
Labrador – Island Transmission Link

Socioeconomic Environment: Communities, Land and Resource Use, Tourism and Recreation *Component Study: Supplementary Report*

Labrador Transmission Corridor Option: Muskrat Falls to the Strait of Belle Isle

Prepared for:

**Nalcor Energy
Hydro Place, 500 Columbus Drive, PO Box 12800
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
Canada A1B 0C9**

Contract # LC-EV-001

Prepared by:

**AMEC Earth & Environmental
133 Crosbie Road
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
Canada A1B 4A5**

Project #: TF1010492

April 1, 2011

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nalcor Energy is proposing to develop the *Labrador – Island Transmission Link* (the Project), a High Voltage Direct Current (HVdc) transmission system extending from Central Labrador to the Island of Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula.

The environmental assessment (EA) process for the Project was initiated in January 2009 and is in progress. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared by Nalcor Energy, which will be submitted for review by governments, Aboriginal and stakeholder groups and the public. In preparation for and in support of the Project's EA, a series of environmental studies have been completed to provide information on the existing biophysical and socioeconomic environments in and near the Project area.

At the time of the commencement of the EA and these associated environmental studies, the Labrador component of the Project included a proposed Converter Station facility at Gull Island on the lower Churchill River, as well as a proposed transmission corridor extending from Gull Island to the Strait of Belle Isle. In mid-November 2010, Nalcor Energy advised the provincial and federal governments that it would also be assessing the potential option of locating the Project's Labrador converter station at or near the Muskrat Falls site on the lower Churchill River. If that were to be the case, the Labrador transmission corridor would potentially extend from Muskrat Falls to the Trans Labrador Highway (Phase 3), and then follow generally along the south side of the highway to approximately its southernmost point before meeting and continuing along the previously identified corridor from that location to the Strait of Belle Isle. Figure 1.1 shows this Labrador Transmission Corridor Option.

The purpose of this Supplementary Report is to expand and update the scope of the *Socioeconomic Environment: Communities, Land and Resource Use, Tourism and Recreation Component Study* completed for the EA in November 2010 (AMEC, 2010), to provide similar environmental information for this additional transmission corridor option, for eventual use in Project planning and in the EIS.



Figure 1.1

2.0 APPROACH AND METHODS

The *Socioeconomic Environment: Communities, Land and Resource Use, Tourism and Recreation Component Study* (AMEC, 2010) and this Supplementary Report identify and describe key aspects of the socioeconomic environment that are relevant to the nature of the Project and its potential environmental interactions, as defined by the results of the EA process and associated consultations to date. These include communities, land and resource use and other tourism and recreational activities that are crossed by or adjacent to the transmission corridor.

The November 2010 Component Study Report described the existing socioeconomic environment in the Central and Southeastern Labrador Region (AMEC, 2010). This Supplementary Report focuses on the existing socioeconomic environment for the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option only – from Muskrat Falls to and along the Trans Labrador Highway (TLH) to the point where it re-joins the original transmission corridor to the Strait of Belle Isle (Figure 1.1) - and the associated Regional Study Area as described below. In doing so, it does not reproduce the information and analysis provided in the November 2010 Component Study Report (AMEC, 2010). The socioeconomic environment within or immediately adjacent to the identified transmission corridor (2 km wide) is the key focus. However, the study has also sought to provide an appropriate larger “regional context” by generally describing components and activities within a larger geographic area surrounding this immediate corridor.

The following terms are used throughout this report for clarity and consistency:

Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (2 km wide): The currently identified 135 km long transmission corridor option from Muskrat Falls, to and along a portion of the TLH and connecting to the previously identified transmission corridor to the Strait of Belle Isle;

Regional Study Area (15 km wide): An approximately 15 km wide regional area extending about 7.5 km on either side of the centre of the above noted transmission corridor option. This regional area is used primarily for socioeconomic components that are somewhat “stationary” and “footprint” based, such as those that involve land uses or infrastructure with specific locations; and

Regional Study Area (30 km wide): An approximately 30 km wide regional area extending about 15 km on either side of the centre of the above noted transmission corridor option. This regional area is used primarily for socioeconomic components such as resource harvesting activities that are wide-ranging and / or less geographically defined.

An overview of the Study Areas applied to each of the various socioeconomic components and the underlying rationale for each is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Study Area Overview

Components or Activities	Primary Study Area: Labrador Transmission Corridor Option	Regional Study Area	
		Delineation	Nature and Rationale
Communities	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Stationary features within the landscape
Transportation	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Stationary infrastructure within the landscape
Hunting and Trapping	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities
Angling and Other Fishing	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities
Hunting and Fishing Outfitters	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities
Motorized Recreational Vehicles	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities
Cabins and Cottage Development Areas	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Stationary features within the landscape
Other Outdoor Recreational Activities	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities
Parks, Reserves and Other Protected and Special Areas	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	Sensitive and protected areas often associated with wide ranging (recreational) activities
Forestry	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Defined activities within the landscape
Mining and Energy	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Defined activities within the landscape
Agriculture	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (15 km)	Defined activities within the landscape
Other Harvesting Activities	Transmission Corridor (2 km)	Regional Study Area (30 km)	General and wide ranging activities

This study has identified and made use of a range of information sources to describe the existing socioeconomic environment in and adjacent to the Project area. This has included general literature (published and unpublished sources), government reports and datasets and other existing available sources. A comprehensive discussion of these sources is provided in the November 2010 report, and those used specifically for this report are listed as references in Chapter 4.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes communities, land and resource use, and tourism and recreation activities within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option and in the associated Regional Study Areas in Central and Southeastern Labrador.

Again, this report and associated mapping focus exclusively upon the new transmission corridor segment from Muskrat Falls, to and along a portion of the TLH, to the point where that corridor option joins the previously identified corridor to the Strait of Belle Isle (See Figure 1.1).

This 135 km long transmission corridor segment is generally referred to as the “*Labrador Transmission Corridor Option*” in the text that follows. In Figures 3.1 to 3.19, this corridor option, in combination with the segment of the original corridor that extends on to the Strait of Belle Isle, are collectively referred to as the “*Proposed Transmission Corridor*” - in order to maintain the terminology used in the November 2010 Component Study report (AMEC, 2010), and to distinguish it from other alternative corridor segments that have been identified in certain areas.

3.1 Communities

In the Central and Southeastern Labrador Region, communities exist in the Upper Lake Melville Area, along the Southeastern coast and in the Labrador Straits area (Figure 3.1). No communities or drinking water supplies are crossed by the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (DF-ES, 2010; DMA, 2009; DEC-WR, 2009). The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option is closer (than the previously proposed corridor) to Happy Valley-Goose Bay but does not cross any municipal boundaries in the area. Likewise, no communities or drinking water supplies are within the larger associated Regional Study Area.

A number of Aboriginal groups in Labrador and Quebec claim Aboriginal rights and / or title to portions of Labrador, including areas within or near the identified transmission corridors. The relationship of the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option to these Aboriginal communities and their land claim areas and traditional land use activities is described in other Socioeconomic Studies prepared and submitted for the Project’s EA.

3.2 Transportation

The Central and Southeastern Labrador Region has existing transportation infrastructure and activities (e.g. roads, air facilities, a military flight training area and marine infrastructure and traffic).

Route 510 (or the TLH), the major road route in Central and Southeastern Labrador, begins in the Labrador Straits and connects to Happy Valley-Goose Bay (Figure 3.2). Route 510 is designated as a “protected road” under the *Protected Road Zoning Regulations* of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*. This means that any development within the designated planning area must be approved by the Department of Government Services in consultation with other relevant government departments and agencies (DMA, 1999).

The Muskrat Falls area is currently accessible through a gravel road that extends to that site from the TLH (Phase 1) near Happy Valley - Goose Bay, as well as a number of existing trails on both the north and south sides of the Churchill River (see Appendix A). From Muskrat Falls, the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option extends to and

generally along the western half of the TLH (Phase 3), and crosses it a number of times (Figure 3.2 and Appendix A).

Registered air facilities in Central and Southeastern Labrador are also shown in Figure 3.2. None are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (DTW, 2010; DTW, 2009), and no such air facilities are located within the Regional Study Area. An airstrip at Crow Head is located within the alternative transmission corridor at Point Amour. Long Pond, which overlaps the proposed transmission corridor near Forteau Point is used as a float plane base by several local operators (Belbin, 2011).

Figure 3.3 shows the designated flight training area in Central and Southeastern Labrador. The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses through a small portion of the east-central part of the training area, where minimum flying altitudes are 100' and 250' (DND, 2010).

3.3 Hunting and Trapping

The following sections generally describe hunting and trapping management areas in the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option. In all cases, this corridor segment crosses through the same hunting and trapping areas as those that overlapped the original (Gull Island) transmission corridor. Detailed information on harvesting activities and their management within these areas is provided in the November 2010 Component Study Report (AMEC, 2010).

Big game management areas are shown in Figures 3.4 and 3.5. The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses portions of Moose Management Areas 53A and 59 and the “Labrador South” Black Bear Management Area. Southern Labrador is closed to caribou hunting (DEC-W, 2009).

Small game hunting is divided into several management areas and zones which are presented in Figures 3.6 and 3.7. The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses the “All of Labrador” Small Game Management Area for Ptarmigan, Arctic Hare, Snowshoe Hare and Porcupine hunting and the “Southern Zone” Small Game Management Areas for Spruce and Ruffed Grouse (DEC-W, 2009).

The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses the “Central Labrador” Migratory Game Bird Hunting Zone (DEC-W, 2009) (Figure 3.8). Figure 3.9 shows murre hunting zones in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option does not cross murre hunting zones, which are coastal (DEC-W, 2009).

As shown in Figure 3.10, the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses portions of the “Labrador South” Fur Zone (DEC-W, 2009).

3.4 Angling and Other Fishing

Figure 3.11 shows scheduled salmon rivers in Central and Southeastern Labrador. The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option does not cross any scheduled salmon rivers (DFO, 2009). Similarly, no scheduled salmon rivers are within the larger Regional Study Area (30 km).

In Central and Southeastern Labrador, the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses the Eagle Plateau Management Zone (Figure 3.11), a large recently established conservation area for trout angling (DFO, 2009).

As both this and the original (Gull Island) transmission corridor cross through the same areas with regard to angling, detailed information on these activities and their management in this region is provided in the November 2010 Component Study Report (AMEC, 2010).

3.5 Hunting and Fishing Outfitters

In late 2009, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (DTCR) provided information (from its database) on the locations, names and owners / operators of hunting and fishing outfitting camps throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. This information was used and presented in the initial Component Study report (AMEC, 2010). While useful overall, there are some known issues and apparent discrepancies in the database with regard to the locations of some individual camps, and the Study Team understands that this government dataset is the subject of on-going revision and updating.

