



MMTP Monitoring Committee

A report on Indigenous monitoring for the Manitoba-Minnesota
Transmission Project 2020

Acknowledgments

The monitors would like to thank the following people for their support throughout the Project:

Sarah Coughlin – Manitoba Hydro

Norm Voth – Manitoba Hydro

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Carlie Pauls - Stantec

Cole Moszynski – Stantec

And the rest of the staff at Manitoba Hydro!

Authorship

This report was written by Darryl Taylor, Keith Kowall and Travis Bird with support from Ariane Dilay and Sarah Coughlin

Photos

All photos in this report were taken by the four Indigenous monitors with the exception of the Golden-Winged Warbler photo on p.13 taken by Cameron Meuckon and the Northern Leopard Frog photo on p.13 taken by Jonathan Wiens.

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MMTP

The Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project (MMTP) is a 500-kv transmission line from the Winnipeg area to the U.S. border in southeastern Manitoba that connects to the Great Northern Transmission Line. Manitoba Hydro received federal regulatory approval for MMTP and began construction in August 2019.



Tower 415 of MMTP looking north through wetland complex where shrub understory was retained during clearing of trees



Vegetation regrowth near MMTP Tower 421

MMTP Monitoring Committee

The MMTP Monitoring Committee was formed in 2016 with participants from Indigenous communities and groups across southern Manitoba and northwest Ontario, Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Sustainable Development.

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the MMTP Monitoring Committee were drafted by representatives from communities and organizations who participated in Committee meetings. The Terms of Reference define the purpose, goals, structure and reporting functions for the Committee.

The purpose of the Committee was to:

- Share information in a cooperative and transparent manner relating to the environmental issues of the Project;
- Create a platform for understanding issues of concern to Indigenous participants and Manitoba Hydro in order to collaboratively provide informed advice on how to address issues of concern; and
- Support Indigenous participants' effective and meaningful participation in the monitoring of the Project.

The goals of the Committee were to monitor that:

1. Manitoba Hydro does what they say they would do and is compliant with licence conditions;
2. The land and water is respected as we use our knowledge to monitor its health;
3. Leadership, members and staff from communities and organizations feel informed about the status of MMTP and information is accessible to those who just want to check in if interested; and
4. There is a place to discuss topics of interest to us that are beyond MMTP (achievement of this goal is ongoing and was not intended to be achieved by the four monitors)

Invited communities and organizations include:

- Animakee Wa Zhing #37
- Anishnaabeg of Naongashiing
- Birdtail Sioux First Nation
- Black River First Nation
- Brokenhead Ojibway Nation
- Buffalo Point First Nation
- Canupawakpa Dakota Nation
- Dakota Plains Wahpeton First Nation
- Dakota Tipi First Nation
- Iskatewizaagegan #39 Independent FN
- Long Plain First Nation
- Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
- Peguis First Nation
- Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation
- Sagkeeng First Nation
- Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation
- Swan Lake First Nation
- Shoal Lake 40 First Nation
- Sioux Valley Dakota Nation
- Waywayseecappo First Nation
- Manitoba Metis Federation
- Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
- Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council
- Southern Chiefs Organization
- Manitoba Hydro
- Manitoba Sustainable Development

Introduction

The Monitors

Through the MMTP Monitoring Committee, a Hiring Subcommittee was formed and included members from Black River First Nation, Dakota Plains Wahpeton First Nation, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Peguis First Nation (PFN) and Manitoba Hydro. The role of the Hiring Subcommittee was to interview and select the best suited candidates from a pool of Indigenous applicants for the positions of two Compliance and Environment Monitors, one Communications Monitor, and one Traditional Knowledge Monitor. The monitors were hired in August 2019.



