WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Section 7.8 Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources

November 2023

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge that the Waasigan Transmission Line Project is located within lands that represent the traditional territories and homelands of the Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850) First Nations and Treaty #3 (1873), and traverse the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation, Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Métis Nation of Ontario Region 2.

Hydro One also wishes to acknowledge Indigenous artist, Storm Angeconeb, for developing the covering page and wildlife designs throughout the Final Environmental Assessment. Storm is a highly recognized visual artist from Lac Seul First Nation in Treaty #3 and currently resides in Red Lake. Many of her works include animals and birds as representations of herself or those close to her. The artist's description of the covering page is presented below.

Hydro One Environmental Study Art:

What stands out in this art piece is the symbolic representation of solar rays as "Bringing Power"; we can see the environment represented through the wildlife and Ojibwe floral visuals. This artwork is an excellent representation of Hope, Life, and Opportunity, visually portrayed through the Black Bear and her two cubs. The colour theme of this artwork comes from the Waasigan Transmission Line Project brand identity.

Artist: Storm Angeconeb

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Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are recognized under Section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982* (also referred to as Section 35 rights), which includes recognition of existing rights to hunt, trap, fish, gather, and manage the lands for all First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people of Canada. Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) recognizes the distinctions between and among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Hydro One is committed to building meaningful relationships with all Indigenous peoples through cooperation, trust, and shared responsibility.

This section describes the assessment of the potential effects of the Waasigan Transmission Line Project (the Project) on Métis rights, interests, and use of lands and resources (see Section 7.7 for the assessment of effects to First Nation rights, interests, and use of lands and resources). For the purposes of this assessment, Métis rights, interests, and use of lands and resources has been defined to include the ability of Métis people to practice their Section 35 rights, including access to preferred areas and the exercise of their rights with respect to resource harvesting (e.g., hunting, trapping, fishing, harvesting), to experience culturally sensitive, sacred or spiritual landscapes and sites, and to maintain quality of experience/sense of place in areas within homelands or traditional territories.

'Indigenous Knowledge' (IK) refers to the combination of traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional land and resource use (TLRU). Use of the term 'traditional' within this section is not intended to imply that use is only 'historic'. Instead, it is intended to reflect knowledge of land and resource use acquired through the experience and the social processes of learning and sharing knowledge that is unique to each Indigenous culture (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000). Current land and resource use by Indigenous peoples is influenced by traditional knowledge systems, which are cumulative, dynamic, and continually building on experience and adapting to change (Usher 2000).

The rights, interests, and use of lands and resources of the following Métis communities participating in the Project are considered in this section:

- Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (Métis Nation Ontario [MNO]) represented by MNO Sunset Country Métis Council, MNO Kenora Métis Council, MNO Atikokan Métis Council, and MNO Northwest Métis Council;
- MNO Region 2 represented by MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council, MNO Greenstone Métis Council, and MNO Superior North Shore Métis Council; and
- Red Sky Métis Independent Nation.

The assessment follows the general approach and concepts described in Section 5.0, including recognizing and reflecting that western science and Indigenous teachings may approach environmental evaluation differently.

7.8.1 Context

7.8.1.1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) which establishes a universal framework to recognize, and respect the rights of Indigenous peoples, was passed on September 13, 2007, by the United Nations General Assembly. In 2021, the Government of Canada passed Bill C-15 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act,* which provides a process for the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples to work together to implement the UNDRIP Declaration. As of the current date, the Government of Ontario has not adopted UNDRIP into its laws.

There are several articles of UNDRIP that are particularly relevant to conducting environmental assessments in Canada (United Nations 2017) (UNDRIP 2019). Below is a list of the most relevant articles considered in this environmental assessment (EA) and in Project planning:

- Article 11 (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies, and visual and performing arts and literature.
- Article 12 (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop, and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
- Article 26 (1) Peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
- Article 31 (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies, and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports, and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (United Nations 2017).

Comments from NWOMC and Region 2 on the Draft EA Report also highlighted the relevance of UNDRIP Article 3 which states:

- Article 3 Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (United Nations 2017).

NWOMC and Region 2 indicated Article 3 can be “interpreted to include the right to have information collected by and controlled by Indigenous groups in the pursuit of self-determined economic, social and cultural development”.

Hydro One recognizes Indigenous data sovereignty and the right of Indigenous communities to maintain ownership, control, access and possession of their information. Throughout the EA process, Hydro One has endeavoured to collaborate with NWOMC and Region 2 on the inclusion of IK and community information. The process for IK sharing and incorporation is outlined in Section 7.8.7.1 and Hydro One is committed to continued engagement with NWOMC and Region 2.

Hydro One acknowledges that Indigenous communities have historically borne the impacts of development without benefiting from it and is committed to a journey of reconciliation that considers the principles of UNDRIP in Project planning (Hydro One 2021c).

7.8.1.2 Section 35 Rights

Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are recognized and affirmed by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and are hereafter referred to as Section 35 Rights. Within Canadian law and jurisprudence, Section 35 Rights are understood as constitutionally protected rights held by Indigenous peoples, that relate to activities that are an element of a practice, custom, or tradition integral to the distinctive culture of the Indigenous group claiming such rights, and have continuity with the practices, customs, and traditions that existed prior to contact with European society. These rights may include (but are not limited to) activities such as cultural and ceremonial practices, land management, hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering.

In recognition of these rights, the Governments of Canada and Ontario hold the duty to consult Indigenous communities about this Project. The Crown may delegate to a proponent the procedural aspects of consultation, but the ultimate legal responsibility to meet the duty to consult lies with the Crown. The Ontario Ministry of Energy (formerly the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines; ENDM) determined the Project may have the potential to affect established or asserted Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and Interests of First Nation and Métis communities, nations and organizations and delegated the procedural aspects of the Crown’s Duty to Consult to Hydro One. The Ontario Ministry of Energy identified the Indigenous communities to be consulted by Hydro One on the Project (listed in the following sub-section), as well as the delegated procedural aspects of the duty to consult to be undertaken by Hydro One. These are described in Section 4.0 (Engagement Summary) and Section 7.8.2, below.

The Crown listed the following Métis communities that should be consulted:

- MNO Atikokan Métis Council (MNO Region No.1);
- MNO Northwest Métis Council (MNO Region No.1);
- MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council (MNO Region No. 2); and,

- Red Sky Métis Independent Nation.

In addition, the Crown recommended Hydro One include the MNO head office on correspondence.

Hydro One is committed to ongoing engagement and consultation with these identified Métis communities and to developing collaborative working relationships with each of these groups through the EA process, to the Project in-service date and beyond.

The following additional Indigenous communities have expressed interest in the Project and are included in Project engagement:

- MNO Sunset Country Métis Council;
- MNO Kenora Métis Council;
- MNO Greenstone Métis Council; and,
- MNO North Superior Métis Council.

7.8.1.2.1 Treaties

The Project is located within the boundaries of Treaty # 3 (1873), the Treaty #3 'Half-Breed Adhesion' (1875), and the Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850). The Métis exercise their Section 35 Rights, including harvesting rights, on these lands.

There are nine MNO regions in Ontario, and Métis citizens are represented at the local level through MNO Chartered Community Councils. Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (also referred to as NWOMC) asserts they are signatory to the Treaty # 3 Adhesion of 1875. Information provided by the NWOMC notes the following regarding the Treaty #3 Adhesion of 1875:

"The existence of the NWOMC was recognized by the Crown in 1875 with the signing of an Adhesion to Treaty 3 with the 'Halfbreeds of Rainy Lake and River'. The Métis descendants of this 'Halfbreed' collectivity form a part of the NWOMC today. In 2017, Canada signed the Agreement on Advancing Reconciliation with the NWOMC (the "NWOMC Agreement") to begin to address outstanding issues with respect to the Halfbreed Adhesion to Treaty 3, and other rights and claims related matters specific to this Métis community" (MNP 2023b).

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation may also be affected by the Project and asserts they are descendants of the 84 "half-breeds" who were recognized by the Crown as beneficiaries and annuitants under the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850, in concurrence with the First Nation peoples.

Potential effects of the Project on First Nations rights, interests and land uses are addressed in Section 7.7.

7.8.2 Métis Communities

7.8.2.1 Métis Nation of Ontario

There are 120,585 self-identifying Métis people living in Ontario as of 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017). MNO was established in 1993 to bring together Métis communities throughout Ontario and to create a Métis-specific governance structure. On December 9, 2015, the Ontario legislature passed the *Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015* (the "MNO Act"). This legislation recognizes that the MNO "was created to represent and advocate on behalf of its registered citizens, and the Métis communities comprised of those citizens, with respect to their collective rights, interests and aspirations." Métis citizens are identified in the Act as descendants of the Métis people from central and western North America with their own language and traditions (Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act 2015). Métis citizens are represented at the local level through MNO Chartered Community Councils. The councils each operate in accordance with the MNO Charter Agreements, which give Councils the mandate to govern. The interests of the Community Councils are represented at the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) through one of nine regional councillors. Two of the MNO regions are engaged on the Project and are outlined below.

7.8.2.1.1 Northwestern Ontario Métis Community

Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (NWOMC) represented by MNO Sunset Country Métis Council located in Fort Frances, MNO Kenora Métis Council located in Kenora, MNO Atikokan Métis Council located in Atikokan, and MNO Northwest Métis Council located in Dryden.

7.8.2.1.2 Region 2

Region 2 represented by MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council located in Thunder Bay, MNO Greenstone Métis Council located in Geraldton, and MNO Superior North Shore Métis Council located in Terrace Bay.

7.8.2.2 Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation is not affiliated with the MNO and reports membership of over 8,000. People of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation are the descendants of the beneficiaries to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850, and that is the area where most the of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens reside today. "The Red Sky Métis Independent Nation Community is committed to the preservation of history, traditions and practices. As stewards of the land and natural resources, the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation Community shares a common interest for safe and sustainable harvesting, education, health and wellbeing, and environment protection. These commitments are for the benefit of future generations and the preservation of our historic place in the world" (Red Sky Métis Independent Nation 2019).

7.8.3 Input from Engagement

Questions and comments related to the assessment of Métis rights, interests and land use raised by Métis communities during meetings and engagement activities, as well as where and/or how they were addressed in the EA are presented in Table 7.8-1. Questions and comments related to Métis rights, interests and land use that were formally submitted as comments on the draft EA are also presented in Table 7.8-1. In addition, the Draft EA Report was provided to Indigenous communities, government officials and agencies, and interested persons and organizations for review and comment on May 17, 2023. A high-level summary of the key themes from the comments on the Draft EA Report are included in Table 7.8-1. The detailed responses to these comments are included in Appendix 4.0-A.

Table 7.8-1: Summary of Comment Themes Raised during Engagement Related to Métis Communities

Comment Theme	How Addressed in the Environmental Assessment	Métis Community/ Group
Comments Provided by NWOMC and MNO Region 2		
The philosophy of the Métis is that they are the environment, their feelings should be addressed as part of the assessment.	During development of the Terms of Reference for the EA, comments shared by the NWOMC and Region 2 included recommendation of criteria for the assessment of effects linked to cultural identity, which are included in this assessment. The assessment in this section includes space for consideration of the potential for change to cultural identify from a Métis perspective, where information is shared.	NWOMC
Current and future land use should be considered as part of the assessment, not just traditional land use.	Current and future use is included in the assessment. Use of the term 'traditional' within this section is not intended to imply that use is only 'historic'. Instead, it is intended to reflect knowledge of land and resource use acquired through the experience and the social processes of learning and sharing knowledge that is unique to each Indigenous culture and to reflect that current land and resource use is influenced by traditional knowledge systems.	NWOMC
Clarification on how IK information from the NWOMC and Region 2 citizens is included in the EA and comment that it is difficult to identify specific areas as the whole area is used.	Hydro One has worked with Indigenous communities, including the NWOMC and Region 2, since 2020 to support community-led Indigenous Knowledge (IK) studies. As available, and as appropriate, input shared, including planning for these studies or through engagement, has been incorporated into this EA. The provision of culturally sensitive information has been considered by the Project team but maintained as confidential and excluded from EA reporting as directed through information sharing protocols. Hydro One has incorporated traditional land and resource use information and IK information that the community has chosen to provide to inform the Project. As IK studies are completed and shared,	NWOMC and Region 2

Comment Theme	How Addressed in the Environmental Assessment	Métis Community/ Group
	Hydro One is committed to incorporating shared IK information into the relevant Project milestone. Broad use of the Project area by Métis citizens is understood and reflected in this assessment.	
Importance of engagement opportunities to include local Métis citizens in discussion on the Project.	Hydro One has been working with Indigenous communities, including the NWOMC and Region 2, since 2019 to facilitate a two-way flow of information about the Project. A summary of engagement opportunities, including community meetings for the NWOMC and Region 2 citizens, are described in Section 4.5.5 of this EA.	Region 2
Importance of engagement including with mining claim holders.	Section 4 of the EA provides a summary of Project engagement, including with mining claim holders.	Region 2
Importance of ensuring the contractor meets their commitments to communities, including the NWOMC and Region 2.	Hydro One fully understands the importance of ensuring that commitments made to Indigenous communities are kept by Hydro One and their contractor. In addition to protecting their own reputation, the contractor also has contractual obligations to Hydro One to meet their commitments. This will be monitored closely by Hydro One as the Project proceeds through design and construction. the NWOMC and Region 2 communities are encouraged to communicate to Hydro One their own understanding of commitments made to help ensure they are met.	NWOMC
Clarification on how the main alternative route evaluation categories are weighted.	Section 2 of the EA includes a detailed description of the assessment of alternative routes, including category weights. The four main categories (Indigenous values; natural environment; socio-economic environment; technical and cost) were weighed equally.	Region 2
Clarification on how the preferred route was identified in Section 4 (Atikokan to Dryden). Concerns raised about the effects of the preferred route in areas on provincial parks and conservation reserves and the cultural sites within them, as well as water quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and the ability to exercise traditional harvesting practices.	Section 2 of the EA includes a detailed description of the assessment of alternative routes, including the determination of the preferred route within Section 4 – Atikokan to Dryden. The section describes the criteria included in the assessment with factors that represent water quality, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and wildlife migration in the area, protected areas, publicly available cultural sites and areas of archaeological potential. Other sections within this EA identify potential effects and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize the effects for water quality, wildlife, wildlife habitat and wildlife migration. Hydro One is making efforts to reduce effects within the Turtle River – White Otter Provincial Park and the Campus Lake Conservation Reserve, including reducing new off-corridor access	NWOMC and Region 2

Comment Theme	How Addressed in the Environmental Assessment	Métis Community/ Group
	and laydown areas within these areas. This assessment describes an understanding of the Project's potential to affect the NWOMC and Region 2 citizens, including access to preferred areas and practice resource harvesting (e.g., hunting, trapping, fishing, harvesting), to experience culturally sensitive, sacred or spiritual landscapes and sites and to maintain quality of experience/sense of place in areas of use for traditional purposes. Hydro One will continue to work with the NWOMC and Region 2 to determine if there are measures that can be implemented to avoid or mitigate effects to these areas or features of importance to the NWOMC and Region 2.	
Confirmation if the environmental assessment will consider effects to SAR and caribou.	SAR are included in the criteria for the effects assessment in Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. Some species that have similar habitat requirements, such as birds, have been considered within a similar grouping and other species that have very distinct habitat requirements through their lifecycle (e.g., little brown myotis) will be assessed as individual species. Caribou are not included in the effects assessment as the Project is located south of their known distribution in northern Ontario as reported in the Woodland Caribou Conservation Plan (Ontario 2021). However, a criteria is defined for ungulates (i.e., moose), which considers potential effects to habitat similar to that used by caribou that may use habitat outside of their known distribution.	Region 2
Importance of survey locations and methods to understand water crossings and potential to affect fish spawning.	Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat includes the description of baseline data collection, assessment of effects for criteria and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize potential effects that have been incorporated into the effects assessment and Project design. Consideration of critical habitats such as spawning areas for criteria species are assessed.	NWOMC and Region 2
Importance of considering traditionally harvested and sensitive plants.	The baseline characterization of vegetation (Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands) includes a description of some plant species identified as culturally important, where shared through IK studies or engagement. SAR species are also described.	Region 2
Concerns regarding the use of herbicides, especially within protected areas like parks where the line is near waterbodies.	Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be	NWOMC and Region 2

Comment Theme	How Addressed in the Environmental Assessment	Métis Community/ Group
Importance of informing harvesters about the presence of workers and about the use of herbicides if they are used.	used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.	
Need for additional inclusion of IK shared in support of the Project.	Additional content has been included throughout the Final EA Report, respecting the IK and comments shared by NWOMC and Region 2, as reported in Appendix 4.0A.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concerns regarding noise, specifically line hum and disturbance to harvesting and spiritual activities/use and enjoyment of cultural and sacred sites.	Additional context has been added in the assessment of effects in this section, including related to perception of place and in discussion of areas of use for the practice of harvest or cultural practices.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concerns regarding impacts to the enjoyment of the visual landscape.	Additional context has been added in the assessment of effects in this section, including related to perception of place and in discussion of areas of use for the practice of harvest or cultural practices.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concerns regarding creation of new access to formerly inaccessible sites, such as to recreational hunters who may use roads and the right-of-way for access.	Further discussion of potential effects and applicable mitigations are included in the assessment in this section.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concern about use of biophysical components to represent impacts to rights.	Outcomes of the assessment of effects to biophysical elements of the environment, such as potential change to plants, wildlife and fish, inform indicators identified in the ToR including, “changes to harvesting of culturally critical species considering displacement of wildlife resulting in reductions to hunting, fishing, and trapping”. The assessment acknowledges factors that may influence the practice of rights beyond physical changes to the environment. These are further supplemented through additional input from NWOMC and Region 2 in comment responses in Section 7.8.10.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concerns regarding impact rating of potential impacts to Métis rights and interests.	Criteria used and assessment in Section 7.8.11 regarding net effects characterization were evaluated based on the input and perspectives of NWOMC and Region 2, with magnitude definitions clarified and ratings adjusted to reflect feedback. Specific updates are explained in Section 7.8.11.2 and in response to comments shared in Appendix 4.0A.	NWOMC and Region 2
Concerns regarding incorporation of NWOMC and Region 2’s feedback on route selection.	The assessment of effects in this section has been supplemented to recognize concerns by NWOMC and Region 2 including those related to the preferred route. Hydro One commits to further engaging with the	NWOMC and Region 2

Comment Theme	How Addressed in the Environmental Assessment	Métis Community/ Group
	NWOMC and Region 2 on the incorporation of site-specific mitigation in order to avoid or minimize impacts to the practice for rights, interests and land uses by NWOMC and Region 2. Section 2.0 Alternatives and Purpose, including Appendix 2.0A describe how criteria used in the alternative route selection process evolved and how the outcomes of the preferred route selection were determined. Concerns shared by NWOMC and Region 2 on the outcome are identified in these sections of the Final EA Report.	
Mitigation measures to address potential impacts to Métis specific criteria identified within the Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study are required.	Inclusion of additional mitigation has been added in Section 7.8.10 of this assessment in response to information provided by NWOMC and Region 2. Specifically linked to Hydro One's commitments on: • Not using herbicide on the Project; • Ongoing development of site-specific mitigation through continued engagement with NWOMC and Region 2; • Opportunities for participation in archaeological assessments; • Further engagement on Project activities related to provincial parks and conservation reserves; and • Opportunity for ongoing development of Communications and Monitoring Plans and review of the Environmental Protection Plan prior to construction.	NWOMC and Region 2
Comments Provided by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation		
Importance of survey locations and methods to understand water crossings and potential to affect fish spawning.	Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat includes the description of baseline data collection, assessment of effects for criteria and mitigation measures to avoid or minimize potential effects that have been incorporated into the effects assessment and Project design. Consideration of critical habitats such as spawning areas for criteria species are assessed.	Red Sky Métis Independent Nation
Importance of informing harvesters about the presence of workers and about the use of herbicides if they are used.	Through engagement during the Draft EA Report Review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.	Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

EA = environmental assessment; IK = Indigenous Knowledge; LSA = local study area; SAR = Species at Risk.

7.8.4 Information Sources

Information for this baseline was obtained from the following sources:

- Community-led and Project-specific IK studies and planning (see Section 7.8.7);
- Results of Hydro One's engagement activities with Indigenous communities (see Section 4 and Section 7.8.3);
- Knowledge shared by Indigenous field monitors and crew members during field studies;
- Cultural awareness training provided by communities to Project team members;
- Publicly available data related to Métis land and resource use, including through forest management plans and provincial parks and protected area management plans;
- Previous EAs in the region, reviewed for publicly IK relevant to potentially affected Indigenous communities, including; Treasury Metals Inc. Goliath Gold Project Environmental Assessment (Treasury Metals Inc 2018) and NextBridge East-West Tie Transmission Line Environmental Assessment (NextBridge 2018);
- Métis community websites; and
- Results of the effects assessments for all other elements of the environment.

7.8.5 Criteria and Indicators

Criteria are components of the environment that are considered to have economic, social, biological, conservation, aesthetic, or ethical and cultural value, as described in Section 5.2. **Indicators** are an aspect or characteristic of a criterion that, if changed as a result of the Project, may demonstrate a physical, biological, or socio-economic effect.

The criteria and indicators for the assessment of effects on the practice of Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources specific to Indigenous communities were initially outlined in the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR). Feedback from Indigenous communities, government officials and agencies, and interested persons and organizations received during engagement was incorporated into the preliminary criteria and indicators approved in the Amended ToR.

No concerns have been raised during the EA process regarding the preliminary criteria and indicators proposed in the Amended ToR. The criteria and indicators selected for the assessment of Project effects on Métis Rights, including their Interest and use of land and resources and the rationale for their selection, are provided in Table 7.8-2.

Table 7.8-2: Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources Criteria and Indicators

Criteria	Indicators	Rationale for Selection	Measurement of Potential Effects

Loss of Land/ Change in Priority Rights	• Changes in Land Available for Métis Use considering:
	  ◦ Conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land.
	  ◦ Increased physical disturbance.
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in crown land.

Harvesting/ Sites	• Changes to harvesting of culturally critical species considering:
	  ◦ Displacement of wildlife resulting in reductions to hunting, fishing, and trapping
	  ◦ Reduction or change in vegetation resulting in reductions of gathering activities
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation, and wetlands.
			• Qualitative assessment of changes to hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Harvesting/ Sites	• Changes in physical attributes considering:
	  ◦ Decrease in air quality
	  ◦ Increase in noise
	  ◦ Decrease in visual quality
	  ◦ Perception of changes in air quality, noise or visual quality
	• Increased avoidance behaviours
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of changes in air quality, acoustics, and aesthetics.
			• Qualitative assessment of changes in perception of air quality, noise, and visual quality and avoidance behaviour.

Criteria	Indicators	Rationale for Selection	Measurement of Potential Effects
Harvesting/ Sites	• Changes to harvesting practices considering: ◦ Disruption to harvesting timing windows	• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of seasonal changes in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, and vegetation. • Qualitative assessment of seasonal change to hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Harvesting/ Sites	• Changes to access to harvesting areas considering:
	  ◦ Increased non-Métis access
	  ◦ Decreased Métis access
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative and qualitative assessment of change in access to known harvesting areas.
			• Qualitative assessment of change in access to known harvesting areas by Métis and non- Métis land users.

Harvesting/ Sites	• Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge considering:
	  ◦ Removal of resources for teaching/ transmittal to the next generation
	  ◦ Removal of sites for teaching/transmittal to the next generation
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation and wetlands.
			• Quantitative and qualitative assessment of change in lands available for harvesting.
			• Qualitative assessment removal of resources and sites for teaching/transmittal to the next generation.

Criteria	Indicators	Rationale for Selection	Measurement of Potential Effects

Harvesting/ Sites	• Changes in perception of 'place' considering:
	  ◦ Changes in perception of harvesting experience
	  ◦ Changes in perception of species
	  ◦ Changes in perception of Métis sites
		• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in air quality, acoustics, and aesthetics.
			• Quantitative assessment of change in lands available for harvesting.
			• Qualitative assessment of changes in perception of the harvesting experience, species, and Métis sites.

Cultural Identity	• Disruption of "sense of place" considering: ◦ Removal of required conditions for territorial connection for the Métis	• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change to archaeological sites. • Qualitative assessment of change in "sense of place" and territorial connection.
Cultural Identity	• Reduction in cultural practices considering: ◦ Changes in traditional practices specifically linked to cultural identity	• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation, and wetlands. • Quantitative assessment of change cultural practices.

Criteria	Indicators	Rationale for Selection	Measurement of Potential Effects
Cultural Identity	• Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge to the next generation considering: ◦ Removal of cultural connection required for teaching / transmittal to the next generation	• Avoid or minimize effects to the exercise of Métis rights and expression of cultural practices and values	• Quantitative assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation, and wetlands. • Quantitative and qualitative assessment of change cultural practices and cultural connection.

The indicators for Métis rights, interest and land uses are discussed further below.

Changes from the Project may change the amount of accessible land and priority rights. This criterion will be evaluated using several indicators, including the quantitative changes the area (ha) of unoccupied Crown land (i.e., areas without a permitted interest or development by another user that can be accessed), being converted to occupied Crown land (i.e., areas with a permitted interest or development by another user that may restrict limitations to access harvesting resources), as described in Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use.

Harvesting/Sites

The availability of, and access to, harvesting resources was assessed, using information provided in other sections of the assessment: Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, and Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat.

This indicator considered potential changes to the environment that affect the experience of land or resource users and aesthetic changes that affect the desirability of the location for use, from IK studies provided to date, and predicted disturbance-related effects of the Project as reported in Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, 7.1 Non-Indigenous Land Resource Use, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics.

Potential effects to access to harvesting areas for hunting, trapping, fishing, and plant harvest will also be assessed, where information has been shared about the location of harvesting areas/sites and access points.

Cultural Identity

Changes from the Project may affect cultural sites, landscapes, intangible cultural heritage, and cultural practices. These criteria were evaluated using several indicators: disruption of “sense of place,” removal of required conditions for territorial connection for the Métis and change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge to the next generation. These were assessed using IK input

shared by communities and the effects of the Project on protected areas including provincial parks as discussed in Section 7.1, Non-Indigenous Land Resource Use, and cultural sites of relevance as discussed in Section 7.5, and archaeological resources and built heritage resources as discussed in Section 7.6.

7.8.6 Assessment Boundaries

7.8.6.1 Temporal Boundaries

The construction of the Project is expected to commence in 2024, once all applicable permits and authorizations have been obtained. Currently, construction is expected to take approximately three to five years. Operation of the Project will occur continually over an indefinite period.

Following Project development, the Project lifecycle is expected to consist of three stages:

- **Construction stage**: the period from the start of construction to the start of operation (in-service date);
- **Operation and maintenance**: the period from the start of operation and maintenance activities through to the end of the Project life; and
- **Retirement stage**: the period from the start of retirement activities through to the end of final reclamation of the Project. The Project will be operated for an indeterminate period, and the effects of the Retirement Stage of the Project on Métis, Interests and Use of Land and Resources will likely be the same as the Construction Stage; therefore, these two stages will be assessed simultaneously in this section.

As described in Section 5.3.2, the Project will be operated for an indefinite period and the timing of retirement, or decommissioning, is not known at this time as it is anticipated that upgrades to reinforce or rebuild portions of the Project may occur over its lifetime to maintain its longevity. Further, potential effects and mitigation measures to be identified during the EA for the construction of the Project will likely equally apply to the potential removal of the Project at a future point in time, should it ever be required. Therefore, the potential effects of the construction and operations and maintenance stages are assessed as part of the EA, but potential effects and mitigation measures for effects arising from retirement are not assessed in this EA.

