# APPENDIX 4-A

**Métis Nation of Ontario Traditional Knowledge Land Use Severity Assessment**

# Appendix 4 -A: Summary of MNO Severity Assessment on Métis Communities' Ability to Exercise Section 35 Rights, Proposed Mitigation Measures, and Potential Net Effects

| MNO VC | Potential Impact on Métis Communities' Ability to Exercise of Section 35 Rights Identified in the MNO TKLUS | Severity Identified by MNO | Proposed Mitigation Measures | Linked Biophysical Components | Potential Net Effects to Section 35 Rights | Carried Forward to Cumulative Effects? |
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| **Gathering plants and natural materials** | The Project is anticipated to have a very significant impact on gathering practices due to vegetation clearing, soil disturbance, restricted access during construction, and concerns regarding contamination. Impacts may occur during construction and may persist long-term where vegetation and soil conditions are altered. Changes to harvesting locations and reluctance to gather near the PSA may occur. | Very Significant | • Vegetation and habitat management, including retention of compatible vegetation, minimized clearing and access disturbance, use of native species for revegetation, and reclamation of temporary disturbed areas to support habitat stability.<br>• Effectively managing and communicating herbicide use to Métis communities.<br>• Providing access to the PSA to Métis citizens when safe and where feasible | • Vegetation Management (Section 4.3.1)<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5) | Following mitigation, net effects on vegetation and soil conditions are expected. Temporary disruptions to access during construction will be restored afterward, where feasible. Habitat conditions within the right-of-way will be altered in the long term but are not expected to substantially reduce the overall availability of plant resources at the broader landscape scale, although localized reductions may occur. These changes may affect the exercise of gathering practices, in addition to potential concerns regarding contamination or herbicide use. These effects may be experienced by those who rely on gathering and/or have limited ability to shift locations, which could constrain food security, access to medicines, and continuity of land-based practices. | Yes |
| **Hunting and trapping wildlife** | The Project is anticipated to have a significant impact on hunting and trapping practices due to habitat disturbance, changes in wildlife movement and availability, changes in harvesting areas within known Métis harvesting areas, increased hunting pressure, and restricted access during construction. Impacts may occur primarily during construction but could extend into the long term due to changes in habitat, access, or resource availability. Effects are expected within known Métis harvesting areas, including the Historic Sault Ste. Marie and Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Harvesting Areas. | Significant | • Vegetation management including retention of compatible vegetation, minimizing clearing and access disturbance to the extent possible, use of native species for revegetation, and reclamation of temporarily disturbed areas to support habitat stability.<br>• Implementation of wildlife habitat mitigation measures to reduce disturbance to wildlife populations.<br>• Hydro One will monitor the potential for birds to collide with transmission lines during Project operational phase to determine whether visual diverters will be required in specific areas. Implementation of spill prevention and response measures to reduce contamination risks.<br>• Manage and control access, including use of existing ROW and discouraging unauthorized use.<br>• Scheduling construction activities where feasible to minimize disrupting key harvesting periods. | • Vegetation Management (Section 4.3.1)<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Birds (Section 4.3.3)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5)<br>• Access/Transportation (Section 4.8.4) | Following mitigation, net effects on wildlife habitat and availability are expected. Temporary disruptions to access and hunting activities may occur during construction and will be restored afterward, where feasible. Habitat conditions within the right-of-way will be altered in the long term but are not expected to substantially reduce wildlife availability at the broader landscape scale, although localized changes in habitat, movement patterns, and availability of wildlife for harvesting may occur (e.g., temporary avoidance of the right-of-way during construction). These changes may affect the exercise of hunting and trapping practices, particularly for those who rely on hunting and trapping and/or have limited ability to shift harvesting locations, which could constrain access to country foods, with implications for food security and the continuation of land-based practices. | Yes |
| **Fishing** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on fishing practices due to potential changes to aquatic habitat, changes to riparian environments, and restricted access | Significant | • Effective management of watercourse crossing within the PSA to minimize disturbance to fish habitat. | • Fish and Fish Habitat (Section 4.3.6<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7) | Following mitigation, net effects on aquatic habitat and water quality are expected. Temporary disruptions to access during construction may occur and will be restored afterward, where feasible. Habitat conditions within the ROW will be altered in | Yes |

