of a building, equipment, plant and/or other facilities from operation or usage and may include site clean-up and restoration.
Developed	Land that has been altered for residential, commercial or industrial use. Includes buildings, regularly managed green space and associated roads, parking lots, and trails.

the transmission line that they could occur. The presence of the transmission line may result in bird-wire collisions, but not at levels that would have measurable effects to regional populations. The route passes in the vicinity of a small area of aquatic habitat, but it is poor quality with a low likelihood of fish presence.

The Project is expected to result in positive economic benefits to the region, through the presence of the workforce, but also indirectly, through facilitating development of industry. There will be a slight increase in traffic associated with the 30-member workforce, but the volume will be low and outside of traditionally heavy traffic periods. Known heritage sites were avoided during the routing process, with measures developed to manage previously un-discovered cultural or heritage resources. The proposed route avoids private residences and there is limited to no recreational, commercial, or indigenous traditional use in the region that may be affected by the Project.

As the proposed route travels primarily on or adjacent to agricultural land there will be effects associated with the inconvenience, nuisance and increased production costs associated with operating farming equipment and crop production. Manitoba Hydro has developed a compensation policy for landowners that grant an easement for a transmission line right-of-way and for incidental and or physical damages to property during construction.

Based on the routing process, and the measures developed to mitigate and manage any potential adverse effects, the conclusion of environmental assessment was that the residual effects were predicted to be negligible.

Direct Effect	<p>An environmental effect that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A change that a project may cause in the environment; or · Change that the environment may cause to a project. <p>It is a consequence of a cause-effect relationship between a project and a specific environmental component (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 2014).</p>
Ecological reserve	Lands established to preserve unique or rare natural (biological and geological) features of the province.
Ecoregion	Characterized by distinctive regional ecological factors, including climate, physiography, vegetation, soil, water, and fauna
Ecozone	An area of the earth's surface representative of large and very generalized ecological units characterized by interactive and adjusting abiotic and biotic factors
Environmental Management System	Part of an organization's overall management practices related to environmental affairs. It includes organizational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining an environmental policy. This approach is often formally carried out to meet the requirements of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14000 series.
Environmental Protection Plan	Within the framework of an Environmental Protection Program, an Environmental Protection Plan prescribes measures and practices to avoid and minimize potential environmental effects of a proposed project.
Heritage resource	Any site, object, work, or assembly of works of nature or human endeavor that is of value for its archaeological, paleontological, pre-historic, historic, cultural, natural, scientific, or aesthetic features.
Linear Infrastructure	An existing network or system in a given area composed of transportation or utility based facilities (i.e. roads, highways, railways, pipelines, and transmission lines).
Marshalling yard	An open area used to stock-pile, store and assemble construction materials.

Mitigation	Measures for the elimination, reduction or control of the adverse environmental effects of a project, and includes restitution for any damage to the environment caused by those effects through replacement, restoration, compensation or any other means (Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012).
Natural Environment	Naturally occurring physical features of the landscape. These features are represented by the hydrography, flora, fauna, and topography of a given area.
Public Engagement Process	The Process which informs individuals, including Stakeholder Groups and the public, of the Project and allows them opportunities to provide input into the routing and environmental assessment work being undertaken.
Species of Conservation Concern (SOCC)	Species that are rare, disjunct, or at risk throughout their range or in Manitoba and in need of further research. The term also encompasses species that are listed under (Manitoba) The Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act of Manitoba, or that have a special designation by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada.
Species at Risk (SAR)	Is an extirpated, endangered or threatened species or a species of special concern, as defined by the Species at Risk Act.
Stakeholder Group	An interested party that would potentially have feedback to provide, may be affected by the decisions made regarding route selection, have a specific interest or mandate in the area, data to share, able to disseminate information to membership or a general interest in the Project's route selection area.
Wildlife management area	Lands that exist for the benefit of wildlife and for the enjoyment of people including biodiversity conservation, wildlife-related forms of recreation, hunting and trapping.

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