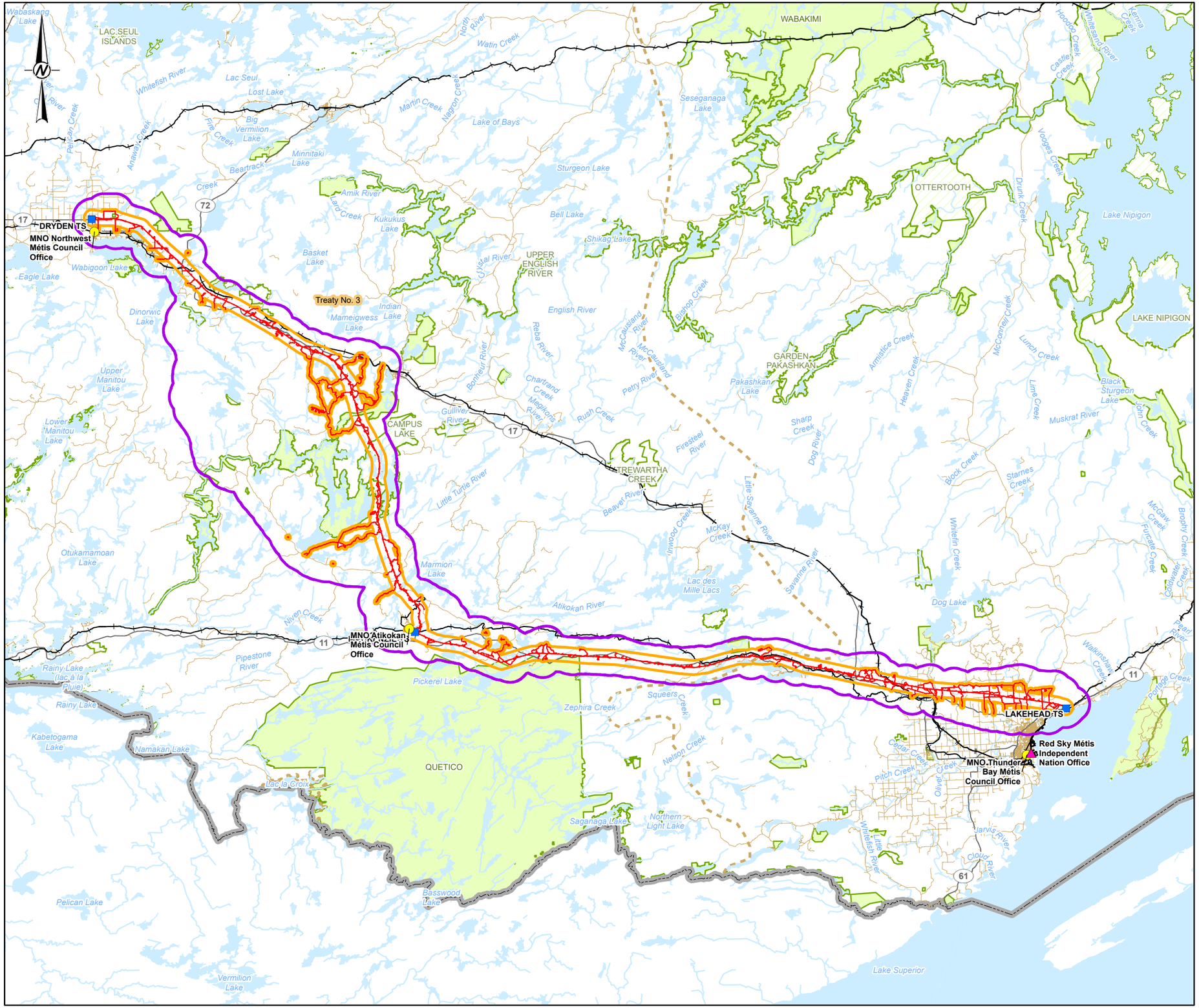
7.8.6.2 Spatial Boundaries

Spatial boundaries for the assessment are provided in Table 7.8-3 and shown on Figure 7.8-1.

Table 7.8-3: Spatial Boundaries for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources

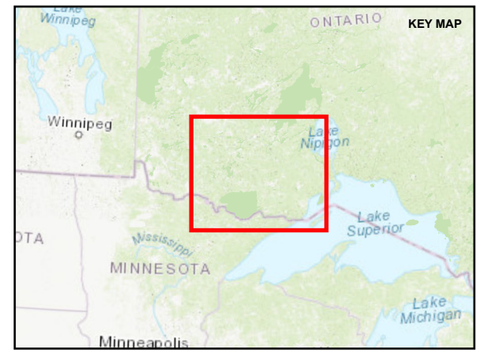
Spatial Boundary	Area (ha)	Description	Rationale
Project footprint	5,124.49	The Project footprint includes: • Typical 46 metre (m) wide transmission line right-of-way (ROW); • Widened ROW for the separation of circuits F25A and D26A for 1 kilometre (km); • Modification of the Lakehead TS, Mackenzie TS, and Dryden TS; • Access roads (existing roads and new); • Temporary supportive infrastructure associated with construction including fly yards, construction/stringing pads, laydown areas, construction camps, and helicopter pads; and • Aggregate pits.	To capture the potential direct effects of the physical footprint of the Project.
Local Study Area (LSA)	174,681.88	Includes the Project footprint and a 2 km buffer on the transmission line ROW, 1.5 km buffer on the TS footprints and a 500 m buffer on access roads, supporting structures and aggregate pits.	To capture potential local direct and indirect effect of the Project on air quality criteria that may extend beyond the Project footprint.
Regional Study Area (RSA)	765,183	Study area outlined in the ToR within which alternative routes including the preliminary Project footprint were identified.	This area was provided as a basis for consideration during initial IK study gap analysis planning and scoping in 2019 and represents a maximum extent considered in IK studies received to date. Allows consideration of potential for cumulative effects.

IK = Indigenous Knowledge; LSA = Local Study Area; ROW = right-of-way; RSA = Regional Study Area; TS = Transformer Station; m = metre; ha = hectare; km = kilometre; ToR = Terms of Reference.



LEGEND

- 230 kV TRANSFORMER STATION (TS)
- MNO COUNCIL OFFICE
- RED SKY MÉTIS INDEPENDENT NATION OFFICE
- RAILWAY
- LOCAL ROAD
- SECONDARY HIGHWAY
- WATERCOURSE
- INTERNATIONAL BORDER
- PRELIMINARY PROJECT FOOTPRINT
- LOCAL STUDY AREA
- REGIONAL STUDY AREA
- TREATY BOUNDARY
- PROVINCIAL PARK
- CONSERVATION RESERVE
- WATERBODY



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REFERENCE(S)

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PROJECTION: NAD 1983 CSRS UTM ZONE 15N

CLIENT
HYDRO ONE NETWORKS INC.

PROJECT
WAASIGAN TRANSMISSION LINE

TITLE
MÉTIS RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND LAND USE STUDY AREAS

CONSULTANT

wsp

YYYY-MM-DD	2023-09-19
DESIGNED	CE
PREPARED	DB
REVIEWED	HK
APPROVED	CS

PROJECT NO.	CONTROL	REV.	FIGURE
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7.8.7 Baseline Data Collection Method

Baseline data was collected for the Métis communities/organizations identified by the Ontario Ministry of Energy to be consulted for the Project (refer to Section 4). As noted in Section 7.8.4, baseline data for Métis rights, interests and land and resource use were collected through information provided directly by the communities, including pre-existing data and engagement input shared by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation and through engagement, correspondence, baseline data collection survey report findings undertaken specifically for the Project as well as IK study findings by the NWOMC and Region 2. Additional baseline data was gathered through a review of publicly available sources relevant to the Project area and potentially affected Métis communities. Hydro One has committed to considering IK information in the next decision-making, planning and design milestones as the information is received.

Methods for collection of this data are described in the following sections. Baseline data collection for First Nations rights, interests and land uses is addressed in Section 7.7.

7.8.7.1 Engagement and Indigenous Knowledge Studies

Table 7.8-1 summarizes comments and questions received through calls, meetings or other engagement feedback related to the assessment of Métis rights, interests, and land use. Where engagement input included baseline information, that information is referenced in this section.

Current land and resource use by Indigenous peoples is influenced by traditional knowledge systems, which are cumulative, dynamic, and continually building on experience and adapting to change (Usher 2000). Knowledge of the land - traditional knowledge/traditional ecological knowledge (TK/TEK) - and how the land is used - traditional land and resource use (TLRU) - are both are considered in this section, where provided by Métis communities. The collection and documentation of information that describes these activities, areas and features is collectively in this report referred to as Indigenous Knowledge (IK). IK is a holistic body of communal knowledge containing information and records collected by Indigenous communities that is of social, economic, cultural, spiritual, and/or historical significance to its members. Much of this knowledge may have been passed on from generation to generation. Each Indigenous community has its own approach to collecting, recording, sharing, and using this knowledge.

IK information also helps to supplement, inform and/or validate the data gathered through western science techniques. Where provided and permitted, traditional ecological knowledge was shared with other disciplines for consideration in their baseline, effects assessment and mitigation sections, as applicable. TLRU information helps Hydro One to understand the historic and current uses of land and resources for traditional purposes by Indigenous communities. TLRU shared by communities is incorporated into the assessment presented in this section to understand potential for the Project to affect these practices and identify mitigation, where applicable to reduce or avoid potential negative effects.

Throughout the EA process, Hydro One has provided opportunities for Métis communities to share IK and other information. The following steps were generally followed when collecting and incorporating IK:

- Establish IK framework and identify IK recorded by Métis communities, where communities were asked to review their available IK information and the location of the Project's alternative routes to undertake a 'gap analysis' on the extent or currency of available data relevant to the Project;
- Receive community-led scoping for additional studies to fill any identified information gaps and prepare reporting, including community protocols for sharing and using IK;
- Provide resources or capacity required to collect, record, and share IK;
- Engage with communities to discuss and understand the IK studies shared, including study area, IK categories used, and protocols for use in the EA; and
- Provide opportunity for validation of information through review of the Draft and Final EA Report.

Hydro One offered financial assistance through community-specific Capacity Funding Agreements (CFAs) to assist in the gathering and recording of IK and participation in other aspects of the EA process.

It is recognized that the ToR period overlapped the period of restriction on gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the ability for in-person meetings to be conducted to advance knowledge sharing during that time. Provincial agencies were kept apprised of the fulfillment of the procedural aspects of consultation with each community and the progress of IK information gathering by each community through monthly meetings and regular reporting. Further details on engagement and the IK study development process with each community are summarized in Section 4. Hydro One fully respects communities who choose not to share their IK. How they choose to participate in the EA process is discussed with the leaders of these communities through engagement activities. Hydro One is committed to considering additional IK information as it is shared by Indigenous communities and to incorporating this information into Project decision-making as it becomes available.

7.8.7.1.1 Indigenous Knowledge Sharing and Incorporation Process

Hydro One recognizes that the collection and use of IK is sensitive in nature and has been guided in its use by the Métis communities who participate in information sharing. Data agreements/IK protocols have been signed between Hydro One and Métis communities that outline how information can be used and shared for the purposes of the Project. These protocols have been followed in the completion of the EA and this section. Site-specific information has not been reported to maintain the confidentiality of the information shared.

These studies, along with comments heard through the engagement process, were used to assess the effects of the Project, in partnership with western science findings of how the Project

may affect the environment. In some instances, information provided on maps of sensitive and/or culturally important features including land and resource use activity did not provide enough information to be able to delineate specific land uses or features (e.g., wildlife harvesting, fishing). In these instances, the land use information was not differentiated as to type but was conservatively assumed to include all land use activities.

Continued engagement and consultation provides opportunity for communities to identify additional land and resource use sites that have the potential to be affected by the Project.

The following steps are followed when IK information is received:

- Review the information for site-specific interactions with the Project footprint and/or Project activities.
- Engage the contributing Métis community to discuss the importance of identified information or sites to the community, and potential mitigation measures.
- Develop appropriate mitigation measures that respond to the proximity of the identified information or site(s) in relation the Project footprint and the nature of the site (e.g., hunting location versus camping site). Potential mitigation measures may include:
  - Detailed mapping, recording, flagging, and avoidance of the location, where possible; and
  - In the event that avoidance of the site is not feasible, other alternatives would be discussed with the identifying Indigenous community. These may include implementation of mitigation measures to reduce the potential for direct or indirect effects on the site such as a change in construction methods or measures designed to reduce noise, scheduling of activities outside of periods when the site will be used by Indigenous land users, or adjustment of the design.
- Update relevant commitments and implementation documents, such as the Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Plan, for sites requiring non-standard mitigation.

7.8.7.1.2 Indigenous Knowledge - Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Region 2

CFAs were signed with NWOMC and Region 2 during the ToR phase to complete the assessment of IK information available and/or required, and to develop a work plan and budget. CFAs were developed with NWOMC and Region 2 through the EA phase of the Project to advance participation. NWOMC and Region 2 retained consultants to support the work needed to complete the IK studies.

In 2021, a baseline data collection survey was completed by the NWOMC and Region 2 and a summary of findings (MNP 2021) provided to Hydro One. NWOMC and Region 2 indicated that the results of the survey were used to inform the structure of their IK study. This survey included information on opinions and behaviours of NWOMC and Region 2 citizens in the Waasigan

Transmission Line Project area based on Métis-specific criteria (MNP 2021). Some questions asked in the survey were framed to characterize and quantify avoidance behaviours of NWOMC and Region 2 citizens during a variety of land use and harvesting activities. The results of this survey, as well as available generalized mapped areas of sensitive land uses shared in 2019 (including features between Kashabowie and Dryden), were incorporated into the Project assessment process.

A letter and memo with comments and concerns including reference to areas of concern related to selection of the preliminary preferred route by Hydro One were shared by NWOMC and Region 2 leadership in February 2023 (NWOMC and Region 2 2023a), which informs this assessment.

The IK study titled “Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Northern Lake Superior Métis Community Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study for the Waasigan Transmission Line Project” (TKLUS) by the NWOMC and Region 2 was shared in April 2023 (MNP 2023b). Within the cover letter for the TKLUS, NWOMC and Region 2 leadership noted that the “TKLUS explores and describes impacts to current and future land uses by citizens of the Northwestern Ontario and Region 2 as a result of the Project. It contains data and information collected through comprehensive baseline studies and interviews with citizens of the Northwestern Ontario and Region 2 about the Project and potential impacts” (MNP 2023b). Areas of use shared overlap the majority of the RSA. In the cover letter, NWOMC and Region 2 leadership also state that the TKLUS shows that the Project is likely to impact Métis citizens’ exercise of their constitutionally protected rights (NWOMC and Region 2 2023b). Through comments on the Draft EA, NWOMC and Region 2 provided guidance related to expectation of inclusion of information from this assessment in this Final EA Report. This study and its findings are referenced in this assessment, along with mitigations commitments from Hydro One. Hydro One is committed to considering additional IK information as it is shared by Indigenous communities and to incorporating this information into Project decision-making as it becomes available.

7.8.7.1.3 Indigenous Knowledge - Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

A CFA was signed with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation during the ToR phase to complete the assessment of IK information available and/or required, and to develop a work plan and budget. A CFA was developed with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation through the EA phase of the Project to advance participation. Red Sky Métis Independent Nation reviewed existing information previously collected by the community.

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation shared available generalized mapped areas of land use with Hydro One in 2021 (Red Sky Métis Independent Nation 2021), including features overlapping the portion of the RSA between Thunder Bay and Kashabowie The maps depict fishing and hunting use, and cultural points of interest for Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens within the RSA. In addition, a letter was shared with Hydro One from Red Sky Métis Independent Nation in February 2023 including comments on the preliminary preferred route (Red Sky Métis Independent Nation 2023). No specific features of concern that may be directly affected by the Project were identified.

7.8.7.2 Review of Publicly Available Information

The NWOMC and Region 2 and Red Sky Métis Independent Nation have gathered information about land and resource use through occupancy studies, land use planning, or to satisfy the requirements of EAs for other proposed development.

Projects that had relevant information on land use and practice of rights included in public EA documentation from communities involved in the Project are:

- NextBridge Amended Environmental Assessment Report for the East-West Tie Transmission Project (NextBridge 2018):
  - This report includes some information on Métis cultural, land, and resource use relevant to the Project.
- Treasury Metals Inc. Goliath Gold Project Environmental Assessment (Treasury Metals Inc 2018):
  - The Goliath Gold project is located 20 km east of the City of Dryden and is in close proximity to the Project footprint for the Waasigan Transmission Line. The assessment describes aspects that are considered part of the Métis way-of-life including but not limited to plant gathering, hunting, trapping, fishing, contemporary, ceremonial, and spiritual practices.

Several Hydro One Project staff received a training session by NWOMC and Region 2 titled, “Métis 101 and the Duty to Consult.” This presentation provided information on Métis rights and MNO’s perspective on consultation and accommodation (MNO 2020) which was relevant to the Project.

7.8.8 Description of the Existing Environment

This section summarizes the available information regarding Métis rights, interests, and land use in relation to the study areas defined in Section 7.8.6. Available information regarding data collection for First Nations rights, interests and land use is addressed in Section 7.7. A review of the available information indicates that the study areas have historically, and continue to be, accessed and used by Métis citizens for traditional activities such as hunting, trapping, fishing, plant harvesting, transmission of culture to the next generation and other cultural uses. Some general baseline information regarding land and resource use and cultural site and practices of the Métis is provided in this section. Information attributable to specific Métis communities is identified and sourced where noted.

Within the study areas for this assessment, the lands have been used by Indigenous people for trapping, hunting, gathering, ceremony, trade, and socializing; practices that continue to this day. Section 7.5 of the archaeological assessment presents a summary of regional history, including pre-contact First Nation history and early Métis history. In many cases, the locations of archaeological sites from which archaeological evidence is derived are connected to areas of past and current traditional land and resource use.

Indigenous peoples live, work, hunt, fish, trap, and harvest throughout their traditional lands and rely on these lands for their individual, as well as their community's overall cultural, social, spiritual, physical, and economic wellbeing. These activities take place throughout the year and are not bound by provincial harvest seasons and regulations. Ecologically important areas, such as calving or fish spawning areas, are important to land and resource users due to their role in producing the harvested resources. These harvested resources and lands are inextricably connected to a community's shared identity and culture. It is recognized that the relationship between Indigenous communities and their lands is a symbiotic one and the health of the community is tied to the health of the land. As such, what happens to lands in relation to past, current, and future land use, ecosystems, and sustainability is of fundamental importance to the communities.

7.8.8.1 Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Region 2

7.8.8.1.1 Access to Resources/Lands Available for Practice of Rights

Transportation pathways and features (e.g., trails and waterways) have historically been, and continue to be, traditionally used to access lands for use by Métis peoples, both within and beyond the area of the Project. Waterways in the region are travelled by Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and historic portage points represent important locations to this day.

NWOMC and Region 2's Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study (TKLUS) for the Waasigan Transmission Line Project described the importance of NWOMC and Region 2 citizens accessing unoccupied crown land or land which does not have visible or incompatible uses applied in order to exercise their Section 35 Rights, stating that, "Métis culture is heavily connected with the land (land is a term which can include both land and water) and the environment (which includes all other biotic components of the ecosystem)" (MNP 2023b). The TKLUS identified several travel routes in the LSA including 14 canoe routes, 3 portage points, 3 other water routes, 2 boat launches, 3 ice snow machine trails, 2 land snow machine trails and 1 ice foot path.

In the TKLUS, NWOMC and Region 2 citizens expressed concern regarding the Project route crossing through and near the Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park and Campus Lake Conservation Reserve, and the proximity of the Project to relatively undisturbed waterbodies in this area (MNP 2023b). NWOMC and Region 2 confirmed that their citizens use the land and water near the proposed Project to access resources (MNP 2021). Citizens also expressed concern about accessing areas of Crown land for harvesting within the Project footprint during the construction period of the Project (e.g., temporary closure of roads).

In the TKLUS, NWOMC and Region 2 citizens were asked to describe their use of the land in categories that linked to harvesting rights. They identified "8,995,713.13 hectares of combined harvesting/land use in the Preferred Route LSA" defined as lands within approximately 500 m on each side of the Preliminary Preferred Route (MNP 2023b).

NWOMC and Region 2's baseline data collection report states citizens from the NWOMC and Region 2 participate in harvesting and land use activities in proximity to the proposed Project (MNP 2021). It also states that NWOMC and Region 2 citizens are concerned that several species that they hunt, fish, gather, and trap may be affected by the Project including deer, moose, grouse, beaver, marten, muskrat, walleye, trout, northern pike, berries, mushrooms, and medicines (MNP 2021). In addition, they use land and water for harvesting and cultural activities near the proposed Project (MNP 2021). They also practice spiritual activities or use/enjoy cultural sites and/or sacred sites within 2 km of the proposed Project (within the LSA) (MNP 2021).

Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use characterizes publicly documented trails that may also be used by Indigenous community members for harvesting or cultural practices. The Project footprint transects seven OTN trails (for 3.1 km) and 105 non-OTN trails (for a combined 157.3 km). The majority of OTN trails in the Project footprint are for hiking or waking, cycling, crossing country skiing (1.2 km) and paddling (1.1 km), while the majority of non-OTN trails include snowmobile (47.1 km), ski (5.8 km), bike (1.5 km), and resource user trails (8.1 km). Snowmobile trails in the Project footprint are managed by snowmobiling groups who are members of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC). Canoe routes extending through Ontario Parks are managed by the MNRF. Approximately 71.4 km of non-OTN trails are defined as "other" in the Project footprint, where usage is undefined by MNRF.

Baseline characterization was completed for water crossings to identify the waterbodies that are expected to be crossed by the Project footprint. The list is discussed in Section 6.0 and the full list of waterbody crossing locations is provided in Table A-1 of Appendix 6.2-B and is available in Section 6.5.2.1. There are several navigable waterways used for boating, kayaking and canoeing.

7.8.8.1.2 Wildlife Harvesting

NWOMC and Region 2's TKLUS for the Project states, "harvesting and gathering in a preferred and meaningful manner is essential to the exercise of Métis harvesting rights. Conditions such as the remoteness (e.g., lack of industrial or recreational noise, and pristine visual landscape), and a lack of non-Indigenous land users (both recreational and industrial), are aspects that contribute to make an area 'preferred.' Additionally, the thresholds for an area to be preferred is individual and important to each Métis citizen. This may vary from a proponent's understanding of remoteness in relation to biophysical components" (MNP 2023b).

NWOMC and Region 2 citizens also indicated that equally important to the exercise of harvesting rights is how this harvesting contributes to diet. In NWOMC and Region 2's TKLUS, participants indicated that 25% of their diet was from fishing, 41% from hunting and 5% from gathering (MNP 2023b).

NWOMC and Region 2's TKLUS noted that participants in the study reported harvesting or encountering several species that are important for harvesting and/or cultural practices near the Project including:

- Bear;
- Beaver;
- Chicken;
- Coyote;
- Deer;
- Duck;
- Fisher;
- Fox;
- Grouse;
- Lynx;
- Marten;
- Moose;
- Otter;
- Partridge;
- Prairie Chicken;
- Rabbit;
- Spruce Hen;
- Squirrel;
- Weasel;
- Wolf; and
- Wolverine.

Trapping

Traplines used by Métis harvesters are licensed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to harvest furbearing mammals for commercial or personal use. These may be located on private or Crown lands.

NWOMC and Region 2's baseline data collection report indicates NWOMC and Region 2 citizens trap beaver, marten, and muskrat near the Project (MNP 2021). NWOMC and Region 2 also identified nine sites in the LSA used for trapping and noted that most trapping takes place during the winter (MNP 2023b).

Hunting

Several species are important for harvesting for NWOMC and Region 2, including moose, deer, and waterfowl. Habitat associated with moose, deer, waterfowl, and furbearers is common in the LSA and RSAs. Moose and deer hunting primarily takes place in the autumn from late September through to early December although occasionally a moose will be taken in other seasons if food is needed.

The Baseline Data Collection Survey Report, notes that NWOMC and Region 2 citizens' top three species for hunting near the Project are moose, deer, and grouse (MNP 2021). NWOMC and Region 2 identified 17 areas where they hunt bear, deer, and moose near the Project (MNP 2023b).

NWOMC and Region 2 citizens expressed concern for the significant wildlife habitat present in proximity to Turtle River-White Otter Provincial Park. Concerns regarding potential impacts to migration routes and species viability were also noted and NWOMC and Region 2 expressed the importance of minimizing disturbance to animal habitats as much as possible (MNP 2023b).

Outside of the RSA for this assessment, a list of traditionally important resources harvested by Métis communities in the region was documented in NextBridge Infrastructure LP's Environmental Assessment Report for the East-West Tie Transmission Project. This list includes beaver, lynx, mink, muskrat, moose, otter, rabbit (snowshoe hare), upland birds, waterfowl (species unidentified), weasel, wolf (grey) wolverine. Moose and deer were described as being harvested in the fall, and furbearers were harvested from the fall through to spring. Specifically, wolves and weasels are hunted in the fall and winter, and beavers in the spring (NextBridge 2018).

Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use characterizes the study areas including the Project footprint relative to Provincial Land Use policy areas, and characterizes hunting and trapping activities regulated through the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, *1997*. The unpatented Crown Land crossed by the Project footprint is 3,845.5 ha. There are ten Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in which hunting activities take place by MNRF licenced harvesters that intersect the Project footprint. The number of hunters and the quantity of moose, deer and bear that are harvested, are described. Similarly, this section summarizes the presence of MNRF licenced trappers and notes that there are approximately 28 trapping licenses (regular registered licenses) and 20 structures located within the 46 trapline licence areas in the Project footprint. The MNRF does not make individual trapline tenure or harvest information publicly available.

7.8.8.1.3 Fish Harvesting

NWOMC and Region 2 citizens harvest fish within the watercourses and waterbodies located within the LSA and RSA. Species that have been highlighted through engagement as being culturally important include bass, walleye (pickerel), muskellunge, trout, and northern pike.

In their baseline data collection report, NWOMC and Region 2 highlighted walleye (pickerel), northern pike, and trout as being the "top three" fish species of relevance to the Project (MNP 2021). During the environmental assessment of the East-West Tie Transmission Project, NWOMC and Region 2 raised concerns about impacts to fish and their rights to fishing that would be impacted by the Project (NextBridge 2018).

In NWOMC and Region 2's TKLUS, they identified 49 areas where citizens fish for bass, northern pike, pickerel and trout (MNP 2023b). In addition, the water crossing within the Turtle River-White Otter Provincial Park was identified as an area of interest.

In the Goliath Gold Environmental Assessment Report, NWOMC and Region 2 identified Thunder Lake, Big Sandy Lake and Wabigoon Lake as important areas for fishing walleye (pickerel), trout and bass. The area of Keplyns Bay on Wabigoon Lake was identified as an important area for spawning (Treasury Metals Inc. 2018).

In the NextBridge Infrastructure LP's Environmental Assessment Report for the East-West Tie Transmission Project, NWOMC and Region 2 described the importance of harvesting, "fishing for was stressed as a vital component of their lives for subsistence and for general well being." Some members described only fishing in certain seasons, while other described fishing as a year-round activity (NextBridge 2018).

Fishing activities in the region are discussed in Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use. Each of the MNRF-regulated Fish Management Zones that are crossed by the Project are described, including waterbodies and watercourses used outside timing windows for harvest as protected by Section 35 Rights. Harvested species within Fish Management Zones crossed by the Project that have timing windows listed are brown trout, crappie, lake sturgeon, lake trout, lake whitefish, largemouth and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, rainbow trout, splake, sunfish, walleye and sauger, and yellow perch.

Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, provides background data and field surveys undertaken for the Project that have been used to characterize the fish and fish habitat present within the study areas, including features crossed by the Project footprint. Lake trout, brook trout, northern pike, and walleye were chosen as species representing indicators for the assessment of effects. These species were chosen due to their ecological, Indigenous, and socio-economic importance. Walleye, northern pike, and brook trout are documented in the southern and northern portions of the fish and fish habitat RSA. Lake trout are documented in the lakes and larger watercourses throughout the Fish and Fish Habitat RSA and LSA.

This assessment identifies that there are 830 waterbodies crossed by the ROW and access roads (Table 6.6-5). Most water crossings along the Project footprint are watercourses (i.e., 161 within the ROW and 245 along access roads). Most of the remaining crossings are lakes/ponds (i.e., 76 within the ROW and 40 along the access roads). Based on the field survey, 31 ROW crossings and 56 access road crossings did not have defined bed or banks (i.e., there was no channel present). No background or field data were available for the remainder of the crossings (i.e., 47 ROW and 174 access road crossings). A large proportion of the crossings in both the ROW (i.e., 214) and the access roads (i.e., 237) were determined to have permanent flow regimes.

Fish habitat potential was determined for most of the crossings assessed (i.e., 248 within the ROW and 314 along access roads). Sixteen waterbodies are known to provide spawning habitat at or near the vicinity of the crossing for Walleye, Lake Trout, or undefined species (Dillon 2020, Dryden Forest Management Company 2016, Greenmantle Forest Inc. 2020, MNRF 2022). Potential spawning habitat was observed at 128 crossings in October 2020 and from June to September 2022 (Appendix 6.6A). No known nursery areas were identified in background data, although field surveys identified 111 potential nursey areas (Appendix 6.6A). No SAR critical habitats were mapped by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) within the LSA (DFO 2022).

7.8.8.1.4 Plant and Material Harvesting

Within the RSA, there are plant species of cultural importance, including berries, timber, wild rice, mushrooms and plants used for medicines. Plant species may be collected for sustenance, cultural or medicinal purposes. Habitat for berries and some plant species used as medicines is confirmed to be present within the LSA. Accordingly, it is likely that some areas of plant and material harvest will be affected the Project. However, new habitat for plants may be created in the immediate vicinity of the Project footprint during the rehabilitation of areas disturbed by construction activities.

In their baseline data collection report, NWOMC and Region 2 indicated their top three species for gathering near the Project as berries, mushrooms and medicines (MNP 2021). In addition, they noted NWOMC and Region 2 citizens use land and water near the Project for plant and medicine gathering (MNP 2021). In their TKLUS, NWOMC and Region 2 identified 27 areas within the LSA where they gather blueberries, cedar, chaga, chokecherry, fiddleheads, mushrooms, sage, and wild rice. The TKLUS also notes the importance of teaching plant gathering practices to future generations (MNP 2023b).