From left to right: Travis Bird, Darryl Taylor, Keith Kowall and Norm Voth in the forest near Tower 441



From left to right: MMTP Indigenous Monitors Floyd Flett (PFN), Darryl Taylor (Dakota Tipi First Nation), Keith Kowall (MMF) and Travis Bird (Swan Lake First Nation)



From left to right: Norm Voth, Travis Bird, Darryl Taylor and Keith Kowall harvesting cedar for communities near tower 441

Compliance and Environment Monitor: Travis Bird

My name is Travis Bird and I have worked as a monitor on major projects across Manitoba. I was an Indigenous Monitor on Manitoba Hydro's Bipole III project. I also monitored the Enbridge Line 3 project in my role with the Indigenous Advisory Monitoring Committee and as an inspector for the National Energy Board. I am a pow-wow dancer – grass dancer – from the Treaty 1 First Nation of Swan Lake and I believe in the traditional way of life.

I felt a moral obligation to participate in the monitoring of MMTP because it affects not only my land but everyone's land. I have learnt a lot since the start of my days working on Bipole III until today and I believe I have become a more observant and efficient monitor. In comparison to Bipole III, MMTP was a smaller and faster project and so there were fewer impacts to the land. My experience as a Compliance and Environment Monitor for

MMTP was a positive one. The job was made enjoyable by my colleagues and by the respect that was given to us by Manitoba Hydro employees and contractors. From my ongoing experience with environmental monitoring programs, I believe they are improving. We are working together on what needs to change and I think this is a great start.



Compliance and Environment Monitor
Travis Bird



Travis on the ROW of the M602F International Power Line built in the late 70's, looking at potential future conditions of MMTP ROW

Compliance and Environment Monitor: Keith Kowall

My name is Keith Kowall and I am a lifelong resident of Manitoba and a citizen of the Manitoba Metis Federation. My background includes environmental monitoring in the pipeline industry. My interests are broad, including history, astronomy, and seeing the Winnipeg Blue Bombers do their best.

My participation on MMTP was very rewarding and I appreciate the opportunity to be out in the field every day. I believe

my role was critical in relaying day-to-day project activities to communities and ensuring contractors and Manitoba Hydro complied with licence conditions and followed environmental regulations. I feel that I was able to make a difference on the project by being someone who communities can approach with concerns about the project and by holding Manitoba Hydro accountable during construction activities. Being part of

the team of Indigenous monitors was a very positive experience. We were fully engaged and included in construction meetings and we built relationships with Manitoba Hydro employees and inspectors from consultant firms. I appreciate being embedded into the construction process rather than being a distant observer.



Compliance and Environment Monitor
Keith Kowall



Keith picking up debris near Tower 441

Communications Monitor: Darryl Taylor

My name is Darryl Taylor and I am a Santee Dakota from Dakota Tipi First Nation. I have gained knowledge and experience working as an Environmental Monitor on Manitoba Hydro's BiPole III Project. I received an award for "outstanding contribution to the community by an Indigenous Elder" in the spring of 2019. I am currently Vice Chairman of the Indigenous Council 2019 and Chairman for the Year 2020 for the City of Portage La Prairie. I live by my traditional Dakota ways, which brought a unique and important perspective to the monitoring of MMTP.

I believe that hydro projects have a significant impact on the land and on my people. Being able to make offerings to the spirits that were being desecrated was one of the most significant positive change that happened on this Project. I feel like I did my part by making those offerings and by communicating to the corporation that it is necessary to have that level of respect toward the animals, the plants and the land. I believe Manitoba Hydro was transparent on all aspects of this Project and having Indigenous involvement on all future projects is of utmost importance.

There were some challenges at the start of monitoring but as the Project went on, a level of respect was instilled between us Indigenous monitors, Manitoba Hydro employees and contractors and a lot of positives came out of the monitoring committee. I enjoyed teaching Manitoba Hydro employees and contractors about Indigenous traditions and perspectives and I appreciate the level of interest others had in my teachings.