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| | during construction. Impacts may be noticed acutely during fishing and spawning seasons. Concerns regarding contamination could affect the availability of fish for harvesting and the ability of Métis citizens to rely on fish as a food source. | | • Protection of aquatic and riparian habitats and water quality through erosion and sediment control.<br>• Compliance with MNR and DFO timing windows and restrictions<br>• Maintain and/or restore access to fishing areas post construction.<br>• Implementation of spill prevention and response measures to reduce contamination risks. | • Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5) | the long term but are not expected to substantially reduce the overall availability of fish at the broader landscape scale, although localized changes in habitat conditions and availability of fish for harvesting may occur, particularly during construction periods that overlap with sensitive fishing and spawning seasons. These changes may affect the exercise of fishing practices, in addition to potential concerns regarding contamination affecting the ability to rely on fish as a food source. These changes may affect fishing practices, particularly for those who rely on fishing and/or have limited ability to shift harvesting locations, which could constrain access to country foods, with implications for food security and the continuation of land-based practices. | |
| **Water, Watersheds, Rivers, and Streams** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on water, watersheds, rivers, and streams due to potential disturbance to waterbodies and riparian areas, including habitat disruption, reduced water quality, and changes to water quantity and flow. Impacts may occur during construction and could extend into the long term where changes in runoff or contamination affect water systems. Construction activities may also temporarily restrict access to waterbodies and waterways used for harvesting, travel, and cultural activities. Concerns regarding water quality may affect the ability of Métis citizens to rely on water resources that support harvesting and traditional practices. | Significant | • Effective management of watercourse crossing within the PSA to minimize disturbance to watercourses, riparian areas, and fish habitat.<br>• Implement erosion and sediment control measures to protect water quality.<br>• Implementation of spill prevention and response measures to reduce contamination risks.<br>• Restore disturbed riparian areas post construction. | • Fish and Fish Habitat (Section 4.3.6)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5 | Mitigation measures will reduce potential effects on water quality, flow, and hydrological conditions; however, some localized changes may occur during construction, particularly where work near waterbodies or watercourse crossings is required. Watershed conditions within and adjacent to the right-of-way may be altered in the long term (e.g., localized changes to riparian vegetation and drainage patterns at watercourse crossings) but are not expected to substantially affect water resources at the broader landscape scale. These changes may affect the use of water resources that support harvesting and traditional practices, in addition to potential concerns regarding contamination, particularly for those who rely on local waterbodies and/or have limited ability to shift locations, constraining access to water resources supporting harvesting and food security. | Yes |
| **Climate Change** | The Project is anticipated to contribute to environmental changes through vegetation clearing, emissions, and construction-related disturbance, which may affect soil, wildlife habitat, and water systems. These changes are expected to occur primarily during construction but may contribute to longer-term environmental change. Concerns identified by Métis citizens include the removal of vegetation and natural carbon sinks, potential noise and vibration effects on harvesters and wildlife, and localized changes to wind conditions within the transmission corridor. Changes to ecological conditions may influence wildlife, fish, and plant populations, potentially | Significant | • Minimize clearing and disturbance where practicable and restore disturbed areas.<br>• Implement erosion and sediment control measures.<br>• Apply standard construction best management such as turning off vehicles and equipment when not in use to reduce emissions and disturbance. | • Climate Change (Section 4.4.2.1) | The Project will contribute incrementally to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental disturbance, primarily during construction, with localized and temporary effects expected. While these contributions are not anticipated to result in measurable changes to climate patterns at the regional scale, they will add to cumulative environmental change already experienced by Métis communities, including effects on ecological systems that support harvesting and traditional practices. These incremental changes may affect the exercise of these practices over time, particularly for those who live near or actively harvest in and around the PSA, while also having the potential to affect Métis citizens in the broader LSA. | Yes |

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| | affecting Métis harvesting practices and broader connections to the land. | | | | | |