NWOMC and Region 2 raised concerns regarding the potential for contamination from herbicides, especially to berries and the animals, and NWOMC and Region 2 citizens who consume them (MNP 2023b). In comments provided on the Draft EA Report, NWOMC and Region 2 noted that the practice of Indigenous rights is much more susceptible to short-term change when compared with the resilience of vegetation ecosystems.

In the Goliath Gold Environmental Assessment Report, NWOMC and Region 2 identified plant gathering as an important activity that takes place near the mine's project footprint, which is located near/ overlapping with the Project footprint. Important areas of concern for potential effects to animals and NWOMC and Region 2 harvesters that might consume contaminated berries, are identified in the report (Treasury Metals Inc 2018). In the NextBridge Infrastructure LP's Environmental Assessment Report for the East-West Tie Transmission Project, the gathering of plant materials for subsistence, medicinal, cultural and crafting purposed was described as important to NWOMC and Region 2 citizens (NextBridge 2018).

Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands provides a characterization of ecosystem availability, distribution and composition, within the Project footprint for traditional use plant species including some of the plants listed above.

NWOMC and Region 2 provided information related to general habitats commonly harvested by their members (MNP LLP 2021). In accordance with the feedback received, mixed forest offers the most important type to members for harvesting, followed by coniferous forest, sparse forest, wetland, deciduous forest and then grassland. As noted in Section 6.4, these habitat types appear to correspond to a former classification system used to describe landcover across northern Ontario.

7.8.8.1.5 Cultural Identity and Culturally Important Sites

Cultural activities and practices and sacred sites identified by Métis communities are present throughout the area of the Project at specific sites or unidentified locations. Specific sites, such as cabins and camps that provide or provided shelter while conducting traditional activities throughout a community's traditional territory, meeting and ceremony places and other sacred sites such as burial grounds, are important to document and avoid for Project development activities. Where information shared by communities is indicated as being of importance without further definition of the type of use occurring within the area (e.g., may be used for access, harvesting and/or other cultural activities and practices), these are defined in this assessment as being culturally important sites.

At community open houses with Hydro One, NWOMC and Region 2 explained that the Turtle Lake-White Otter Provincial Park area is of great importance to the Métis as it reflects their governance values for ongoing land stewardship (MNP 2023). In their baseline data report, NWOMC and Region 2 indicated their citizens practice spiritual activities or use/enjoy cultural sites and/or sacred sites near the Project area and within 2 km from the Project boundary (MNP 2021).

The NWOMC and Region 2 TKLUS identified several cultural sites including burial, spiritual, cultural and historic sites, habitation sites including camps and cabins, and routes including snow machine trails, canoe routes, ice paths and boat launches within the studied Preferred Route LSA (MNP 2023).

Sections 7.5 Archaeological Resources and 7.6 Built Heritage Resources, identifies cultural sites and landscapes including sites and landscapes of importance to Métis communities.

Provincial parks and conservation reserves defined within the region are located in areas with features of value to Indigenous communities. As discussed in Section 7.1 Land and Resource Assessment, two provincial parks, the Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park and Quetico Provincial Park include small areas that are intersected by the Project footprint.

Removed from the areas intersected by the Project footprint, cultural heritage values identified within parts of the Quetico Provincial Park include pictographs, archaeological encampment sites, and burial sites (MECP 2021a). Cultural heritage values linked to Indigenous heritage are identified within parts of Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park which includes 39 archaeological sites, and 37 pictograph sites. Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park overlaps two NWOMC and Region 2-asserted harvesting territories: Lake of the Woods/Lac Seul and Rainy Lake/Rainy River.

One conservation reserve, the Campus Lake Conservation Reserve, also intersects the Project. Cultural values are redacted from the Campus Lake Conservation Reserve management plan to protect sensitive information. Information shared by NWOMC and Region 2 reflects the importance of and use of this area by citizens.

7.8.8.2 Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

7.8.8.2.1 Access to Resources/Lands Available for Practice of Rights

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation shared mapped areas of land use with Hydro One identifying features located between the Thunder Bay and Kashabowie areas. Large areas within which Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens conduct traditional activities, such as fishing and hunting (two areas), and cultural points of interest to their citizens (three areas) are identified within the RSA, with edges overlapping the LSA.

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation shared a letter with Hydro One in February 2023 indicating that areas near the proposed Project are used for traditional and cultural purposes; however, no specific areas of concern within the LSA or RSA were identified. The letter stated there are archaeological sites within the area and that the Project will affect a percentage of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation traditional lands and use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use characterizes publicly documented trails that may also be used by Indigenous community members for harvesting or cultural practices. The Project footprint transects seven OTN trails (for 3.1 km) and 105 non-OTN trails (for a combined 157.3 km). The majority of OTN trails in the Project footprint are for hiking or waking, cycling, crossing country skiing (1.2 km) and paddling (1.1 km), while the majority of non-OTN trails include snowmobile (47.1 km), ski (5.8 km), bike (1.5 km), and resource user trails (8.1 km). Snowmobile trails in the Project footprint are managed by snowmobiling groups who are members of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC). Canoe routes extending through Ontario Parks are managed by the MNRF. Approximately 71.4 km of non-OTN trails are defined as “other” in the Project footprint, where usage is undefined by MNRF.

Baseline characterization was completed for water crossings to identify the waterbodies that are expected to be crossed by the Project footprint. The list is discussed in Section 6.0 and the full list of waterbody crossing locations is provided in Table A-1 of Appendix 6.2-B and is available in Section 6.5.2.1. There are several navigable waterways used for boating, kayaking and canoeing.

7.8.8.2.2 Wildlife Harvesting

Trapping

Traplines used by Métis harvesters are licensed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to harvest furbearing mammals for commercial or personal use. These may be located on private or Crown lands. No specific information related to trapping was shared by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation in relation to the Project.

Hunting

Based on engagement, several species important for harvesting for Métis citizens have been identified, including moose, deer, and waterfowl. Habitat associated with moose, deer,

waterfowl, and furbearers is common in the LSA and RSAs. Moose and deer hunting primarily takes place in the autumn.

Outside of the RSA for this assessment, a list of traditionally important resources harvested by Métis communities in the region was documented in NextBridge Infrastructure LP's Environmental Assessment Report for the East-West Tie Transmission Project. This list includes beaver, lynx, mink, muskrat, moose, otter, rabbit (snowshoe hare), upland birds, waterfowl (species unidentified), weasel, wolf (grey) wolverine. Moose and deer were described as being harvested in the fall, and furbearers were harvested from the fall through to spring. Specifically, wolves and weasels are hunted in the fall and winter, and beavers in the spring (NextBridge 2018).

Spatial data shared by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation indicates two places in the RSA and LSA that overlap large areas within which activities such as fishing and hunting occur. Details on use or species targeted within these broad regions were not shared, and no specific areas of concern within the LSA or RSA have been identified by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation.

Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use characterizes the study areas including the Project footprint relative to Provincial Land Use policy areas, and characterizes hunting and trapping activities regulated through the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, *1997*. The unpatented Crown Land crossed by the Project footprint is 3,845.5 ha. There are ten Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in which hunting activities take place by MNRF licenced harvesters that intersect the Project footprint. The number of hunters and the quantity of moose, deer and bear that are harvested, are described. Similarly, this section summarizes the presence of MNRF licenced trappers and notes that there are approximately 28 trapping licenses (regular registered licenses) and 20 structures located within the 46 trapline licence areas in the Project footprint. The MNRF does not make individual trapline tenure or harvest information publicly available.

7.8.8.2.3 Fish Harvesting

Métis citizens harvest fish within the watercourses and waterbodies located within the LSA and RSA. Species that have been highlighted through engagement as being culturally important include bass, walleye (pickerel), muskellunge, trout, and northern pike.

Land use maps shared by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation with Hydro One identified generalized areas within which citizens fish. From spatial data shared, two places were identified in the RSA and LSA that overlap large areas within which activities such as fishing and hunting occur. Details on use or species targeted within these broad regions have not been shared; however, no specific areas of concern within the LSA or RSA have been identified by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation.

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation documented sturgeon and walleye as species of concern during the East-West Tie Transmission Project (NextBridge 2018).

Fishing activities in the region are discussed in Section 7.1 Land and Resource Use. Each of the MNRF-regulated Fish Management Zones that are crossed by the Project are described,

including waterbodies and watercourses used outside timing windows for harvest as protected by Section 35 Rights. Harvested species within Fish Management Zones crossed by the Project that have timing windows listed are brown trout, crappie, lake sturgeon, lake trout, lake whitefish, largemouth and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, northern pike, rainbow trout, splake, sunfish, walleye and sauger, and yellow perch.

Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, provides background data and field surveys undertaken for the Project that have been used to characterize the fish and fish habitat present within the study areas, including features crossed by the Project footprint. Lake trout, brook trout, northern pike, and walleye were chosen as species representing indicators for the assessment of effects. These species were chosen due to their ecological, Indigenous, and socio-economic importance. Walleye, northern pike, and brook trout are documented in the southern and northern portions of the fish and fish habitat RSA. Lake trout are documented in the lakes and larger watercourses throughout the Fish and Fish Habitat RSA and LSA.

This assessment identifies that there are 830 waterbodies crossed by the ROW and access roads (Table 6.6-5). Most water crossings along the Project footprint are watercourses (i.e., 161 within the ROW and 245 along access roads). Most of the remaining crossings are lakes/ponds (i.e., 76 within the ROW and 40 along the access roads). Based on the field survey, 31 ROW crossings and 56 access road crossings did not have defined bed or banks (i.e., there was no channel present). No background or field data were available for the remainder of the crossings (i.e., 47 ROW and 174 access road crossings). A large proportion of the crossings in both the ROW (i.e., 214) and the access roads (i.e., 237) were determined to have permanent flow regimes.

Fish habitat potential was determined for most of the crossings assessed (i.e., 248 within the ROW and 314 along access roads). Sixteen waterbodies are known to provide spawning habitat at or near the vicinity of the crossing for Walleye, Lake Trout, or undefined species (Dillon 2020, Dryden Forest Management Company 2016, Greenmantle Forest Inc. 2020, MNRF 2022). Potential spawning habitat was observed at 128 crossings in October 2020 and from June to September 2022 (Appendix 6.6A). No known nursery areas were identified in background data, although field surveys identified 111 potential nursey areas (Appendix 6.6A). No SAR critical habitats were mapped by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) within the LSA (DFO 2022).

7.8.8.2.4 Plant and Material Harvesting

Within the RSA, there are plant species of cultural importance, including berries, timber, wild rice, mushrooms and medicines. Plant species may be collected for sustenance, cultural or medicinal purposes. Habitat for berries and some plant species used as medicines is confirmed to be present within the LSA. Accordingly, it is likely that some areas of plant and material harvest will be affected the Project. However, new habitat for plants may be created in the immediate vicinity of the Project footprint during the rehabilitation of areas disturbed by construction activities.

No specific plants or materials harvested by the community were specifically identified to Hydro One in the information shared to date by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation.

Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands provides a characterization of ecosystem availability, distribution and composition, within the Project footprint for traditional use plant species including some of the plants listed above.

7.8.8.2.5 Cultural Identity and Culturally Important Sites

Cultural activities and practices and sacred sites identified by Métis communities are present throughout the area of the Project at specific sites or unidentified locations. Specific sites, such as cabins and camps that provide or provided shelter while conducting traditional activities throughout a community's traditional territory, meeting and ceremony places and other sacred sites such as burial grounds, are important to document and avoid for Project development activities. Where information shared by communities is indicated as being of importance without further definition of the type of use occurring within the area (e.g., may be used for access, harvesting and/or other cultural activities and practices), these are defined in this assessment as being culturally important sites.

Land use maps prepared by the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation and shared with Hydro One, identify large areas that include important points of interest within the RSA between Thunder Bay and Kashabowie. Additional detail was not shared regarding whether these points of interests are used for cultural and spiritual practices.

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation shared a letter with Hydro One in February 2023 indicating that areas near the proposed Project are used for traditional and cultural purposes; however, no specific areas of concern within the LSA or RSA were identified. The letter stated there are archaeological sites within the area and that the Project will affect a percentage of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation traditional lands and use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

7.8.9 Potential Project-Environment Interactions

Potential Project interactions were identified through a review of the Project Description and existing environmental conditions. The linkages between Project components and activities and potential effects to Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources are identified in Table 7.8-4.

Table 7.8-4: Project-Environment Interactions for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources

Criteria	Indicator	Project Phase Construction (includes access road and ROW preparation, installation, and reclamation activities)	Project Phase Operation (includes operation and maintenance activities)	Description of Potential Project-Environment Interaction
Loss of Land/ Change in Priority Rights	Changes in Land Available for Métis Use considering: • Conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land • Increased physical disturbance	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could result in unoccupied Crown land being converted to occupied Crown land.
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting of culturally critical species considering: • Displacement of wildlife resulting in reductions to hunting, fishing and trapping • Reduction or change in vegetation resulting in reductions of gathering activities	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could affect the availability of harvested species, e.g., by displacing wildlife and reducing changing plant species

Criteria	Indicator	Project Phase Construction (includes access road and ROW preparation, installation, and reclamation activities)	Project Phase Operation (includes operation and maintenance activities)	Description of Potential Project-Environment Interaction
Harvesting/Sites	Changes in physical attributes considering: • Decrease in air quality • Increase in noise • Decrease in visual quality • Perception of changes in air quality, noise or visual quality • Increased avoidance behaviours	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could change environmental conditions (e.g., air, acoustic environment, aesthetics) that support harvested species.
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting practices considering: • Disruption to harvesting timing windows	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could affect harvesting practice, e.g., by disrupting when citizens can harvest in preferred areas.
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to access considering: • Increased non-Métis access • Decreased Métis access	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could restrict access to preferred harvesting areas and could also increase access via new access roads and the ROW.

Criteria	Indicator	Project Phase Construction (includes access road and ROW preparation, installation, and reclamation activities)	Project Phase Operation (includes operation and maintenance activities)	Description of Potential Project-Environment Interaction
Harvesting/Sites	Change in teaching/ transmittal considering: • Removal of resources for teaching/ transmittal to the next generation • Removal of sites for teaching/transmittal to the next generation	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could remove harvested species or sites that are important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation.
Harvesting/Sites	Changes in perception of “place” – harvesting sites considering: • Changes in perception of harvesting experience • Changes in perception of species • Changes in perception of Métis sites	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could affect perceptions of harvested species, sites or experiences.
Cultural Identity	Disruption of “sense of place” considering: • Removal of required conditions for territorial connection for the Métis	✓	✓	Site preparation, construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could remove cultural connections required to maintain a sense of place.

Criteria	Indicator	Project Phase Construction (includes access road and ROW preparation, installation, and reclamation activities)	Project Phase Operation (includes operation and maintenance activities)	Description of Potential Project-Environment Interaction
Cultural Identity	Reduction in cultural practices considering: • Changes in traditional practices specifically linked to cultural identity	✓	✓	Site preparation, construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could result in a change to cultural practices.
Cultural Identity	Change in teaching/ transmittal to the next generation considering: • Removal of cultural connection required for teaching / transmittal to the next generation	✓	✓	Construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could remove cultural connections that are required for teaching/ transmittal to the next generation.

ROW = right-of-way.

Note: ✓ = A potential Project-environment interaction could result in an environmental or socio-economic effect; _ = No plausible interaction was identified.

7.8.10 Potential Effects, Mitigation Measures, and Net Effects

Potential effects, mitigation measures and net effects are characterized in this section for the criteria defined for the assessment of Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources. This assessment is first undertaken considering potential effects and mitigation relevant to NWOMC and Region 2 (Section 7.8.10.1) and then as relevant to the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation (Section 7.8.10.2). The nature of effects and accordingly, the mitigation measures overlaps resulting in the same or similar text between the assessments.

7.8.10.1 Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Region 2

The linkages between Project components and activities and potential effects to Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources are identified and assessed in the following sections using indicators for the following three criteria:

- Loss of Land/Change in Priority Rights;
- Harvesting/Sites; and
- Cultural Identify.

Potential effects were identified by reviewing the Project Description, the description of Métis land and resource use in Section 7.8.8 (including access to resources and lands available for practice of rights), cultural identity and culturally important sites in Section 7.8.8, input from engagement and IK input shared, knowledge from similar projects and activities, and the preliminary potential effects identified in the Amended ToR (Hydro One 2021a).

Effects on the use of land and resources, cultural identify and cultural heritage have the potential to affect Section 35 Rights that have been defined through treaties and case law, as well as other interests, and are interpreted to include access to and use of Crown land, resources, and cultural and spiritual sites that support Métis culture and way of life.

The following section provides an assessment of potential effects, including planned mitigation measures, and an assessment of whether each potential effect is considered to have a net effect.

7.8.10.1.1 Changes in Land Available for Métis Use

This section considers the direct conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land and related physical disturbance.

Potential Effects

The Project will change the quantity of unoccupied Crown land available for use as the Project footprint overlaps many parcels of Crown land. Changes to land use designations are anticipated to be required for the construction of the Project, and it is anticipated that 3,845.5 ha of land will be converted from unoccupied to occupied as a result of the Project.

During the Project construction stage, site preparation, clearing and grubbing, the construction of infrastructure (e.g., access roads, fencing, bridges, turn-around areas, temporary laydown areas, and temporary construction camps), the assembly and erection of transmission structures, and the transportation of construction workers, equipment and materials may occur within areas used by Métis for land and resource use. As a result, Project construction may reduce the amount of unoccupied Crown lands available for exercising Métis rights such as use of the land and resources for harvesting and cultural practices.

Reductions in availability would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint, in the areas directly used for temporary workspaces and permanent infrastructure. Crown land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads will only be unavailable during the site-specific construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed and become available for use again although some access roads may be retained. A process for engagement regarding retaining access roads will be developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities.

As described in Section 7.8.1.2, the Governments of Canada and Ontario hold the duty to consult Indigenous communities regarding this Project. The Crown may delegate procedural aspects of consultation to a proponent; however, but the ultimate legal responsibility to meet the duty to consult, including regarding the status of Crown lands, lies with the Crown.

On private land, an easement granted to Hydro One for the transmission line ROW would convey priority rights to Hydro One for use of that easement for construction, operation and maintenance purposes. On Crown land, and Land Use Permit is required to provide occupational authority for the permanent footprint (i.e., the ROW) and access roads. This land would become occupied Crown land. This change to available Crown land may affect other indicators, such as access to harvesting areas (see Section 7.8.10.1.3).

NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have expressed concern about potential restrictions NWOMC and Region 2 harvesters and land users may face on Crown land, particularly if the easement and establishment of the transmission line ROW may result in increased firearm restrictions in relation to hunting due to safety concerns (MNP 2023b). NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have also expressed concern about changes in area available for the practice of land and resource use within Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park and the Campus Lake Conservation Reserve area (NWOMC and Region 2 2023a).

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to engage with Métis communities to define specific areas where mitigation can be effectively applied to minimize potential for effects (e.g., related to timing of specific uses). Hydro One will minimize the total footprint of Project access roads by aligning construction and operations stage access planning to the extent possible, will confine Project construction activities to surveyed and marked areas, and will provide notice to affected Métis communities prior to the start of construction.

Within parks and protected areas, mitigation measures are identified for the land use planning, parks and protected area criteria in Section 7.1 that speak to minimizing the Project footprint including limiting development of temporary facilities.

As described in Section 2.0, construction access roads and areas that are being used on a temporary basis during construction, such as laydown areas, pull sites, and helipads, that are located on previously undisturbed lands will be restored following construction.

Net Effects

The Project has the potential to affect the quantity of land available for NWOMC and Region 2 use as a result of the Project footprint overlapping with Crown lands and lands used for current and traditional purposes. The Project will result in both temporary and long-term changes to land available for NWOMC and Region 2 use considering conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land, and increased physical disturbance. Based on these results, and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project is predicted to result in a net change in land available for NWOMC and Region 2 citizens for use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

It is noted that there a range of factors that influence areas selected for use in exercising rights and use of the land and resources for harvesting and cultural practices. These may include areas being considered ecological suitable, accessible, and safe as well as other elements of cultural context. While the area of unoccupied Crown land affected by the Project is used as an indicator of potential for change, it is recognized there is variation in how different areas are viewed in to determine if it is considered appropriate or preferred by Indigenous communities for the practice of rights.

7.8.10.1.2 Changes to Harvesting of Culturally Critical Species

This section describes potential for change in availability of cultural critical species at harvesting sites. The evaluation of potential effects on the indicators for harvesting sites is largely based on the outcomes of the net effects assessments completed for the biophysical criteria in Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, and Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands.

This section considers direct effects to cultural critical species. The effects of Project activities on harvesters are considered in the following sections for criteria looking at change in the physical attributes of harvesting sites (Section 7.8.10.1.3) and how those changes may relate to harvest timing (Section 7.8.10.1.4), access to harvesting sites (Section 7.8.10.1.5) and perception of place (Section 7.8.10.1.7), including for teaching/transmittal of harvesting knowledge (Section 7.8.10.1.6).

Potential Effects

Harvesting activities, such as hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering of plant and plant materials that community members participate in are primarily for food and consumption. Harvesting is also recognized as a traditional activity and a right integral to Métis culture.

Hunting and Trapping

Section 7.8.8.1.2 provides a list of species important for harvesting and/or cultural practices to NWOMC and Region 2 citizens including bear, moose, deer, grouse, furbearers including marten and beaver and other species. NWOMC and Region 2 reports indicate that the hunting and/or trapping of grouse and deer are known to occur in the LSA (MNP 2023b).

When asked which species they felt would be most affected by transmission lines, 93% of NWOMC and Region 2 citizens who participated in the TKLUS noted their belief that species for hunting would be most impacted by transmission line and 81% indicated their belief that species for trapping would be most impacted. The top reported species respondents felt would be affected for hunting were deer, moose, and grouse. The top species identified which respondents felt would be affected for trapping were beaver, marten, and muskrat (MNP 2023b).

Maps shared by NWOMC and Region 2 indicate widespread moose hunting sites in the Project area. Two deer hunting sites were noted north of Thunder Bay and north of Dryden. Bear hunting sites were noted in Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park and in the area surrounding Dryden (including in Butler Lake Provincial Park and Lola Lake Provincial Park). Widespread grouse hunting areas were also noted on the maps.

Maps shared by NWOMC and Region 2 indicate a large are within which beaver trapping may occur northwest of Thunder Bay and south of Dryden, including in Turtle River-White Otter Lake Provincial Park.

During the construction stage of the Project, there will be direct removal of some wildlife habitat in the Project footprint. These effects can change wildlife habitat, availability, use, and connectivity. Section 6.5 identifies that the loss or alteration of vegetation and riparian habitats can lead to small changes in wildlife abundance and distribution in species such as moose, furbearers and birds.

Although, where feasible and practicable, the transmission line follows existing linear features to reduce impacts and fragmentation, there will be some fragmentation of the land from the transmission line and access roads. Land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads are not expected to provide quality wildlife habitat during the construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed. Once construction is completed, the transmission corridor may provide habitat to wildlife again, but may also provide areas for increased predation of some species, such as moose, which can lead to small changes in the survival and reproduction.

Despite some additional fragmentation from the transmission line, access roads, facilities such as temporary laydown areas, and temporary construction camps, habitat for several culturally important species such as moose are predicted to remain abundant and well connected across the landscape.

The evaluation of potential effects on availability of harvested resources for hunting and trapping is based on the net effects assessments for the relevant wildlife indicators. Where net effects are identified for culturally critical species, or species considered to be representative of such species that are important to hunting and trapping, that net effect will also impact the availability of harvested resources. The assessment of the Project on moose and furbearing animals has been assessed in the wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) as criteria species. The assessment of wildlife identifies net effects on moose and furbearing mammals (e.g., American marten, beaver, and gray wolf), marshbirds (e.g., trumpeter swam), and their habitats during construction and operation, which could result in a reduction in the availability of those species to be harvested; thereby, potentially impacting the harvesting of culturally critical species for Métis citizens.

Despite some habitat loss for temporary workspaces (e.g., laydown areas), and temporary construction camps, and longer-term habitat fragmentation from the transmission line and permanent access roads, habitat for several culturally critical species such as moose are predicted to remain abundant and well connected across the landscape. Net effects from the Project are not predicted to have significant negative effects on moose populations as they are highly mobile, have large home ranges, and can use different habitat types. Section 10.0 of the Final EA Report outlines the monitoring requirements for the Project, including proposed monitoring for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Indigenous communities have noted the importance of moose to their communities. Hydro One will work with Indigenous communities to develop and implement mitigation effectiveness monitoring.

NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have reported concerns regarding corona noise and general line hum causing disturbance to wildlife and NWOMC and Region 2 harvesters/land users (MNP 2023b). It was also noted in the wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) that corona noise from the transmission line is not anticipated to cause wildlife, including bird species, to avoid the ROW and so is not anticipated to reduce habitat availability. Additionally, individuals with home ranges that overlap the Project footprint may currently be habituated to corona noise due to the presence of existing ROW. Similar conclusions were reached for furbearers and marsh birds as populations are expected to remain self sustaining and ecologically effective relative to the baseline, and effects from the Project are predicted to be not significant.

Some NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have noted that, in relation to trapping, they would not be comfortable harvesting in proximity to or on a transmission line ROW; thus, trapping species such as beaver, grouse, rabbit, waterfowl, muskrat, marten, fisher, fox, lynx, bear, and deer would be impacted for some trappers. Concerns about the use of herbicide or pesticide for vegetation management were also voiced in relation to hunting if wildlife consume treated vegetation (MNP 2023b).

Fishing

Fishing is a current and traditional activity, and a rights-based activity, within the LSA. Detailed information about the extent to of these activities is not available for this assessment; however, it is understood that preferred fish species include bass, walleye, northern pike, muskellunge, trout, and other fish species in some of the lakes in the area.

Fish selected as indicator species assessed in Section 6.6 are lake trout, brook trout, northern pike, and walleye, which were chosen due to their ecological, Indigenous, and socio-economic importance:

- Walleye are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.
- Lake trout are documented in the lakes and larger watercourses throughout the RSA and LSAs.
- Northern pike are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.
- Brook trout are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.

The assessment of the effects on these species has been addressed in Section 6.6. Disturbances that may affect fish habitat directly from construction are the result of the operation of heavy machinery in the waterbody, installation of isolation structures during construction (i.e., isolation construction techniques such as flumes, instream diversions, or bypass pumps to divert the water flow around the isolated workspace), bank treatments, place of structures, fill, and other materials into the water.

As described in Section 6.6 (Fish and Fish Habitat), there is predicted to be a net effect on fish and fish habitat during the construction and operation of the Project. Depending on the extent and location of such effects in relation to fish harvesting areas, effects to fish and fish habitat could result in a reduction in the availability of those species to be harvested; thereby potentially impacting the harvesting of culturally critical species by Métis citizens, primarily during the duration of construction activities.

The potential for changes in environmental conditions to affect resource availability and fish harvesting levels for traditional land and resource users during the construction and operation and maintenance stages are addressed in the characterization of the net effects.

Plant Harvesting

It is recognized that Métis citizens collect plants such as blueberries, raspberries, edible plants, mushrooms, medicines, chokecherry, sage, cedar, sweetgrass, fiddlehead, cranberry, and wild strawberry in the region. Specifically, harvesting of blueberry, chaga, chokecherry, sage and cedar is known to occur in the LSA (MNP 2023b).

The assessment of the Project on vegetation has been assessed using three criteria (upland, wetland, and riparian ecosystems) in the vegetation and wetlands assessment (Section 6.4). There are several effects predicted on these ecosystems, including reduced soil quality, soil

disturbance, changes to hydrology, potential chemical or hazardous material spills, dust and air emissions, and introduction of invasive species. The assessment found that there would be net effects to several of the vegetation criteria, which could result in a reduction in the availability of those plant species to be harvested; thereby potentially impacting the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

Specifically, construction activities will require the removal of vegetation in the Project footprint, including the temporary workspaces (e.g., laydown areas and construction camps). Some of the disturbances will be temporary, whereas some alternations will be more permanent (e.g., large trees will not be permitted within the ROW). In the Project footprint, some culturally important plants may be cleared during construction, but low growing plants may re-establish themselves where the disturbance is not permanent. Thus, the impacts during operations will depend on the plant species and location.

During operations, NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have expressed concern about vegetation management on the ROW using chemicals they perceive could have long-term effects on the species they consume (e.g., berries and plants), including animals that also consume the berries and plants, and potential impacts to water (MNP 2023b). Several NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have noted that, they would not be comfortable plant or berry gathering in proximity to or on a transmission line ROW unless there was clarity that herbicides or pesticides had not been used; thus, harvesting species such as blueberry, raspberry, edible plants, mushrooms including chaga, medicines, chokecherry, sage, cedar, sweetgrass, fiddlehead, cranberry, wild strawberry could be impacted for some plant harvesters (MNP 2023b).