Communications Monitor Darryl Taylor



Darryl on the ROW of the M602F International Power Line built in the late 70's, finding antler sheds

Traditional Monitor: Floyd Flett

My name is Floyd Flett and I worked as an environmental monitor for the Enbridge pipeline in 2018. I am a Peguis band member and grew up educating myself and others with the outdoors. I take pride in utilizing my skills in the environment through hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering medicines while protecting the plants, animals, water and air to ensure sustenance is thriving for future use. I have completed training with ECO Canada as an environmental monitor and took traditional studies along with technical studies at which time I received certificates from ECO Canada and Limnos. Using my skills, I work toward ensuring the environment is taken care of.



Traditional Monitor Floyd Flett



Floyd conducting heritage surveys prior to MMTP construction

Overview

This final report is authored by monitors Darryl Taylor, Keith Kowall and Travis Bird and documents their experience throughout the construction of MMTP. The report is organized in three main sections. The first section summarizes the compliance and environmental monitoring results and recommendations for future projects. The second section offers a discussion on communication successes and challenges that were experienced by the Communications Monitor and recommendations for future projects. The third section describes the traditional ceremonies that were held throughout the Project and future monitoring sites that have been set up. The report concludes with a summary, thoughts on the committee's achievement of its goals and next steps.



Hope Creek cleared using low ground disturbance methods in the winter



A porcupine spotted in a tree near MMTP



Construction activities on MMTP at Tower 483



Deer tracks spotted on MMTP ROW near Tower 226

Compliance and Environment

Introduction

Manitoba Hydro has committed (to a number) of mitigation measures to minimize potential negative environmental and socio-economic effects. Protection of the environment can only be achieved with the involvement of Manitoba Hydro employees, consultants, contractors, Indigenous communities and organizations and the public at all stages of the Project from planning and design through construction and operational phases. In the role of Compliance and Environment monitors we reported on the daily observance of construction activities to ensure that the contractors were complying with environmental obligations set forth long before construction began.

The infractions of the contractors observed ran the gamut from minor spills to the more serious involving non-conformance reports and even the removal from the project of one of the sub-contractors. The record breaking precipitation that fell in the fall of 2019 brought with it numerous challenges in the construction of the powerline. With the saturation of the ground being what it was, getting vehicles to the ROW without generating ground disturbance was challenge enough, and heavy machinery to the ROW impossible. For this reason Manitoba Hydro suspended construction activities for a number of weeks to allow the ground to freeze enabling work to continue.

When environmental concerns were observed, whether they be ground disturbance or fuel spills for example, they were noted and photographed in our daily reports. These concerns would be relayed to Manitoba Hydro who in turn would notify the contractor involved immediately for corrective action. The quick response to our concerns by Manitoba Hydro was greatly appreciated and in turn made us feel that we were being taken seriously, were indeed part of the project, and could effect change for the better going forward. We will now discuss some successes and challenges in our experience with compliance and environmental monitoring on MMTP.



Keith cleaning up debris and making note of rutting near MMTP Tower 38 to be addressed by the contractor during rehabilitation



Travis and Norm checking on groundwater seepage from tower foundation at MMTP Tower 443



Compliance and Environment Monitors Keith and Travis at MMTP Tower 441 sharing insight with Manitoba Hydro employees

Successes and Challenges

Successes

We believe that Manitoba Hydro was diligent in responding to concerns that we brought to their attention. For example, if a fuel spill was discovered, we would notify Manitoba Hydro who would then order the immediate remediation of the spill. When concerns over ground disturbance or rutting were brought to the attention of contractors, they responded by installing rig mats or postponing construction at certain sites until ground conditions improved. We believe Manitoba Hydro's effective responses and reactions to issues and concerns communicated by us is a success of compliance and environmental monitoring.

We are also happy with the way Manitoba Hydro identified and worked around Environmentally Sensitive Sites (ESS) such as the Golden-Winged Warbler and Northern Leopard Frog habitats. Such buffer zones were flagged and respected by Manitoba Hydro and contractors alike, although one incident is discussed in the next section. We also observed Manitoba Hydro offset a tower to avoid an area with rare species of orchids and medicinal plants, which we found commendable and respectful. Overall, we saw a lot of positive changes with MMTP from the way projects have been constructed in the past.



