



L1301 Transmission Line Decommissioning Project

Caribou Protection and Impacts Mitigation Plan – Final

August, 2023



1 Introduction

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro (Hydro) is preparing to decommission transmission line L1301 in central Labrador. The transmission line is located within the range of the listed Red Wine Mountain Boreal Caribou. The decommissioning project was released from Environmental Assessment on July 7, 2023 and, as a condition of release, a Caribou Protection and Impacts Mitigation Plan (CPIMP) is to be approved prior to commencement of the project.

The L1301 wood pole transmission line spans 269 km between Churchill Falls and Muskrat Falls (North Spur area) and was constructed in the 1970s. Hydro plans to decommission this wood pole line over a 5 year period (2023-2027) with activities focused seasonally between May and November each year. The work will commence in the vicinity of Churchill Falls and generally progress from west to east.

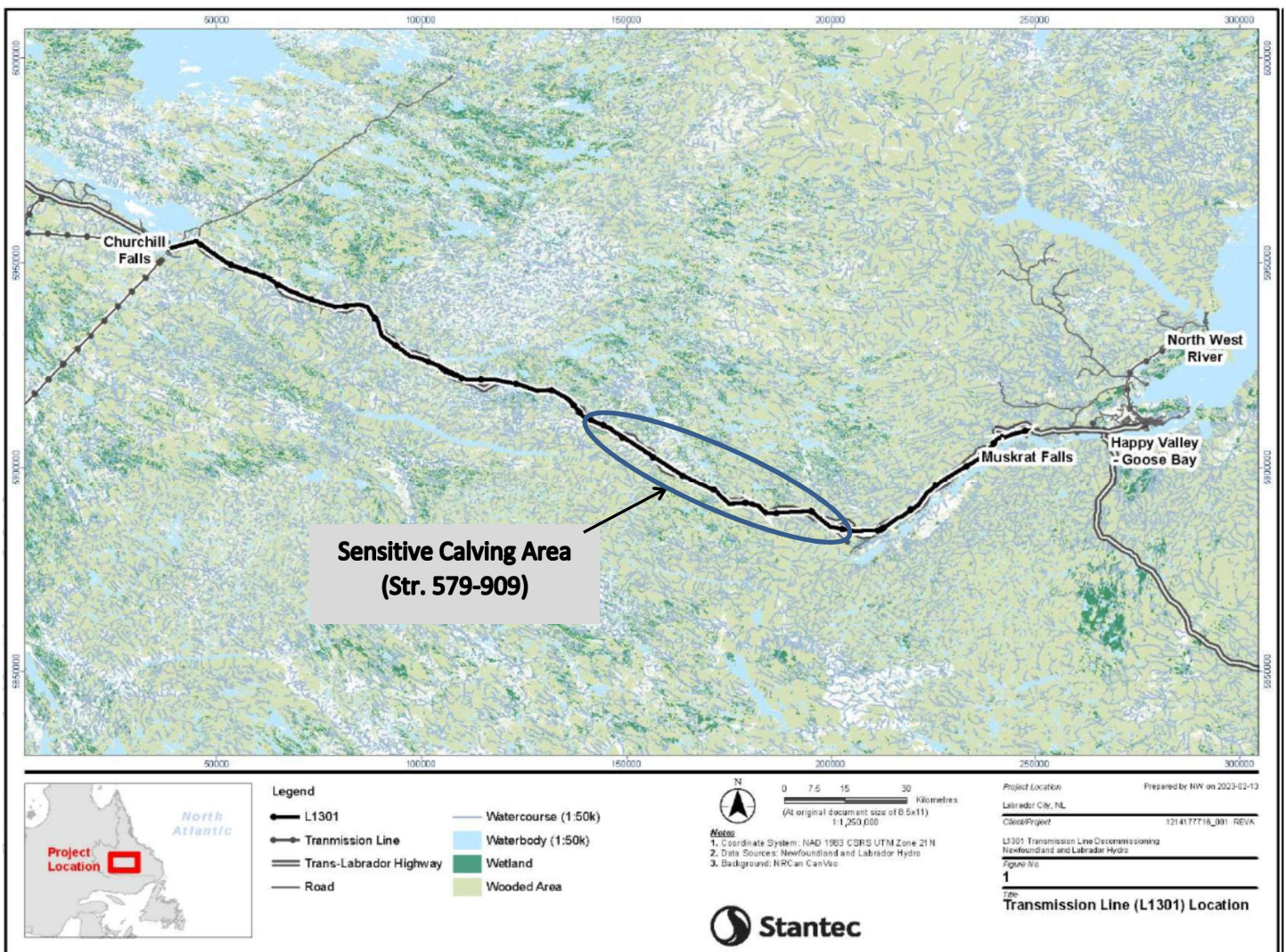


Figure 1. Project Location and Sensitive Caribou Calving Area

2 Purpose

The purpose of this CPIMP is to establish the requirements to protect and mitigate impacts to caribou during execution of this project. This CPIMP is consistent with the *Lower Churchill Project Species at Risk Impacts Mitigation and Monitoring Plan* that applied to new transmission line construction adjacent to L1301.