Mitigation Measures

Efforts will be made to minimize direct effects and disturbance to wildlife, fish, plants and their habitats through project construction, operations and maintenance, such as staging construction to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles. A detailed list of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat is provided in Section 6.5, measures to reduce impacts to fish and fish habitat are provided in Section 6.6, and measure to reduce effects to plants (vegetation) are provided in Section 6.4. Specific to moose, it is noted that Hydro One will prioritize avoiding sensitive or important moose areas (e.g., traditional hunting grounds, calving areas, late winter cover areas, mineral licks, etc.) when selecting alternate or preferred new access routes to minimize moose habitat loss and disturbance and during the selection and delineation of fly yards, laydown areas, aggregate sites, other project components, etc.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

It is recognized that there are harvest areas present within the LSA that may be affected by the Project footprint, including between Atikokan and Dinorwic, which has been highlighted by NWOMC and Region 2 as an important area of use. Hydro One is committed to working with NWOMC and Region 2 to further identify specific affected areas for harvesting resources (i.e., for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering) or known sites that are important for the next generation within these areas to define potential refinements to the Project footprint; or other site-specific measures to reduce Project effects such as opportunities for pre-construction harvesting of plants and medicines in the transmission line path (right-of-way). There may be other resources that are important to local communities for harvesting and that may be identified through on-going discussion of IK studies. Hydro One will work NWOMC and Region 2 to identify other harvested resources, and through engagement develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures.

Section 10.0 of the Final EA Report outlines the monitoring requirements for the Project, including proposed monitoring for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Indigenous communities have noted the importance of moose to their communities. Hydro One will work with Indigenous communities to develop and implement mitigation effectiveness monitoring.

Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Net Effects

The Project footprint will directly overlap with areas that are used by wildlife, fish and plants that are harvested by NWOMC and Region 2 citizens, resulting in removal of habitat and sensory disturbances that will affect the presence of harvested species. Based on these results, and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project has potential to result in a net change to the harvesting of culturally critical species during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which in turn has potential to impact the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Métis rights.

7.8.10.1.3 Changes to Physical Attributes – Harvesting Sites

Preferred harvesting areas support the harvesting activities above, and are important for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous harvesting rights and interests. Based on the information provided, it is understood that there may be preferred harvesting areas in portions of the LSA. This section considers the physical attributes of harvesting sites that may create avoidance behaviours.

Potential Effects

Potential effects that will influence avoidance behaviours are both direct and indirect.

Most of the direct disturbance is expected to take place during construction and is anticipated to be temporary. During the construction stage of the Project, it anticipated that there will be sensory disturbances in the LSA, such as lights, smells, dust, noise, dust, and general human activity. This increase in activity can change wildlife habitat, availability, and use of the area. Specifically, during construction, wildlife may avoid construction areas due to noise, vibrations and other disturbances, including helicopter use. Section 6.5 identifies that sensory disturbances can lead to small changes in wildlife abundance and distribution in species such as moose and furbearers. Some Métis citizens have indicated that they will generally avoid areas in proximity to the Project footprint due to increased workers and traffic in proximity to the site (MNP 2023b).

The Acoustic Environment (Section 6.9) identifies a net effect related to increased noise levels in the LSA during the construction stage only, resulting from helicopter use, the construction of the transmission line, access roads, and the temporary construction camp (and dependent on proximity to construction activities). During the operation and maintenance stage, while not identified as a net effect, audible noise resulting from corona may be experienced by traditional land and resource users. The wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) identifies net effects related to changes in wildlife habitat availability, sensory disturbances, converted habitat and increased edge habitat.

During the operation and maintenance stage, such disturbances from construction lights, noise and vibrations will be minimal as they will be limited to periods when repair or replacement activities will be required in the permanent Project footprint. However, Métis citizens have also expressed concern about the corona effects (i.e., line hum), indicating that it may be disruptive for plant and berry gathering as if people are in an area for an extended period of time. Others voiced concerns about whether hunted species would be affected by the corona effect. Overall, the corona effects are expected to be disruptive and impact their use of the transmission line ROW for harvesting or land use activities (MNP 2023b). This perception is expected to have a promote avoidance behaviour over the long-term.

The visual aesthetics assessment (Section 7.4) identifies net effects related to the introduction of visual disturbances to the existing landscape, the visibility of built structures and the maintenance of vegetation disturbances in their LSA with long term to permanent duration for the preliminary proposed alignment. Métis citizens have indicated that the construction and operation of the Project would impact the visual landscape that Métis harvesters and land users currently enjoy, and some indicated that it would result in avoidance of the Project area and areas where the towers and cleared ROW are visible. Some would not be pleased having the transmission line go through key harvesting, fishing and land use areas or seeing the towers in areas they frequent (MNP 2023b).

In addition, some Métis citizens have indicated that they may avoid the transmission line ROW due perceived uncertainty surrounding electric and magnetic fields (EMF), and potential herbicide or pesticide use. During both construction and operations, berry picking and plant gathering in close proximity to the ROW are expected to be avoided as there is unease with

potential herbicide or pesticide usage; however, the cleared land of a transmission line can also be ideal for berry and plant growth (MNP 2023b); therefore, there could also be an increase in plant or plant material harvesting by some.

Overall, the findings on the TKLUS indicate that the construction and operation of the transmission line will result in an increase in avoidance behaviours from Métis citizens and harvesters for the exercise of Section 35 harvesting rights and land use activities in proximity to the Project footprint, which is expected to result in a loss of current harvesting activities in proximity to the Project, as well as future opportunities within the zone of avoidance (MNP 2023b).

Mitigation Measures

Numerous mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize the potential impact of noise and air borne emissions outlined in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment and 6.7 Air Quality. Hydro One and its contractors will comply with local municipal noise by-laws and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) Model Municipal Noise Control Bylaw. Also, measures to reduce dust and air emissions will be put in place, such as minimizing dust-generating activities, as practicable and where required, during periods of high wind to limit dust emissions and spread.

Specific to harvesting, Hydro One will continue discussions with NWOMC and Region 2 on priority hunting areas and helicopter activity within these areas. Helicopter use in identified priority hunting areas will be limited to the extent reasonably possible. This may include adjusting flight paths around sensitive features or altering start and end times during the day for specific areas.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

Net Effects

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to physical attributes during the construction and operation and maintenance stages of the Project, which will increase avoidance behaviours in the LSA; thus, potentially impacting this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

7.8.10.1.4 Changes to Harvesting Practices (Timing Windows)

This section considers potential changes to harvesting practices considering disruption to harvesting timing windows. NWOMC and Region 2 further note that disruption to harvesting timing windows can result in seasonal changes, but it also may result in change in harvesting practices by citizens such that there is a cessation of harvesting practices within an affected area.

Potential Effects

Changes to harvesting practices from the Project construction and operations and maintenance are possible if the effects to harvesting of culturally critical species or the indirect effects from changes to physical attributes overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows.

Once construction starts, construction activities are expected to occur throughout the year with staging to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible. Specific timing, sequencing and staging will be determined during the detailed planning phase. Construction activities will typically occur for one 10-hour shift per day, with normal working hours of 07:00 to 18:00. Night-time work is not anticipated; however, longer shifts may be required. Construction of the transmission line is anticipated to start at multiple locations along the corridor. Consequently, there may be concurrent construction and operation of temporary construction camps, turn-around areas, laydown areas, and access road or trail use.

While the staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles where possible, construction or maintenance activities may be required during periods when species are active and harvesting practices are preferred. This may result in changes to harvesting practices in proximity to the Project footprint, particularly if there are increased avoidance behaviours, as discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.3 and reduced access, as discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.5.

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to work with NWOMC and Region 2 regarding harvest timing windows and seasonality, to review existing and/or develop appropriate site- and time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures.

Construction staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Net Effects

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to harvesting practices if the effects to harvesting of culturally critical species or the indirect effects from changes to physical attributes overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows; thus, potentially impacting this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

7.8.10.1.5 Changes to Access to Harvesting Areas

Access to harvesting areas supports the harvesting activities discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.2, and is important for the current and traditional exercise of Métis harvesting rights. Based on the information provided, it is understood that there are preferred harvesting areas in portions of the LSA. Métis citizens expressed concern about accessing areas for harvesting along the Project footprint during the construction period of the Project (e.g., temporary blocking of roads) (MNP 2023b).

Potential Effects

Formal and tertiary roadways, terrestrial and aquatic travel routes, aquatic access points and boat caches are integral to the ongoing harvest of resources and are integral to traditional land and resource use. It is predicted that construction of the Project could both increase and decrease access to these travel routes and areas that are preferred for harvesting resources (i.e., hunting, trapping, fishing and plant materials). The NWOMC and Region 2 TKLUS identified several travel routes in the LSA including 14 canoe routes, 3 portage points, 3 other water routes, 2 boat launches, 3 ice snow machine trails, 2 land snow machine trails and 1 ice foot path, some of which may be crossed by the Project.

Restricted Access

During the Project construction stage, construction activities may occur within areas used for land access. The construction of infrastructure may reduce or change access to lands and waters available for hunting, fishing, trapping or other harvesting, and some access to camps or cabins. Métis harvesters and land users in the LSA may face temporary restrictions or limitations, particularly excluding non-workers due to safety concerns relating to construction activities. As well, the increase in occupation of Crown land for construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could result in temporary or permanent reduction in access to that land for current and traditional land and resource use.

Roadways may experience increased traffic during the Project workday. Aquatic and canoe travel routes could experience temporary access restrictions, where construction activities cross navigable waterways. Certain specific secondary roads may also experience intermittent, short-term closures due to Project clearing, infrastructure construction, and assembly, use of explosives, the operation of construction equipment, the construction of new waterbody crossings, cable stringing, or other construction activities, to promote worker and public safety.

Reductions in access would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint. Temporary disturbances to access and use of preferred access and harvesting areas during the construction stage would be most noticeable where proximity to communities or land use areas overlap the Project footprint and the LSA for the preferred route.

Although access and use of the access roads and ROW may face temporary restrictions or detours during the construction stage, these disturbances will not be continuously in effect because construction will be completed using a staged approach. Temporary access restrictions will only be put in place for a few weeks to a few months within the larger construction schedule, as Project construction progresses along the ROW.

Temporary access restrictions experienced during the site-specific construction stage will not be continuous (as construction will be completed using a staged approach, but rather, for a few weeks to a few months within the larger construction schedule, as Project construction progresses along the ROW. The restricted Project footprint access may not noticeably remove opportunities for these activities to occur at the LSA level, although some individual users may be affected. As well, despite these restrictions, users would be able to continue to access a wide range of other areas and resources, including preferred harvesting areas that are not within the LSA throughout the construction stage.

Maintenance activities, including the periodic inspection of the transmission line and associated infrastructure, necessary repairs, and vegetation management along the ROW, are predicted to be infrequent. Access restrictions for traditional land and resource use areas related to these operational and maintenance activities will be communicated to adjacent nearby Métis citizens in advance of when they are planned to occur.

Some Métis harvesters and land users have expressed concerns about this potential restriction in access and the extent to which Métis harvesting would be affected.

Increased Access

Construction of the Project could open access to new areas or expand access to a broader range of resources and harvest areas, both on and adjacent to ROWs and new access roads. This could have a positive impact for Métis harvesters and land users, such as increased access for hunters or fishers that could use new roads and the ROW to access formally inaccessible areas. However, this could be considered negative if the increased access results in non-Indigenous impacts to the land and availability of resources for traditional land and resource use.

Access restrictions during the operation and maintenance stage would be limited to infrequent, periodic maintenance activities; otherwise, permanent access roads will remain open and accessible to traditional land and resource users, and are predicted to be actively used. In this sense, the creation of permanent access roads could create increased access to harvesting areas over the longer term.

These changes could also result in an influx of Métis hunters, trappers, anglers and non-Métis outdoor tourism, recreation and other land users to areas within and adjacent to new ROWs, and encroaching on lands typically used (or with limited access) by Indigenous peoples. Increased active use resulting from expanded access could further reduce the availability of resources to harvest, as well as the remote, wilderness character and values of the traditional land and resource use.

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One is committed to working with NWOMC and Region 2 to further identify specific affected areas including access for harvesting resources (i.e., for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering) or known sites that are important for the next generation within these areas to define potential refinements to the Project footprint; or other site-specific measures to reduce Project effects. As additional IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into project planning and decision-making, and appropriate avoidance or mitigation measures will be developed and implemented.

Hydro One will provide Métis harvesters and land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW.

Project construction activities will be confined to surveyed and marked areas, and a construction Traffic/Access Management Plan will be prepared and implemented.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Net Effects

It is predicted that construction of the Project could both increase and decrease access to areas that are preferred for harvesting resources. Based on these results and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project has potential to result in a net change to the access to Métis harvesting areas during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has potential to impact the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

7.8.10.1.6 Change in Teaching/Transmittal of Knowledge

This section considers a change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge considering removal of resources for teaching/ transmittal to the next generation or removal of sites for teaching/transmittal to the next generation.

Potential Effects

Changes in teaching or transmittal of knowledge to the next generation could occur as a result of the removal of the cultural connections required for teaching and transmittal of cultural identity. This includes consideration of intangible values like quiet enjoyment of the landscape or sites used for teaching.

Changes in teaching or transmittal of knowledge related to harvesting could occur as a result of the removal of resources or sites used for teaching and transmittal to the next generation. This could occur if harvested resources are displaced (e.g., by sensory disturbance) or removed (e.g., loss of habitat and harvested areas, or over-harvesting of a population).

Criteria-specific sections of the EA provide an assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation and wetlands. These conclude that net effects (i.e., effects likely to result in environmental changes relative to the baseline and thus contribute to net effects) have been identified for vegetation and wetlands, wildlife, noise, and the visual aesthetics, as described in Sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.9, and 7.4. The vegetation and wetlands assessment (Section 6.4) identifies net effects related to the loss and alteration of upland, wetland and riparian ecosystem distribution and composition in their LSA that are long-term to permanent in duration for the preliminary proposed alignment.

These net effects on vegetation and wetlands, visual aesthetics, noise, and wildlife have the potential to indirectly affect traditional land use quality in harvesting areas within the LSA, but most notably within the Project footprint.

Some Métis citizens have indicated that they would not use the Project area for teaching any longer, which would result in a loss of this area for intergenerational learning. This is largely based on a belief that the land would no longer be a good place for teaching and that the longevity of the development means that generations to come will be impacted by the Project (MNP 2023b).

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to work with Métis communities to review existing and/or develop appropriate site- or time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures relevant to specific sites important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues.

Net Effects

There is a predicted net effect to teaching or transmittal of knowledge to the next generation because some Métis citizens have indicated that they would not use the Project area for teaching any longer, which would result in a loss of this area for intergenerational learning.

7.8.10.1.7 Changes in Perception of “Place” – Harvesting Sites

The ability of Métis citizens to uphold their way of life and continue to exercise their Section 35 harvesting rights is linked to, and contingent on, the perceived quality of the environment (MNP 2023b). This section assesses potential changes in perception of “place”, specifically in relation to harvesting sites. (Section 7.8.10.1.8 addresses changes to “sense of place” in relation to ither culturally important sites).

The LSA for the preferred route is both currently and traditionally used for hunting, trapping, fishing, and harvesting of plants by Métis citizens. Land and resource use by community members is an integral part of Métis culture and has been passed down through generations, reinforcing connections to the land. Land users appreciate the low noise levels and limited visual disturbances in the area (i.e., in terms of visible development) as part of their connection to their traditional way of life. Maintaining the remote environmental setting is considered important to some individuals as part of their experience of the land.

Changes in perception of 'place' may occur as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of Métis sites.

Potential Effects

The assessments completed in Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics, have been used as a basis to support the evaluation of effects in this section.

Some NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have indicated that they will generally avoid areas in proximity to the Project footprint due to increased disturbance from workers and traffic in proximity to the site. As well, community members have expressed concern about the corona effects (i.e., line hum), indicating that it may be disruptive for gathering if people are in an area for an extended period of time, or if hunted species would be affected by the corona effect. The TKLUS study and baseline survey data report that on NWOMC and Region 2 land users feel they would avoid transmission lines corridor in the practice of land uses for harvesting is an average of 1.2 km or for cultural practices is an average of 1.5 km (MNP 2023b). It is noted that he Project is aligned with an existing 230 kV transmission corridor for much of its length, including through areas of concern to NWOMC and Region 2 identified between Atikokan and Dryden.

NWOMC and Region 2 shared that during both construction and operations, gathering in close proximity to the ROW may be avoided based on perception of risk of potential herbicide or pesticide usage. It was noted that land cleared for a transmission line can also create habitat for the growth of plants such as blueberry; therefore, there could also be an increase in desirable plants and plant harvesting by some. As noted in the mitigation measures, Hydro One has made the commitment that herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

Air Quality

Construction related activities will result in some emissions from vehicles, equipment, slash and burn, and generators, along with others. Section 6.7 Air Quality outlines the potential sources of emissions and predicted effects in detail. The air quality during construction is predicted to be below relevant regulatory criteria within 100 m of the Project footprint. It is predicted that concentrations will decrease by as much as 40% approximately 100 m from the Project footprint.

Given these low levels, and that access to the Project construction areas will be restricted, it is not expected that air quality will have an effect on perception of place in areas of use for harvesting.

Noise and Vibrations

There will be noise emissions during the construction stage of the Project because of general construction activities like pile driving and the use of large off-road equipment such as dozers, backhoes, and excavators. An assessment of the potential changes in noise levels is described in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment. That assessment includes the construction of the transmission line, temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas, and access roads, the use of aggregate sites, and upgrades to the transformer stations.

Noise levels will increase in some areas on occasion; however, the noise will be temporary in nature and localized. There will be increased vibrations during construction, from activities such as pile driving and blasting. The increase in vibrations will be limited and intermittent.

During operation, audible noise is emitted by a transmission line. The noise emitted, called corona noise, typically resembles a crackling sound. Modern transmission lines are designed, constructed, and maintained so that during dry conditions they will minimize corona-related sound. Therefore, during dry weather conditions, noise from the proposed transmission lines will be generally indistinguishable from background sound levels at locations beyond the edge of the transmission line ROW. During rainfall events or high humidity, the noise level at the edge of the transmission line ROW will remain at a low level but elevated when compared to dry conditions.

During maintenance activities, such as repairs or replacement works, existing noise levels can be expected to increase, on occasion, at the potential points of reception. Resulting noise or vibrations will be short-term and temporary in nature. The increase in noise and vibrations, whether during construction, or operations or maintenance is considered to have a potential effect on land users and people in proximity to the Project footprint. Both the noise and vibration may impact NWOMC and Region 2 user's experience on the land as they harvest or participate in other cultural activities. This may result in temporary avoidance of areas during these activities.

Aesthetics

Visual disturbances are expected to begin during the construction stage and continue incrementally towards the commencement of the operations and maintenance stage. Visual disturbances from the modifications at the transformer stations are expected to be limited given the presence of the existing station and infrastructure. An assessment of the potential changes in aesthetics was assessed in Section 7.4 Aesthetics, and included visual representation of likely change at several areas along the transmission line route for analysis, based on ease of access, recreational use, and potential viewpoint of the Project. The visual aesthetics assessment identified net effects related to the introduction of visual disturbances to the existing landscape, the visibility of built structures and the maintenance of vegetation disturbances in

their LSA with long term to permanent duration for the preliminary proposed alignment. NWOMC and Region 2 comments on the Draft EA noted that the assessment of visual aesthetics undertaken in Section 7.4 did not reflect the criteria or values that would be applied by NWOMC and Region 2 in understanding the potential impact to the practice of rights, interests and land uses of NWOMC and Region 2. One goal of the assessment in Section 7.4, which follows a modelling-driven approach to identify section of the Project that may be more highly visible than others or visible to more receptors than others. This may act in contrast to understanding how a change in the visual aesthetic may change the perception of place for a land user in a more remote location, where the change in the visual landscape may increase avoidance behaviors.

In addition, during operation and maintenance, vegetation management will occur in the permanent ROW to maintain transmission line integrity. As well, previously forested areas will be maintained with no large trees and will remain accessible, introducing noticeable changes to resource use areas.

Concerns have also been expressed in relation to construction workforces not taking care of the land and leaving garbage on the land (MNP 2023b).

These effects may impact a person's perception of harvesting experience or of specific NWOMC and Region 2 sites. Overall, many NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have indicted that they are comfortable consuming resources harvested on or near transmission lines for a variety of harvesting activities and are comfortable with hunting and fishing in proximity to a transmission line. Fewer were comfortable with trapping and harvesting plants or berries on or near a transmission line (MNP 2023b).

Mitigation Measures

Numerous mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize the potential impact of noise and air borne emissions outlined in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment and 6.7 Air Quality. Hydro One and its contractors will comply with local municipal noise by-laws and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) Model Municipal Noise Control Bylaw. Also, measures to reduce dust and air emissions will be put in place, such as minimizing dust-generating activities, as practicable and where required, during periods of high wind to limit dust emissions and spread.

Mitigation measures for effects to visual aesthetics during the operations and maintenance stage have been incorporated into the Project design to minimize negative effects. Mitigation measures considered in the potential effects analysis for visual aesthetics included the selection and location of structures to minimize visibility and visual contrast with the existing conditions.

Hydro One will continue to work with Métis communities to review existing and/or develop site- and time-specific appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures to changes affecting perception of "Place" for harvesting sites.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

As well, appropriate waste management strategies will be implemented to ensure construction sites are properly maintained.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues.

Net Effects

There is potential for a net effect of change in perception of "place" as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of the harvesting sites. With the construction and operation of the Project, avoidance behaviors of NWOMC and Region 2 harvesters and land users is expected to change, with the extent of change varying by type of activity (e.g., possibly more reduction in trapping and plant harvesting than hunting and fishing in proximity to a transmission line).

7.8.10.1.8 Disruption of "Sense of Place" and Reduction in Cultural Practices

This section assesses potential disruption in "sense of place" and reduction in cultural practices as a result of changes to areas that are culturally sensitive and important to NWOMC and Region 2 citizens.

Indigenous-recognized archaeological resources are those formally or informally recognized by Indigenous communities or organizations, which may include sites registered in the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database or unregistered sites. Recognized and potential archaeological resources will be discussed with Métis communities, to the extent possible, prior to the Stage Two Archaeological Assessment as part of the ongoing engagement process.

Historic, culturally sensitive, sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites have been identified within the Project footprint or LSA. NWOMC and Region 2 identified the following number of sites within in their TKLUS:

- 2 General Cultural Sites;
- 1 Burial Site;
- 14 Contemporary Gathering Sites;
- 2 Historic Event Sites;
- 3 Historic Occupation/Camps/Cabins;

- 5 Historic Sites;
- 1 Historic Trading Post;
- 4 Historic Trails;
- 1 Important Landscape Feature; and
- 7 Sacred/Spiritual Sites (MNP 2023b).

There is also the potential for archaeological sites in the LSA including:

- Indigenous sites such as campsites, portage areas, canoe spills (i.e., where cargo from canoe was spilt and not recovered), caches, sacred sites, resource extraction areas, and burial sites.
- Resources related to historical Euro-Canadian sites, such as infrastructure associated with logging and mining, early domestic settlement, early industrial infrastructure, religious centres (e.g., missionary related), cemeteries, single isolated burials, canoe spills, caches, fur trade associated infrastructure, and early recreational infrastructure (e.g., related to tourism).
- Petroglyphs, pictographs, and guideposts used by both Indigenous peoples and Euro-Canadian settlers.

Potential Effects

The Project has the potential to impact location-specific historical, cultural, sacred and/or spiritual landscapes or sites identified by NWOMC and Region 2 within the Project footprint. Hydro One is committed to further engagement with NWOMC and Region 2 on mitigation measures for these site-specific changes. If additional IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into the next Project planning and decision-making milestone.

The construction and operation of a transmission line is expected to result In an increase in avoidance behaviours from NWOMC and Region 2 citizens in relation to accessing cultural sites, habitation sites, or routes. Many NWOMC and Region 2 citizens feel that spiritual activities or the use and enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites cannot be undertaken near a transmission line as it would be too intrusive to allow for spiritual activities. In general, spiritual activities or the use and enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites would not be undertaken near a transmission line because it would affect the sacredness of the rituals and the visual aspects and tranquility of the sites. Specifically, corona effects (i.e., line hum) was voiced as a concern that would affect undertaking spiritual activities and/or use/enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites (MNP 2023b).

Construction of the Project could open new areas or expand access to a broader range of resources and harvest areas, both on and adjacent to the ROW and new access roads. This could have a positive impact, such as increased access by NWOMC and Region 2 citizens to

specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites along the Project footprint, or could be considered negative if the increased access results in adverse impacts to the specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites.

These changes could result in an influx of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users to areas within and adjacent to the new ROW, and encroaching on lands typically used (or with limited access) by Indigenous peoples. Expanded access could further reduce the remote, wilderness character and values of the specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites.

Disruption of “sense of place” could also occur as a result of removal of required conditions, such as archaeological sites, for territorial connection for Métis peoples. Culturally sensitive sites, such as burial grounds, sacred areas and occupancy sites of cultural importance could be lost or altered as a result of the construction if not avoided. During construction, the alteration of the landscape could result in damage or destruction to terrestrial or marine archaeological resources that may be culturally sensitive. This could involve displacement of artifacts, the loss of valuable contextual information, or the complete destruction of artifacts and features leading to the complete loss of data.

During the operation and maintenance stage of the Project, maintenance activities, including the necessary repairs and vegetation management along the ROW, are predicted to be infrequent and are not anticipated to disturb areas that were not also disturbed during construction; thus, effects to culturally sensitive resources are not anticipated during the operation and maintenance stage.

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to work with NWOMC and Region 2 to review existing and/or develop appropriate site- or time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures to changes affecting ‘sense of place’.

Based on the findings of the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment, the Project footprint requires a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment prior to construction for the areas identified as having archaeological potential and recommended for further archaeological work. Recognized and potential archaeological resources were identified in the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment shared for review by Indigenous communities prior to the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment is currently underway, and the results will be used to develop strategies to mitigate potential direct effects of the Project on any archaeological resources identified within or adjacent to the identified preferred corridor. There will be engagement with Indigenous communities related to archaeological sites identified in the Archaeological Resources LSA through the completion of the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. These sites will be subject to avoidance and protection measures to avoid loss of, or damage to, archaeological resources, or assessed and mitigated by excavation.

Further archaeological work will involve Indigenous community members interested in and/or knowledgeable about the area. Training of local Indigenous community members will build capacity for future archaeological projects within and outside their traditional territories. Cultural awareness training will be provided to construction staff to facilitate the identification of unexpected archaeological resources.

In the event that archaeological resources not previously identified are suspected or encountered unexpectedly during construction, implement the following mitigation measures:

- Suspend activity at that location and do not allow work to resume until permission is granted by Hydro One who will engage Indigenous communities and their elders to obtain direction.
- Following engagement with the affected Indigenous communities and their elders, Hydro One will bring in a licenced archaeologist and contact the MCM.
- The licenced archaeologist will develop an appropriate mitigation measures plan including engagement with Hydro One, affected Indigenous communities, their elders and stakeholders, and if necessary, the appropriate regulatory agencies.
- Continue to offer ongoing engagement to affected communities and apply protocols identified by Indigenous communities for land access and treatment of findings. Hydro One will consult with the MCM regarding proposed protocols on treatment of findings, where appropriate.

The effect of the Project on archaeological resources, including the number of archaeological sites in the Project footprint, and the area of the Project footprint with archaeological potential is predicted to be minimized with effective implementation of the mitigation measures as described in the Archaeological Resources Section (Section 7.5).

To minimize potential impacts, the Project design will consider existing roads and trails such that construction of new access roads will be avoided as much as feasible.

Other sites important to local communities may be identified in additional IK studies. Hydro One will work with NWOMC and Region 2 to identify other culturally sensitive, sacred, or spiritual landscapes, and through engagement develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. If additional IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into Project planning and decision-making, and appropriate avoidance or mitigation measures will be developed and implemented.

Net Effects

There is a low potential for an effect from the loss of, or damage to an archaeological resource or culturally sensitive or scared site from construction activities; however, there is potential for a net effect of disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices due to changes in perception of Métis sites, resulting in land users avoiding the Project area in relation to spiritual activities or use/enjoyment of cultural sites and/or scared sites, within the LSA.

There would be a net effect of reduction in cultural practices in proximity to the Project because spiritual activities or the use and enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites would no longer be undertaken near a transmission line.

7.8.10.1.9 Potential Effects, Mitigation Measures, and Predicted Net Effects

Table 7.8-5 provides a summary of the predicted net effects, which is based on the previous assessment discussion and the implementation of mitigation measures identified above and further supplemented in Table 7.8-5.