Golden-Winged Warbler



Monitors participating in nest sweep training



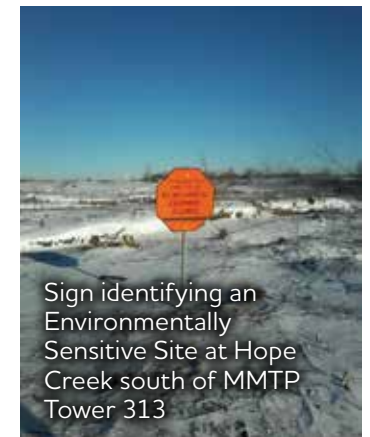
Pictured left: Marker cones installed in stick nest to temporarily deter nesting in active construction area. Cones will be removed once ground conditions are dry



Northern Leopard Frog



Willow retention in wetland within a traditional use plant species Environmentally Sensitive Site



Sign identifying an Environmentally Sensitive Site at Hope Creek south of MMTP Tower 313

Challenges

A glaring shortfall noted continually throughout the project was the presence of sub-standard heavy machinery on the ROW. Some of this machinery had no business being there due to its overall poor condition or lack of a spill kit and were responsible for a majority of spills. Manitoba Hydro was diligent in responding to spills once they were made aware of spills, but on several occasions, we discovered fuel spills on the ROW that had not yet been acknowledged by the contractors on site. This resulted in a few non-conformance reports issued to those contractors. We do have concerns over contractors still operating with an old-school mentality that is not as considerate of the environment as it should be. One sub-contractor was removed from the Project because of poorly maintained equipment and lack of spill tray, as well as for other reasons, which demonstrates Manitoba Hydro's commitment to complying with licence conditions and environmental regulations. It is our opinion that on future projects any piece of heavy equipment allowed on the ROW be inspected and assigned a sticker noting it passed inspection.

Another compliance challenge that we faced was the observation of heavy equipment tracks inside a riparian buffer zone by the Assiniboine Red River that was flagged as a "No Machine Zone". Such

tracks were brought to Manitoba Hydro's attention who alerted the contractor and reminded them to be mindful of flagging around waterways. At the start of construction, rutting and ground disturbance was a constant threat due to record breaking amounts of precipitation and monitors notified contractors and Manitoba Hydro when remediation was needed. Manitoba Hydro paused work to prevent further ground disturbance during wet conditions.



Wet ground conditions near MMTP Tower 212



Equipment tire tracks within the "No Machine Zone" near water's edge on MMTP



Ground disturbance and rutting at MMTP Tower 52 (prior to rehabilitation). This site was added to the rehabilitation tracker for contractors to repair prior to concluding construction.

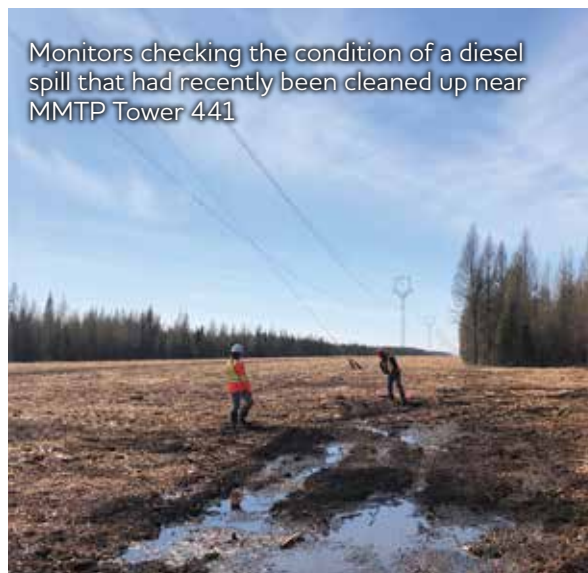
Recommendations

We would like to share several recommendations with Manitoba Hydro on how to improve compliance for future projects. The first recommendation is to only allow machinery that has been inspected and approved by Manitoba Hydro on construction sites. A sticker should be placed on each equipment that has passed the inspection so that monitors and inspectors can easily see which piece of machinery has been approved and which ones still need inspecting. This would reduce the risk of fuel spills from old and defective equipment.

