



July 12, 2022

CIAR File No.: 83566

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Subject: Natural Resources Canada's Submission in Response to the Designation Request for the Snake Lake Reservoir Expansion Project

On April 22nd, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) requested that Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) provide information in response to the Designation Request for the Snake Lake Reservoir Expansion (the Project) located northwest of Brooks, Alberta. On May 6th, a suspension of the 90-day timeline was granted to the Proponent in order to provide sufficient time to address information requested by the Agency. On July 12th, the timeline resumed.

NRCan is responding to this Designation Request pursuant to subsection 13(1) of the *Impact Assessment Act*. Details of NRCan's response can be found in the appendix below.

If you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail at walker.smith@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca or by phone at (613) 447-2892.

Thank you,

<Original signed by>

Walker Smith
Environmental Assessment Officer
Office of the Chief Scientist

cc: Laurence Davidson – Team Lead, Impact Assessment

ATTACHMENT

Federal Authority Advice Record: Designation Request under IAA

Response due by July 21, 2022

Snake Lake Reservoir Expansion Project

Department/Agency	Natural Resources Canada
Lead Contact	Walker Smith, Environmental Assessment Officer
Full Address	588 Booth Street, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0E4
Email	walker.smith@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca
Telephone	613-447-2892
Alternate Departmental Contact	Laurence Davidson (laurence.davidson@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca)

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1. Has your department or agency considered whether it has an interest in the Project; exercised a power or performed a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project; or taken any course of action (including provision of financial assistance) that would allow the Project to proceed in whole or in part?

NRCan does not have an interest in the Project, nor has it taken any course of action (e.g., regulatory decision, funding, etc.) to enable the Project to proceed in whole or in part.

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2. Is it probable that your department or agency may be required to exercise a power or perform a duty or function related to the Project to enable it to proceed?

Based on available information, it is not probable that NRCan will be required to exercise a power or perform a duty or function related to the Project.

3. If your department or agency will exercise a power or perform a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project, will it involve public and Indigenous consultation?

Not applicable.

4. Is your department or agency in possession of specialist or expert information or knowledge that may be relevant to any potential adverse effects within federal jurisdiction caused by the Project or adverse direct or incidental effects stemming from the Project?

In relation to the Project, NRCan is in possession of expertise related to hydrogeology (i.e., groundwater quantity, dynamics and flows). NRCan may further refine its expertise as more information becomes available related to the Project.

5. Has your department or agency had previous contact or involvement with the proponent or other parties in relation to the Project?

No.

6. From the perspective of the mandate and area(s) of expertise of your department or agency, does the Project have the potential to cause adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or adverse direct or incidental effects as described in section 2 of IAA? Could any of those effects be managed through legislative or regulatory mechanisms administered by your department or agency? If a licence, permit, authorization or approval may be issued, could it include conditions in relation to those effects?

From the perspective of the legislative mandate of the Department, NRCan is unaware of any potential Project-related adverse effects within federal jurisdiction. Through its various research programs, NRCan is able to provide scientific expertise and advice to other Federal Authorities as needed, to support their assessment of potential effects within federal jurisdiction (e.g., Department of Fisheries & Oceans and impacts to fish and fish habitat, and Environment & Climate Change Canada and impacts to Species at Risk).

7. Does your department or agency have a program or additional authority that may be relevant and could be considered as a potential solution to concerns expressed about the Project? In particular, the following issues have been raised by the requestor:
- effects to fish and fish habitat;
 - adverse effects on migratory birds and species at risk and their critical habitats. Special concern species at risk that may be affected includes Great Plains Toad and Northern Leopard Frog. Threatened species at risk that may be affected includes Thick-Billed McCown's Longspur, Tiny Cryptantha, and Rocky Mountain Sculpin. Endangered species at risk that may be affected includes Burrowing Owl, Greater Short-horned Lizard, and Lake Sturgeon (Endangered status under COSEWIC). Other species at risk that may be affected are noted in Appendix 1 of the Request for Designation;
 - changes to the environment on federal lands, including reserve lands and Canadian Forces Base Suffield;
 - changes to the environment that occur in a province or territory other than the one where the Project is taking place, including Saskatchewan;
 - changes to the environment that occur outside of Canada;
 - contribution to climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions and loss of carbon storage capacity by converting native grasslands to irrigated agricultural lands;
 - changes to the environment that could affect the Indigenous peoples of Canada; and,
 - changes occurring to the health, social, or economic conditions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

No.

8. Does your department or agency have information about the interests of Indigenous groups in the vicinity of the Project; the exercise of their rights protected by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*; and/or any consultation and accommodation undertaken, underway, or anticipated to address adverse impacts to the section 35 rights of the Indigenous groups?

No.

9. If your department has guidance material that would be helpful to the proponent or the Agency, please include these as attachments or hyperlinks in your response.

Not applicable.

Walker Smith

Name of departmental / agency
responder

Environmental Assessment Officer

Title of responder

July 12, 2022

Date