Table 7.8-5: Potential Effects and Mitigation Measures to Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources – NWOMC and Region 2

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
Project activities during the construction stage: • Construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads; • Use of aggregate pits (including blasting); • Upgrades to the transformer stations; • Construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and • Decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps. **Operation and maintenance stage:** • Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.	Change in land available for Métis use	**Construction Stage:** • Implement mitigation measures applied to land use planning, parks and protected area criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.1 Non-Indigenous Land and Resource Use) that speak to minimizing the Project footprint. • Confine Project construction activities to surveyed and marked areas. • Provide adequate notification of construction activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Hydro One will minimize the total footprint of Project access roads by aligning construction and operations stage access planning to the extent possible. • Development of new aggregate resources will undergo the applicable permitting process and will include engagement with Indigenous communities as part of the permitting process or as committed to by Hydro One. **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Implement mitigation measures applied to land use planning, parks and protected area criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.1 Non-Indigenous Land and Resource Use) that speak to minimizing the Project footprint. • Restore temporary construction access roads and areas that are being used on a temporary basis during construction, such as laydown areas, pull sites, and helipads, that are located on previously undisturbed lands. Where necessary, sediment and erosion control measures will be implemented for areas for the temporary structures like access roads, watercourse crossings, laydown areas, and construction camps. • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area.	Net change in land available for Métis use
Project activities during the construction stage: • Construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads; • Use of aggregate pits (including blasting); • Upgrades to the transformer stations; • Construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and • Decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps.	Change to harvesting of culturally critical species Change in physical attributes (harvesting sites) Change to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows) Change in access to harvesting areas Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge Change in perception of ‘place’ (harvesting sites)	**Construction Stage:** • Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Sections 6.2 Surface Water, 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics). • Construction staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible. • Hydro One will continue discussions with affected Indigenous communities on priority hunting areas and helicopter activity within these areas. Helicopter use in identified priority hunting areas will be limited to the extent reasonably possible. This may include adjusting flight paths around sensitive features or altering start and end times during the day for specific areas. • Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW. • Hydro One will continue to work with NWOMC and Region 2 and submitted IK information to further identify specifically affected areas of harvested resources (i.e., hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering) and known sites identified by Métis citizens as being important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation, and review existing or develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. • A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations.	Net change to harvesting of culturally critical species Net change to physical attributes (avoidance behaviours) Net change or end to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows) Net change to access to harvesting areas Net change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge Net change in perception of ‘place’

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
Operation and maintenance stage: • Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.		• Where blasting activities are required, all blasting operations will occur in accordance with the EPP Blasting and Communication Management Plan. The process and procedures for notifications and minimizing effects of blasting activities (i.e., avoidance of sensitive features and timing windows, where possible) will be developed collaboratively with Indigenous communities. • Calcium chloride may be used along municipal roads near residences to reduce dust and improve safety where there is increased Project traffic interface with public road users. Application of calcium chloride by Hydro One will be completed in consultation with road authorities and will not occur within 120 m of a waterbody or wetland. • Provide adequate notification of construction and maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Signage to be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction activities as appropriate. Signage will serve to alert other land users that workers are in the area, such as during hunting seasons or periods of harvests indicated by Indigenous communities. Signs will be placed in engagement with the appropriate authorities. • Project construction activities will be confined to surveyed and marked areas, and a construction Traffic/Access Management Plan will be prepared and implemented. • Construction routes will be designed so as to avoid key access roads/entrances and new travel lanes for maintenance will be gated, fenced, ditched or bermed as appropriate to be to limit travel to construction traffic and to prevent unplanned/undesired recreational access during the operation and maintenance stage. • Disturbances will be avoided and minimized and access restrictions on areas where OTN trails, non-OTN trails, and other trails including resource trails are located will be implemented where possible. **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Sections 6.2 Surface Water, 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics). • Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW. • A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations. • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Signage to be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of maintenance activities as appropriate. Signage will serve to alert other land users that workers are in the area, such as during hunting seasons or periods of harvests indicated by Indigenous communities. Signs will be placed in engagement with the appropriate authorities. • Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line. • During the operations stage, existing roads and trails will be used where possible with affected trails repaired and rehabilitated.	

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
		• Access roads will be established within the transmission line ROW for use during operation and maintenance. The access will be located, for the most part, within the cleared ROW; however, in some places (e.g., where the ROW spans a waterbody or crosses difficult terrain) an access road off ROW may be required to reduce the number of watercourse crossing requirements.	

Project activities during the construction stage:
• construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads;
• the use of aggregate pits (including blasting);
• upgrades to the transformer stations;
• construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and
• decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps.
 	
Operation and maintenance stage:
• Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.
	Disruption of “sense of place”
	Reduction in cultural practices
	Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge
		Construction Stage:
		• Provide adequate notification of construction activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area.
		• Hydro One will continue to work with NWOMC and Region 2 to identify specifically affected areas of cultural resources (i.e., culturally important, ceremonial, sacred) and known sites identified by Métis citizens as being important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation, and review existing or develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. As IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into the next project planning and decision-making milestone.
		• Reduce effects on culturally sensitive, sacred or spiritual landscapes and sites by implementing the mitigation measures applied in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.5 Archaeological Resources), including environmental monitoring.
		• There will be engagement with Indigenous communities related to archaeological sites identified in the Archaeological Resources LSA through the completion of the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. These sites will be subject to avoidance and protection measures to avoid loss of, or damage to, archaeological resources, or assessed and mitigated by excavation.
		• The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment (and Stage 3 and 4, if required) should be undertaken as soon as possible in the Detailed Planning Phase, prior to construction. Further archaeological work will involve Indigenous community members interested in and/or knowledgeable about the area.
		• Training of the Indigenous community members about archaeological fieldwork methods, as well as general theory, will be built into the Project scope. Training of local Indigenous community members will build capacity for future archaeological projects within and outside their traditional territories.
		• The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment report will be provided to Indigenous communities prior to submission to the MCM.
		• In the event that archaeological resources not previously identified are suspected or encountered unexpectedly during construction, implement the following mitigation measures:
		  ◦ Suspend activity at that location and do not allow work to resume until permission is granted by Hydro One who will engage Indigenous communities and their elders to obtain direction.
		  ◦ Following engagement with the affected Indigenous communities and their elders, Hydro One will bring in a licenced archaeologist and contact the MCM.
		  ◦ The licenced archaeologist will develop an appropriate mitigation measures plan including engagement with Hydro One, affected Indigenous communities, their elders and stakeholders, and if necessary, the appropriate regulatory agencies.
		  ◦ Continue to offer ongoing engagement to affected communities and apply protocols identified by Indigenous communities for land access and treatment of findings. Hydro One will consult with the MCM regarding proposed protocols on treatment of findings, where appropriate.
		• Cultural awareness training will be provided to construction staff to facilitate the identification of unexpected archaeological resources.
		• If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues. A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations.
			Net disruption of “sense of place”
			Net reduction in cultural practices
			Net change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
		• Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, Section 7.4 Aesthetics, and Section 7.5 Archaeological Resources). **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues. A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations.	

7.8.10.2 Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

The linkages between Project components and activities and potential effects to Red Sky Métis Independent Nation Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources are identified and assessed in the following sections using indicators for the following three criteria:

- Loss of Land/Change in Priority Rights;
- Harvesting/Sites; and
- Cultural Identify.

Potential effects were identified by reviewing the Project Description, the description of Métis land and resource use in Section 7.8.8 (including access to resources and lands available for practice of rights), cultural identity and culturally important sites in Section 7.8.8, input from engagement and IK input shared, knowledge from similar projects and activities, and the preliminary potential effects identified in the Amended ToR (Hydro One 2021a).

Effects on the use of land and resources, cultural identify and cultural heritage have the potential to affect Section 35 Rights that have been defined through treaties and case law, as well as other interests, and are interpreted to include access to and use of Crown land, resources, and cultural and spiritual sites that support Métis culture and way of life.

The following section provides an assessment of potential effects, including planned mitigation measures, and an assessment of whether each potential effect is considered to have a net effect.

7.8.10.2.1 Changes in Land Available for Métis Use

This section considers the direct conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land and related physical disturbance.

Potential Effects

The Project will change the quantity of unoccupied Crown land available for use as the Project footprint overlaps many parcels of Crown land. Changes to land use designations are anticipated to be required for the construction of the Project, and it is anticipated that 3,845.5 ha of land will be converted from unoccupied to occupied as a result of the Project.

During the Project construction stage, site preparation, clearing and grubbing, the construction of infrastructure (e.g., access roads, fencing, bridges, turn-around areas, temporary laydown areas, and temporary construction camps), the assembly and erection of transmission structures, and the transportation of construction workers, equipment and materials may occur within areas used by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens for land and resource use. As a result, Project construction may reduce the amount of unoccupied Crown lands available for exercising Métis rights such as use of the land and resources for harvesting and cultural practices.

Reductions in availability would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint, in the areas directly used for temporary workspaces and permanent infrastructure. Crown land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads will only be unavailable during the site-specific construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed and become available for use again.

On private land, an easement granted to Hydro One for the transmission line ROW would convey priority rights to Hydro One for use of that easement for construction, operation and maintenance purposes. On Crown land, a Land Use Permit is required to provide occupational authority for the permanent footprint (i.e., the ROW) and access roads. This land would become occupied Crown land. This change to available Crown land may affect other indicators, such as access to harvesting areas (see Section 7.8.10.1.3).

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to engage with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation, will confine Project construction activities to surveyed and marked areas, and will provide notice to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction.

As described in Section 2.0, construction access roads and areas that are being used on a temporary basis during construction, such as laydown areas, pull sites, and helipads, that are located on previously undisturbed lands will be restored following construction.

Net Effects

The Project has the potential to affect the quantity of land available for use by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens as a result of the Project footprint overlapping with Crown lands and lands used for current and traditional purposes. The Project will result in both temporary and long-term changes to land available for use by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation considering conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land, and increased physical disturbance. Based on these results, and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project is predicted to result in a net change in land available for Red Sky Métis Independent Nation to exercise their rights and interests.

7.8.10.2.2 Changes to Harvesting of Culturally Critical Species

This section describes potential for change in availability of cultural critical species at harvesting sites. The evaluation of potential effects on the indicators for harvesting sites is largely based on the outcomes of the net effects assessments completed for the biophysical criteria in Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, and Section 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands.

This section considers direct effects to cultural critical species. The effects of Project activities on harvesters are considered in the following sections for criteria looking at change in the physical attributes of harvesting sites (Section 7.8.10.1.3) and how those changes may relate to harvest timing (Section 7.8.10.1.4), access to harvesting sites (Section 7.8.10.1.5) and

perception of place (Section 7.8.10.1.7), including for teaching/transmittal of harvesting knowledge (Section 7.8.10.1.6).

Potential Effects

Harvesting activities, such as hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering of plant and plant materials, that community members participate in are primarily for food and consumption. Harvesting is also recognized as a traditional activity and a right integral to Métis culture.

Based on the information provided, it is understood that Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens may harvest wildlife, fish and plants in portions of the LSA between Thunder Bay and Atikokan, but that no sites of specific concern were identified as directly affected by the Project.

Hunting and Trapping

During the construction stage of the Project, there will be direct removal of some wildlife habitat in the Project footprint. These effects can change wildlife habitat, availability, use, and connectivity. Section 6.5 identifies that the loss or alteration of vegetation and riparian habitats can lead to small changes in wildlife abundance and distribution in species such as moose, furbearers and birds.

Although, where feasible and practicable, the transmission line follows existing linear features to reduce impacts and fragmentation, there will be some fragmentation of the land from the transmission line and access roads. Land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads are not expected to provide quality wildlife habitat during the construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed. Once construction is completed, the transmission line corridor will provide habitat to wildlife again, but may also provide areas for increased predation of some species, such as moose, which can lead to small changes in the survival and reproduction.

Despite some additional fragmentation from the transmission line, access roads, facilities such as temporary laydown areas, and temporary construction camps, habitat for several culturally important species, such as moose, will remain abundant and well connected across the landscape.

The evaluation of potential effects on resource availability and harvesting levels for hunting and trapping is based on the net effects assessments developed by the biophysical disciplines. Specifically, moose and furbearing animals have been addressed in the wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) as criteria species. Where net effects are identified for species considered to be representative of and important to hunting and trapping, that net effect will also impact the availability of harvested resources.

The evaluation of potential effects on availability of harvested resources for hunting and trapping is based on the net effects assessments for the relevant wildlife indicators. Where net effects are identified for culturally critical species, or species considered to be representative of such species that are important to hunting and trapping, that net effect will also impact the availability of harvested resources. The assessment of the Project on moose and furbearing animals has been assessed in the wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) as criteria species. The assessment of

wildlife identifies net effects on moose and furbearing mammals (e.g., American marten, beaver, and gray wolf), marshbirds (e.g., trumpeter swam), and their habitats during construction and operation, which could result in a reduction in the availability of those species to be harvested; thereby, potentially impacting the harvesting of culturally critical species for Métis citizens.

Despite some temporary habitat loss for temporary workspaces (e.g., laydown areas), and temporary construction camps, and longer-term habitat fragmentation from the transmission line and permanent access roads, several culturally critical species, such as moose, will remain abundant and well connected across the landscape. Net effects from the Project are not predicted to have significant negative effects on moose populations as they are highly mobile, have large home ranges, and can use different habitat types.

It was noted in the wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) that corona noise from the transmission line is not anticipated to cause wildlife, including bird species, to avoid the ROW and so is not anticipated to reduce habitat availability. Additionally, individuals with home ranges that overlap the Project footprint may currently be habituated to corona noise due to the presence of existing ROW. Similar conclusions were reached for furbearers and marsh birds as populations are expected to remain self sustaining and ecologically effective relative to the baseline, and effects from the Project are predicted to be not significant.

Fishing

Fishing is a current and traditional activity, and a rights-based activity, within the LSA. Detailed information about the extent to of these activities undertaken within the LSA by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation was not shared for this assessment; however, broadly it is understood that fish species commonly harvested in the region include bass, walleye, northern pike, muskellunge, trout, and other fish species in some of the lakes in the area.

Fish selected as indicator species assessed in Section 6.6 are lake trout, brook trout, northern pike, and walleye, which were chosen due to their ecological, Indigenous, and socio-economic importance:

- Walleye are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.
- Lake trout are documented in the lakes and larger watercourses throughout the RSA and LSAs.
- Northern pike are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.
- Brook trout are documented in the southern and northern portions of the RSA.

The assessment of the effects on these species has been addressed in Section 6.6. Disturbances that may affect fish habitat directly from construction are the result of the operation of heavy machinery within waterbodies, installation of isolation structures during construction (i.e., isolation construction techniques such as flumes, instream diversions, or bypass pumps to

divert the water flow around the isolated workspace), bank treatments, place of structures, fill, and other materials into the water.

As described in Section 6.6 (Fish and Fish Habitat), there is predicted to be a net effect on fish and fish habitat during the construction and operation of the Project. Depending on the extent and location of such effects in relation to fish harvesting areas, effects to fish and fish habitat could result in a reduction in the availability of those species to be harvested; thereby potentially impacting the harvesting of culturally critical species by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens, primarily during the duration of construction activities.

The potential for changes in environmental conditions to affect resource availability and fish harvesting levels for traditional land and resource users during the construction and operation and maintenance stages are addressed in the characterization of the net effects.

Plant Harvesting

As noted in Section 7.8.8.2.4, No specific plants or materials harvested by the community were specifically identified to Hydro One in the information shared to date by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation. Within the RSA, there are plant species of cultural importance, including berries, timber, wild rice, mushrooms and medicines. Plant species may be collected for sustenance, cultural or medicinal purposes. Habitat for berries and some plant species used as medicines is confirmed to be present within the LSA.

The assessment of the Project on vegetation has been assessed using three criteria (upland, wetland, and riparian ecosystems) in the vegetation and wetlands assessment (Section 6.4). There are several effects predicted on these ecosystems, including reduced soil quality, soil disturbance, changes to hydrology, potential chemical or hazardous material spills, dust and air emissions, and introduction of invasive species. The assessment found that there would be net effects to several of the vegetation criteria, which could result in a reduction in the availability of those plant species to be harvested; thereby potentially impacting the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

Specifically, construction activities will require the removal of vegetation in the Project footprint, including the temporary workspaces (e.g., laydown areas and construction camps). Some of the disturbances will be temporary, whereas some alternations will be more permanent (e.g., large trees will not be permitted within the ROW). In the Project footprint, some culturally important plants may be cleared during construction, but low growing plants may re-establish themselves where the disturbance is not permanent. Thus, the impacts during operations will depend on the plant species and location.

Mitigation Measures

Efforts will be made to minimize direct effects and disturbance to wildlife, fish, plants and their habitats through project construction, operations and maintenance, such as staging construction to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles. A detailed list of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat is

provided in Section 6.5, measures to reduce impacts to fish and fish habitat are provided in Section 6.6, and measure to reduce effects to plants (vegetation) are provided in Section 6.4. Section 10.0 of the Final EA Report outlines the monitoring requirements for the Project, including proposed monitoring for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Hydro One will work with Indigenous communities to develop and implement mitigation effectiveness monitoring.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Net Effects

The Project footprint may overlap with areas that are used by wildlife, fish and plants that are harvested by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens, resulting in removal of habitat and sensory disturbances that will affect the presence of harvested species. Based on these results, and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project has potential to result in a net change to the harvesting of culturally critical species during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which in turn has potential to impact the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

7.8.10.2.3 Changes to Physical Attributes – Harvesting Sites

Preferred harvesting areas support the harvesting activities above, and are important for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous harvesting rights and interests. Based on the information provided, it is understood that there may be preferred harvesting areas in portions of the LSA, though it is difficult to quantity the extent of these areas within the LSA boundaries; thus, the assessment of effects is qualitative.

This section considers the physical attributes of harvesting sites that may create avoidance behaviours.

Potential Effects

Potential effects that will influence avoidance behaviours are both direct and indirect.

Most of the direct disturbance is expected to take place during construction and is anticipated to be temporary. During the construction stage of the Project, it anticipated that there will be sensory disturbances in the LSA, such as lights, smells, dust, noise, dust, and general human

activity. This increase in activity can change wildlife habitat, availability, and use of the area. Specifically, during construction, wildlife may avoid construction areas due to noise, vibrations and other disturbances. Section 6.5 identifies that sensory disturbances can lead to small changes in wildlife abundance and distribution in species such as moose and furbearers.

The Acoustic Environment (Section 6.9) identifies a net effect related to increased noise levels in the LSA during the construction stage only, resulting from the construction of the transmission line, access roads, and the temporary construction camp (and dependent on proximity to construction activities). During the operation and maintenance stage, while not identified as a net effect, audible noise resulting from corona may be experienced by traditional land and resource users. The wildlife assessment (Section 6.5) identifies net effects related to changes in wildlife habitat availability, sensory disturbances, converted habitat and increased edge habitat.

During the operation and maintenance stage, such disturbances from construction lights, noise and vibrations will be minimal as they will be limited to periods when repair or replacement activities will be required in the permanent Project footprint.

The visual aesthetics assessment (Section 7.4) identifies net effects related to the introduction of visual disturbances to the existing landscape, the visibility of built structures and the maintenance of vegetation disturbances in their LSA with long term to permanent duration for the preliminary proposed alignment.

Mitigation Measures

Numerous mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize the potential impact of noise and air borne emissions outlined in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment and 6.7 Air Quality. Hydro One and its contractors will comply with local municipal noise by-laws and the MECP Model Municipal Noise Control Bylaw. Also, measures to reduce dust and air emissions will be put in place, such as minimizing dust-generating activities, as practicable and where required, during periods of high wind to limit dust emissions and spread.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

Net Effects

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to physical attributes during the construction and operation and maintenance stages of the Project, which will increase avoidance behaviours in the LSA; thus potentially impacting this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

7.8.10.2.4 Changes to Harvesting Practices (Timing Windows)

This section considers potential changes to harvesting practices considering disruption to harvesting timing windows.

Potential Effects

Changes to harvesting practices from the Project construction and operations and maintenance are possible if the effects to harvesting of culturally critical species or the indirect effects from changes to physical attributes overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows.

Once construction starts, construction activities are expected to occur throughout the year with staging to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible. Specific timing, sequencing and staging will be determined during the detailed planning phase. Construction activities will typically occur for one 10-hour shift per day, with normal working hours of 07:00 to 18:00. Night-time work is not anticipated; however, longer shifts may be required. Construction of the transmission line is anticipated to start at multiple locations along the corridor. Consequently, there may be concurrent construction and operation of temporary construction camps, turn-around areas, laydown areas, and access road or trail use.

While the staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles where possible, construction or maintenance activities may be required during periods when species are active and harvesting practices are preferred. This may result in changes to harvesting practices in proximity to the Project footprint, particularly if there are increased avoidance behaviours, as discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.3 and reduced access, as discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.5.

Mitigation Measures

Construction staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Hydro One will continue engage with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation should any additional IK be identified regarding harvest timing windows and seasonality, to review existing and/or develop appropriate site- and time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures.

Net Effects

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to harvesting practices if the effects to harvesting of culturally critical species or the indirect effects from changes to physical attributes overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows; thus potentially impacting this

use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

7.8.10.2.5 Changes to Access to Harvesting Areas

Access to harvesting areas supports the harvesting activities discussed in Section 7.8.10.1.2, and is important for the current and traditional exercise of Métis harvesting rights.

As site-specific information about known harvesting areas is not yet available to complete a quantitative assessment of change in access to known harvesting areas within the LSA, this assessment provides a qualitative assessment of change in access to potential harvesting areas by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation users and non-Métis land users.

Potential Effects

Formal and tertiary roadways, terrestrial and aquatic travel routes, aquatic access points and boat caches are integral to the ongoing harvest of resources and are integral to traditional land and resource use. It is predicted that construction of the Project could both increase and decrease access to these travel routes and areas that are preferred for harvesting resources (i.e., hunting, trapping, fishing and plant materials).

Restricted Access

During the Project construction stage, construction activities may occur within areas used for land access. The construction of infrastructure may reduce or change access to lands and waters available for hunting, fishing, trapping or other harvesting, and some access to camps or cabins. Métis harvesters and land users in the LSA may face temporary restrictions or limitations, particularly excluding non-workers due to safety concerns relating to construction activities. As well, the increase in occupation of Crown land for construction, operation and maintenance of the Project could result in temporary or permanent reduction in access to that land for current and traditional land and resource use.

Roadways may experience increased traffic during the Project workday. Aquatic and canoe travel routes could experience temporary access restrictions, where construction activities cross navigable waterways. Certain specific secondary roads may also experience intermittent, short-term closures due to Project clearing, infrastructure construction, and assembly, use of explosives, the operation of construction equipment, the construction of new waterbody crossings, cable stringing, or other construction activities, to promote worker and public safety.

Reductions in access would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint. Temporary disturbances to access and use of preferred access and harvesting areas during the construction stage would be most noticeable where proximity to communities or land use areas overlap the Project footprint and the LSA for the preferred route.

Although access and use of the access roads and ROW may face temporary restrictions or detours during the construction stage, these disturbances will not be continuously in effect because construction will be completed using a staged approach. Temporary access restrictions

will only be put in place for a few weeks to a few months within the larger construction schedule, as Project construction progresses along the ROW.

Temporary access restrictions experienced during the site-specific construction stage will not be continuous (as construction will be completed using a staged approach, but rather, for a few weeks to a few months within the larger construction schedule, as Project construction progresses along the ROW. The restricted Project footprint access may not noticeably remove opportunities for these activities to occur at the LSA level, although some individual users may be affected. As well, despite these restrictions, users would be able to continue to access a wide range of other areas and resources, including preferred harvesting areas that are not within the LSA throughout the construction stage.

Maintenance activities, including the periodic inspection of the transmission line and associated infrastructure, necessary repairs, and vegetation management along the ROW, are predicted to be infrequent. Access restrictions for traditional land and resource use areas related to these operational and maintenance activities will be communicated to adjacent nearby Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens in advance of when they are planned to occur.

Increased Access

Construction of the Project could open access to new areas or expand access to a broader range of resources and harvest areas, both on and adjacent to ROWs and new access roads. This could have a positive impact for Métis harvesters and land users, such as increased access for hunters or fishers that could use new roads and the ROW to access formally inaccessible areas. However, this could be considered negative if the increased access results in non-Indigenous impacts to the land and availability of resources for traditional land and resource use.

Access restrictions during the operation and maintenance stage would be limited to infrequent, periodic maintenance activities; otherwise, permanent access roads will remain open and accessible to traditional land and resource users, and are predicted to be actively used. In this sense, the creation of permanent access roads could create increased access to harvesting areas over the longer term.

These changes could also result in an influx of Métis hunters, trappers, anglers and non-Métis outdoor tourism, recreation and other land users to areas within and adjacent to new ROWs, and encroaching on lands typically used (or with limited access) by Indigenous peoples. Increased active use resulting from expanded access could further reduce the availability of resources to harvest, as well as the remote, wilderness character and values of the traditional land and resource use.

Mitigation Measures

Specific access routes to preferred harvesting areas that are important to Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens may be identified through ongoing discussion of IK study findings. Hydro One will work with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation to identify access to preferred

harvesting areas, and through engagement develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. If additional IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into Project planning and decision-making, and appropriate avoidance or mitigation measures will be developed and implemented.

Hydro One will provide Red Sky Métis Independent Nation harvesters and land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW.

Project construction activities will be confined to surveyed and marked areas, and a construction Traffic/Access Management Plan will be prepared and implemented.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. Signage will be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction and maintenance activities as appropriate to alert other land users that workers are in the area.

Net Effects

It is predicted that construction of the Project could both increase and decrease access to areas that are preferred for harvesting resources. Based on these results and following the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in Table 7.8-5, the Project has potential to result in a net change to the access to Métis harvesting areas during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has potential to impact the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

7.8.10.2.6 Change in Teaching/Transmittal of Knowledge

This section considers a change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge considering removal of resources for teaching/transmittal to the next generation or removal of sites for teaching/transmittal to the next generation.

Potential Effects

Changes in teaching or transmittal of knowledge to the next generation could occur as a result of the removal of the cultural connections required for teaching and transmittal of cultural identity. This includes consideration of intangible values like quiet enjoyment of the landscape or sites used for teaching. Or changes in teaching or transmittal of knowledge related to harvesting could occur as a result of the removal of resources or sites used for teaching and transmittal to the next generation. This could occur if harvested resources are displaced (e.g., by sensory disturbance) or removed (e.g., loss of habitat and harvested areas, or over-harvesting of a population).

Criteria-specific sections of the EA provide an assessment of change in wildlife and wildlife habitat, fish and fish habitat, vegetation and wetlands. These conclude that net effects (i.e., effects likely to result in environmental changes relative to the baseline and thus contribute to net effects) have been identified for vegetation and wetlands, wildlife, noise, and the visual aesthetics, as described in Sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.9, and 7.4. The vegetation and wetlands

assessment (Section 6.4) identifies net effects related to the loss and alteration of upland, wetland and riparian ecosystem distribution and composition in their LSA that are long-term to permanent in duration for the preliminary proposed alignment.

These net effects on vegetation and wetlands, visual aesthetics, noise, and wildlife have the potential to indirectly affect traditional land use quality in harvesting areas within the LSA, but most notably within the Project footprint. Only a small proportion of each current or traditional land and resource use area shared by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation overlaps the Project footprint; therefore, indirect biophysical effects on land use quality are anticipated to be limited, particularly following the implementation of mitigation measures summarized in Table 7.8-5 (i.e., leading to an assessment of not significant for these biophysical effects).

While there may be some temporary loss of resources and access to sites, it is anticipated that such effects will not substantially reduce the availability of resources and/or sites for teaching and transmittal of knowledge to the next generation.

Mitigation Measures

Hydro One will continue to work with Métis communities on IK study findings to understand specific sites important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation, and review existing or develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. Known sites that are identified by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens as important for teaching/transmittal of knowledge to the next generation will be avoided where possible.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues.

Net Effects

There is a predicted net effect to teaching or transmittal of knowledge to the next generation because some Métis citizens have indicated that they would not use the Project area for teaching any longer, which would result in a loss of this area for intergenerational learning.

7.8.10.2.7 Changes in Perception of "Place" – Harvesting Sites

This section assesses potential changes in perception of "place", specifically in relation to harvesting sites. (Section 7.8.10.1.8 addresses changes to "sense of place" in relation to ither culturally important sites).

The LSA for the preferred route is both currently and traditionally used for hunting, trapping, fishing, and harvesting of plants by Métis citizens. Land and resource use by community members is an integral part of Métis culture and has been passed down through generations, reinforcing connections to the land. Land users appreciate the low noise levels and limited visual disturbances in the area (i.e., in terms of visible development) as part of their connection to their traditional way of life. Maintaining the remote environmental setting is considered important to some individuals as part of their experience of the land.

Changes in perception of ‘place’ may occur as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation sites.

Potential Effects

The assessments completed in Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics, have been used as a basis to support the evaluation of effects in this section.