Another recommendation is that contractors should have a spill response unit dedicated to attending to the remediation of spills. This could help to reduce the instances in which monitors discover spills that have yet to be acknowledged or reported by contractors. This would also reduce the response time for clean up and remediation of spills.

We also recommend that Manitoba Hydro be more diligent during the contractor hiring process. It is critical for contractors to understand the importance of environmental protection and the need

to follow environmental regulations. It is imperative for Manitoba Hydro to seek contractors that are dedicated to minimizing environmental disturbance as much as possible. Strengthening the hiring process could help in this aspect.



In terms of the Indigenous monitoring committee, we recommend better introducing the roles of Manitoba Hydro employees, consultants and contractors at the start of construction of the Project so that everyone has a better understanding of what others employees do. We also

would have liked to have our own vehicles to be able to visit and monitor sites of our choosing. However, we understand that Manitoba Hydro did take steps to have trucks for us but did not hear back from communities. Future monitors could also benefit from access to ATVs to conduct their work.

We had some challenges with reporting at the start of our work and we believe that the reporting format should be streamlined for future monitors. New and upgraded tablets should also be provided to future monitors to avoid issues with old technology. Although we had the opportunity to work a flexible schedule, we did not take up the opportunity as much as we would have liked to. We think future monitors could benefit from staggering their work schedule to always have one person on site.

Although some of us had been shown the location of trail cameras on the Project, we believe that in the future all monitors could benefit from knowing their location and from seeing the photos as to have a better understanding of wildlife in the area. Monitoring specific Environmentally Sensitive Sites (ESS) on the Project from

the start of construction could also be useful. Communities had been invited to participate in early Project activities such as geotechnical drilling and heritage work and some did participate, but we think that more involvement in these activities could bring future monitors a better understanding of the Project area. Some of us had participated in heritage work, which was good. Overall, we believe that the Indigenous compliance and environmental monitoring on this Project worked very well and that it is essential for every project moving forward.



Debris near MMTP Tower 120 to be picked up for recycling/disposal. All debris is placed on a deficiencies list for clean up by contractors and checked by Manitoba Hydro or Compliance and Environment Monitors. This debris has now been removed from the ROW.



MMTP Tower 121 at Red River Crossing



Travis and Floyd along with other community members, archeologists and Manitoba Hydro employees conducting heritage work prior to MMTP construction

Communication

Introduction

One of our goals was to communicate Project updates with communities but communication ended up being a big challenge. We were fully transparent on all aspects of the Project and created a website where we shared our daily reports. We also reached out to communities repeatedly and offered in-person meetings and presentations. As Indigenous monitors, we were involved in all aspects of the Project, more so than on any other project in the past. Everything we have said and done is fully transparent and available for communities to see. We believe we gave our best efforts to put the information out there and we wish for more First Nation and Metis involvement in all future projects.

Communication Methods

We used several methods of communication to share project information with communities. A website was created for the MMTP monitoring committee where we shared our daily compliance and environment reports.

The Communications Monitor offered to provide Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 First Nations project updates and in-person presentations in their communities. Cedar boughs were also brought to communities during visits.