Through its EA-related information gathering and consultation activities with outfitters and others, Nalcor Energy has received additional information and clarification on outfitter locations, particularly in the Central and Southeastern Labrador region. This has included discussions with the Labrador Outfitters Association (Emmens, 2011) who provided information and clarification, and confirmed that the outfitter information presented in the recent EIS and associated studies for the Trans Labrador Highway Phase 3 (Happy Valley - Goose Bay to Cartwright Junction) (DTW, 2004) is a generally accurate representation of outfitter locations in this area.

This updated outfitter information has therefore been incorporated into this Supplementary Report, and will be utilized in the EIS. The information presented in Figure 3.12 is therefore an amalgamation of the updated and verified location information for outfitters in and near the general study area, and from the original DTCR dataset for outfitters elsewhere in Labrador.

Figure 3.12 shows outfitting camps Central and Southeastern Labrador (DCTR, 2009). No outfitting camps are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option but one is located within the Regional Study Area. As described in the Component Study (AMEC, 2010), several camps are located within the Regional Study Area near the Labrador Straits. Even when camps are not located within the corridor itself, guides and / or their clients may sometimes travel through or use the corridor area.

3.6 Motorized Recreational Vehicles

Figure 3.13 shows Central and Southeastern Labrador snowmobile and ATV trails. None of these snowmobile trails are crossed by the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (DEC-L, 2010). The Grand River Snowmobile Trail, approximately 150 km of groomed routes on the north side of the Churchill River, is within the Regional Study Area (Grand River Snowmobile Club, 2009).

ATVs are used extensively throughout Central and Southeastern Labrador, particularly on back woods trails, forestry access roads, snowmobile trails and within communities. No known trails are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (DEC-L, 2010) or within the Regional Study Area.

Motorized boats may be used at some of the outfitting camps within the Central and Southeastern Study Region (Section 3.5 and Figure 3.12).

3.7 Cabins and Cottage Development Areas

Figure 3.14 shows the locations of permitted cottage development areas and crown titles for cottages in Central and Southeastern Labrador. Cottages are accessible by road and remote cottages are not accessible by conventional motor vehicle. A cottage development area on the north side of the Churchill River is outside the transmission corridor but within the Regional Study Area (DEC-L, 2009). No known cottages or remote cottages are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or within the larger Regional Study Area. Further information is also provided in Appendix A.

3.8 Other Outdoor Recreational Activities

Residents of the province participate in a variety of other outdoor recreational activities including bicycling, camping, canoeing, kayaking, white-water rafting, golfing, hiking and skiing.

Bicyclists may use the TLH - which is crossed by the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option - but the unpaved nature of this road may make it too rough for extensive bicycling.

Four campgrounds are located in Central and Southeastern Labrador (Figure 3.15). However, no campgrounds are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or within the Regional Study Area (DTCR, 2010).

Canoeing occurs on the Churchill River and possibly elsewhere, including in proximity to some of the outfitting lodges (Figure 3.12). Lack of road access to suitable areas has limited kayaking, but the TLH has improved access to waterbodies in Central and Southeastern Labrador.

Two golf courses are located in Labrador: one in Labrador West and the other in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. No golf courses are located within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or Regional Study Area (Golf Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010).

More than 300 hiking trails are found in Newfoundland and Labrador. No known hiking trails are located in the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or Regional Study Area (DTCR, 2010).

No known cross country ski areas or downhill skiing / snowboarding slopes are located in the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or Regional Study Area (DTCR, 2010).

3.9 Parks, Reserves and Other Protected and Special Areas

No parks or other protected areas are crossed by the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (Figure 3.16). The proposed Eagle River Waterway Provincial Park is not within the corridor, but is within the larger Regional Study Area (DEC, 2010). The current proposed boundary for the Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve is not within the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or the Regional Study Area (Parks Canada, 2009; Taylor, S., 2010).

3.10 Forestry

The Labrador Transmission Corridor Option crosses through Forest Management Districts 19A and 19C (Figure 3.17). Currently, forestry activity is planned for Districts 19A but not for 19C (DNR-FS, 2009). Forestry activities and their management are discussed in detail in the November 2010 Component Study Report (AMEC, 2010).

3.11 Mines and Energy

There are no developing or producing mines or oil and gas exploration activities in the Central and Southeastern Labrador Region (Figure 3.18). Fifteen quarries and four staked claims are located in the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (DNR-ME, 2009). The quarries were established during the construction of the TLH. Appendix A illustrates quarries and staked claims in greater detail. Twenty-two other quarries and five staked claims are within the larger Regional Study Area.

3.12 Agriculture

Farming activity is limited in Central and Southeastern Labrador, but is expanding and evolving in recent years. An agricultural development area surrounds Upper Lake Melville (Figure 3.19). No commercial farmgates are located in the Labrador Transmission Corridor Option or the Regional Study Area (DNR-A, 2010).

3.13 Other Harvesting Activities

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador participate in a variety of other harvesting activities including wood cutting, roadside gardening and gathering wild berries, fruits, flowers, plants, lichens and mushrooms. These activities are an integral part of traditional subsistence and recreational lifestyles throughout the province.

Because of the nature of these pursuits, it is not possible to define precisely when and where they occur. However activities typically occur in season where the resource in question is found and near access routes.