| **Areas of Use and Occupation** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on Métis citizens areas of use and occupation. Effects will mainly occur during construction due to restricted access however, access may continue in some areas during the Project's lifecycle. The footprint of effects is significant given overlap with the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Harvesting Area and Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Harvesting Areas. While no Métis cultural sites or contemporary Métis gathering sites were recorded within the Project area, contemporary Métis gathering sites and several high-use harvesting areas were identified within the broader study area. Métis participants also expressed concerns regarding the potential existence of Métis burial sites within the Project area and the geographic scope of archaeological investigations | Significant | • Minimize access restrictions during construction to reduce disruption to harvesting and cultural activities.<br>• Access to PSA will be restored post construction.<br>• Implement a Cultural Heritage Risk Management Plan.<br>• Minimize disturbance to areas used for cultural activities.<br>• Implement vegetation, wildlife, and land restoration measures to support continued land use post construction. | • Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5<br>• Access/Transportation (Section 4.8.4)<br>• Cultural Heritage (Section 4.5) | Following the implementation of mitigation measures, temporary disruptions to access and use are expected within the PSA during construction and will be restored afterward, where feasible. No Métis cultural sites or contemporary Métis gathering sites were identified within the Project area. Areas of use and occupation, including overnight stay locations, were recorded within the LSA, indicating ongoing use of the surrounding landscape. Project effects are expected to be limited to the PSA and may influence use of areas within the right-of-way due to temporary access restrictions and the presence of Project infrastructure. These changes may affect the use of areas for harvesting and cultural activities over time, particularly for those who live near or actively use areas within the LSA, which may constrain continued use of preferred locations. | No – Effects are localized to the PSA, occur within an existing transmission corridor, with access expected to be restored following construction, and do not interact with other stressors in a manner that would result in cumulative, landscape-level changes. |
| **Sense of Place** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on Métis citizens' sense of place, defined as the ability to experience traditional territory in culturally significant ways. Vegetation clearing, access road modifications, construction activities, and additional transmission infrastructure may alter the visual and environmental character of the landscape and influence experience and connection to the area. Some Métis citizens noted that the existing transmission corridor has already altered the landscape, while others noted that additional construction, including increased noise, may further detract from their experience on the land. Métis citizens may seek out or prefer alternative locations. | Significant | • Minimize vegetation clearing and retain existing vegetation where feasible to reduce changes to landscape character.<br>• Use the existing transmission corridor to limit new disturbance and maintain visual continuity.<br>• Implement construction best management practices to reduce noise and disturbance during construction.<br>• Restore disturbed areas following construction to support recovery of natural landscape conditions.<br>• Develop and implement a Cultural Heritage Risk Management Plan to address potential effects on culturally important landscapes. | • Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5)<br>• Cultural Heritage (Section 4.5)<br>• Access (Section 4.8.4)<br>• Landscape changes (Section 4.5 and Section 4.11) | Following the implementation of mitigation measures, changes to the visual and environmental character of the landscape are expected within the PSA due to vegetation clearing and the presence of Project infrastructure. These changes may influence how the area is experienced during harvesting and cultural activities, including perceptions of disturbance and industrial presence. Effects are expected to be localized and reflective of the existing transmission corridor context. These changes may influence sense of place over time, particularly for those who live near or regularly use areas within the LSA, including the potential to seek out or prefer alternative locations. | No - Effects are localized to the PSA, occur within an existing transmission corridor, do not extend into the broader LSA, and are not expected to interact with other stressors or activities to result in cumulative, landscape-level changes. |
| **Governance** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on Métis governance (accountability to Métis citizens and future generations), including participation in decision-making, stewardship, and management of lands and resources. Governance is an important component of their rights, | Significant | Hydro One will:<br>• Continue to engage with Métis communities through established governance structures, including Regional Consultation Committees.<br>• Provide capacity funding and support to facilitate meaningful participation; | Linked biophysical VCs are not applicable. | Following the implementation of mitigation measures, including ongoing engagement, capacity support, and incorporation of Métis knowledge and perspectives, potential effects on Métis governance are expected to be limited. Métis communities will continue to be engaged throughout the Project lifecycle, and opportunities for participation in Project-related | No – Governance is supported through ongoing engagement, consultation, and capacity funding, with continued opportunities to |