During both construction and operations, gathering in close proximity to the ROW may be avoided based on disturbance or perception of risk, including related to potential herbicide or pesticide usage. It is noted that land cleared for a transmission line can also create habitat for the growth of plants such as blueberry; therefore, there could also be an increase in desirable plants and plant harvesting by some during Operations and Maintenance Phase.

Air Quality

Construction-related activities will result in some emissions from vehicles, equipment, slash and burn, and generators, along with others. Section 6.7 Air Quality outlines the potential sources of emissions and predicted effects in detail. The air quality during construction is predicted to be below relevant regulatory criteria within 100 m of the Project footprint. It is predicted that concentrations will decrease by as much as 40% approximately 100 m from the Project footprint.

Given these low levels, and that access to the Project construction areas will be restricted, it is not expected that air quality will have an effect on perception of place in areas of use for harvesting.

Noise and Vibrations

There will be noise emissions during the construction stage of the Project because of general construction activities like pile driving and the use of large off-road equipment such as dozers, backhoes, and excavators. An assessment of the potential changes in noise levels is described in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment. That assessment includes the helicopter use, construction of the transmission line, temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas, and access roads, the use of aggregate sites, and upgrades to the transformer stations.

Noise levels will increase in some areas on occasion including during helicopter use; however, the noise will be temporary in nature and localized. There will be increased vibrations during construction, from activities such as pile driving and blasting. The increase in vibrations will be limited and intermittent.

During operation, audible noise is emitted by a transmission line. The noise emitted, called corona noise, typically resembles a crackling sound. Modern transmission lines are designed, constructed, and maintained so that during dry conditions they will minimize corona-related sound. Therefore, during dry weather conditions, noise from the proposed transmission lines will be generally indistinguishable from background sound levels at locations beyond the edge of

the transmission line ROW. During rainfall events or high humidity, the noise level at the edge of the transmission line ROW will remain at a low level but elevated when compared to dry conditions.

During maintenance activities, such as repairs or replacement works, existing noise levels can be expected to increase, on occasion, at the potential points of reception. Resulting noise or vibrations will be short-term and temporary in nature. The increase in noise and vibrations, whether during construction, or operations or maintenance is considered to have a potential effect on land users and people in proximity to the Project footprint. Both the noise and vibration may impact Métis user's experience on the land as they harvest or participate in other cultural activities. This may result in temporary avoidance of areas during these activities.

Aesthetics

Visual disturbances are expected to begin during the construction stage and continue incrementally towards the commencement of the operations and maintenance stage. Visual disturbances from the modifications at the transformer stations are expected to be limited given the presence of the existing station and infrastructure. An assessment of the potential changes in aesthetics was assessed in Section 7.4 Aesthetics and included several areas along the transmission line route for analysis, based on ease of access, recreational use, and potential viewpoint of the Project. The visual aesthetics assessment identified net effects related to the introduction of visual disturbances to the existing landscape, the visibility of built structures and the maintenance of vegetation disturbances in their LSA with long term to permanent duration for the preliminary proposed alignment.

In addition, during operation and maintenance, vegetation management will occur in the permanent ROW to maintain transmission line integrity. As well, previously forested areas will be maintained with no large trees and will remain accessible, introducing noticeable changes to resource use areas.

Concerns have also been expressed in relation to construction workforces not taking care of the land and leaving garbage on the land (RSMIN 2023).

These effects may affect a person's perception of harvesting experience or of specific Red Sky Métis Independent Nation sites.

Mitigation Measures

Numerous mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize the potential impact of noise and air borne emissions outlined in Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment and 6.7 Air Quality. Hydro One and its contractors will comply with local municipal noise by-laws and the MECP Model Municipal Noise Control Bylaw. Also, measures to reduce dust and air emissions will be put in place, such as minimizing dust-generating activities, as practicable and where required, during periods of high wind to limit dust emissions and spread.

Mitigation measures for effects to visual aesthetics during the operations and maintenance stage have been incorporated into the Project design to minimize negative effects. Mitigation

measures considered in the potential effects analysis for visual aesthetics included the selection and location of structures to minimize visibility and visual contrast with the existing conditions.

Appropriate waste management strategies will be implemented to ensure construction sites are properly maintained.

Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.

Notice will be provided to affected Indigenous communities prior to the start of construction. If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues.

Net Effects

There is potential for a net effect of change in perception of "place" as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of the harvesting sites.

7.8.10.2.8 Disruption of "Sense of Place" and Reduction in Cultural Practices

This section assesses potential disruption in "sense of place" and reduction in cultural practices as a result of changes to areas that are culturally sensitive and important to Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens.

Indigenous-recognized archaeological resources are those formally or informally recognized by Indigenous communities or organizations, which may include sites registered in the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database or unregistered sites. Recognized and potential archaeological resources will be discussed with Métis communities, to the extent possible, prior to the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment as part of the ongoing engagement process.

No specific culturally sensitive, sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites have been identified within the Project footprint or LSA to date, though there is the potential for archaeological sites in the LSA including:

- Indigenous sites such as campsites, portage areas, canoe spills (i.e., where cargo from canoe was spilt and not recovered), caches, sacred sites, resource extraction areas, and burial sites.
- Resources related to historical Euro-Canadian sites, such as infrastructure associated with logging and mining, early domestic settlement, early industrial infrastructure, religious centres (e.g., missionary related), cemeteries, single isolated burials, canoe spills, caches, fur trade associated infrastructure, and early recreational infrastructure (e.g., related to tourism).

- Petroglyphs, pictographs, and guideposts used by both Indigenous peoples and Euro-Canadian settlers.

Potential Effects

No location-specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites have been identified by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation within the Project footprint or LSA. However, should sites be identified the construction and operation of a transmission line may result in an increase in avoidance behaviours from Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens in relation to accessing cultural sites, habitation sites, or routes within the LSA.

Construction of the Project could open new areas or expand access to a broader range of resources and harvest areas, both on and adjacent to the ROW and new access roads. This could have a positive impact, such as increased access by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens to specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites along the Project footprint, or could be considered negative if the increased access results in adverse impacts to the specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites.

These changes could result in an influx of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users to areas within and adjacent to the new ROW, and encroaching on lands typically used (or with limited access) by Indigenous peoples. Expanded access could further reduce the remote, wilderness character and values of the specific sacred, or spiritual landscapes or sites.

Disruption of “sense of place” could occur as a result of removal of required conditions, such as archaeological sites, for territorial connection for Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens. Culturally sensitive sites, such as burial grounds, sacred areas and occupancy sites of cultural importance could be lost or altered as a result of the construction if not avoided.

During the operation and maintenance stage of the Project, maintenance activities, including the necessary repairs and vegetation management along the ROW, are predicted to be infrequent and are not anticipated to disturb areas that were not also disturbed during construction; thus, effects to culturally sensitive resources are not anticipated during the operation and maintenance stage.

Mitigation Measures

Based on the findings of the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment, the Project footprint requires a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment prior to construction for the areas identified as having archaeological potential and recommended for further archaeological work. Recognized and potential archaeological resources were identified in the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment shared for review by Indigenous communities prior to the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment is currently underway, and the results will be used to develop strategies to mitigate potential direct effects of the Project on any archaeological resources identified within or adjacent to the Project footprint.

There will be engagement with Indigenous communities including Red Sky Métis Independent Nation related to archaeological sites identified in the Archaeological Resources LSA through the completion of the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. These sites will be subject to avoidance and protection measures to avoid loss of, or damage to, archaeological resources, or assessed and mitigated by excavation.

Further archaeological work will involve Indigenous community members interested in and/or knowledgeable about the area. Training of local Indigenous community members will build capacity for future archaeological projects within and outside their traditional territories. Cultural awareness training will be provided to construction staff to facilitate the identification of unexpected archaeological resources.

In the event that archaeological resources not previously identified are suspected or encountered unexpectedly during construction, implement the following mitigation measures:

- Suspend activity at that location and do not allow work to resume until permission is granted by Hydro One who will engage Indigenous communities and their elders to obtain direction.
- Following engagement with the affected Indigenous communities and their elders, Hydro One will bring in a licenced archaeologist and contact the MCM.
- The licenced archaeologist will develop an appropriate mitigation measures plan including engagement with Hydro One, affected Indigenous communities, their elders and stakeholders, and if necessary, the appropriate regulatory agencies.
- Continue to offer ongoing engagement to affected communities and apply protocols identified by Indigenous communities for land access and treatment of findings. Hydro One will consult with the MCM regarding proposed protocols on treatment of findings, where appropriate.

The effect of the Project on archaeological resources, including the number of archaeological sites in the Project footprint, and the area of the Project footprint with archaeological potential is predicted to be minimized with effective implementation of the mitigation measures as described in the Archaeological Resources Section (Section 7.5).

To minimize potential impacts, the Project design will consider existing roads and trails such that construction of new access roads will be avoided as much as feasible.

Hydro One will continue engage with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation should any additional IK be identified regarding harvest timing windows and seasonality, to review existing and/or develop appropriate site- and time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures.

Net Effects

There is a low potential for an effect from the loss of, or damage to an archaeological resource or culturally sensitive or scared site from construction activities; however, there is potential for a net effect of disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices due to changes in perception of Métis sites, resulting in land users avoiding the Project area in relation to spiritual activities or use/enjoyment of cultural sites and/or scared sites, within the LSA.

There would be a net effect of reduction in cultural practices in proximity to the Project because spiritual activities or the use and enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites would no longer be undertaken near a transmission line.

7.8.10.2.9 Potential Effects, Mitigation Measures, and Predicted Net Effects

Table 7.8-5 provides a summary of the predicted net effects, which is based on the previous assessment discussion and the implementation of mitigation measures identified above and further supplemented in Table 7.8-5.

Table 7.8-6: Potential Effects and Mitigation Measures to Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources - Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
Project activities during the construction stage: • Construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads; • Use of aggregate pits (including blasting); • Upgrades to the transformer stations; • Construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and • Decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps. **Operation and maintenance stage:** • Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.	Change in land available for Métis use	**Construction Stage:** • Implement mitigation measures applied to land use planning, parks and protected area criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.1 Non-Indigenous Land and Resource Use) that speak to minimizing the Project footprint. • Confine Project construction activities to surveyed and marked areas. • Provide adequate notification of construction activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Hydro One will minimize the total footprint of Project access roads by aligning construction and operations stage access planning to the extent possible. • Development of new aggregate resources will undergo the applicable permitting process and will include engagement with Indigenous communities as part of the permitting process or as committed to by Hydro One. **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Implement mitigation measures applied to land use planning, parks and protected area criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.1 Non-Indigenous Land and Resource Use) that speak to minimizing the Project footprint. • Restore temporary construction access roads and areas that are being used on a temporary basis during construction, such as laydown areas, pull sites, and helipads, that are located on previously undisturbed lands. Where necessary, sediment and erosion control measures will be implemented for areas for the temporary structures like access roads, watercourse crossings, laydown areas, and construction camps. • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area.	Net change in land available for Métis use
Project activities during the construction stage: • Construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads; • Use of aggregate pits (including blasting); • Upgrades to the transformer stations; • Construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and • Decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps.	Change to harvesting of culturally critical species Change in physical attributes (harvesting sites) Change to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows) Change in access to harvesting areas Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge Change in perception of ‘place’ (harvesting sites)	**Construction Stage:** • Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Sections 6.2 Surface Water, 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics). • Construction staging will be planned to avoid or minimize potential effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife breeding cycles (e.g., breeding bird period, fisheries windows, etc.), where possible. • Hydro One will continue discussions with affected Indigenous communities on priority hunting areas and helicopter activity within these areas. Helicopter use in identified priority hunting areas will be limited to the extent reasonably possible. This may include adjusting flight paths around sensitive features or altering start and end times during the day for specific areas. • Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW. • Hydro One will continue to work with Métis communities and submitted IK information to further identify specifically affected areas of harvested resources (i.e., hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering) and known sites identified by Métis citizens as being important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation, and review existing or develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures.	Net change to harvesting of culturally critical species Net change to physical attributes (avoidance behaviours) Net change or end to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows) Net change to access to harvesting areas Net change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge Net change in perception of ‘place’

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
Operation and maintenance stage: • Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.		• A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations. • Where blasting activities are required, all blasting operations will occur in accordance with the EPP Blasting and Communication Management Plan. The process and procedures for notifications and minimizing effects of blasting activities (i.e., avoidance of sensitive features and timing windows, where possible) will be developed collaboratively with Indigenous communities. • Calcium chloride may be used along municipal roads near residences to reduce dust and improve safety where there is increased Project traffic interface with public road users. Application of calcium chloride by Hydro One will be completed in consultation with road authorities and will not occur within 120 m of a waterbody or wetland. • Provide adequate notification of construction and maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Signage to be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of construction activities as appropriate. Signage will serve to alert other land users that workers are in the area, such as during hunting seasons or periods of harvests indicated by Indigenous communities. Signs will be placed in engagement with the appropriate authorities. • Project construction activities will be confined to surveyed and marked areas, and a construction Traffic/Access Management Plan will be prepared and implemented. • Construction routes will be designed so as to avoid key access roads/entrances and new travel lanes for maintenance will be gated, fenced, ditched or bermed as appropriate to be to limit travel to construction traffic and to prevent unplanned/undesired recreational access during the operation and maintenance stage. • Disturbances will be avoided and minimized and access restrictions on areas where OTN trails, non-OTN trails, and other trails including resource trails are located will be implemented where possible. **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Sections 6.2 Surface Water, 6.4 Vegetation and Wetlands, Section 6.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Section 6.6 Fish and Fish Habitat, Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, and Section 7.4 Aesthetics). • Information will be shared to provide land users clarity on the regulatory restrictions or other legal encumbrances that will impact use of the transmission line ROW. • A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations. • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • Signage to be posted along public roadways in proximity to areas of maintenance activities as appropriate. Signage will serve to alert other land users that workers are in the area, such as during hunting seasons or periods of harvests indicated by Indigenous communities. Signs will be placed in engagement with the appropriate authorities. • Through engagement during the Draft EA Report review process, Hydro One heard feedback from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding concerns with the use of herbicides to remove and manage vegetation on the Project. After extensive consideration of this feedback, herbicides will not be used during construction of the Project or for future maintenance of this transmission line.	

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
		• During the operations stage, existing roads and trails will be used where possible with affected trails repaired and rehabilitated. • Access roads will be established within the transmission line ROW for use during operation and maintenance. The access will be located, for the most part, within the cleared ROW; however, in some places (e.g., where the ROW spans a waterbody or crosses difficult terrain) an access road off ROW may be required to reduce the number of watercourse crossing requirements.	

Project activities during the construction stage:
• construction of temporary construction camps, temporary laydown areas and access roads;
• the use of aggregate pits (including blasting);
• upgrades to the transformer stations;
• construction of the transmission line, which is expected to include clearing, access, foundations and anchors (including blasting), assembly, erection, stringing (including cable splicing), and reclamation; and
• decommissioning and reclamation of the decommissioned access roads, temporary laydown areas, staging areas, and construction camps.
 	
Operation and maintenance stage:
• Operation and maintenance of new ROW, fencing, transmission line, conductors, tower foundations, transformer stations and permanent access roads.
	Disruption of “sense of place”
	Reduction in cultural practices
	Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge
		Construction Stage:
		• Provide adequate notification of construction activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area.
		• Hydro One will continue to work with Métis communities as IK information becomes available during the EA process to identify specifically affected areas of cultural resources (i.e., culturally important, ceremonial, sacred) and known sites identified by Métis citizens as being important for teaching/transmittal to the next generation, and review existing or develop appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures. As IK information becomes available, the information will be incorporated into the next project planning and decision-making milestone.
		• Reduce effects on culturally sensitive, sacred or spiritual landscapes and sites by implementing the mitigation measures applied in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 7.5 Archaeological Resources), including environmental monitoring.
		• There will be engagement with Indigenous communities related to archaeological sites identified in the Archaeological Resources LSA through the completion of the Stage Two Archaeological Assessment. These sites will be subject to avoidance and protection measures to avoid loss of, or damage to, archaeological resources, or assessed and mitigated by excavation.
		• The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment (and Stage 3 and 4, if required) should be undertaken as soon as possible in the Detailed Planning Phase, prior to construction. Further archaeological work will involve Indigenous community members interested in and/or knowledgeable about the area.
		• Training of the Indigenous community members about archaeological fieldwork methods, as well as general theory, will be built into the Project scope. Training of local Indigenous community members will build capacity for future archaeological projects within and outside their traditional territories.
		• The Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment report will be provided to Indigenous communities prior to submission to the MCM.
		• In the event that archaeological resources not previously identified are suspected or encountered unexpectedly during construction, implement the following mitigation measures:
		  ◦ Suspend activity at that location and do not allow work to resume until permission is granted by Hydro One who will engage Indigenous communities and their elders to obtain direction.
		  ◦ Following engagement with the affected Indigenous communities and their elders, Hydro One will bring in a licenced archaeologist and contact the MCM.
		  ◦ The licenced archaeologist will develop an appropriate mitigation measures plan including engagement with Hydro One, affected Indigenous communities, their elders and stakeholders, and if necessary, the appropriate regulatory agencies.
		  ◦ Continue to offer ongoing engagement to affected communities and apply protocols identified by Indigenous communities for land access and treatment of findings. Hydro One will consult with the MCM regarding proposed protocols on treatment of findings, where appropriate.
		• Cultural awareness training will be provided to construction staff to facilitate the identification of unexpected archaeological resources.
		• If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues. A Communications Plan will establish
			Net disruption of “sense of place”
			Net reduction in cultural practices
			Net change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge

Project Component or Activity	Potential Effect	Mitigation Measures	Net Effect
		the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations. • Reduce indirect effects on traditional land and resource use through implementing mitigation measures applied to biophysical criteria as described in other sections of this EA (i.e., Section 6.7 Air Quality, Section 6.9 Acoustic Environment, Section 7.4 Aesthetics, and Section 7.5 Archaeological Resources). **Operation and Maintenance Stage:** • Provide adequate notification of maintenance activities to affected Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders along the Project corridor as required under Project permits, approvals, and agreements, including sharing approximate dates that work may be done in an area prior to commencing work in the area. • If there are concerns or issues raised by Indigenous community members, there will be a process implemented for Hydro One to discuss and address those issues. A Communications Plan will establish the communications process for both formal and informal communications with Indigenous communities, project stakeholders, and other organizations.	

7.8.11 Net Effects Characterization

7.8.11.1 Approach

The effects assessment approach followed the general process described in Section 5.0 Environmental Assessment Approach. Net effects are described using the significance factors identified in Table 5.6-2. Changes to Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources are measured against the magnitude levels identified in Table 7.8-7.

Potential effects with no predicted net effect after implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Table 7.8-5 and Table 7.8-6 are not carried forward to the net effects assessment.

Hydro One notes that the characterization of net effects is an interpretation by Hydro One and their consultants, which has been informed by the input of communities shared through comments on the Draft EA. Hydro One recognizes that each Indigenous community is best positioned to provide context on how opportunities to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights are taken.

Table 7.8-7: Magnitude Effects Levels for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources

Indicator	Negligible	Low	Moderate	High
Loss of Land/Change in Priority Rights • Changes in Land Available for Métis Use Harvesting/Sites • Changes in physical attributes • Changes to harvesting of culturally critical species • Changes to harvesting practices • Changes to access to harvesting areas • Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge • Changes in perception of ‘place’ Cultural Identity • Disruption of “sense of place”	A change that is predicted to be within the range of baseline or guideline values, or within the range of natural variability	The effect is measurable but not expected to materially change opportunity for use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights	The effect results in a potentially negative or beneficial change to opportunity for use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights	The effect is expected to substantially interfere with or enhance opportunity for use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights

Indicator	Negligible	Low	Moderate	High
• Reduction in cultural practices • Change in teaching/ transmittal of knowledge to the next generation				

7.8.11.2 Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and Region 2

Net effects were calculated and predicted for the Project and are described using factors including direction (positive or negative), predicted magnitude (level of change in land and resource use setting), geographic extent (i.e., spatial extent of the effect), duration and reversibility (e.g., by project stage, permanent/irreversible), frequency (i.e., number of times the effect happens), and the likelihood of occurrence (i.e., how likely is the effect).

A summary of the characterization of net effects of the Project on Section 35 Rights is provided in Table 8.10-2. Net effects are described after the implementation of effective mitigation measures. Effective implementation of mitigation measures summarized in Table 8.10-2, is predicted to reduce the magnitude and duration of net effects on Section 35 Rights.

7.8.11.2.1 Net Change to Land Available for Métis Use

The Project will result in a net change of 3,845.5 ha in land available for NWOMC and Region 2 use considering conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land, and increased physical disturbance.

This direct effect is predicted to have a negative impact on use of the Crown land for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights. Based on the area of other unoccupied land available, this impact is expected to be of low to moderate magnitude. The magnitude of the impact is expected to be moderate where reductions in availability of land will occur within provincial parks and protected areas. This is due to land in these areas being of a high value to Métis land users by virtue of its protected status, which has afforded some certainty in the land's quality and availability for land use activities.

Reductions in availability would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint, in the areas directly used for temporary workspaces and permanent infrastructure where there is physical disturbance; thus the geographic extent is the Project footprint as only the lands directly impacted by the Project footprint will be converted from unoccupied to occupied Crown land status.

The duration of effects on Crown land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads will be short-term and the lands will be occupied and unavailable during the construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed and are expected to become available for use again. Crown land used for the permanent footprint (i.e., the ROW) and access roads would be considered occupied Crown land for the life of the Project (long-term).

The conversion of 3,845.5 ha of unoccupied Crown land to occupied land and increased physical disturbance of lands used will be certain to occur; thus, change in land available is considered certain.

7.8.11.2.2 Net Change to Harvesting of Culturally Critical Species

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to the harvesting of culturally critical species during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has the potential to impact this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

The Project footprint will overlap with areas that are potentially used by wildlife, fish and plants that are harvested by Métis citizens resulting in removal of habitat, and sensory disturbances will indirectly affect the presence of some species. These effects are predicted to negatively affect the harvesting of culturally critical species; however, over the long-term, there could be positive effects as the cleared land of a transmission line can also be ideal for berry and plant growth.

The geographic extent of clearing will be local (i.e., affecting a few individuals that occupy/use areas near the construction activities within the LSA). Given the mobility of the wildlife and fish species, and the small relative area of disturbance for plant species, it is predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change that is predicted to be within the range of baseline or guideline values, or within the range of natural variability). This is because the Project footprint and area of potential impact compared to the area available for harvesting is relatively small, and although a net effect has been conservatively identified for species considered to be culturally critical for harvesting, those effects were not assessed to be significant in Section 6.5, Section 6.6, and Section 6.7).

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbance and not impacts to the availability of the species populations as a whole. Longer term, it is anticipated that the resources will return to the LSA and within the majority of the Project footprint; thus, the effects are considered reversible. While the effects may be continual during construction, they will be infrequent during the operation and maintenance stage because much of the Project footprint will be reclaimed and maintenance activities will be infrequent (e.g., semi-annual to annual transmission line inspections; vegetation management every five to eight years; and repairs on an as-needed basis).

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as probable (i.e., the effect is likely to occur), though this is considered conservative as it has not been confirmed with certainty that culturally critical species are available, harvested, and will be impacted in the affected areas.

7.8.11.2.3 Net Change to Physical Attributes – Harvesting Sites

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to physical attributes during the construction and operation and maintenance stages of the Project, which will increase avoidance

behaviours; thus potentially impacting the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

Project construction and maintenance activities are likely to cause safety concerns (e.g., traffic), sensory disturbances (e.g., noise and vibrations) and other concerns that may increase avoidance behaviours by both Métis citizens and harvested resources (e.g., wildlife). During operations, visual impact and other concerns (e.g., relating to impacts of herbicide use) are also expected to result in avoidance behaviours. These effects are primarily indirect. While the effects are primarily negative, there may be some positive effects in that the cleared transmission line ROW can be a good place for berry picking and plant harvesting, which may result in an increase in plant harvesting.

The geographic extent will be local and given the opportunity to harvest in many other areas and mobility of the wildlife and fish species, it was predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change); however, comments on the Draft EA provided by NWOMC and Region 2 noting elements of locationality in Métis harvesting practices has shifted this magnitude level to moderate. Comments from NWOMC and Region 2 indicate that not all harvesting practices can be readily transplanted to other locales due to species availability as this may disconnect the activity from spiritual and cultural elements, including intergenerational learning and teaching.

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbances from dust, noise and vibration and an increase in workers and traffic. Longer term, it is anticipated that the harvested resources will return to the LSA and within the majority of the Project footprint; however, some harvesters will continue to avoid the area; thus, some avoidance will be long-term. While the effects may be continual during construction, they range from infrequent to continual during the operation and maintenance stage because much of the Project footprint will be reclaimed and maintenance activities will be infrequent, but the concerns about harvesting in or near the ROW may endure for the life of the operation for some citizens. With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as probable to occur.

7.8.11.2.4 Net Change to Harvesting Practices (Timing Windows)

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to harvesting practices if the effects to harvesting overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows.

Disruption to hunting, trapping and fishing timing windows as a result of construction would be a negative effect, only expected as a direct result of Project activities in a given location. The geographic extent will be local to areas under construction, and it is predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible to low (i.e., a small or discernable measurable change) because the Project footprint and area of potential impact compared to the area available for harvesting is relatively small, in relation to other areas that will be available for harvesting.

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbance in a specific area. Longer term, no seasonal changes to harvesting activities are expected; thus, the effects are considered reversible. The effects are expected to be infrequent during construction.

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as possible as seasonal changes to hunting, trapping, and fishing cannot be confirmed until site-specific construction schedules are available.

7.8.11.2.5 Net Change to Access to Harvesting Areas

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to access to preferred harvesting areas during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has potential to impact this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of NWOMC and Region 2 rights.

Access restrictions to harvesting areas by NWOMC and Region 2 citizens are expected to have direct negative effects by reducing harvesting practices during construction. During operations, the creation of new access via permanent access roads and the transmission line ROW may have some positive effects by increasing access to preferred or new harvesting areas; however, this may also be perceived as a negative effect if access is opened broadly to non-Indigenous peoples.

It is anticipated that the magnitude of the effect will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change), given the temporary, short-term nature of the access restrictions, and the limited areas to be affected relative to the total land and resource use area affected in the LSA. As well, harvesters may be able to take detours and would be able to continue to access other harvesting areas that are not in proximity to the Project footprint. Project construction activities may reduce or limit access to certain portions of existing areas (i.e., local roads or trails near the ROW) with intermittent, short-term closures; however, over the long-term, such restrictions will be lifted and access is expected to increase with the permanent ROW and access roads.

Geographically, the effects are expected to be local (i.e., within the LSA) as access would primarily be restricted to the Project footprint, but such restrictions might limit access elsewhere in the LSA (e.g., if access requires crossing the new ROW). The access restrictions will be intermittent and temporary because the site-specific construction stage will be short-term and not be continuous because construction will be completed using a staged approach, as Project construction progresses along the ROW. During the operations and maintenance stage, a longer-term increase in access, which have both positive and negative effects, is expected.

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as probable (i.e., the effect is likely to occur), as locations of site-specific access to known harvesting areas has not been confirmed in the LSA.

7.8.11.2.6 Net Change in Teaching/Transmittal of Knowledge

A net effect of change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge is predicted as a result of avoidance of the area for use in teaching future generations. This indirect effect would be negative, local, long-term, and continual. Based on input from the TKLUS, likelihood is predicted to be certain (MNP 2023b).

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be moderate as there is a material change to teaching/transmittal of knowledge. This will be confirmed through ongoing engagement to ensure understanding of the loss of Intergenerational Learnings that will result from the construction and operation of the Project.

7.8.11.2.7 Net Changes in Perception of "Place" – Harvesting Sites

There is potential for a net effect of change in perception of "place" as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of the harvesting sites. With the construction and operation of the Project, avoidance behaviors of NWOMC and Region 2 harvesters and land users is expected to change, with the extent of change varying by type of activity (e.g., possibly more reduction in trapping and plant harvesting that hunting and fishing in proximity to a transmission line).

This effect would be indirect, negative, local, long-term, continual and probable to occur.

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be moderate due to the material change to the perception of 'place' and avoidance behaviours that are anticipated. Additionally, although many NWOMC and Region 2 citizens are comfortable with hunting and fishing in proximity to a transmission line, fewer were comfortable with trapping and harvesting plants or berries on or near a transmission line (MNP 2023b). The magnitude and probability of the effect will be confirmed through further engagement.

7.8.11.2.8 Net Disruption of "Sense of Place" and Reduction in Cultural Practices

There is a low potential for a net effect from the loss of, or damage to an archaeological resource or culturally sensitive or scared site from construction activities; however, there is higher potential for a net effect of disruption to "sense of place" and reduction in cultural practices due to changes in perception of Métis sites, resulting in land users avoiding the Project area for spiritual activities or use/enjoyment of cultural sites and/or scared sites, within the LSA.