Figure 3.1

Communities - Central and Southeastern Labrador

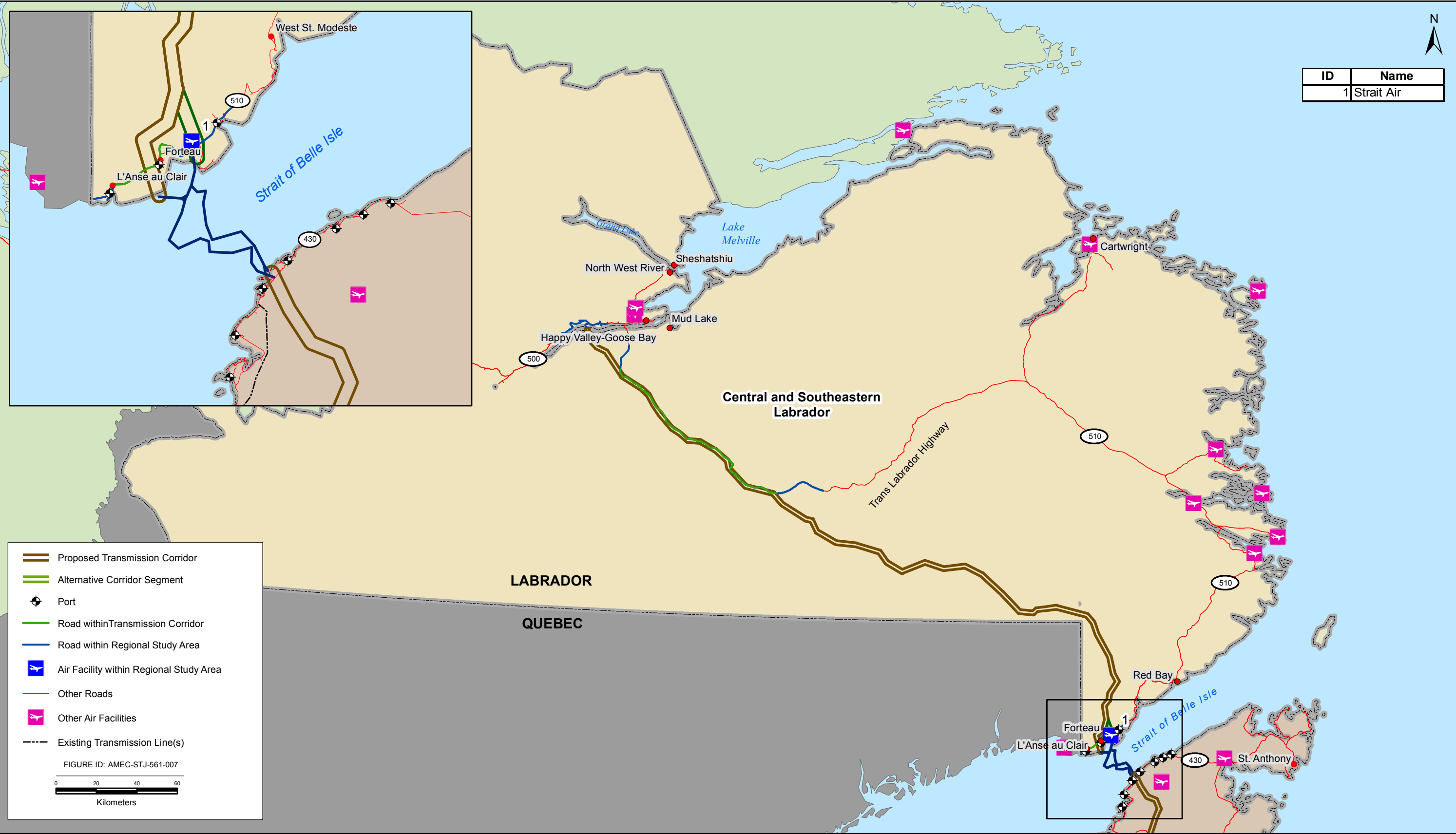


Figure 3.2

Transportation - Central and Southeastern Labrador

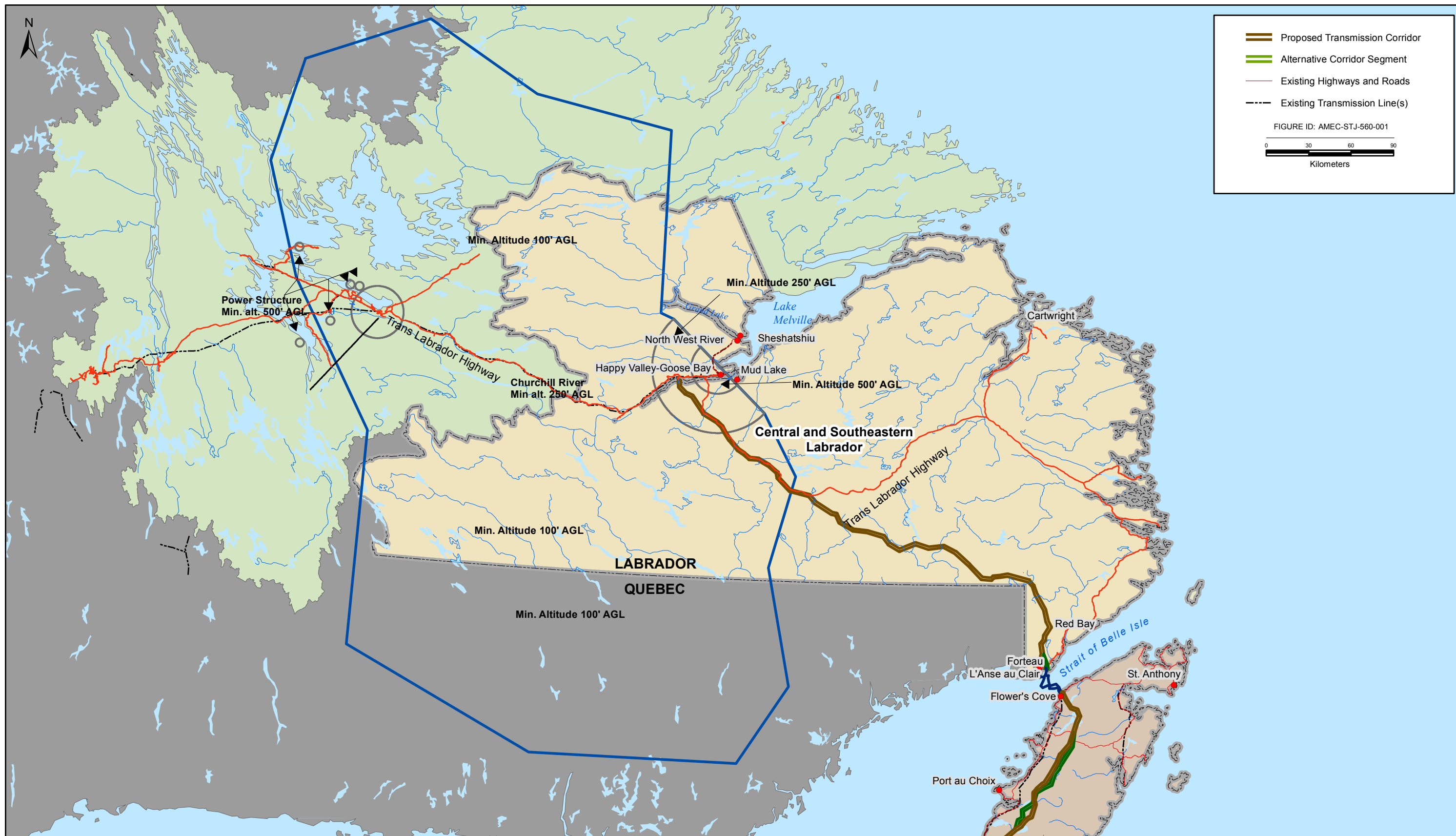


Figure 3.3

Designated Flight Training Area

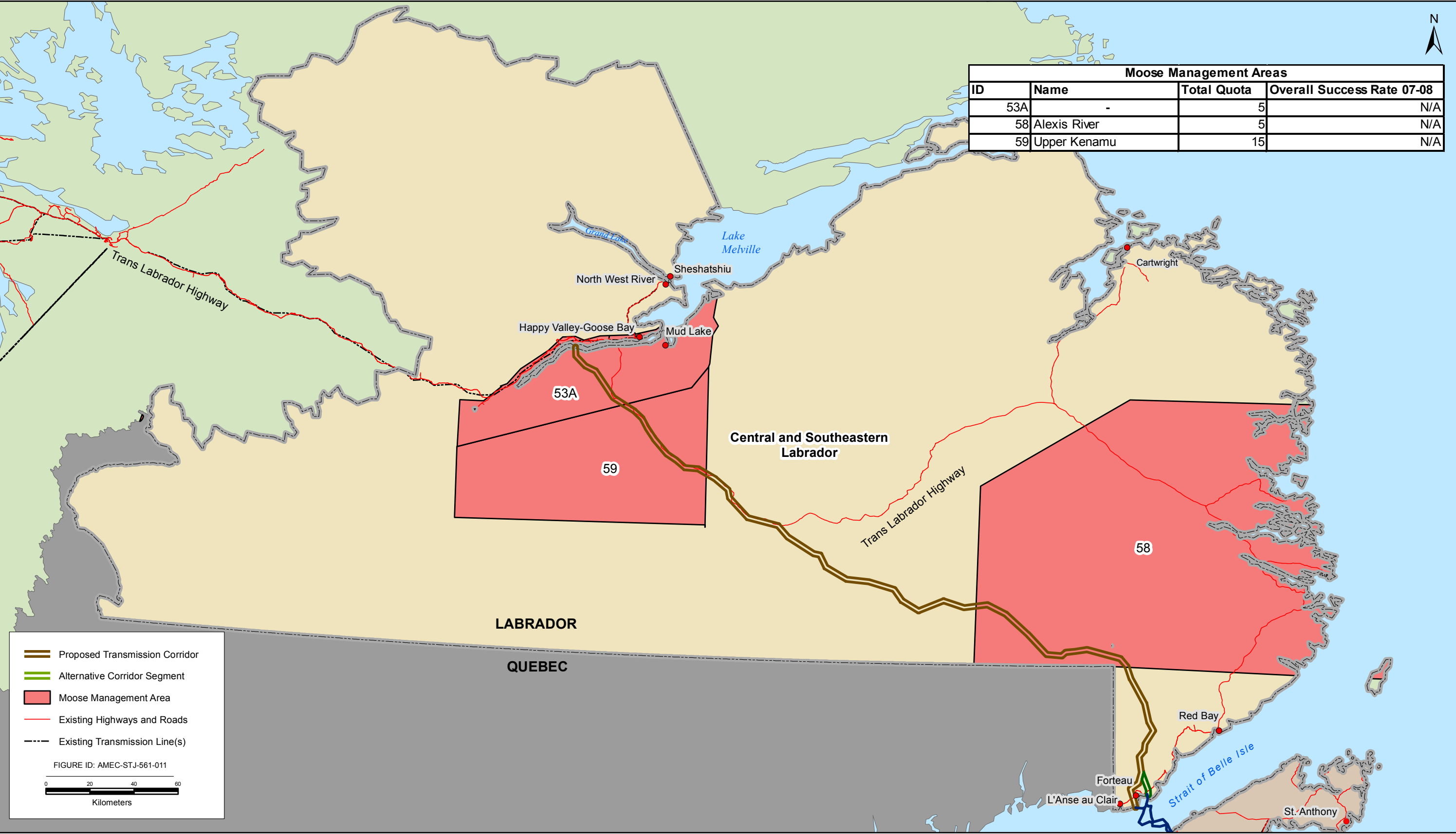


Figure 3.4

Moose Hunting - Central and Southeastern Labrador



Figure 3.5