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| | culture, and way of life, including the role of regional governance structures and responsibilities related to harvesting and land stewardship. Concerns were raised regarding the extent to which Métis perspectives and knowledge are incorporated into Project planning and decision-making, including opportunities for meaningful participation and the conditions needed to enhance Métis communities' ability to exercise of Section 35 rights, such as recognition, protection, and the ability to share and document knowledge. Participants also expressed concerns regarding the lack of Métis consultation during the original 1980s environmental assessment process, perceived inequities in Project engagement and participation opportunities, including access to environmental committee involvement, and the absence of a Métis specific equity participation opportunity comparable to that offered to First Nation Partners. | | • Consider and integrate Métis knowledge, values, and concerns into Project planning, assessment, and implementation, where provided.<br>• Provide continued opportunities for Métis communities to review Project information and provide input throughout planning, construction, and operation.<br>• Document and respond to community feedback, including incorporating input into Project design and mitigation, where feasible. | | decision-making processes will be maintained. No net effects on governance are anticipated. | participate in Project-related decision-making processes, which will support Métis accountability to their citizens and future generations. |
| **Management and Stewardship** | The Project is anticipated to have significant impact on Métis management and stewardship, defined as the responsibility and role of Métis citizens to care for, manage, and maintain lands, waters, and resources in accordance with Métis knowledge, practices, and values. Project activities such as vegetation clearing, construction, and the presence of infrastructure may influence the ability to carry out stewardship responsibilities, including protecting culturally important areas and species, monitoring environmental conditions, maintaining relationships with the land, and sharing and applying Métis knowledge in the care and management of lands, waters, and resources. Concerns were raised regarding the protection of culturally significant species, habitats, and harvesting areas, and the importance of Métis involvement in management and stewardship-related decisions and activities. Participants also identified concerns regarding opportunities to participate in environmental monitoring | Significant | Hydro One will:<br>• Provide capacity funding and opportunities (environmental monitoring and field programs);<br>• Consider and integrate Métis knowledge, values, and land use information into Project planning, design, and implementation, where provided;<br>• Implement mitigation measures to protect culturally important species, habitats, and areas identified through TKLU studies and consultation;<br>• Provide opportunities for Métis communities to participate in monitoring and adaptive management during construction and operation; and<br>• Communicate Project activities and schedules to support ongoing awareness of changes on the land. | Linked biophysical VCs are not applicable. (See VCs on gathering plants and natural materials; hunting and trapping wildlife; fishing; and water, watersheds, rivers, and streams.) | Following the implementation of mitigation measures, including ongoing engagement, incorporation of Métis knowledge, and participation in monitoring and stewardship-related activities, net effects on Métis management and stewardship are expected to be limited. Project activities may continue to influence the ability of Métis citizens to carry out stewardship responsibilities within the PSA, particularly in areas where environmental conditions or culturally important resources are altered. However, opportunities for Métis involvement in monitoring and adaptive management are expected to reduce the extent of these effects over time. | No – Ongoing engagement and participation in monitoring and adaptive management, with impacts localized to the PSA, are not expected to result in reduced ability or role of Métis to care, manage and maintain their territories in accordance with their knowledge, practices, and values. |

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| | and stewardship initiatives, including representation on the Project Environmental Committee and involvement in ongoing monitoring and rehabilitation activities. | | | | | |