There would be a net effect of reduction in cultural practices in proximity to the Project because spiritual activities or the use and enjoyment of cultural sites and/or sacred sites as NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have advised these activities would no longer be undertaken near a transmission line.

It is predicted that this indirect effect would be negative, local, long-term, continual and certain.

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be low to moderate (discernible and may or may not materially citizens' land use), based on the input that some NWOMC and Region 2 citizens have indicated that they would not use the Project area for teaching any longer, which would result in a loss of this area for intergenerational learning (MNP 2023b). The magnitude and probability of the effect will be confirmed through further engagement to understand the impacts.

Table 7.8-8: Characterization of Predicted Net Effects for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources – NWOMC and Region 2

Criteria	Indicators	Net Effect	Direct/ Indirect	Direction	Magnitude	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Irreversibility	Frequency	Likelihood of Occurrence
Loss of Land/Change in Priority Rights	Changes in Land Available for Métis Use	Net change in land available for Métis use	Direct	Negative	Low to Moderate	Project footprint	Short-term and long-term	Continual to Infrequent	Certain
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting of culturally critical species	Net change to harvesting of culturally critical species	Indirect	Negative and Positive	Negligible	Local	Short-term (reversible)	Continual to Infrequent	Probable
Harvesting/Sites	Changes in physical attributes (avoidance behaviours)	Net change in physical attributes	Indirect	Negative and Positive	Moderate	Local	Short-term and long-term	Continual	Probable
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows)	Net change to harvesting practices (timing windows)	Direct	Negative	Negligible to Low	Local	Short-term	Infrequent	Possible
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to access to harvesting areas	Net change to access to harvesting areas	Direct	Negative and Positive	Negligible	Local	Short-term and long-term	Infrequent to Continual	Probable
Harvesting/Sites Cultural Identity	Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge to the next generation	Net change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge	Indirect	Negative	Moderate	Local	Long-term	Continual	Certain
Harvesting Sites	Changes in perception of ‘place’	Net change in perception of “place” – harvesting sites	Indirect	Negative	Moderate	Local	Long-term	Continual	Probable
Cultural Identity	Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Net disruption of “sense of place” Net reduction in cultural practices	Indirect	Negative	Low to Moderate	Local	Long-term	Continual	Certain

7.8.11.3 Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

Net effects were predicted for the Project and are described using factors including direction (positive or negative), predicted magnitude (level of change in land and resource use setting), geographic extent (i.e., spatial extent of the effect), duration and reversibility (e.g., by project stage, permanent/irreversible), frequency (i.e., number of times the effect happens), and the likelihood of occurrence (i.e., how likely is the effect).

A summary of the characterization of net effects of the Project on Section 35 Rights is provided in Table 8.10-2. Net effects are described after the implementation of effective mitigation measures. Effective implementation of mitigation measures summarized in Table 8.10-2, is predicted to reduce the magnitude and duration of net effects on Section 35 Rights.

7.8.11.3.1 Net Change to Land Available for Métis Use

The Project will result in a change of up to 3,845.5 ha considering conversion of unoccupied Crown land to occupied Crown land, and increased physical disturbance. It is recognized that the area used by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens relevant to the Project is primarily located between Thunder Bay and Atikokan.

This direct effect is predicted to have a negative impact on use of the Crown land for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights. Based on the area of other unoccupied land available, this impact is expected to be of negligible magnitude.

Reductions in availability would be experienced most heavily within the Project footprint, in the areas directly used for temporary workspaces and permanent infrastructure where there is physical disturbance; thus the geographic extent is the Project footprint as only the lands directly impacted by the Project footprint will be converted from unoccupied to occupied Crown land status.

The duration of effects on Crown land used for temporary workspaces, camps, and access roads will be short-term and the lands will be occupied and unavailable during the construction stage, after which they will be reclaimed and are expected to become available for use again. Crown land used for the permanent footprint (i.e., the ROW) and access roads would be considered occupied Crown land for the life of the Project (long-term).

The conversion of 3,845.5 ha of unoccupied Crown land to occupied land and increased physical disturbance of lands used will be certain to occur; thus, change in land available is considered certain.

7.8.11.3.2 Net Change to Harvesting of Culturally Critical Species

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to the harvesting of culturally critical species during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has the potential to impact this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

The Project footprint may overlap limited areas that are potentially used by wildlife, fish and plants that are harvested by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens resulting in removal of habitat, and sensory disturbances will indirectly affect the presence of some species. These effects are predicted to negatively affect the harvesting of culturally critical species; however, over the long-term, there could be positive effects as the cleared land of a transmission line can also be ideal for berry and plant growth.

The geographic extent of clearing will be local (i.e., affecting a few individuals that occupy/use areas near the construction activities within the LSA). Given the mobility of the wildlife and fish species, and the small relative area of disturbance for plant species, it is predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change that is predicted to be within the range of baseline or guideline values, or within the range of natural variability). This is because the Project footprint and area of potential impact compared to the area available for harvesting is relatively small, and although a net effect has been conservatively identified for species considered to be culturally critical for harvesting, those effects were not assessed to be significant in Section 6.5, Section 6.6, and Section 6.7).

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbance and not impacts to the availability of the species populations as a whole. Longer term, it is anticipated that the resources will return to the LSA and within the majority of the Project footprint; thus, the effects are considered reversible. While the effects may be continual during construction, they will be infrequent during the operation and maintenance stage because much of the Project footprint will be reclaimed and maintenance activities will be infrequent (e.g., semi-annual to annual transmission line inspections; vegetation management every five to eight years; and repairs on an as-needed basis).

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as probable (i.e., the effect is likely to occur), though this is considered conservative as it has not been confirmed with certainty that culturally critical species are available, harvested, and will be impacted in the affected areas.

7.8.11.3.3 Net Change to Physical Attributes – Harvesting Sites

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to physical attributes during the construction and operation and maintenance stages of the Project, which may increase avoidance behaviours; thus potentially impacting the use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

Project construction and maintenance activities are likely to cause safety concerns (e.g., traffic), sensory disturbances (e.g., noise and vibrations) and other concerns that may increase avoidance behaviours by both Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens and harvested resources (e.g., wildlife). During operations, visual impact and other concerns (e.g., relating to impacts of herbicide use) are also expected to result in avoidance behaviours. These effects are primarily indirect. While the effects are primarily negative, there may be some positive effects in that the cleared transmission line ROW can be a good place for berry picking and plant harvesting, which may result in an increase in plant harvesting.

The geographic extent will be local and given the opportunity to harvest in many other areas and mobility of the wildlife and fish species, it is predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change).

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbances from dust, noise and vibration and an increase in workers and traffic. Longer term, it is anticipated that the harvested resources will return to the LSA and within the majority of the Project footprint; however, some harvesters will continue to avoid the area; thus, some avoidance will be long-term. While the effects may be continual during construction, they range from infrequent to continual during the operation and maintenance stage because much of the Project footprint will be reclaimed and maintenance activities will be infrequent, but the concerns about harvesting in or near the ROW may endure for the life of the operation for some citizens. With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as probable to occur.

7.8.11.3.4 Net Change to Harvesting Practices (Timing Windows)

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to harvesting practices if the effects to harvesting overlap spatially and temporally with harvesting timing windows.

Disruption to hunting, trapping and fishing timing windows as a result of construction would be a negative effect, only expect as a direct result of Project activities in a given location. The geographic extent will be local to areas under construction and it is predicted that the magnitude of the effects will be negligible to low (i.e., a small or discernable measurable change) because the Project footprint and area of potential impact compared to the area available for harvesting is relatively small, in relation to other areas that will be available for harvesting.

The duration of effects is expected to be short-term during the construction stage as they are primarily a result of temporary disturbance in a specific area. Longer term, no seasonal changes to harvesting activities are expected; thus, the effects are considered reversible. The effects are expected to be infrequent during construction.

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as possible as seasonal changes to hunting, trapping, and fishing cannot be confirmed until site-specific construction schedules are available.

7.8.11.3.5 Net Change to Access to Harvesting Areas

The Project is predicted to result in a net change to access to preferred harvesting areas during the construction and operation and maintenance stages, which has potential to impact this use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation rights.

Access restrictions to harvesting areas by Red Sky Métis Independent Nation citizens are may have direct negative effects by reducing harvesting practices during construction. During operations, the creation of new access via permanent access roads and the transmission line ROW may have some positive effects by increasing access to preferred or new harvesting

areas; however, this may also be perceived as a negative effects if access is opened broadly to non-Indigenous peoples.

It is anticipated that the magnitude of the effect will be negligible (i.e., a small measurable change), given the temporary, short-term nature of the access restrictions, and the limited areas to be affected relative to the total land and resource use area affected in the LSA. As well, harvesters may be able to take detours and would be able to continue to access other harvesting areas that are not in proximity to the Project footprint. Project construction activities may reduce or limit access to certain portions of existing areas (i.e., local roads or trails near the ROW) with intermittent, short-term closures; however, over the long-term, such restrictions will be lifted and access is expected to increase with the permanent ROW and access roads.

Geographically, the effects are expected to be local (i.e., within the LSA) as access would primarily be restricted to the Project footprint, but such restrictions might limit access elsewhere in the LSA (e.g., if access requires crossing the new ROW). The access restrictions will be intermittent and temporary because the site-specific construction stage will be short-term and not be continuous because construction will be completed using a staged approach, as Project construction progresses along the ROW. During the operations and maintenance stage, a longer-term increase in access, which have both positive and negative effects, is expected.

With regard to likelihood, the effect has been assessed as possible, as locations of site-specific access to known harvesting areas were not confirmed in the LSA.

7.8.11.3.6 Net Change in Teaching/Transmittal of Knowledge

A net effect of change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge is predicted as a result of avoidance of the area for use in teaching future generations. This indirect effect would be negative, local, long-term, and continual.

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be negligible given the limited area within which a material change to teaching/transmittal of knowledge may occur.

7.8.11.3.7 Net Changes in Perception of “Place” – Harvesting Sites

There is potential for a net effect of change in perception of “place” as a result of changes in perception of harvesting experience, changes in perception of species, and changes in perception of the harvesting sites. With the construction and operation of the Project, avoidance behaviors of Métis harvesters and land users is expected to change, with the extent of change varying by type of activity (e.g., possibly more reduction in trapping and plant harvesting that hunting and fishing in proximity to a transmission line).

This effect would be indirect, negative, local, long-term, continual and possible to occur.

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be negligible given the limited areas of use that may be affected.

7.8.11.3.8 Net Disruption of "Sense of Place" and Reduction in Cultural Practices

There is a low potential for a net effect from the loss of, or damage to an archaeological resource or culturally sensitive or scared site from construction activities; and low potential for a net effect of disruption to "sense of place" and reduction in cultural practices due to changes in perception of RSIMN sites, resulting in land users avoiding the Project area for spiritual activities or use/enjoyment of cultural sites and/or scared sites, within the LSA.

It is predicted that this indirect effect would be negative, local, long-term, continual and possible.

The magnitude of the effect is predicted to be negligible.

Table 7.8-9: Characterization of Predicted Net Effects for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources - Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

Criteria	Indicators	Net Effect	Direct/ Indirect	Direction	Magnitude	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Irreversibility	Frequency	Likelihood of Occurrence
Loss of Land/Change in Priority Rights	Changes in Land Available for Métis Use	Net change in land available for Métis use	Direct	Negative	Negligible	Project footprint	Short-term and long-term	Continual to Infrequent	Certain
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting of culturally critical species	Net change to harvesting of culturally critical species	Indirect	Negative and Positive	Negligible	Local	Short-term	Continual to Infrequent	Probable
Harvesting/Sites	Changes in physical attributes (avoidance behaviours)	Net change in physical attributes	Indirect	Negative and Positive	Negligible	Local	Short-term and long-term	Continual	Probable
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to harvesting practices (harvest timing windows)	Net change to harvesting practices (timing windows)	Direct	Negative	Negligible	Local	Short-term	Infrequent	Possible
Harvesting/Sites	Changes to access to harvesting areas	Net change to access to harvesting areas	Direct	Negative and Positive	Negligible	Local	Short-term and long-term	Infrequent to Continual	Probable
Harvesting/Sites Cultural Identity	Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge to the next generation	Net change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge	Indirect	Negative	Negligible	Local	Long-term	Continual	Possible
Harvesting Sites	Changes in perception of ‘place’	Net change in perception of “place” – harvesting sites	Indirect	Negative	Negligible	Local	Long-term	Continual	Possible
Cultural Identity	Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Net disruption of “sense of place” Net reduction in cultural practices	Direct/Indirect	Negative	Negligible	Local	Long-term	Continual	Possible

7.8.11.4 Assessment of Significance

The general method defined for assessment of significance of net effects of the Project is informed by the interaction between the significance factors outlined in Section 5.0, with magnitude, duration, and geographic extent identified as the most important factors. Consideration is also given to concerns of Indigenous communities, interested agencies, groups, and individuals raised during engagement and through review comments on the EA reports. As set out in Section 5.6.5, a predicted net effect Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources criteria would be considered significant if it is assessed as:

- High magnitude;
- Medium-term to permanent in duration;
- Occurring at any geographic extent; and
- Representing a management concern.

To be considered significant, the effects are expected to result in substantial interference in the use of affected lands and resources by Métis communities/citizens for the current and traditional exercise of their Indigenous rights and interests.

Based on the assessment of the indicators for the three criteria (loss of land/change in priority rights, harvesting sites, and cultural identify), the net effects are not predicted to be high magnitude, yet many will be long-term in duration and will occur in the LSA. With the implementation of mitigation measures, the net effects are not predicted to represent a substantial interference in the continued opportunity for Métis citizens to be able to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights.

Hydro One notes that the characterization of net effects is an interpretation by Hydro One and their consultants, which has been informed by the input of communities shared through comments on the Draft EA. Hydro One recognizes that each Indigenous community is best positioned to provide context on how opportunities to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights are taken.

Hydro One is committed to engaging with the NWOMC and Region 2 on potential refinements to the Project footprint and incorporation of site-specific mitigation in order to avoid or minimize impacts to NWOMC and Region 2 and to.

Hydro One will continue engage with Red Sky Métis Independent Nation should any additional IK be identified that may require review of existing and/or development of new appropriate site- and time-specific mitigation or avoidance measures.

7.8.12 Cumulative Effects Assessment

In the assessment of Project's net effects, changes to Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources from the Project are compared to current conditions. It is recognized that past development and other influences in the RSA have changed the availability and use of land and resources, as well as cultural practices, over time and that the degree of change or influence may vary across the landscape and by community.

This section evaluates how net effects from the Project identified in the preceding sections may overlap in time and space with the effects of other developments and activities that are expected to occur (i.e., cumulative effects) and if those effects could result in substantial interference in the use of affected lands and resources by Métis communities for the current and traditional exercise of their Indigenous rights and interests. Future projects include reasonably foreseeable future developments (RFDs) defined in Section 9.0. The cumulative effects assessment is primarily qualitative, supported by quantitative data where available, completed at the regional scale and presented as a reasoned narrative describing the outcomes of cumulative effects for each criterion.

7.8.12.1 Regional Context

This assessment recognizes that what happens to lands in relation to past, current, and future land use and ecosystems, is of fundamental importance to Indigenous communities and the practice of rights, interests and use of land and resources. Where potential effects of the Project may act cumulatively with the effects of future activities, the effects are considered in the context of if or how the changes may fall within the flexibility or range in current practice. For example, if an area suitable for the harvest of blueberries may be affected by the Project and cumulatively with another development, understanding the potential availability of similar habitat within a similar area may provide context on the potential magnitude of an effect to harvesting. It is, however, recognized that the overlap between areas considered ecological suitable (e.g., considering quality and availability of plants, fish or wildlife desired for harvest), accessible (e.g., considering physical barriers or resources such as fuel, off-road vehicles, etc.), and safe (e.g., terrain, potential hazards, proximity to other developments, actual or perceived risk of contamination) as well as other elements of cultural context are factors in determining what lands are truly available for and considered appropriate or preferred by Indigenous communities for the practice of rights. The context in this section provides some indicators of how the natural environment and human development in the region may represent both opportunities for or pressures on the ability to accommodate or manage potential cumulative effects.

Development of the landscape in the region through a western archaeological lens is described in Section 7.5.5 of the archaeological assessment. This section reports evidence of human occupation beginning approximately 9,500 years ago, through use of the lands by small groups engaged in seasonal subsistence harvest, to the post-contact European exploitation of fur bearing and game animals, resulting in an increasingly settled lifestyle for Indigenous communities that was compounded by the Treaty System, the creation of reserves, and the

introduction of the snowmobile in the 1960s. The unique history of each Métis community that may be affected by the Project influence the cultural context within which appropriate or preferred conditions for the practice of rights are established.

As defined in Table 7.8-2, the RSA defined for assessment of the criteria for Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources reflects the study area outlined in the ToR within which alternative routes including the preliminary Project footprint were identified and provided as a basis for IK study planning. It is recognized that the practice of rights, interests and use of land and resources for communities extend beyond the boundaries of the Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources RSA. While this RSA boundary identified is considered appropriate for the understanding of potential overlap between effects of the Project and those of future projects with similar effects that may overlap in time and space, general characterization of the landscape of the broader region is also shared for context and where it relates to criteria such as moose, for which regional effects are considered at a habitat level.

Forest Resource Inventory (FRI) information, available as a result of the province's effort to inventory forest resources across most of northern Ontario, is used to provide broad characterization of vegetation within the study areas. FRI ecosite data was mapped through various methods, a combination of aerial imagery interpretation via Digital Surface Models and stereo imagery analysis, and LiDAR completed between 2007 and 2011. The multi-analysis approach resulted in a variety of information, including vegetation types, heights and soil moisture, which has allowed for a best estimate of the ecosite type (MNR 2009).

Table 7.8-10 reports RFI landscape types to provide a broad characterization of the landscape within the region. As noted below, natural landscape types – primarily water and forest, represent the primary land uses. Unclassified or disturbed areas include roads, utility corridors, aggregate areas, clearings and structures including camps. Section 6.4.5.1.1 of the vegetation and wetlands assessment describes additional efforts made to quantify more recent areas of disturbance in close proximity of the Project since the RFI was defined; however, the additional disturbance was not defined as substantial greater than the areas defined as 'unclassified' in the available RFI at the regional scale.

Table 7.8-10: Regional RFI Habitat or Landscape Types

General Habitat or Landscape Types	Area (ha) and % of total area within Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources RSA	Area (ha) in Unpatented Crown Land and % of total area of Unpatented Crown Land within Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources RSA
Built up areas		
Commercial / Industrial Unclassified	0.08%	0.01%
Constructed	1.41%	0.33%
Residential Unclassified	0.86%	0.07%
Utilities Unclassified	0.22%	0.13%

General Habitat or Landscape Types	Area (ha) and % of total area within Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources RSA	Area (ha) in Unpatented Crown Land and % of total area of Unpatented Crown Land within Métis Rights, Interest and Use of Land and Resources RSA
Open lands		
Bluff	0.00%	0.00%
Cliff	0.01%	0.01%
Field	0.25%	0.00%
Island	0.22%	0.25%
Meadow	0.41%	0.33%
Rock Barren	0.02%	0.02%
Shoreline	0.00%	0.00%
Shrub	0.26%	0.03%
Mineral Barren	0.19%	0.07%
Water and Wetlands		
Water	17.45%	20.50%
Bog	0.08%	0.09%
Fen	1.37%	1.48%
Marsh	0.01%	0.01%
Meadow Marsh	1.63%	1.43%
Open Bog	0.01%	0.01%
Swamp	0.05%	0.06%
Thicket Swamp	0.99%	0.79%
Treed Bog	0.02%	0.02%
Treed Fen	1.92%	2.17%
Treed Swamp	7.94%	8.11%
Forest		
Coniferous Forest	37.33%	41.28%
Deciduous Forest	25.92%	21.25%
Mixed Forest	1.35%	1.56%
Total Area (ha)	759,881.81	635,539.15

Section 7.5.5 identifies lumber and mining industries as prominent in the development of the landscape of northern Ontario from the mid-19th century to the present day. Current presence on the land of settlements, infrastructure, commercial and industrial developments influence the conditions for and perceptions of ecological suitability, accessibility and safety.

Section 7.1 describes and maps administrative and legislative boundaries relevant to current uses of land in the region that demonstrate how developments and linear features cross natural areas on the land. The geographic distribution of features demonstrates both opportunities for access (e.g., presence of road and trails) and pressures through disturbance or fragmentation

that may limit the availability or quality of natural area for other uses (e.g., presence of industrial developments). Types of land use development and mapping showing the distribution on the land currently include:

- **Presence of settlements including on reserve lands, and infrastructure** (Figure 7.1.3-3 Land Use Planning): including municipalities and designated places, private and Crown land uses areas, utility lines, road and rail. These features both define areas of potential land use opportunities including undesignated Crown land with access, and barriers to land use including developed lands.

- **Protected Areas and Outdoor Tourism and Recreational Land Use** (Figure 7.1.7-2 Protected Areas and Outdoor Tourism and Recreational Land Use; Figure 7.1.7.8-2 water crossings; Figure 7.1.6-4 Hunting, trapping, fishing units/zones): These features both define areas of potential land use opportunities including protected areas such as provincial parks, and potential barriers to land use where recreational activities may occur.

- **Forestry features**: **(**Figure 7.1.9-3 shows the scale and distribution of harvest areas planned for 2021-2022). Forestry, a past, existing and future activity in the RSA, takes place on provincial Crown land and private forest lands. Provincial Crown lands make up a large majority of the operational forest area and are managed under long-term SFLs. The SFL holders are responsible for forest management activities in the licensed area including forest planning, harvesting, silviculture and regeneration. There are six FMUs that overlap the Project footprint including the Wabigoon Forest, the Dog River-Matawin Forest, the English River Forest, the Boundary Waters Forest, the Dryden Forest, and the Lakehead Forest. FMUs that overlap parts of the Project footprint are licensed to Resolute FP Canada Inc., Domtar Inc., Dryden Forest Management Company Ltd., and Greenmantle Forest Inc.

  These features both define areas of potential land use opportunities where access may be created, and potential barriers to land use where active harvesting may occur. Section 6.4.10.3 provides a summary of harvest plans per FMU.

- Mineral and aggregate resource activities: (Figure 7.1.4-4; Figure 7.1.5-2).

  These features define areas representing potential barriers to land use opportunities.

Sections 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 characterize potential for cumulative effects for criteria, including representative traditional use plants, harvested wildlife and fish, considering RFDs within the study areas applicable to the species considered. Cumulative effects include the effects from the Project in addition to the effects by past, present and RFDs, where calculated change considers RFDs with footprints available at the time of reporting. The findings of these assessments are summarized below, where the potential for cumulative effects to harvested plants, wildlife and fish affect the potential availability of species for harvest (and ability to access).

Summary of cumulative effects to habitat for traditionally used plants

Section 6.4.10.8 of the vegetation and wetlands assessment looks at the potential for cumulative effects to areas of habitat that may support traditionally used plants. It is noted that RFDs that did not have footprints available at the time of analysis and reporting (Section 9.0; Table 9.9-1; Table 6.4-38) are expected to contribute to decreases in the quantity of plants of traditional use habitat. This assessment notes a potential loss of 2,073 ha (0.48% change of baseline characterization) to plants of traditional use habitat in the vegetation and wetlands RSA (which represents a 5 km buffer from the Project footprint). Calculated change by general habitat type within the RSA is provided in Table 6.4-38. Largest predicted loss by percent change is meadow general habitat type with a 12.2% change from baseline characterization and an absolute loss of 2,102 ha in the vegetation and wetlands RSA. The Project footprint will be allowed to naturally revegetate with compatible species and will result in creation of meadow habitat. The RFDs are not expected to disturb the least common general habitat type bog in the vegetation and wetlands RSA. The predicted loss of plants of traditional use habitat in the RSA that would result in localized changes in habitat distribution from RFDs are effects that are assumed to be permanent as reclamation plans are not available for RFDs. The distribution of plants of traditional use habitat may be further affected because of changes to hydrology and drainage patterns associated with future mining activities. New development may lead to a greater exposure of ecosystem edges to disturbance and could result in increased potential for invasion by noxious weed species and invasive species. Habitat for most types of plants of traditional use considered in the vegetation and wetlands RSA are well distributed and therefore, despite individual proximity to disturbance, their populations in the RSA should remain largely intact. However, invasive species may become more prevalent near other developments in the RSA.

This assessment also notes that future forestry activities would change the availability, distribution and composition of plants of traditional use habitat in the RSA. The goal for Forest Management Plans (FMPs) is to reach target levels for forest diversity and composition, wildlife habitat for provincially significant species, and locally featured species and species at risk. Overall, the FMPs seek to achieve a level of forestry operation and harvest that meets market demand while incorporating sustainable forest practices and environmental values to meet a desired forest composition. The Boundary Waters FMP, Dog River-Matawin FMP, Dryden FMP, English River FMP, Lakehead FMP and Wabigoon FMP are further discussed in Section 6.4.10.3 for upland ecosystems and in Section 6.4.10.4 for wetland ecosystems.

As well, changes in habitats host to plant species of traditional use due to climate change are qualitatively discussed, as well as summarized for all boreal ecosystems in Section 6.4.10.8. Plants of traditional use habitat quantity may be negatively affected by climate change as many plant species of traditional use prefer wetland habitats; considered to be one of the ecosystems most sensitive to predicted climate changes (ECCC 2017). Increases in temperature, increases in evapotranspiration and decreases in surface water flow could cause wetland habitats to change in the landscape by reducing their area coverage, for example. The reliance on precipitation to maintain function in bogs makes them especially vulnerable to climate change

and it is noted that diversity of plants in wetlands is linked to water level fluctuations, so predicted decreases in water levels may lead to concerns for species diversity. The combination of environmental stress (i.e., higher temperature) paired with environmental disturbances (i.e., increase in the occurrence of fire) by climate change are expected to reduce the amount of area covered by the boreal forests in its southern boundary of their present-day distributions (Price et al. 2013, Thompson et al. 1998, Varrin et al. 2007). Species that are adapted to regenerate following fire such as pine and aspen are predicted to increase in the landscape leading to a homogenization of species on the landscape (Thompson et al. 1998, Iverson and Prasad 2001, Varrin et al. 2007). Plant species of traditional use such as eastern white cedar, highbush cranberry, Labrador tea, sweetgrass and wild rice may be negatively impacted. Drier habitat conditions may favor other plant species of traditional use, such as paper birch, showy mountain ash, chokecherry, common bearberry, early lowbush blueberry, saskatoon berry, Canada wild ginger, common yarrow and prickly rose. Plant species of traditional use habitat quantity could be further reduced in the RSA and beyond the RSA due to climate change, although the extent of habitat reduction is not known.

Summary of cumulative effects to habitat for wildlife

Section 6.5.10 of the wildlife and wildlife habitat assessment looks at the potential for cumulative effects to areas of habitat that may support wildlife species. Outcomes of the assessment for a subset of species, including wildlife noted for inclusion by Indigenous communities are summarized here, specifically: ungulates (moose), furbearers (such as American marten, beaver, gray wolf), herpetofauna (snapping turtle), raptors and marshbirds (trumpeter swan). The summary considers the study areas defined for each species in the wildlife and wildlife habitat assessment (Section 6.5.4). Estimates of habitat loss are anticipated to be conservative as entire lease areas for mining projects considered were assumed to be disturbed in consideration of cumulative effects.

Ungulates (Moose): Past and existing activities have negatively affected habitat availability, habitat distribution, and survival and reproduction of moose in the moose and gray wolf RSA. Aerial surveys conducted by the Ontario Government between 1975 and 2023 indicate moose populations in the Project study areas are declining. Moose display life history traits (e.g., high reproductive and dispersal rates, ability to use many types of habitats) that provide flexibility to adapt to different ecozones, the rate of increasing landscape alteration by humans, and climate change. Moose are primarily threatened by direct and indirect habitat loss, altered predator prey relationships, and hunting. Habitat is not a limiting factor for moose at baseline or considering cumulative effects as moderate to high suitability habitat covers 46.8% of the moose RSA at baseline and 46.6% after consideration of RFD projects (change of 0.2%). The RFDs are not anticipated to result in changes to moose movements or population connectivity, relative to baseline as disturbances are either point source, linear disturbances that parallel existing disturbances, or linear corridors that are narrower than the width reported to inhibit moose movements (Joyal et al. 1984). Additionally, it is assumed the RFDs will use mitigation measures that avoids and limits effects to moose survival and reproduction.

Climate change is predicted to result in drier conditions that lead to more frequent and severe fires in the Ontario boreal forest (Thompson et al. 1998, Colombo 2008, Nituch and Bowman 2013). It is anticipated that forage availability may decrease in the first few years post-fire and lead to declines in recruitment. However, burned forest may become highly suitable for moose from 10 to 26 years post-burn as forest regeneration provides optimal forage (Nelson et al. 2008). Fire suppression practices in older forest stands in Ontario began 30 years ago (Carleton 2001), so continued fire suppression may limit effects from increased wildfire frequency and intensity in the future. As such, changes to the amount and quality of habitat in the RSA are uncertain. Climate warming is predicted to result in greater overlap between moose and white-tailed deer (Thompson et al. 1998, Murray et al. 2006), which may increase moose mortality through higher predation risk from wolves or infestation of meningeal brain worm (Thompson et al. 1998). The magnitude and extent of these changes is unknown because there is high uncertainty regarding the potential effects of climate change; predictions are based on simulations that can be highly variable and many scenarios are possible.