Black Bear Hunting - Central and Southeastern Labrador



Figure 3.6

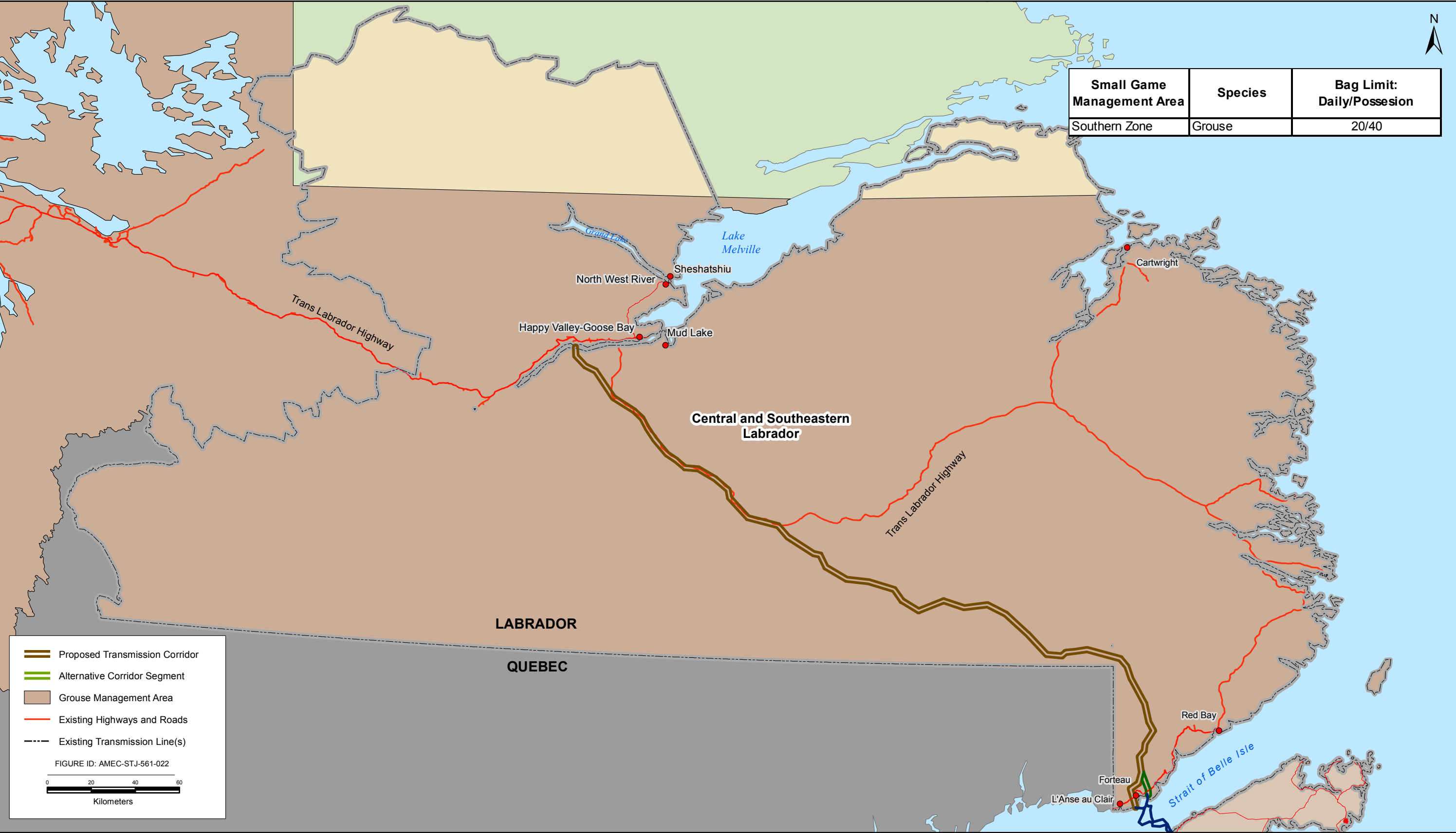


Figure 3.7

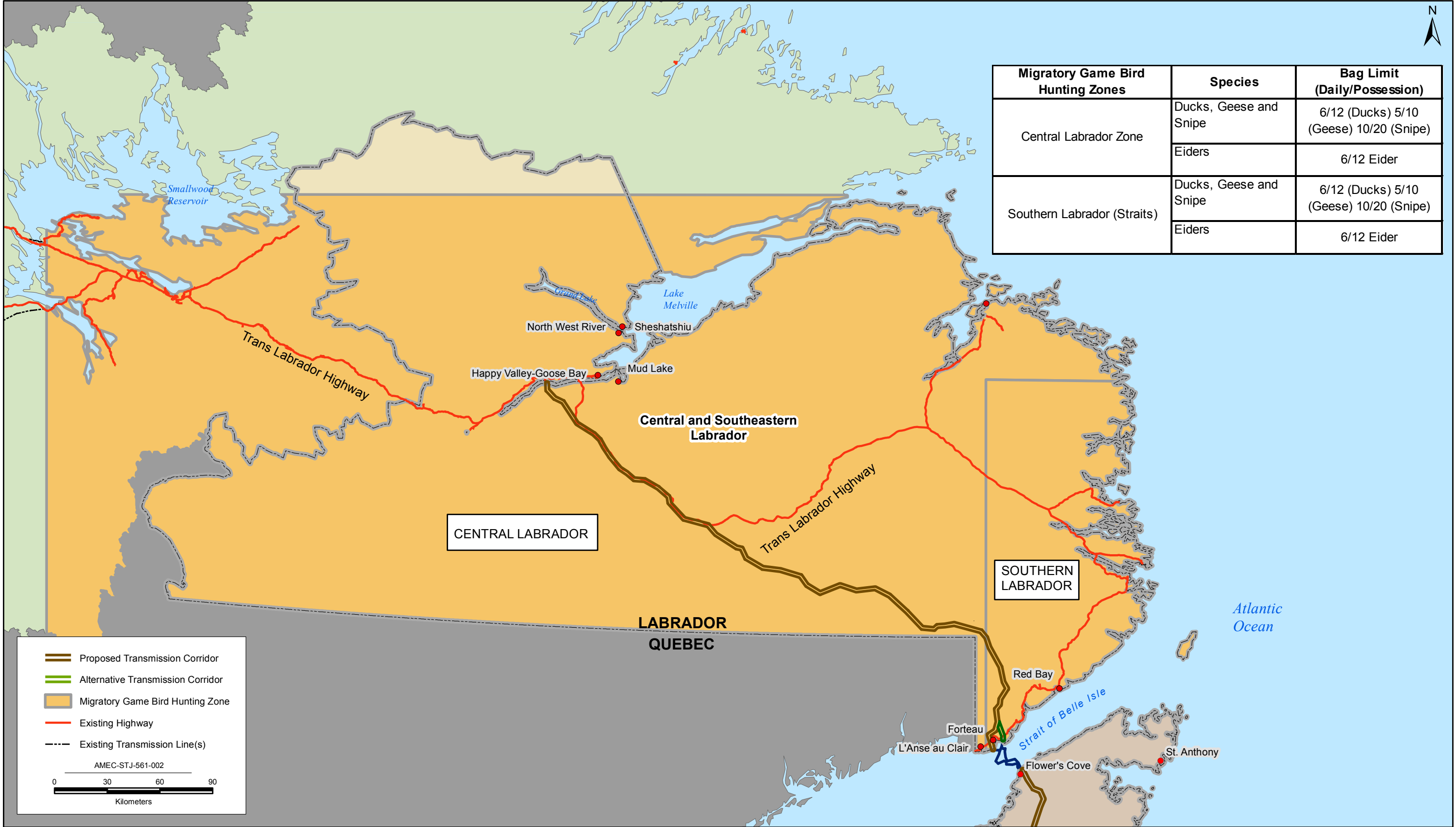


Figure 3.8

Migratory Game Bird Hunting - Central and Southeastern Labrador

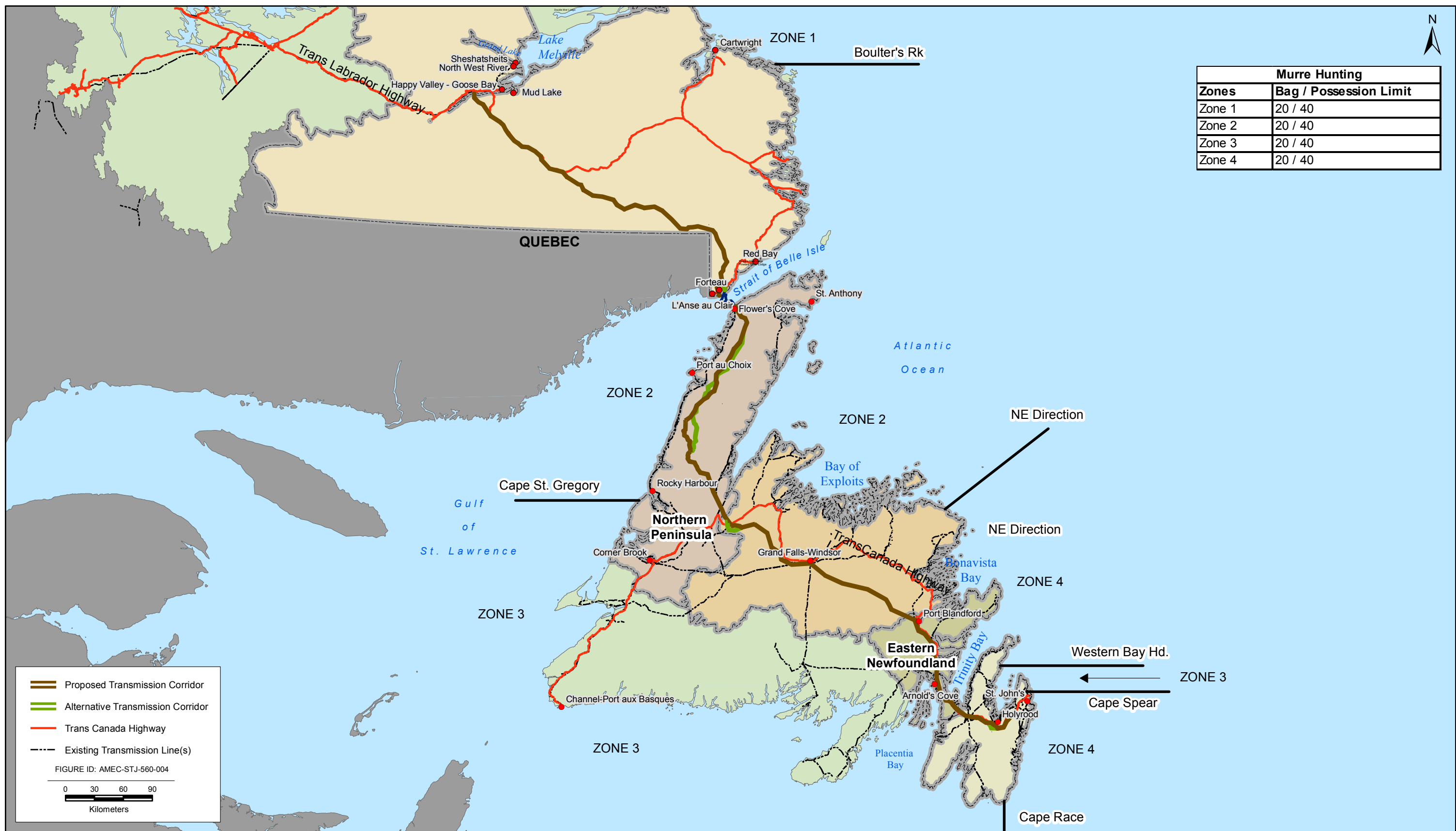


Figure 3.9

Murre Hunting - Newfoundland and Labrador

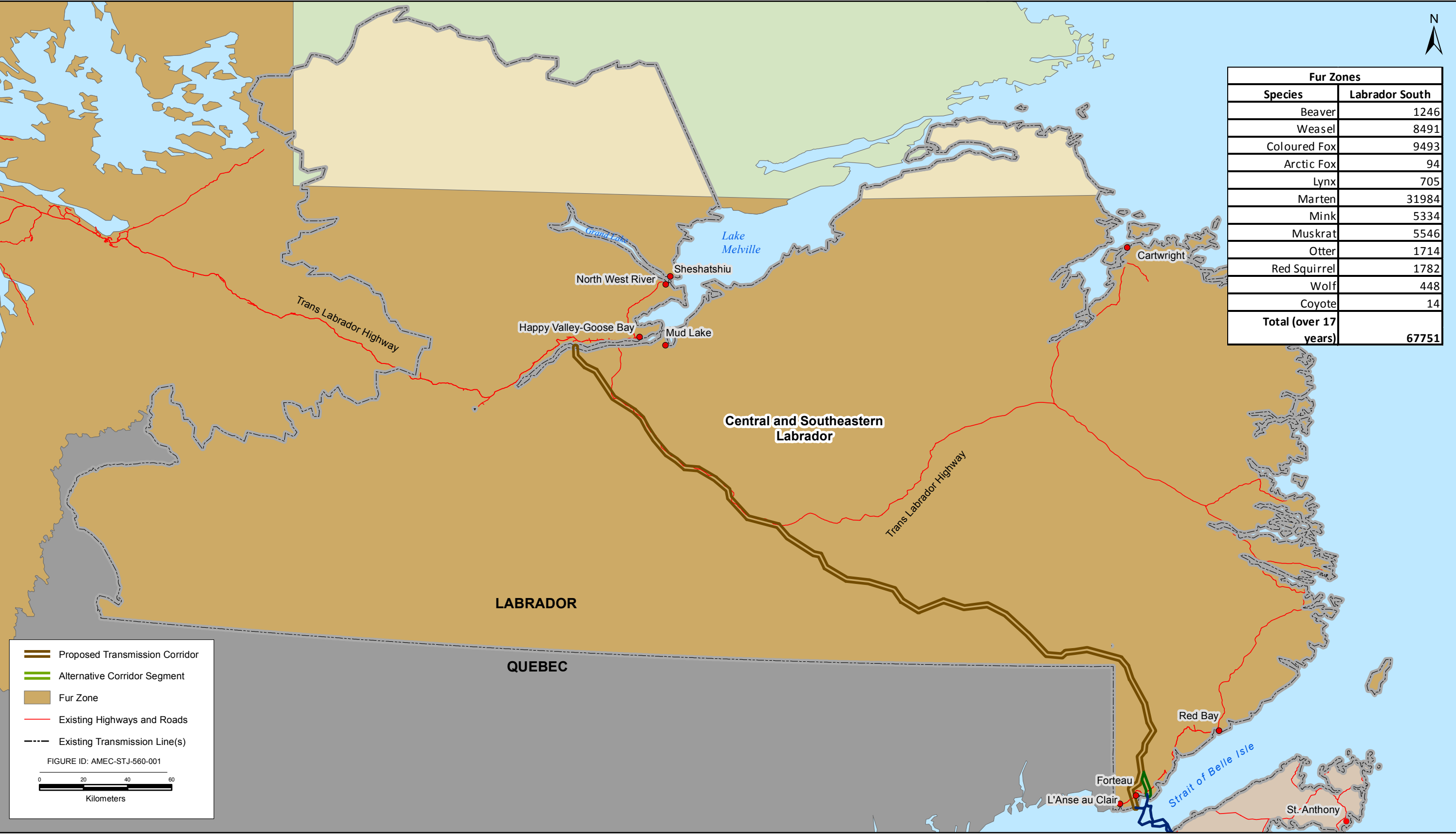