Front page of website MMTPmonitoring.com

Manitoba Hydro media relations created a video about Communications Monitor Darryl Taylor sharing his experience and role on MMTP. Darryl shared how the monitors used their traditional knowledge to monitor the land and the water and explained the purpose of the ceremonies and offerings that were held on MMTP. This video was shared on social media platforms and can be found at this link: https://youtu.be/_3KSgt_Hdms



Daily reports on website MMTPmonitoring.com



Blog posts on website MMTPmonitoring.com

Manitoba Hydro media relations also released a video to announce the end of construction and electrification of MMTP. In the video, Manitoba Hydro describes the construction process of MMTP and describes the role and importance of the Indigenous monitors. The video can be found at this link: <https://youtu.be/DYC6Nr2pU5M>

Recommendations

To overcome some of the challenges we faced in communicating with communities, we provide a few recommendations for future project. Recording and sharing more video content has the potential to reach a wider audience. We believe a lot more can be communicated through a short video with commentary than with text and pictures. We also recommend Manitoba Hydro share more content through social media rather than using a project website. We also recommend that during in-person engagement activities in communities there be traditional flute music playing in the background and do a smudge at the start as to create a more comfortable and familiar environment for community members.

We highly encourage all communities to complete the Traditional Knowledge (TK) studies and we believe it is imperative that they are completed before Manitoba Hydro finalizes their environmental assessments for projects.

In TK studies, it is critical for communities to include specific locations of burials, medicines, animals, fishing and hunting routes, and any other important sites so that Manitoba Hydro can try to avoid these locations during the routing process. We also recommend Manitoba Hydro seek input from communities with paper or online surveys. Surveys are a quick and easy way to obtain input from some community members that may otherwise not have the time or capacity to participate in full engagement activities. Overall, we believe that engagement is a two-way street and we hope to see more interest and participation from communities in the future.



Monitors discussing with Manitoba Hydro employees and contractors

Traditional

Introduction

Over the course of MMTP, we were given the opportunity to host traditional ceremonies and make offerings of tobacco and prayers. These ceremonies and offerings represent ways for us to apologize and give back to the spirits that are being desecrated by the Project. We know that the trees in the ROW may never come back but we pray that the animals come back and utilize the area again. We cannot replace the trees that have been cleared but we can acknowledge their spirits, we can apologize, and we can ask them to move on. We also had the opportunity to harvest and donate some of the wood to communities and organizations as a way to respect and make use of the trees. In our prayers, our thoughts and in our daily lives, we have that level of respect for all living beings. Our actions signify that we are acknowledging all of the spirits and asking for forgiveness and for health and protection. We can pray and perform ceremonies and offerings of tobacco to respect the spirits and this is the way for us to connect with them. We made these offerings not just for us but for everyone involved on the Project and we appreciate the interest that other employees had in our teachings about spirituality and traditional ceremonies.



First Nation and Metis representatives and Elders along with Manitoba Hydro employees at the Pipe Ceremony prior to MMTP construction

Ceremonies and Offerings

Prior to construction, Manitoba Hydro and interested First Nation and Metis representatives and elders were invited to a traditional pipe ceremony and offering on the Project site.

Pictured right: Elder Gloria Eastman and Elder Jean Eagle at the Pipe Ceremony prior to MMTP construction



Traditional

Since MMTP would be crossing over the Red River, Manitoba Hydro invited water keepers from Peguis First Nation along with interested First Nation and Metis representatives and Elders to conduct a water ceremony asking for permission and safety for all who are part of the Project. A traditional feast was also offered.



Water Ceremony for MMTP at the Red River crossing



Cedar harvested and offered to communities



Tipi teaching at Manitoba Hydro office in downtown Winnipeg



An International Boundary Marker at the Canada/US Border created by the Treaty of 1908



Along with Manitoba Hydro staff, we offered a Tipi Teaching at the Manitoba Hydro office in downtown Winnipeg.

Manitoba Hydro identified traditional tobacco tie offerings on and off the ROW. We were also able to make offerings of tobacco and prayers along the ROW whenever and wherever we saw fit.

We are planning a closing ceremony for MMTP. However, during the uncertainty around COVID-19 our planning of the closing ceremony has been paused.