| **Travel** | The Project is anticipated to have moderate impact on Métis travel, defined as the ability of Métis citizens to move across lands and waters to access harvesting areas, cultural sites, and other areas of importance. Project activities such as vegetation clearing, construction, and access road modifications may affect travel routes, including temporary restrictions, changes to established trails, or altered conditions for navigation. While some access routes may be maintained or improved, concerns were raised regarding potential disruptions during construction and the reliability of access to areas used for harvesting and cultural activities. Participants also raised concerns regarding potential restrictions on the use of existing roads and travel corridors, including whether access within the Project corridor would remain available, as well as potential effects on seasonal travel routes such as snowmobile trails used to access hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering areas. | Moderate | Hydro One will:<br>• Use existing access routes where feasible to limit disturbance.<br>• Minimize disruption to established trails and travel routes during construction.<br>• Implement temporary access restrictions only where required for safety.<br>• Where feasible, provide alternate access routes or temporary rerouting to maintain travel during construction.<br>• Provide advance notice of construction activities and any access limitations.<br>• Restore disturbed access routes following construction to maintain access for ongoing use. | • Wildlife (Section 4.3.7<br>• Access/Transportation (Section 4.8.4 and Section 4.10) | Following the implementation of mitigation measures, net effects on Métis travel are expected to be limited and localized to the PSA. Temporary disruptions to travel routes and access may occur during construction; however, access is expected to be maintained or restored through the use of existing routes, provision of alternate access where feasible, and post-construction restoration. Travel conditions may be altered in areas with Project infrastructure, but overall access to harvesting and culturally important areas within the LSA is expected to be maintained. These effects occur within or adjacent to an existing transmission corridor (ROW), where travel conditions have already been altered. | No – Impacts are localized to the PSA, including the use of alternate access routes during construction; therefore, impacts are not expected to reduce ability to move across lands and waters. |
| **Trade** | The Project is anticipated to have moderate effects on Métis citizens ability to conduct trade in a culturally significant manner due to restricted access to harvesting areas during construction and potential changes to wildlife, fish, and other harvested resources that support trade activities. Concerns were raised regarding the seasonal importance of traded resources such as country foods and trapping products, and how changes in harvesting success may affect the sharing, exchange, and commercial use of these resources. | Moderate | • Restore access to harvesting areas post construction to support continued harvesting and related trade activities.<br>• Reclaim disturbed areas and support habitat recovery post construction.<br>• Implement vegetation, wildlife, and habitat protection measures to support availability of harvested resources.<br>• Minimize wildlife habitat and ground disturbance. | • Vegetation Management (Section 4.3.1)<br>• Fish (Section 4.3.6)<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7) | Net effects on Métis trade are expected to be limited and localized to the PSA. Temporary disruptions to access may occur during construction; however, access is expected to be restored following construction. Changes in habitat and resource availability may occur but are not expected to substantially affect the overall availability of harvested resources at the broader landscape scale, as these effects occur within or adjacent to existing transmission corridor (ROW), where conditions have already been altered. This may impact individuals who are unable to shift harvesting locations. | No – Impacts are localized to PSA within or adjacent to existing ROW and are not anticipated to substantially reduce ability to conduct trade in culturally significant manner. |
| **Land Use Patterns** | The Project is anticipated to have moderate impact on Métis citizens' ability to use traditional territory in a culturally significant manner due to temporary access restrictions during | Moderate | • Manage access restrictions to minimize disruption during construction. | • Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4) | Net effects on Métis land use patterns are expected to be limited and localized to the PSA. Temporary disruptions may occur during construction; however, access is expected to be restored following construction. Changes in environmental conditions | No – Impacts are localized to the PSA within or adjacent to an existing ROW, may |

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| | construction, and potential changes in environmental conditions, which may influence where and how harvesting and land-based activities are carried out. This may impact their land use patterns on a seasonal basis and fears about spills and contamination may result in moving to new areas. | | • Maintain or restore access routes where feasible following construction.<br>• Reclaim temporary disturbed areas post construction.<br>• Implement vegetation, and habitat restoration measures to support continued land use.<br>• Implement erosion and sediment control and spill prevention measures to reduce contamination concerns.<br>• Where feasible schedule construction activities to minimize disruption during key seasonal land use periods. | • Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5)<br>• Access (Section 4.8.4) | may influence where and how harvesting and land-based activities are carried out on a seasonal basis, but are not expected to substantially alter land use patterns at the broader landscape scale post-construction, as these effects occur within or adjacent to an existing transmission corridor (ROW), where conditions have already been altered. Métis harvesters may experience these impacts directly. | influence changes on a seasonal basis but not expected to reduce the ability to use their traditional territory in a culturally significant manner. |