Figure 3.10

Fur Trapping - Central and Southeastern Labrador

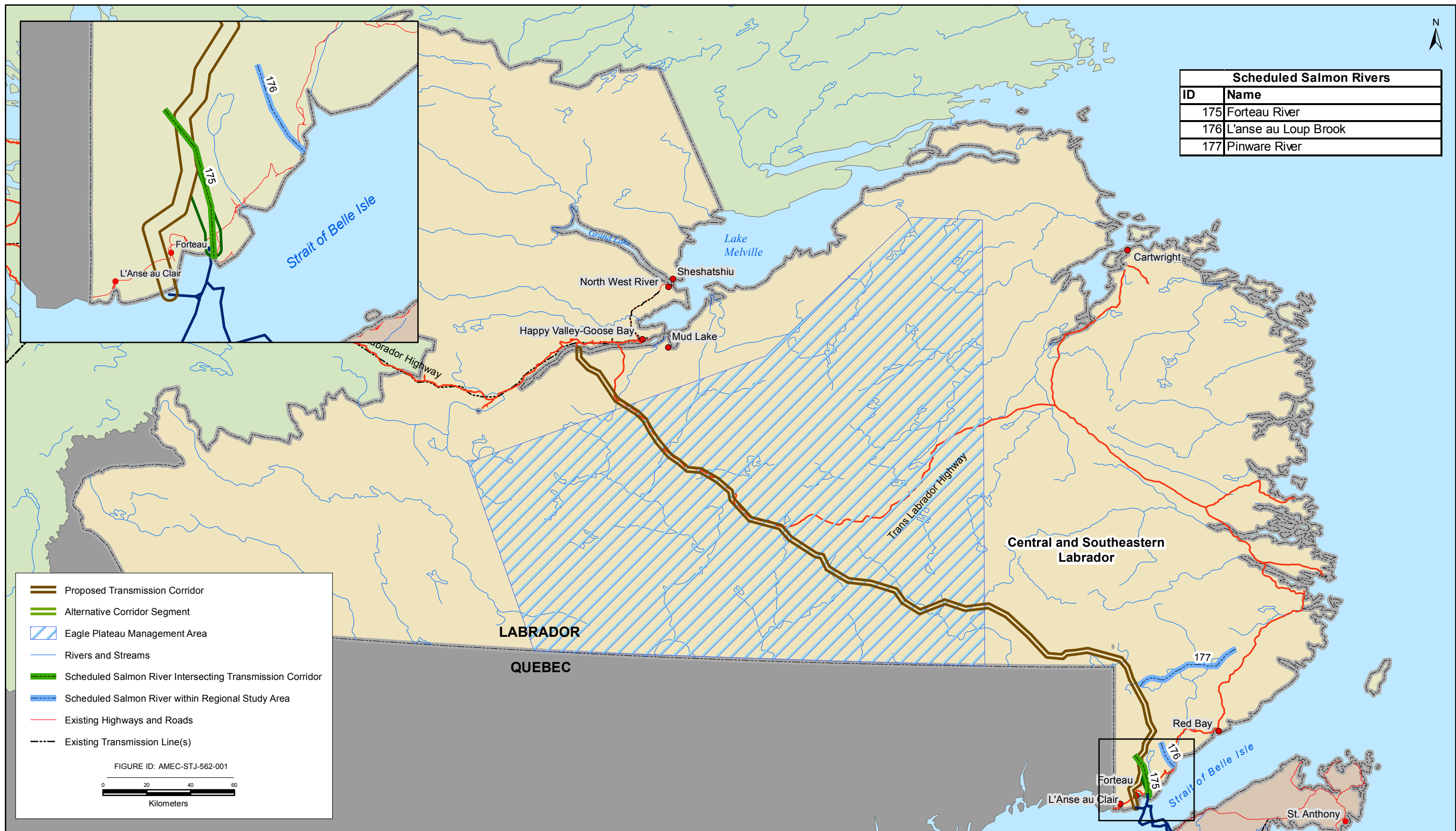


Figure 3.11

Angling - Central and Southeastern Labrador

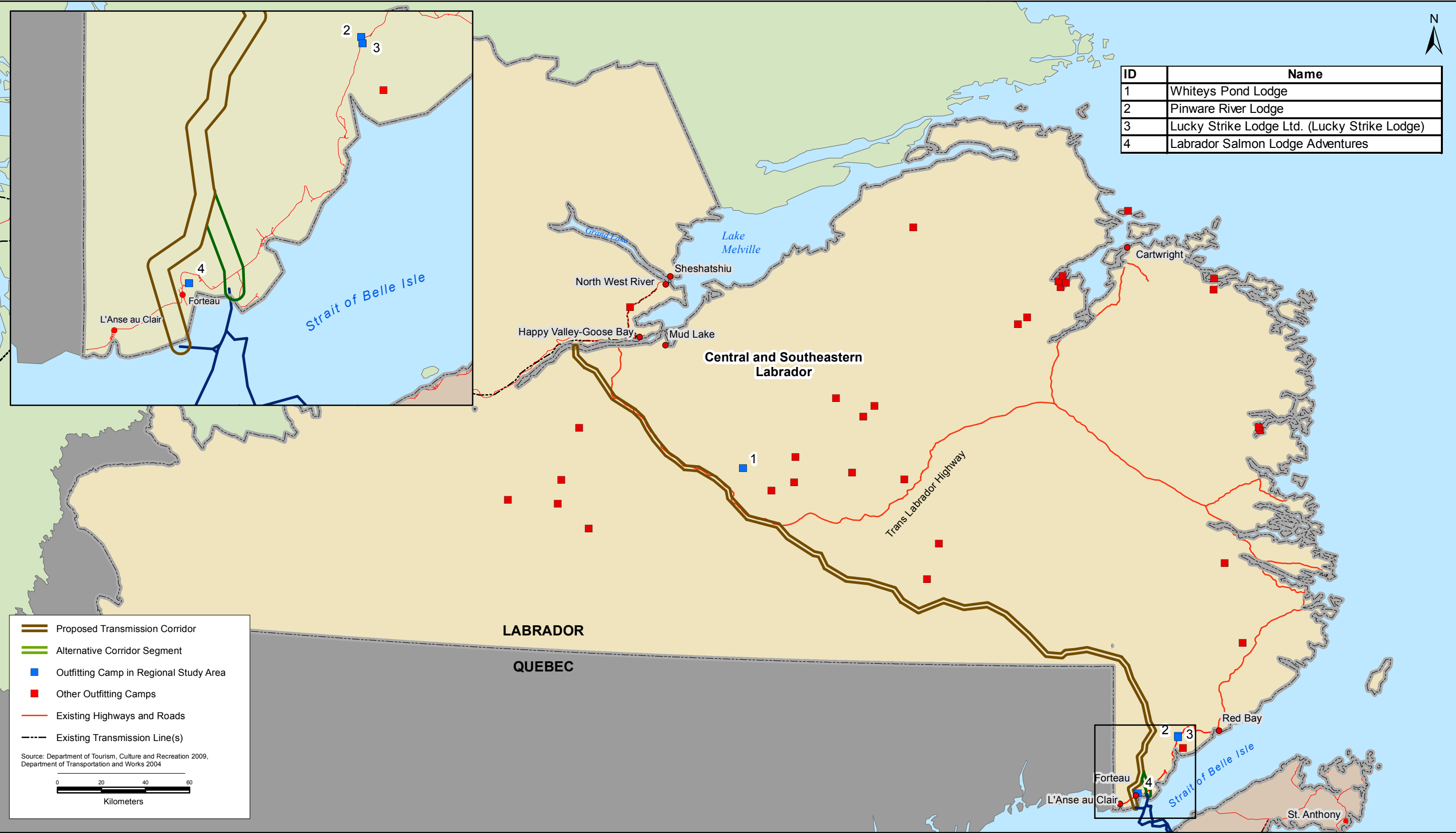


Figure 3.12



Figure 3.13



Figure 3.14



Figure 3.15

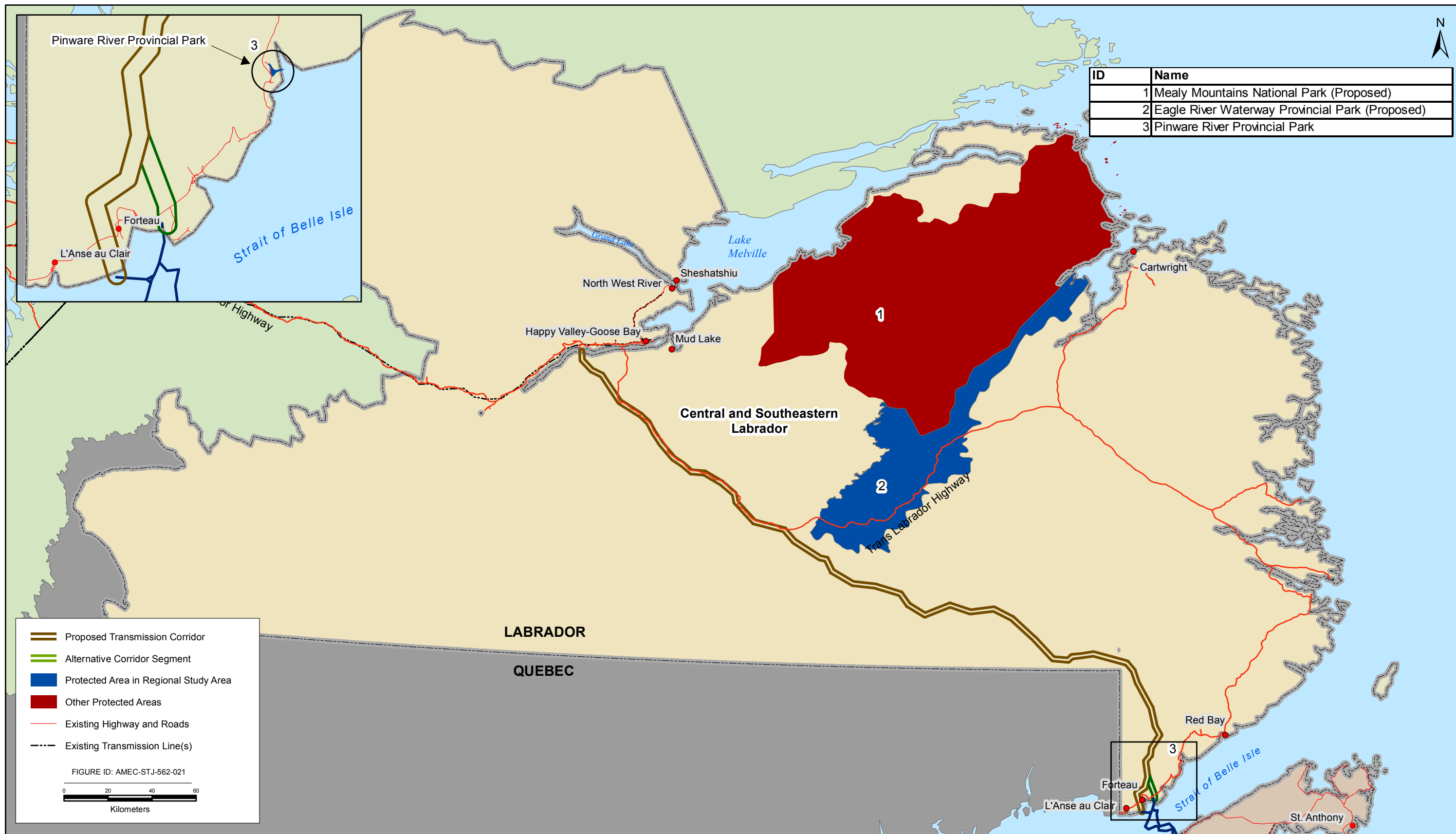


Figure 3.16



Figure 3.17

Forestry - Central and Southeastern Labrador



