

NORTHERN ROAD LINK NEWSLETTER

Issue 6 | August 2022

NEW PROGRESS

Since the last newsletter, the Northern Road Link (NRL) Team has:

- Provided the draft Initial Project Description (IPD) to the Impact Assessment Agency (the Agency) for an informal review
- Posted the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) on April 29, 2022 for a 60-day comment period. Project Team is working on responses to ToR comments received

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Submission of formal IPD to the Agency
- Ongoing 2022 field surveys
- Ongoing meetings and presentations with Indigenous Communities regarding the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Program
- Resume livestream and radio shows
- Responses to ToR comments



Attawapiskat River

Summer/Fall 2022

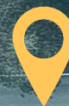
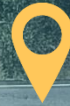
Ongoing Engagement, IK Program, Field Studies, and Submission of IPD and DPD

Early 2023

Start Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment

Winter 2023

Public and Indigenous community open houses



THE FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The federal impact assessment (IA) process includes the following 5 key steps:

1. Planning

The IA is planned with input from the public and Indigenous communities. The proponent submits the Initial and Detailed Project Description (IPD and DPD) to the Agency, who then creates the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines that state what must be included in the Impact Statement.

2. Impact Statement

The proponent conducts multiple technical studies and gathers public feedback to prepare the Impact Statement.

3. Impact Assessment

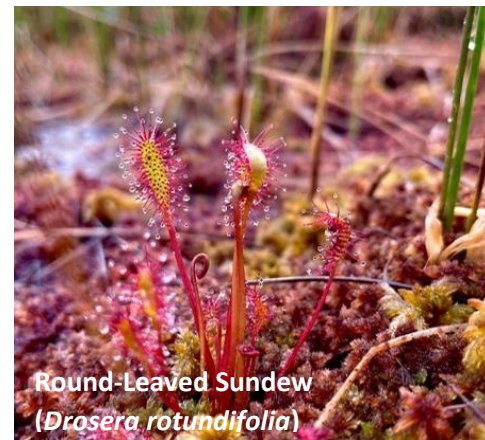
The Agency uses information from the Impact Statement and consultation to prepare an Impact Assessment Report (IAR), which is shared online for public comments.

4. Decision Making

The IAR and Crown consultation outcomes inform the Minister or Governor in Council's decision on whether a project's potential negative impacts are in the public interest. If yes, the Minister must establish conditions for the proponent in a Decision Statement.

5. Post Decision

The Agency is active in verifying the project complies with the Decision Statements and correcting non-compliance.



Round-Leaved Sundew
(*Drosera rotundifolia*)



Fairy Slipper Orchid
(*Calypso bulbosa*)

NRL Initial Project Description (IPD)

The IPD for the NRL Project is currently in development. The IPD will provide a summary of the proposed project, detailing the project purpose and need and outlining the proposed studies to be completed. This includes engagement and consultation activities with the public and Indigenous communities, Indigenous knowledge collection, and a summary of the Project's potential effects.

The IPD will be submitted in summer/fall 2022 for public and Indigenous community consultation and regulatory review. Following the submission and its review, the Agency will create a summary of issues that will inform the Project Impact Statement (Step Two of the IA process).



Treed Bog in Study Area

WHAT WE HEARD ON THE PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONTACT INFORMATION

<http://northernroadlink.ca/>

1-888-515-3607

info@northernroadlink.com



The proposed Terms of Reference for the NRL Project was released for a 60-day public review period from April 29, 2022, to June 28, 2022.

The following is a summary of the key themes and select questions received on the Proposed ToR:

Aboriginal Treaty Rights and Interests (ATRI)

Consideration of the Rights and Interests that interact with the Project and/or Project activities including Valued Components. Concern that the EA will not properly assess potential effects of ATRI and requests that should a First Nation undertake their own assessment of potential impacts to their rights, their assessment will be considered in the EA.

Adequacy of Legislation

Concern that the *Environmental Assessment Act* requirements are less stringent than the *Impact Assessment Act* in terms of environmental protection and ATRI.

Cumulative Effects

Commenters noted that a comprehensive Regional Assessment should be the preferred assessment method to determine the cumulative effects of the three proposed road projects (Webequie Supply Road, Marten Falls Community Access Road and NRL) on the Ring of Fire area, and that the three road projects should be included in the Regional Assessment. Commenters requested that the EA for the NRL Project not proceed until completion of the Regional Assessment. Commenters also noted that since the three proposed road projects will be connected and have overlapping proponentcy, they should be assessed as a single project to better capture cumulative effects.

Indigenous Knowledge

Requests for confirmation that Indigenous Knowledge will be considered and incorporated to the EA and clarification on how it will be used in the assessment.

Record of Consultation (RoC)

Requests for various edits to the categorization of stakeholders.

Impact on Peatlands

Concern that the impacts from potential peatland disturbance/removal is not quantified. Concerns included removal of peatlands as carbon sinks, release of carbon/methane contributing to climate change and potential affects to the water table.

Consultation and Engagement

Desire for more robust and meaningful consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities, that respects their protocols and is mindful of the crises being faced by communities (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, boil water advisory), to fulfill the EA requirements and capture the necessary impacts to ATRI.

Project Alternatives and Assessment

Concern that the proposed alternative means to carry out the Project and associated evaluation criteria have been scoped too narrowly. Specifically, comments noted that routes that do not lead to the Ring of Fire were not considered and that the evaluation criteria should be expanded to include consideration of mitigation and additional social indicators.

Socio-Economic Resources

Desire for local and regional Study Area Valued Component to include both direct and indirect, positive and negative impacts.

Effects to Species At Risk (SAR)

Commenters requested the ToR clarify language regarding impacts to SAR and SAR habitat. Commenters requested that the ToR state that there is the potential for the Project to have effects on SAR as well as their habitat.

Comments and questions are being reviewed. Responses are anticipated to be provided in **Summer/Fall 2022**.