| **Knowledge Transmissions** | The Project is anticipated to have a moderate impact on Métis citizens' ability to conduct and share experiential and land-based knowledge due to temporary access restrictions during construction and potential changes in environmental conditions. These changes may influence opportunities for on-the-land learning and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge through harvesting and cultural activities, particularly during key seasonal periods when such knowledge is practiced and shared. | Moderate | • Manage access restrictions during construction and restore access where feasible post construction.<br>• Minimize disturbance to lands and resources used for harvesting and cultural activities.<br>• Where feasible, schedule construction activities to minimize disruption during key seasonal periods for land-based activities and knowledge transmission.<br>• Implement vegetation, wildlife, and habitat protection measures to support continued land-based use.<br>• Reclaim and restore disturbed areas post construction to facilitate continued knowledge transfer activities. | • Vegetation Management (Section 4.3.1)<br>• Fish (Section 4.3.6)<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Surface Water/Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5) | Net effects on Métis citizens' ability to conduct and share experiential and land-based knowledge are expected to be limited and localized to the PSA. Temporary disruptions to access and land-based activities may occur during construction; however, access is expected to be restored following construction. Changes in environmental conditions may influence opportunities for on-the-land learning and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, particularly during key seasonal periods when such activities take place but are not expected to substantially affect knowledge transmission at the broader landscape scale after disturbed areas are restored. | No – Impacts are localized to PSA and are associated with temporary access restrictions and minor changes in environmental conditions, are not expected to substantially reduce ability to conduct and share experiential and land-based knowledge or intergenerational knowledge transmission in a culturally significant manner. |
| **Practicing Cultural Activities** | The Project is anticipated to have a moderate impact on Métis citizens' ability to practice cultural activities due to temporary access restrictions during construction and potential changes in environmental conditions. Cultural activities are often practiced collectively, maintain community connections, and cultural heritage practices. Changes in access and environmental conditions may influence the ability to carry out activities such as gathering, ceremony, guiding, outfitting, and other culturally significant land-based practices, | Moderate | • Manage access restrictions during construction and restore access where feasible post construction.<br>• Minimize disturbance to lands and resources used for cultural activities.<br>• Where feasible, schedule construction activities to minimize disruption during key seasonal periods when cultural activities are practiced collectively.<br>• Implement vegetation, wildlife, and habitat protection measures to | • Vegetation Management (Section 4.3.1)<br>• Wildlife (Section 4.3.7)<br>• Surface Water /Water Quality (Section 4.4.4)<br>• Spill Prevention (Section 4.4.5)<br>• Cultural Heritage (Section 4.5)<br>• Access (Section 4.8.4) | Net effects on Métis citizens' ability to practice cultural activities are expected to be limited and localized to the PSA. Temporary disruptions to access and land-based activities may occur during construction; however, access is expected to be restored following construction. Changes in environmental conditions may influence the ability to carry out cultural practices on the land, including those practiced collectively and that support connections to Métis communities and cultural heritage, particularly during key seasonal periods. These effects are not expected to substantially affect the overall ability to practice cultural activities at the broader landscape scale. | No – Impacts are localized to PSA, collective practice of cultural activities may have temporary restrictions, which are not anticipated to substantially reduce the ability to practice cultural activities in a culturally significant manner. |

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| | particularly during key seasonal periods, and may affect opportunities to pass on cultural knowledge and traditions associated with these activities. Improved or maintained access could support ongoing presence on the land and participation in cultural activities. | | maintain areas used for cultural practices.<br>• Reclaim and restore disturbed areas post construction to support continued cultural use.<br>• Implement erosion and sediment control and spill prevention measures to reduce environmental impacts. | | | |