Figure 3.18



Figure 3.19

Agriculture - Central and Southeastern Labrador

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APPENDIX A

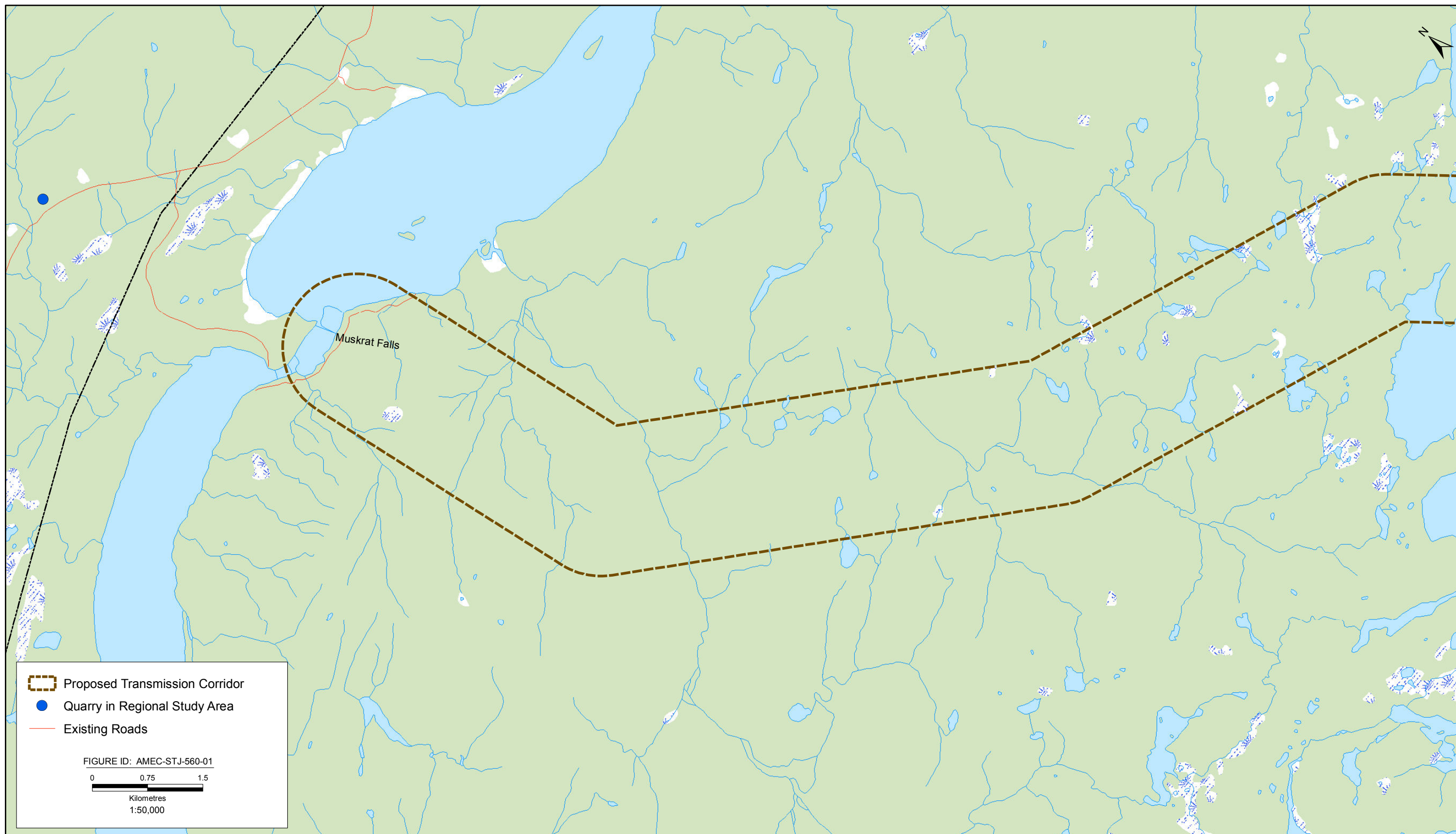
Map Atlas: Selected Land Uses



INDEX A



Labrador - Island Transmission Link: Labrador Transmission Corridor Option (Muskkrat Falls to Strait of Belle Isle)
Select Land Uses