Prayer cloth on tree near MMTP

Monitoring Plan

We have designed a monitoring program to monitor the impacts of MMTP on aspects of traditional importance. Traditional use plant species composition and abundance are of concern to First Nations and Metis. We have set up vegetation quadrats at certain sites along the ROW where we will measure the growth of traditional plant species, including medicines and berries, over time. Another concern to First Nations and Metis is the effect of the Project on traditional hunting and trapping that could result from changes in access, noise and sensory disturbances, and changes to wildlife and wildlife habitat. We will monitor accessibility, level of visual and noise disturbances, and presence of wildlife over time at certain sites along the ROW. We are also concerned with effects of the Project on the health of wetlands and so one of our monitoring stations is set up at a wetland site. The methods of monitoring will include direct observation, vegetation quadrats and wildlife cameras, which will be conducted three times per year at each chosen site (spring, summer and fall). Key results from our monitoring program will be shared with the MMTP monitoring committee, interested parties, First Nations, Metis and Manitoba Sustainable Development.



Traditional medicinal plant (Sage) near MMTP Tower 248



Conclusion

Summary

We, Indigenous monitors – two Compliant and Environment Monitors, one Communications Monitor and one Traditional Monitor – want to share that our experience working on MMTP was very positive. Individually and as a team, we were the eyes and ears of Indigenous Peoples with interest in the Project and were able to share project information and updates transparently with communities. We were able to hold traditional ceremonies and make offerings to the spirits that were desecrated by the Project, which we believe is a significant positive change from past projects.

Overall, we believe that Manitoba Hydro was compliant to licence conditions and that they were responsive and reactive to concerns we shared with them. Some compliance challenges that we would like to see improved for future projects relate mainly to spill prevention and response. For this, we provided some recommendations for Manitoba Hydro to consider such as only allowing machinery that has been inspected and approved onto construction sites.

We did experience many challenges with communication. We reached out to communities in various ways but did not get the level of response and interest we had hoped to receive. We hope that communities are checking the MMTP Monitoring



First Nation and Metis representatives and Elders along with Manitoba Hydro employees at the Pipe Ceremony prior to MMTP construction

Committee website for project updates and suggest that Manitoba Hydro share more video content in the future. However, we strongly believe that engagement is a two-way street and we encourage communities to be more interested and engaged in future projects that affect the land and water.

Having the opportunity to hold traditional ceremonies, such as the traditional pipe ceremony and the water ceremony, and being able to give traditional offerings and prayers throughout the ROW was very important to us. We believe this shows a level of respect from Manitoba Hydro toward Indigenous Peoples and toward the environment and the spirits that has not been present on past projects. Continuing to hold such traditional

ceremonies and offerings on future projects can help to build and strengthen relationships between Manitoba Hydro and Indigenous Peoples that have been tainted by past projects.



Committee Goals

This section reports on how we believe the goals of the MMTP Monitoring Committee were met.



Views of MMTP from the helicopter



Helicopter used for an aerial tour of MMTP



Goal 1

Manitoba Hydro does what they say they would do and is compliant with licence conditions.

As described in the compliance and environment section, we believe that Manitoba Hydro did what they said they would do and were compliant with licence conditions. Manitoba Hydro responded and acted efficiently to compliance issues that were brought to their attention by us and other inspectors and remained fully transparent during the entire construction of the Project. They even issued some non-conformance to contractors, which further demonstrates their commitment to following environmental regulations.