The combined evidence concerning the cumulative changes to moose habitat availability, distribution, and survival and reproduction in the moose and gray wolf RSA suggests that moose populations would likely continue to maintain their current state in the moose and gray wolf RSA, although possibly at a lower abundance. Reductions of habitat availability, distribution, and survival and reproduction are not expected to affect the ecological effectiveness of moose in or beyond the moose and gray wolf RSA.

Furbearers (American marten, beaver): Past and existing activities have negatively affected habitat availability, habitat distribution, and survival and reproduction of American marten and of beaver in the RSA. However, American martens are adaptable and resilient to natural and human-related disturbances and associated changes in habitat availability and distribution and this species is still common and widespread throughout central and northern Ontario. Similarly, beaver populations in northern Ontario have rebounded since the end of the fur trade. Habitat is not a limiting factor for American marten as moderate to high suitability habitat covers 22.2% of the RSA at baseline and 22.1% after consideration of cumulative effects (change of 0.1%).

The RFDs are anticipated to result in small, direct changes to marten habitat availability, habitat distribution, movements, and population connectivity relative to baseline. Removal of 858 ha or 0.8% of moderate to high suitability habitat at the RSA scale, or the equivalent of one marten home range, is anticipated to have a negligible effect on American martens in the RSA. Current forestry practices in Ontario are aimed at maintaining texture and pattern targets for mature and old forest that are suitable for marten, as well as reducing habitat fragmentation; these factors are likely to improve marten habitat in the RSA compared to baseline. Overall, climate change is anticipated to have a negative effect on marten habitat availability, habitat distribution, and reproduction and survival, but effects are uncertain. Therefore, the combined evidence concerning the cumulative changes to American marten habitat availability, distribution, and survival and reproduction indicates that marten populations would continue to be self-sustaining in the RSA.

The RFDs including the Project, are anticipated to result in small, direct changes to beaver habitat availability, after implementation of mitigation, relative to the baseline. Removal of 509 ha or 1.3% of suitable habitat for beaver is anticipated to have negligible effects on beaver at the RSA scale after consideration of cumulative effects; cumulative effects are not anticipated for beaver habitat distribution or survival or reproduction. Climate change is anticipated to have a positive effect on beaver habitat availability, habitat distribution, and reproduction and survival. Therefore, the combined evidence concerning the cumulative changes to beaver habitat availability, distribution, and survival and reproduction indicates that beaver populations would continue to be self-sustaining in the RSA.

Herpetofauna (snapping turtle): RFDs within the wildlife and wildlife habitat RSA have the potential to reduce herpetofauna habitat availability through direct habitat loss and avoidance due to sensory disturbance, however, negative effects from changes to habitat availability from direct vegetation removal from RFDs are expected to be of small magnitude. The RFDs in the RSA have the potential to increase herpetofauna mortality through collisions with vehicles, with potential expected to be highest where roadways are within close proximity to wetlands and large waterbodies, particularly if they bisect these features. Implementation of mitigation measures to reduce the risk of vehicle collisions is anticipated to mitigate herpetofauna injury and mortality. Increased temperatures associated with climate change could have both positive and negative effects on herpetofauna in the RSA. Reductions of habitat availability, distribution, and survival and reproduction are not expected to affect the ecological effectiveness of herpetofauna.

Raptors (bald eagle): RFDs, including the Project, are predicted to produce measurable changes to habitat availability, distribution and survival and reproduction for bald eagles. The Project footprint and other RFDs would remove 2,151 ha (0.98%) of moderate to high suitability habitat in the wildlife and wildlife habitat RSA. This relates to a reduction in predicted abundance in the RSA by the equivalent of up to three individuals. It is anticipated this calculation may overestimate effects, considering that RFDs will be required to implement mitigation measures to limit effects on bald eagle populations. The Project and RFDs have the potential to reduce bald eagle habitat availability and distribution in the RSA through direct habitat loss and avoidance due to sensory disturbance. Some individuals may adapt or habituate to sensory disturbance. Changes in habitat distribution will have effects on movement and habitat use, but bald eagle populations that overlap with the RSA should remain well connected because this species is highly mobile. Overall, the small changes in habitat availability and distribution (and associated predicted reduction in abundance) should have little detectable influence on the abundance of bald eagle that overlap the RSA.

Climate change is predicted to have varying influences on habitat availability, habitat distribution and survival and reproduction of bald eagles. In general, bald eagles are thought to be less vulnerable to climate change than other species with more specialized requirements and more limited distributions (Armstrong 2014). The combined evidence concerning the cumulative effects on bald eagle from changes in habitat availability, distribution, and survival and

reproduction indicates that populations would continue to be self-sustaining and ecologically effective.

Marshbirds (trumpeter swan): RFDs, including the Project, are predicted to produce measurable changes to habitat availability, distribution and survival and reproduction for marshbirds, represented by trumpeter swans. The Project footprint and other RFDs may remove 499 ha (0.4%) of habitat defined in the wildlife assessment as moderate to high suitability with the wildlife criteria RSA. The amount of habitat loss predicted is likely an overestimate as the entire lease boundaries for future mine projects were used as the disturbance footprint and it is anticipated that RFDs will be required to implement mitigation measures to limit effects.

The Project and RFDs have the potential to reduce trumpeter swan habitat availability and distribution in the RSA through direct habitat loss and avoidance due to sensory disturbance. Some individuals may adapt or habituate to sensory disturbance. Changes in habitat distribution will have effects on movement and habitat use, but trumpeter swan populations that overlap with the RSA should remain well connected because this species is highly mobile. Overall, the small changes in habitat availability and distribution (and associated predicted reduction in abundance) should have little detectable influence on the abundance of trumpeter swan that overlap the RSA. Climate change is predicted to have varying influences on habitat availability, habitat distribution and survival and reproduction of trumpeter swan.

Summary of cumulative effects to habitat for fish

Section 6.6 qualitatively identifies potential for cumulative effects to fish and fish habitat through physical alteration of waterbodies, changes in riparian and in water vegetation, channel morphology; cause changes to water and sediment quality and quantity (e.g., may alter drainage patterns and increase or decrease drainage flows and surface water levels, which could affect fish habitat quantity and quality etc.). Cumulative effects identified were related to RFDs including culvert and bridge rehabilitation and replacement where work is anticipated to occur below the high water mark (HWM), mining activities including pit and mine excavations, blasting, mine dewatering, access roads and mine water supply, and forestry activities including removal of forests, riparian and wetland habitats, as well as the development of access roads, camps and storage facilities. Considering mitigation measures similar to those applicable to the Project that will be required in implementing the RFD projects and the scale of activities, the contribution of the Project and other RFD on fish and fish habitat in the RSA is not anticipated to have a cumulative effect on the overall functionality of fish and fish habitat as they currently exist based on the predicted characterization of the cumulative effects.

Outcomes of the cumulative effects assessments of change to vegetation and wetlands, wildlife and fish predict that populations in the applicable RSA areas would continue to be self sustaining and ecologically effective, reflecting areas of high-quality natural habitat present in the region. Ecological suitability and to access to harvest areas will continue to change into the future. The rate of change may be influenced by climate change and geographic variation in types and rates of development, resulting in variable levels of change and effect by region.

7.8.12.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Developments

In addition to assessing the net environmental effects of the Project, which considered past and present developments, this assessment also evaluates and assesses the significance of net effects from the Project that overlap temporally and spatially with effects from other reasonably foreseeable future developments (RFDs) and activities (i.e., cumulative effects).

For a criterion that has identified net effects, it is necessary to determine if the effects from the Project interact both temporally and spatially with the effects from one or more past, present, or RFD or activities, since the combined effects may differ in nature or extent from the effects of individual Project activities. Where information is available, the cumulative effects assessment estimates or predicts the contribution of effects from the Project and other developments on the criteria, in the context of natural changes in the environment.

In the assessment of Project's net effects, changes to Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources from the Project are compared to current conditions. It is recognized that the previous and ongoing development and other influences in the RSA has changed the use of land and resources, and cultural practices, over time. The ongoing pressures of development and presence of infrastructure such as roads and existing utility lines will continue to represent change in the region to which the Project represents an incremental addition.

For this assessment, the net effects characterized in Table 7.8-8 for NWOMC and Region 2 are carried forward to a cumulative effects assessment if they have a likelihood of occurrence of 'probable' or 'certain' and a non-negligible magnitude. Net effects with this characterization are most likely to interact with other RFDs.

Based on this assessment, the following net effects are carried forward to the cumulative effects assessment:

- Net change in land available for Métis use;
- Net change in harvesting practices (timing windows);
- Net change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge;
- Net disruption of "sense of place"; and
- Net reduction in cultural practices.

The cumulative effects assessment is primarily qualitative and presents a reasoned narrative describing the outcomes of interacting cumulative effects for Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources criteria.

A list of the RFDs that were considered for this EA are presented in Section 9.0, Table 9.0-1. Of these projects, the RFDs listed in Table 7.8-11 were identified as being probable to occur within the RSA and, therefore, have potential to have net effects within the RSA.

Table 7.8-11: Reasonably Foreseeable Developments that Overlap and Interact with the Regional Study Area

ID	Project	Description	Spatial Overlap of Net Effects	Temporal Overlap of Net Effects	Included in Cumulative Effects Analysis
6	McIntyre Creek Culvert rehabilitation	Culvert rehabilitations at McIntyre Creek, 1 km west of Highway 102, Thunder Bay, and Wild Goose Creek, 6 km east of Highway 527, Shuniah.	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Paved shoulders, Resurfacing Highway 11	Adding paved shoulders and resurfacing 35.3 km of Highway 11, starting 6.0 km east of Highway 102.	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Blind Creek culvert rehabilitation	Culvert rehabilitation at Blind Creek, 7 km east of Highway 527, Shuniah.	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	McVicars and Corbett Creek culverts rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of McVicars Creek culvert, 6 km west of Hodder Ave, and Corbett Creek culvert, 5 km west of Highway 130, Thunder Bay.	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	John Street culvert replacement	Replacement of the John Street culvert, west of Highway 11/17, Thunder Bay.	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Hwy 17 resurfacing	Resurfacing of Highway 17 west, west of Highway 72, Dinorwic.	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Osaquan, Melgund, and Shoshowae Creek culverts, rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of Osaquan Creek culver, 8 km west of Ignace, Melgund Creek culvert, 56 km west of Ignace, and Shoshowae Creek culvert, 10 km west of Dryden.	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Highway 11, 11B resurfacing, paved shoulders	Resurfacing and adding paved shoulders to Highway 11B, Atikokan.	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Highway 11 resurfacing, paved shoulders	Resurfacing and adding paved shoulders to Highway 11, from Oliver Road, Kakabeka to Shabaqua.	Yes	Yes	Yes

ID	Project	Description	Spatial Overlap of Net Effects	Temporal Overlap of Net Effects	Included in Cumulative Effects Analysis
19	Highway 102, resurfacing	Resurfacing Highway 102 west of Highway 589 to Highway 11/17, Thunder Bay.	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	CPR Kaministiquia and CNR overheads, bridge rehabilitation and bridge removal	Rehabilitation and removal of CPR overhead Kaministiquia River bridge and CNR overhead bridge, 4 km east of Highway 17, Sistonen's Corner.	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Seine River Bridge, rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of the Seine River bridge, 21 km north of Highway 11B, Atikokan.	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Turtle and Little Turtle River bridges, rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of Turtle River bridge, 44 km south of Highway 17, Atikokan, and Little Turtle River bridge, 79 km south of Highway 17, Atikokan.	Yes	Yes	Yes
23	Revell River No. 3 Bridge, rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of the Revell River No. 3 bridge, 1 km east of Highway 622, Ignace.	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Treasury Metals Inc. Goliath Gold Project	Construction of one open pit mine with underground development, a tailings storage facility, waste rock storage, overburden storage, low-grade stockpile, a 115-kV transmission line, and on-site electrical substation. The site is 15 km east of Dryden and 5 km north of Wabigoon. Operation is anticipated to be 12 years.	Yes	Yes	Yes

ID	Project	Description	Spatial Overlap of Net Effects	Temporal Overlap of Net Effects	Included in Cumulative Effects Analysis
25	Rehabilitation of Steep Rock Mine	Stabilization and remediation of the former Steep Rock Mine, including a plan for enhanced natural recovery that will increase the size of Steep Rock Lake in the coming decades.	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) Potential deep geological repository site	Preliminary assessments by Nuclear Waste Management Organization are underway near Ignace to identify suitable areas for a deep geological repository site for nuclear waste. Currently no decision between choosing the Ignace location or a location in South Bruce, Bruce County.	Yes	Yes	Yes
30	Agnico Eagle Hammond Reef Gold Mine	Agnico Eagle Mines Limited has proposed the construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment of a new open-pit gold mine. Mining would occur for 11 years, with an ore production capacity of 60,000 tonnes per day. The mine is located outside of the RSA; however, the access road and transmission line cross the RSA.	Yes	Yes	Yes
31	Commercial Forestry	Planned forestry harvest activities and roads derived from Forest Management Plans.	Yes	Yes	Yes

CNR = Canadian National Railway; MNRF = Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Culvert Rehabilitation and Highway Resurfacing Projects

With the exception of RFD IDs 24, 25, 29, 30 and 31, the RFDs listed in Table 7.8-11 involve culvert rehabilitations and highway resurfacing for existing infrastructure. These projects may act cumulatively with potential Project changes to wildlife and fish habitat, potentially acting cumulative with change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

The RFD ID 24 (Goliath Gold Project) involves the construction, operation and decommissioning of an open pit and underground gold mine located 20 km east of the City of Dryden. Most of the properties associated with the Goliath Gold Complex have been privately owned since around 1900 and have been acquired by Treasury Metals by means of private purchase agreements. Portions of these private land parcels will be developed for the Goliath Gold Project.

The Project, including the ROW and access roads, will cross the private properties owned by Treasury Metals and will require additional changes to the land use within these private parcels. Hydro One will continue to engage with Treasury Metals regarding land rights. The Goliath Gold Project is included within the cumulative effects analysis as there is potential for spatial and temporal overlap of net effects between this RFD and the Project that include change in land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

Agnico Eagle Hammond Reef Gold Mine

The RFD ID 30 Agnico Eagle Hammond Reef Gold Mine includes the proposed construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment of a new open-pit gold mine. Mining would occur for 11 years, with an ore production capacity of 60,000 tonnes per day. The mine is located outside of the RSA; however, the access road and transmission line cross the Project RSA. The Project is included within the cumulative effects analysis as there is potential for spatial and temporal overlap of net effects between this RFD and the Project that may include change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

Rehabilitation of Steep Rock Mine

The RFD ID 25 (Rehabilitation of Steep Rock Mine) involves the stabilization and remediation of the former Steep Rock Mine site just north of Atikokan, including the potential raising of water levels in the mine pit areas which will increase the size of Steep Rock Lake. It is expected that the former mine pit water levels will take several decades to reach their static elevation, so the cumulative effects assessment would only consider net effects identified to occur during Project operations and maintenance.

Although the MNRF plans to engage with potentially affected groups as appropriate throughout rehabilitation efforts, it is possible that the project may affect the use of Crown and/or private lands dependant on the final pit lake elevation. The Project is included within the cumulative effects analysis as there is potential for spatial and temporal overlap of net effects between this

RFD and the operations and maintenance of the Project that may include change in land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

Potential Deep Geological Repository Site

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is currently investigating two areas for a potential deep geological repository site including the Ignace and Bruce County areas. At this stage, it is unknown which area will be selected and the final location of the site within each respective area. If the Ignace location is selected, additional changes to the current land use will be required to accommodate the facility including the conversion of Crown land to private land. Therefore, this RFD is included within the cumulative effects analysis as there is potential for spatial and temporal overlap of net effects between this RFD and the operations and maintenance phase of the Project that include changes to Crown lands, and possibly changes to land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

Commercial Forestry

The RFD ID 31 (commercial forestry) involves overall general commercial forestry activities that take place within the RSA. This includes activities that may take place in the Boundary Waters Forest (includes the Crossroute-Sapawe Forest), the Dog River-Matawin Forest, the Dryden Forest, the English River Forest, the Lakehead Forest and the Wabigoon Forest (see Figure 7.1.9-3).

Commercial forestry operations occurring throughout forest management areas are included within the cumulative effects analysis as there is potential for spatial and temporal overlap of net effects between this RFD and the Project that may include change in land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

As noted in Section 7.1, the Project footprint overlaps very small percentages of the FMU’s crossed: Wabigoon FMU (0.2%), the Dog River-Matawin FMU (0.1%), the Boundary Waters FMU (0.1%), the Dryden FMU (0.2%), and the Lakehead FMU (0.1%) (Table 7.1-20 Forest Management Units and Harvest Area in the Study Areas). The Project overlaps only 0.01% of lands located within the English River FMU. Direct effects to the Black Forest FMU are not anticipated as it is not overlapped by the Project footprint; however, indirect effects may occur as this FMU is located within the LSA/RSA.

Summary

A summary of the potential cumulative effects on change in land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices for RFDs is provided in Table 7.8-12.

Table 7.8-12: Summary of Cumulative Effect Interactions for Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources

Project/Activity	Potential Cumulative Effect	Rationale for Potential Cumulative Effect
ID # 6-10, 12-13, 17-23: Culvert Rehabilitation and Highway Resurfacing Projects	Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Disturbance to traffic and within work areas for construction may act cumulative with Project activities that affect change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.
ID # 24: Treasury Metals Inc. Goliath Gold Project	Change in land available for Métis use Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Areas of land use for harvest and potential access to harvest areas shared by NWOMC and Region 2 are overlapped where the Project footprint crosses the Goliath Gold Project. Potential visibility of Project elements and Project-related construction disturbance (e.g., industrial traffic, dust) in combination with potential disturbance through noise from Goliath Gold project activities, may result in change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices.

Project/Activity	Potential Cumulative Effect	Rationale for Potential Cumulative Effect
ID # 25: Rehabilitation of Steep Rock Mine	Change in land available for Métis use Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	The rehabilitation of Steep Rock Mine will result in the potential raising of water levels to the final end pit lake elevation (described below). This may disrupt areas currently used for access to areas of harvest or change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices, resulting in avoidance behaviours given the visual change on the landscape. These changes may overlap with areas that may be avoided in vicinity of the operating ROW or maintenance activities due to change in change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices. Project effects are predicted to be limited within the LSA.
ID # 29: Potential deep geological repository site	Change in land available for Métis use Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	If the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation – Ignace area location is selected, conversion of Crown land to private land is expected and will result in potential loss of availability of land for use, affect change in harvesting practices (timing windows). While it is expected that NWMO will continue to engage with Indigenous communities, to reduce potential for effects to harvested resources, cultural sites and access to sites for cultural practices, there is potential for cumulative effects where effects overlap with Project effects within the LSA to change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices.

Project/Activity	Potential Cumulative Effect	Rationale for Potential Cumulative Effect
ID # 30: Agnico Eagle Hammond Reef Gold Mine	Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Development and use of road to access the mine may act cumulative with Project activities that affect change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place” and reduction in cultural practices.
ID # 31: Commercial Forestry	Change in land available for Métis use Change in harvesting practices (timing windows) Change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge Disruption of “sense of place” Reduction in cultural practices	Ongoing forestry activities including active clearing or development of access may interact with the Project during construction, and operations and maintenance result in change in land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices in areas of harvest or along access roads with the RSA. While it is expected that Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL) holders will continue to engage with Indigenous communities to reduce potential for effects to harvested resources, cultural sites and access to sites for the exercise of rights, there is potential for cumulative effects where effects overlap with short-term changes in access during construction or areas that may be avoided in vicinity of the operating ROW or maintenance activities due to disruption to ‘sense of place’.

7.8.12.3 Cumulative Effects Characterization

Cumulative effects may occur where the Project and other RFD both cause similar net effects within Project boundaries. As discussed in the previous section, net effects to changes to land available for Métis use, change in harvesting practices (timing windows), change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices may occur due to Project and RFD activities that result in effects that overlap spatially and temporally.

The cumulative negative effect to Métis rights, interests and use of lands and resources for NWOMC and Region 2 considering changes to land available for Métis use is assessed as being of low magnitude, as changes to the landscape and Crown land are uncertain for some RFDs but could result in a direct loss or indirect alteration of current practices. The geographic extent of the cumulative effect would be local. The duration of the net cumulative effect is generally predicted to be short-term considering construction related effects and long-term for operations. The net cumulative effects would be continual considering the duration of the cumulative effect associated with the structures and permanent access roads of the Project. Likelihood of occurrence has generally predicted to be probable for RFDs such as Steep Rock Mine rehabilitation or on-going forestry, but recognizing some effects such as those from the potential deep geological repository site are wholly dependent on which site is selected for that project.

The cumulative negative effect to Métis rights, interests and use of lands and resources for NWOMC and Region 2 considering changes to change in harvesting practices (timing windows) is assessed as being of negligible to low magnitude, as timing for activities such as construction are uncertain for some RFDs but could result in a disturbance to timing of harvesting practices. The geographic extent of the cumulative effect would be regional where effects in change in harvest timing in one area may affect the practice in another. The duration of the net cumulative effect is generally predicted to be short-term considering construction related effects where Project and RFD effects are more likely to overlap in space and time. The net cumulative effects would be continual considering the duration of the cumulative effect associated with the structures and permanent access roads of the Project. Likelihood of occurrence has generally predicted to be possible for RFDs, recognizing some effects such as those from the potential deep geological repository site are wholly dependent on which site is selected for that project.

The cumulative negative effect to Métis rights, interests and use of lands and resources for NWOMC and Region 2 considering change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge, disruption of “sense of place”, and reduction in cultural practices are assessed as being of low to moderate magnitude, as additional industrial activities affecting areas of harvest and cultural practice may change the cultural practice of the area, but recognizing most of the RFDs affect limited geographic areas. The geographic extent of the cumulative effect would be regional. The duration of the net cumulative effect is generally predicted to be long-term, over the life of an RFD. The net cumulative effects would be continual considering the duration of the cumulative effect associated with the structures and permanent access roads of the Project. Likelihood of

occurrence has generally predicted to be possible recognizing some effects such as those from the potential deep geological repository site are wholly dependent on which site is selected for that project.

The summary of predicted net cumulative effects is shown in Table 7.8-13.

Table 7.8-13: Summary of Predicted Net Cumulative Effects on Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources - NWOMC and Region 2

Criteria	Net Effect	Direct/ Indirect	Direction	Magnitude	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Irreversibility	Frequency	Likelihood of Occurrence
Loss of Land/ Change in Priority Rights	Net change in land available for Métis use	Direct	Negative	Low	Local	Short-term and long-term	Continual to Infrequent	Probable
Harvesting/ Sites	Net change to harvesting practices (timing windows)	Direct	Negative	Negligible to Low	Regional	Short-term	Infrequent	Possible
Harvesting/ Sites	Net change in teaching/transmittal of knowledge	Indirect	Negative	Negligible to Low	Regional	Long-term	Continual	Possible
Cultural Identity	Net disruption of “sense of place” Net reduction in cultural practices	Direct/Indirect	Negative	Low to Moderate	Regional	Long-term	Continual	Possible

7.8.12.4 Assessment of Significance of Cumulative Effects

The general assessment method for assessment of significance of cumulative effects is informed by the interaction between the significance factors, with magnitude, duration, and geographic extent identified in Section 5.0 as the most important factors. As set out in Section 5.6.5, a predicted net cumulative effect on the Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources criteria would be considered significant if it is assessed as:

- High magnitude;
- Medium-term to permanent in duration;
- Occurring at any geographic extent; and
- Representing a management concern.

To be considered significant, the effects would have to result in substantial interference in the use of affected lands and resources by Métis communities/citizens for the current and traditional exercise of their Indigenous rights and interests.

Taking into account the implementation of the mitigation measures, the magnitude of the cumulative effects for changes to the Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources during the construction and operation and maintenance stages is low to moderate. With the effective implementation of mitigation measures likely for the RFD's assessed including working closely with Métis communities to reduce potential for effects, the cumulative effects in combination with the effects of the Project are not predicted to represent a substantial interference in the continued opportunity for Métis communities to be able to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights. However, Hydro One notes that the characterization of net effects is an interpretation by Hydro One and their consultants, which has been informed by the input of communities shared through comments on the Draft EA. Hydro One recognizes that each Indigenous community is best positioned to provide context on how opportunities to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights are taken.

7.8.13 Monitoring

This section identifies any recommended effects monitoring to verify the prediction of the effects assessment and to verify the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and compliance monitoring to evaluate whether the Project has been constructed, implemented, and operated in accordance with the commitments made in the EA Report.

Monitoring for all components of the environment are relevant to confirming the predictions in the assessment of effects to Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources. As noted in Section 10.0, the ongoing development of monitoring programs will also be informed by

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and the results of Indigenous Traditional Land and Resource Use studies completed for the Project.

Hydro One commits to sharing the list of EA commitments defined for the Project and the associated monitoring framework (Sections 10.3 and 10.4) with Indigenous communities. The purpose of sharing and engaging on these proposed plans and commitments will be to provide communities with the opportunity to comment on and participate in the development of the monitoring and follow-up programs and plans. Hydro One is also committed to employing Indigenous Environmental Monitors and/or Guardians and will collaborate with communities in implementing monitoring of Project-related effects and compliance monitoring throughout all Project stages.

In order to evaluate effects on Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources, Métis community members will be encouraged to share any issues and concerns with Hydro One and its contractor during the construction stage. Monitoring of complaints and issue resolution will help minimize or remove any on-going effects to land and resource use.

7.8.14 Prediction Confidence in the Assessment

Prediction confidence is discussed qualitatively for the overall effects assessment results for Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources, after accounting for the steps used to reduce uncertainty.

Primary factors affecting confidence and uncertainty in this assessment are related to:

- The availability and quality of information defining the Project components and baseline characterization data (e.g., accuracy of land use and licensed or culturally defined spatial data);
- The availability of IK and studies that may further inform the assessment;
- Level of understanding and the ability to predict how Project components or effects are likely to change land and resource use or cultural practices, including perceptions of quality of experience and sense of place;
- Level of understanding of the drivers of change in indicators and associated impacts to Métis land and resource use; and
- Level of certainty associated with the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.

Uncertainty in the assessment was reduced by:

- Using a conservative approach (e.g., assuming a high probability that effects may occur);
- The use of current net effects and cumulative effects information; and

- Commitment to further discussion with Indigenous communities through the EA review process.

The confidence in the effects assessment for Métis rights, interests and use of land and resources is low to moderate. A community-led, Project-specific IK study by NWOMC and Region 2 has been undertaken and shared, along with comments shared on the Draft EA which are referenced in this assessment. Comments from NWOMC and Region 2 have noted that on-going discussion with the community is needed for appropriate interpretation of TKLUS data and understanding of potential for effects to communities. Hydro One has committed to on-going discussion and to working with NWOMC and Region 2 in developing plans considering specific affected areas for harvesting resources or known sites that are important for the next generation to define potential refinements to the Project footprint; or other site-specific measures to reduce Project effects. Hydro One has committed to considering IK information whenever it is received during the Project. This commitment is reflected through the characterization of baseline and in the consideration of effects in this section. Information shared by Red Sky Metis Independent Nation notes that no specific areas of concern were identified to date as affected by the Project.

An understanding of the projects to assess cumulative effects is based on the availability of detailed descriptions of individual projects and activities, a consideration of their proposed geographic context, the likelihood of their occurrence and experience and/or reference of the potential effects of these projects from similar documented developments. Since the amount of information on many projects is limited and there is uncertainty about their occurrence and their net effects, confidence is low to moderate.

Remaining uncertainty was primarily addressed by conservative assumptions that overestimated rather than underestimated potential effects of the Project. Ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities on the EA Report and findings of IK studies as they are available will improve confidence in the effects assessment and cumulative effects.

7.8.15 Criteria Summary

Table 7.8-14 presents a summary of the assessment results by criteria.

Table 7.8-14: Métis Rights, Interests and Use of Land and Resources Summary

Criteria	Assessment Summary
• Loss of Land/ Change in Priority Rights • Harvesting/ Sites • Cultural Identity	• With the implementation of mitigation measures, the net effects and cumulative effects considering RFD's are not predicted to represent a substantial interference in the continued opportunity for Métis citizens to be able to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights. • Hydro One notes that the characterization of net effects is an interpretation by Hydro One and their consultants, which has been informed by the input of communities shared through comments on the Draft EA. Hydro One recognizes that each Indigenous community is best positioned to provide context on how opportunities to undertake use of land and resources for the current and traditional exercise of Indigenous rights are taken.

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