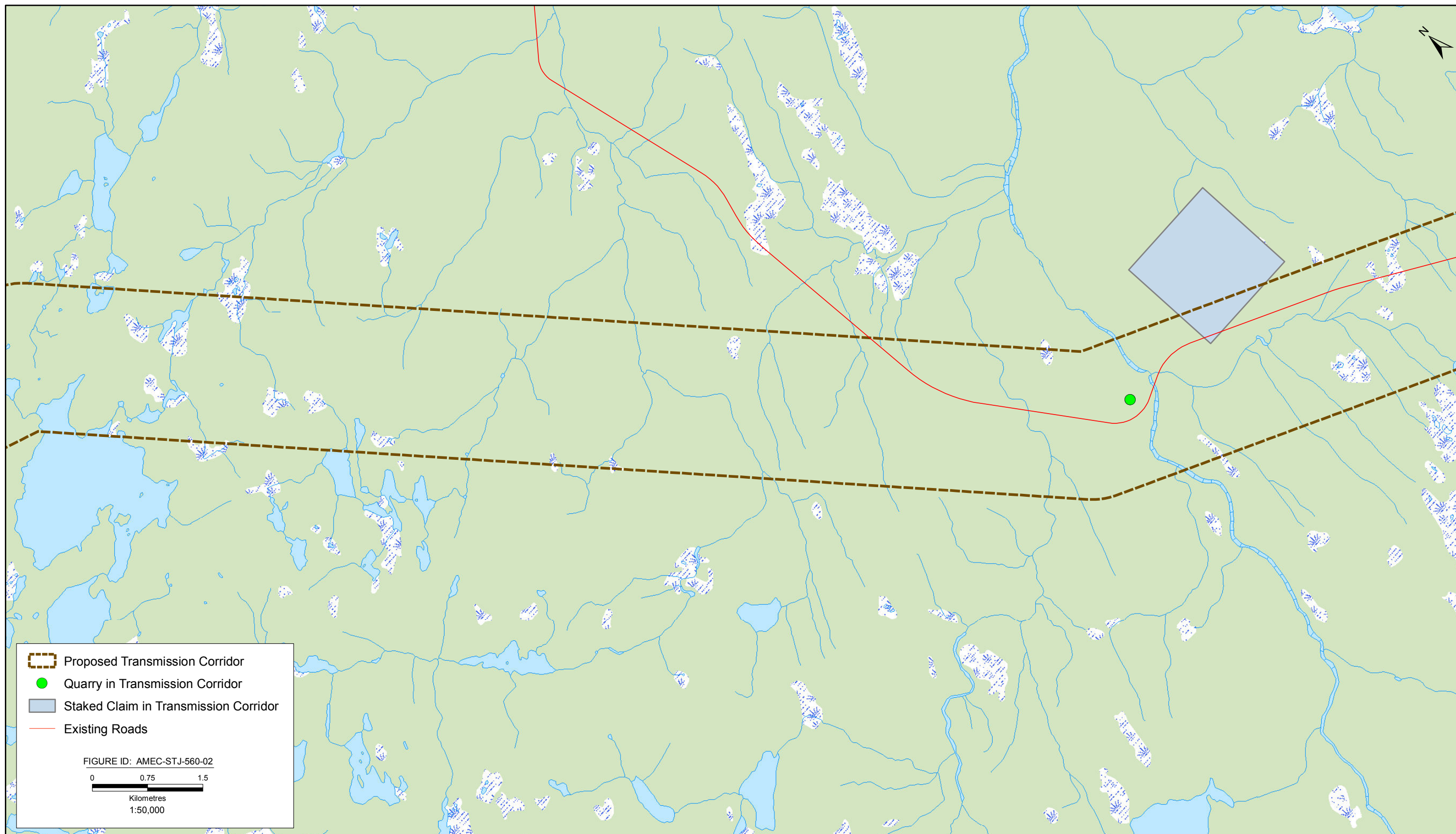


FIGURE 2

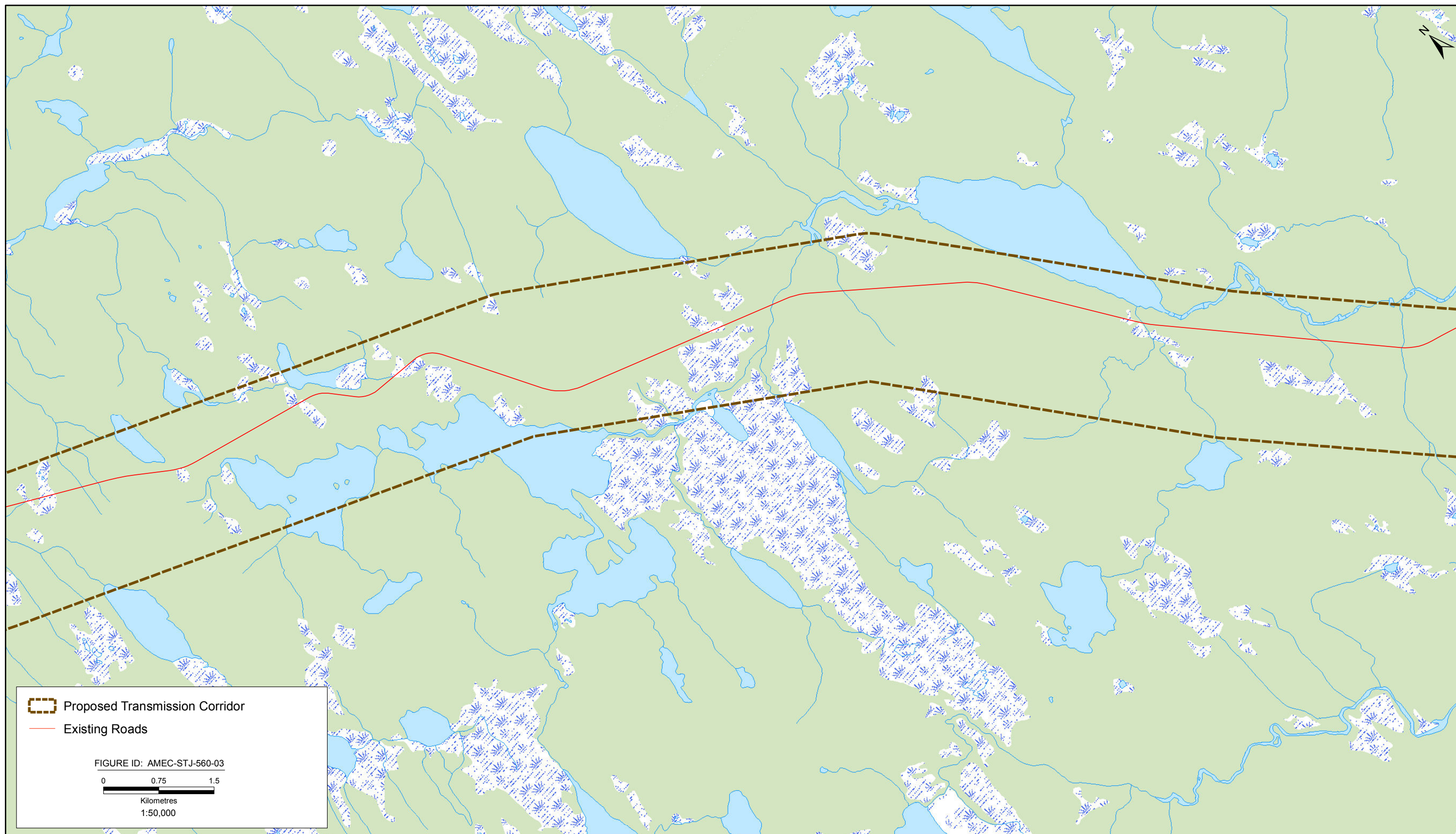
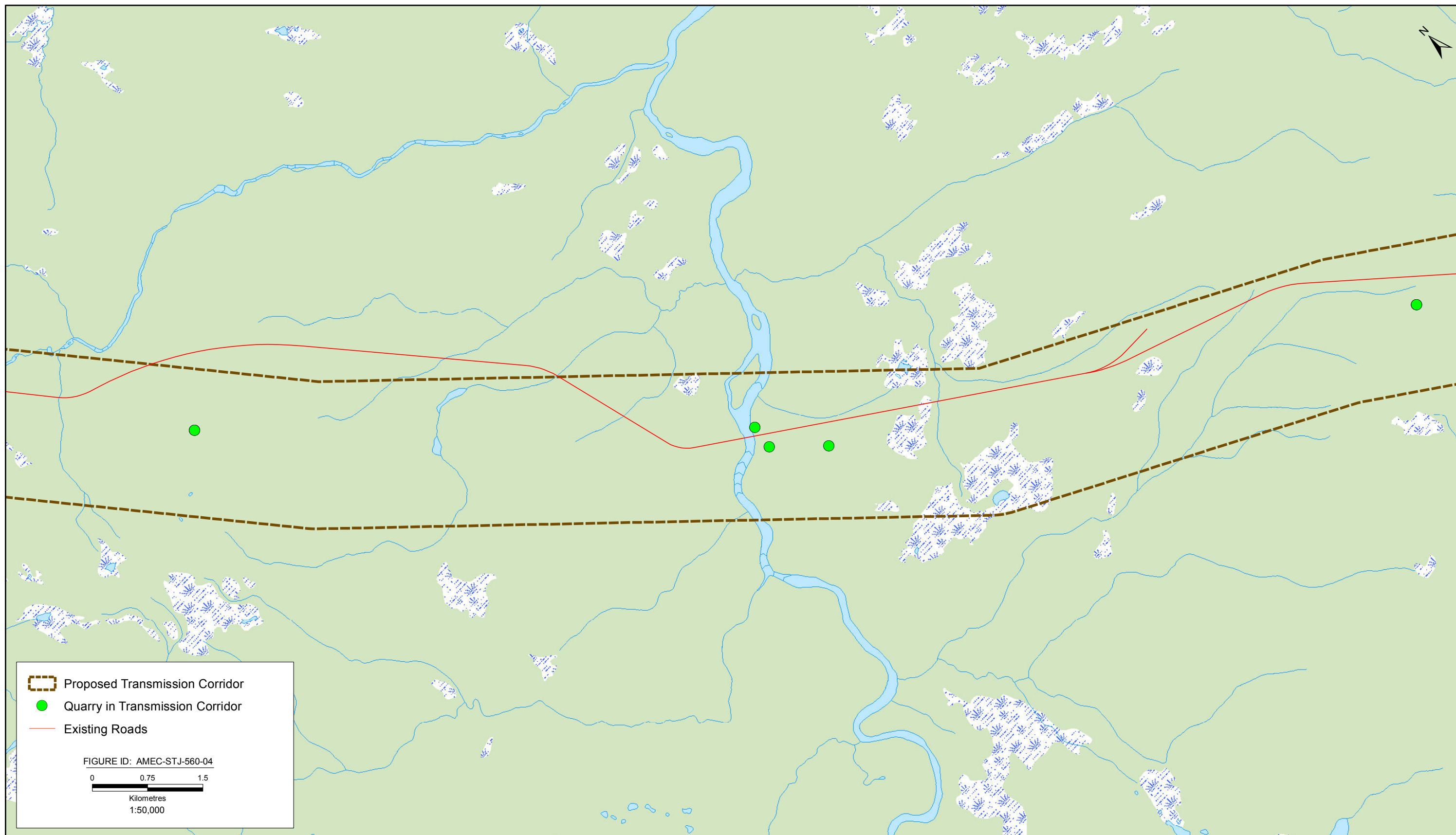


FIGURE 3



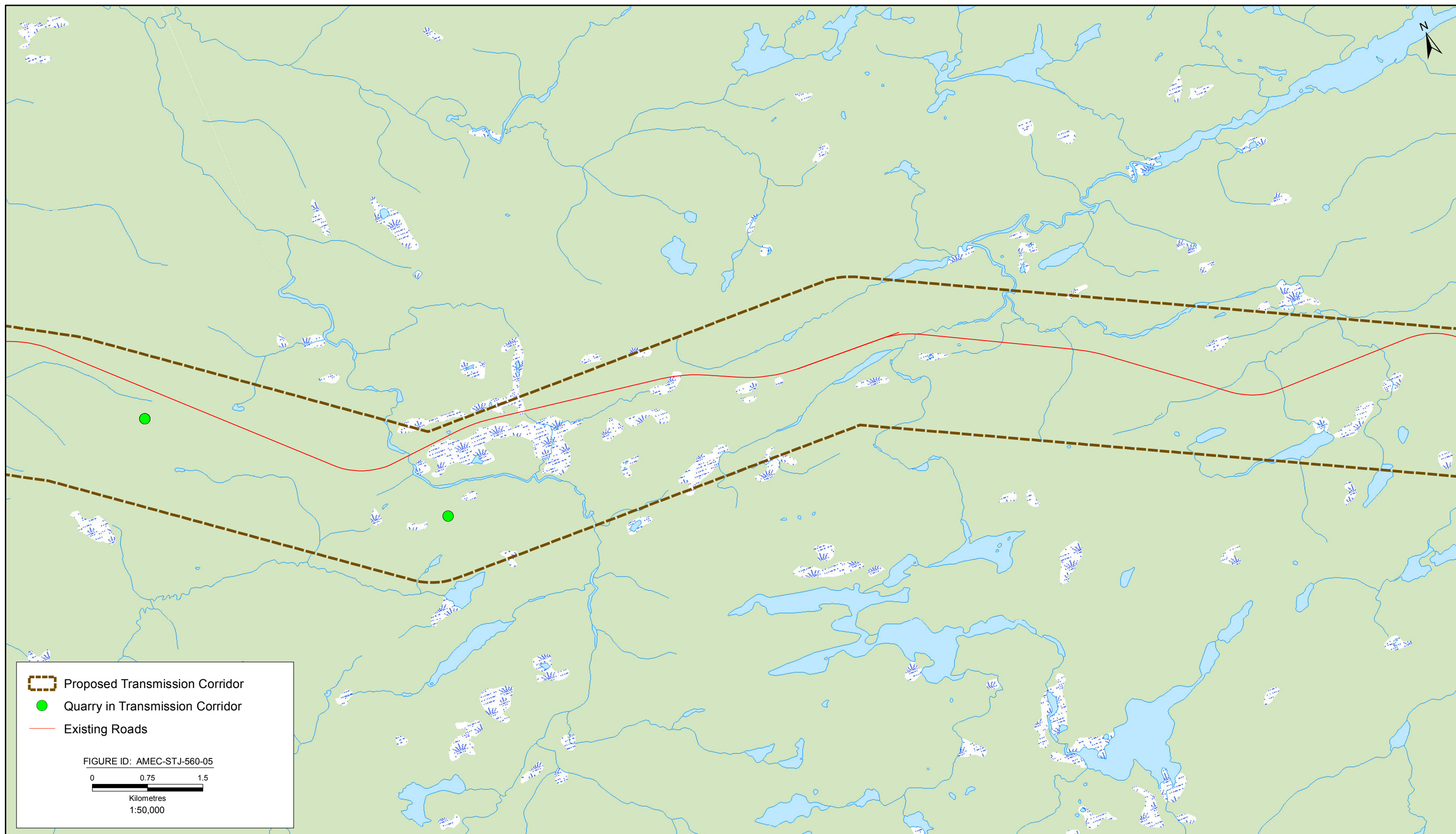
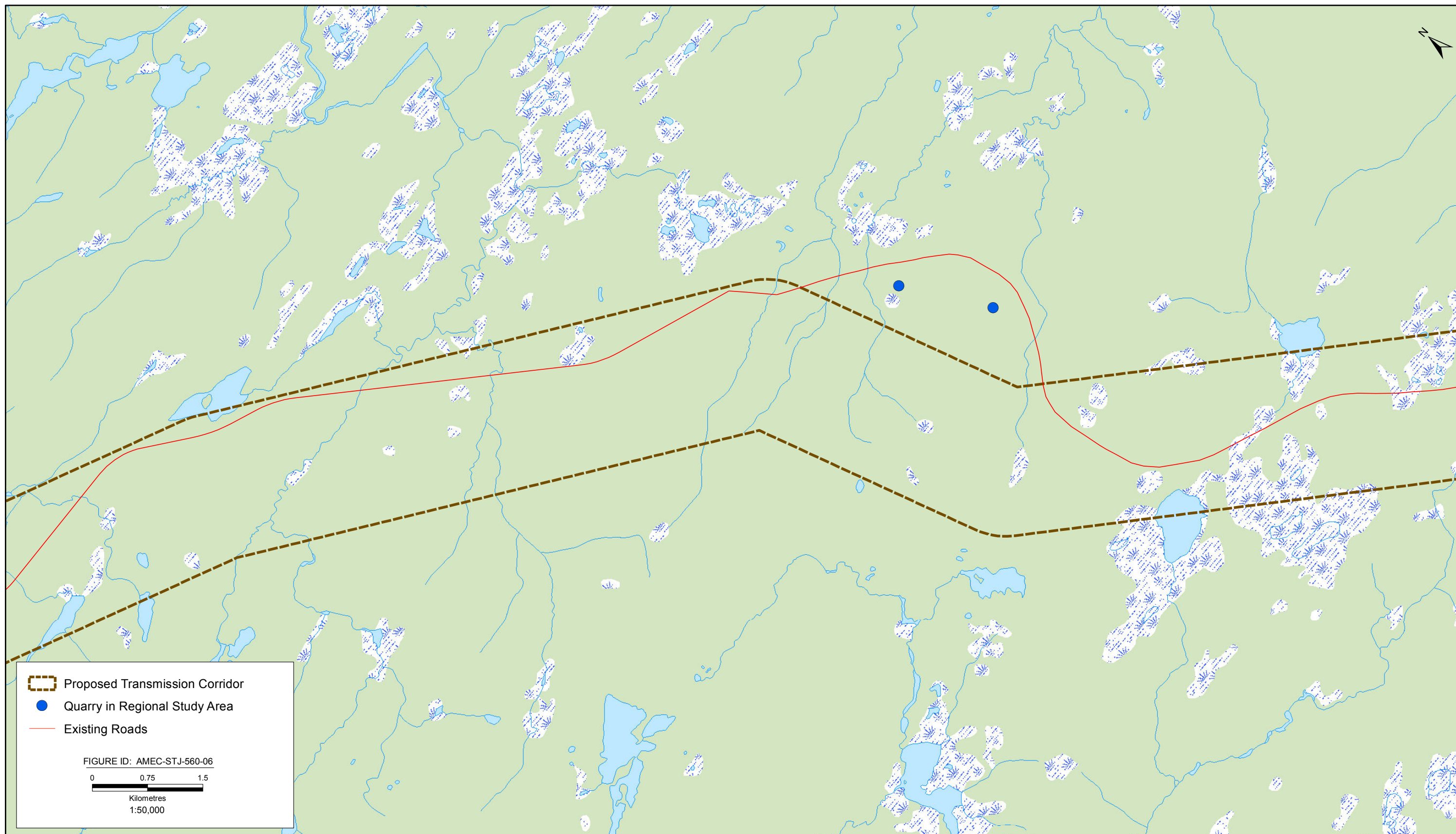