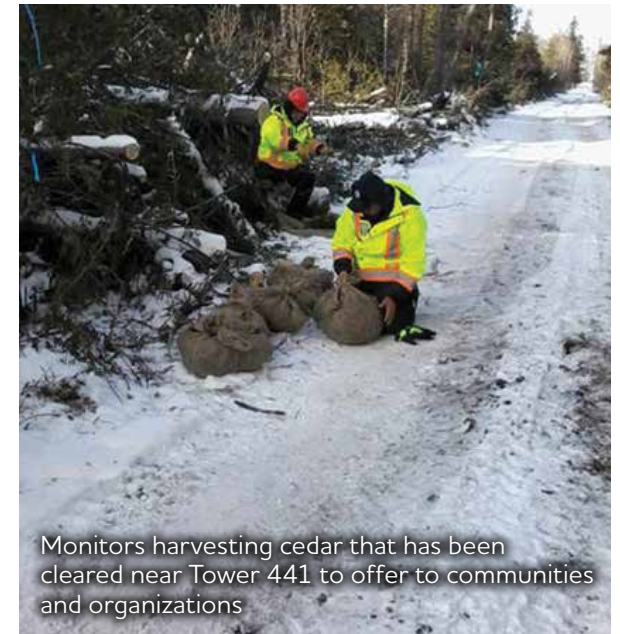


Cedar forest near Tower 441 prior to project clearing

Goal 2

The land and water is respected as we use our knowledge to monitor its health.

The impacts of MMTP on the land and water is significant. However, we believe that some level of respect was given. We believe that routing of the Project around the city of Winnipeg where land has been pre-disturbed by other development helped to minimize disturbance to intact environments. The portion of the Project where intact forests were cleared, and especially cedar forests, brought us sadness and frustration. However, by making traditional tobacco offerings and prayers to the spirits, we feel that some respect was given back to the land and that this helps to maintain our connection to the land. In addition, by allowing us to collect the cedar and offer it to communities, we also believe this helped to offset some of the negative impacts of the Project. Being able to repurpose the cleared cedar for medicinal use by communities, gives us a sense of purpose and is beneficial in this time of need. In Dakota tradition, cedar is one of the four sacred medicines.



Monitors harvesting cedar that has been cleared near Tower 441 to offer to communities and organizations



The cedar forest near Tower 441 after project clearing and Tower installation

Goal 3

Leadership, members and staff from communities and organizations feel informed about the status of MMTP and information is accessible to those who just want to check in

This goal was very challenging for us to attain. We shared an abundance of information on the MMTP Monitoring Committee website which is accessible to anyone who is interested. We also reached out to communities and offered to visit communities to provide in-person project updates and presentations. However, we feel like there was a lack of response and interest from communities. We do understand that many communities may not have the time or capacity to engage but we believe it is essential that communities try to engage in the future.

Next steps

When thinking about the impacts of MMTP on communities, we think it is too early to really tell what the impacts will be. This is why on-going monitoring of the MMTP ROW is so important. The monitoring of where traditional medicinal plants grow back and how they are harvested by communities will provide information on how the presence of the

transmission line affects traditional activities. The monitoring of animals and how they use the ROW will also be an indicator of how the ROW might impact traditional activities, such as hunting and trapping. The monitoring program will help in identifying impacts to traditional activities, which can inform future project planning and environmental assessments.



Retention of understory within riparian buffer of wetland (only centerline trail cleared) on MMTP ROW near Tower 421-422



The start of spring regrowth on the MMTP ROW

We highly recommend that Indigenous monitors be present for the construction of all future projects, including Hydro and any other project that affects the land, as to ensure that respect is given to the land and water. Traditional ceremonies and offerings should also be conducted on all future projects to instill that level of respect to the land and spirits. Overall, we believe that establishing the MMTP Monitoring Committee and that hiring four Indigenous Monitors on MMTP was an important step toward reconciling relationships between Manitoba Hydro and Indigenous Peoples. Building relationships, developing mutual respect and incorporating more Indigenous perspectives into hydro projects is the way forward and MMTP represents a significant and very important step in the right direction.

For more information about the MMTP Monitoring Committee

Website: MMTPmonitoring.com

For more information about the Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project

Email: MMTP@hydro.mb.ca

Phone: 1-877-343-1631 or
204-360-7888 in Winnipeg

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