3 Project Personnel and Responsibilities

Decommissioning work will be performed by a contractor with Hydro providing a full-time construction monitor and environmental monitoring. Approximately 25 people will be involved with decommissioning activities, with personnel staying in available accommodations in local communities and commuting to the work site(s). The contractor will receive awareness training to ensure familiarity with the CPIMP and its requirements. Hydro will monitor the work and the project area to ensure compliance with the plan.

Hydro's environmental field monitor and/or project environmental specialist will liaise with Wildlife Division on a regular basis to exchange caribou monitoring data and provide project status updates. Hydro's environmental field monitor will implement mitigation measures as required and ensure compliance. An annual summary report will be provided to Wildlife Division.

4 Work Activities

Decommissioning of transmission line L1301 involves the removal of existing wood pole structures, conductor, and related hardware. The work will be performed utilizing existing access points, roads, and trails, generally progressing west to east. Materials will be transported from the project site for disposal on an ongoing basis. Environmental remediation will be completed as the decommissioning activity progresses. The work will be performed utilizing ground-based equipment; however, there is potential for limited helicopter support to remove materials from environmentally sensitive areas.

5 Caribou Protection and Mitigation

Hydro will implement the following protection and mitigation measures for the project:

5.1 Sensitive Calving Area Restriction

No ground activities will occur between structures 579 and 909 from May 26 to July 13 annually (Figure 1.). This section of the transmission line represents the western and eastern extents of the sensitive calving/post calving area identified by Wildlife Division.

5.2 General Mitigation Measures and Procedures

The following mitigation measures and procedures apply at all times throughout the project area:

1. All site personnel shall receive environmental awareness training. This training will include review of the Caribou Protection and Impacts Mitigation Plan;
2. Personal pets are not permitted on the project site;
3. All Project participants shall be prohibited from hunting at the project site;
4. Wildlife shall not be fed and all measures shall be taken to avoid inadvertent feeding;
5. Wildlife shall not be chased, caught, diverted, followed or otherwise harassed by project participants;
6. Equipment and vehicles shall yield the right-of-way to wildlife and adhere to established site speed limits, not exceeding 30km/hr;

7. Equipment shall be maintained in good working order to minimize noise and air pollution;
8. Avoid disturbance to existing vegetation to the extent practicable;
9. Site remediation activities shall be executed to promote natural vegetation by recovering and distributing overburden and organic material and decompacting soils where possible;
10. Should a helicopter be necessary to remove structure components from sensitive areas, maintain a minimum flight altitude of 500 m while commuting to/from the project area. Helicopter support shall be scheduled outside the May 26 and July 13 sensitive calving period;
11. Caribou sightings shall be reported to Hydro's representative as soon as practicable and reported to Wildlife Division within 24 hours;
12. Human - mediated caribou mortality shall be reported to Wildlife Division immediately.

5.3 When Caribou are Present Within 20 km of a Project Work Front

In addition to the above noted general mitigation measures, upon observance of caribou, or notification of the presence of collared caribou, within 20 kilometers of a project work front, the following shall apply:

1. Hydro will inform project personnel of the increased potential for caribou sightings and provide regular briefings as new information becomes available;
2. Hydro will engage with Wildlife Division regularly to monitor the location of collared caribou;
3. Hydro will initiate/conduct weekly visual surveys, within 10km of the work front(s), from road – accessible vantage points for caribou and signs of caribou (i.e., tracks or scat);
4. Should Hydro observe, or be notified of, caribou presence within 5km of a project work front, Hydro will conduct daily visual and/or drone surveys, within 10km of the work front(s), for caribou and signs of caribou.

5.3.1 When Caribou are Present Within 1 km of a Project Work Front

1. During the sensitive calving period (May 26 to July 13), should Hydro observe, or be notified of, caribou presence within 1 km of a project work front, Hydro will temporarily delay, reduce, or suspend activities to minimize equipment travel and noise generation in the area (e.g. truck hauling of materials from site may be suspended);
2. During the sensitive calving period (May 26 to July 13), should collared caribou presence persist for 72 hours within 1 km of a project work front(s), Hydro will temporarily focus project activity at an alternate existing work front until caribou are no longer observed within 1 km of the work front and, where applicable, collared caribou data confirms same;
3. Outside of the sensitive calving period, Hydro will monitor caribou movement and location data and consider adjusting site activities to reduce equipment travel and noise generation in the area until caribou are no longer observed within 1 km of the work front and, where applicable, collared caribou data confirms same .

5.4 Access Roads

No new access roads or laydown areas will be constructed for this decommissioning Project. Existing L1301 access, including stream crossings, that are no longer required to facilitate future maintenance of adjacent transmission infrastructure, will be remediated as required to minimize the environmental impact associated with L1301. Temporary stream crossing structures, installed to facilitate L1301 decommissioning, will be removed as the work progresses.

6 Annual Information Sharing

By January 31 each year, Hydro will provide a summary of caribou interactions and applied mitigations for the previous field season to Wildlife Division for review and discussion.

7 Conclusion

Hydro is committed to protecting and mitigating impacts on wildlife during execution of this decommissioning project. This Caribou Protection and Impacts Mitigation Plan will be implemented upon project commencement and Hydro personnel will closely monitor field activities to ensure compliance. The plan may be adjusted over the course of the project to reflect new information and lessons learned.