FIGURE 5



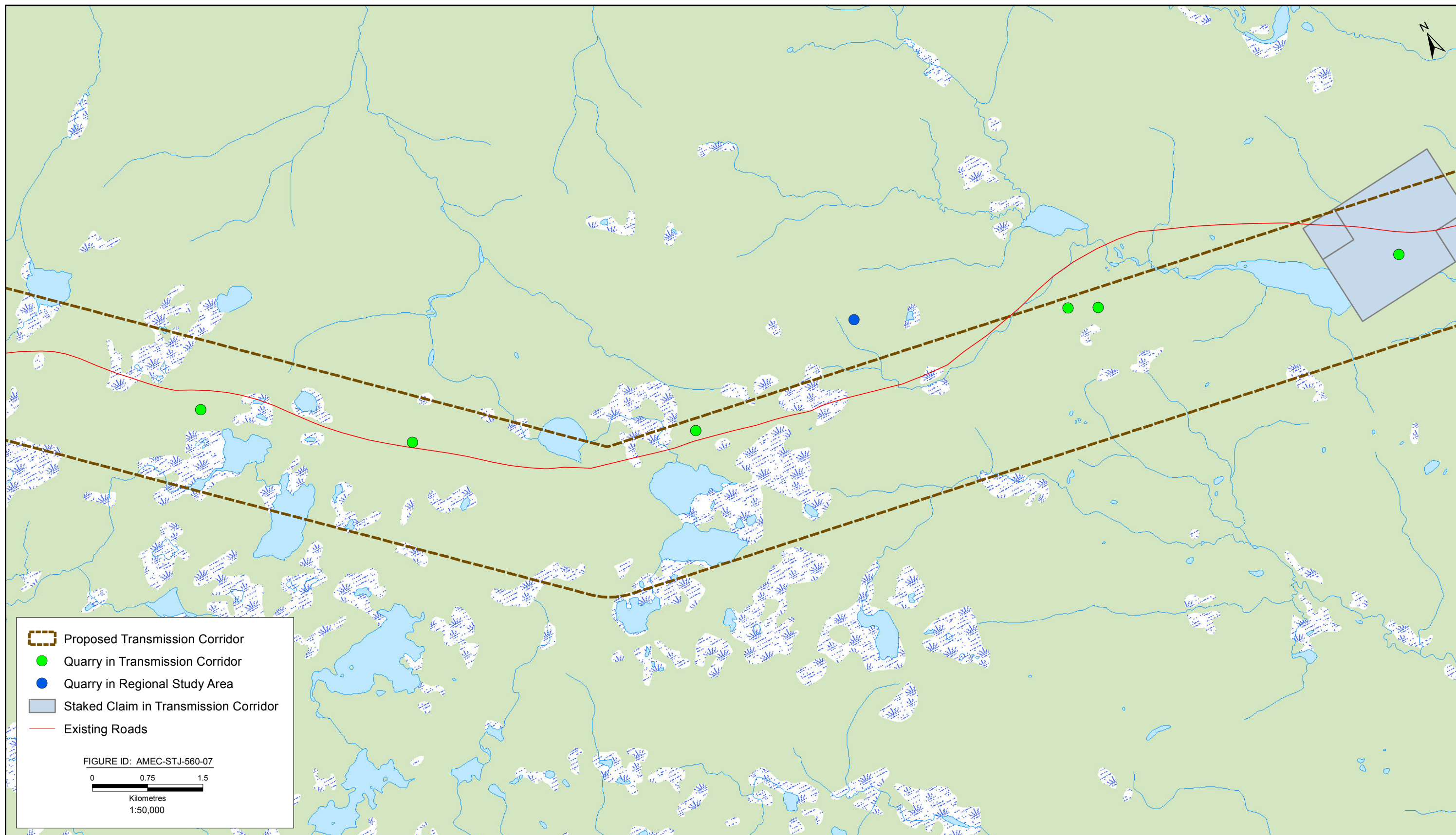


FIGURE 7

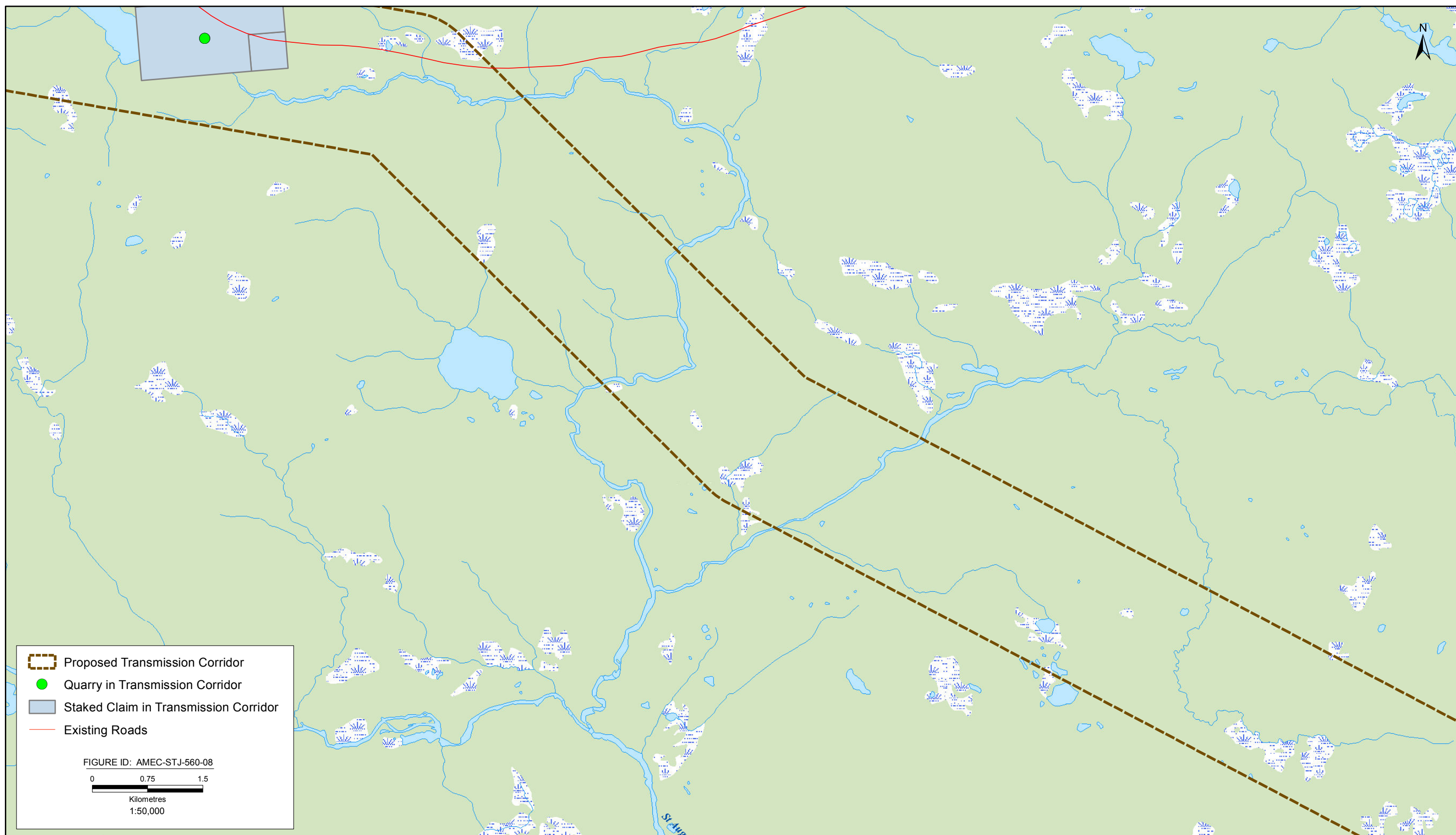


FIGURE 8