

Cedar-Kiteen Wildlife Connectivity Corridor – Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Northwest Transmission Line

The Kalum LRMP provided government policy direction regarding the Cedar-Kiteen wildlife connectivity corridor, and it was legally designated under the Kalum Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP). Non-forestry related developments are not legally bound by the Kalum SRMP legal objectives which were designed specifically to apply to forestry (i.e. Land Use Objectives Regulations apply only to major forest licensees). Non-forestry related activities however do need to consider this direction in their projects. The Province and the BC Hydro did review and consider the connectivity corridor and it was determined that mitigation measures could appropriately address the values of the connectivity corridor, particularly given the significant additional capital costs of a re-routing option.

The function of the corridor is to facilitate wildlife movement between the landscape units in the spring and fall. Appropriate professionals will be engaged in the final design and implementation of the following mitigation measures. This document has been prepared to inform decision makers for both the Environmental Assessment Certificate Review process and any operational permitting should an EA Certificate be approved.

Infrastructure and Access:

- Tower locations have been adjusted as much as possible to minimize impact on the full retention polygon.
- New road construction will be required to make clearing and tower construction practicable. Roads shall be constructed to minimize disturbance footprint, maintain natural drainage and to facilitate future decommissioning.
- Following construction the road will be fully decommissioned. Decommissioning shall consist of full pullback to the original ground contour, removal of drainage structures and re-vegetation with appropriate species and densities to mitigate potential impacts to wildlife movement and facilitate planned vegetation management prescriptions.

Clearing:

- Clearing prescriptions will be made with a focus on mitigative measures to minimize impact to wildlife movement through the connectivity corridor:
 - Clearing width generally includes an initial wider clearing (80-100m) to ensure line safety and security and a long-term maintained width of approximately 40m. Initial clearing in the wider area will be “feathered”, i.e. the dominant trees are cut to the clearing boundary and lower trees are left for a few meters in and the understory is left for a few meters beyond that. This may require modified and more labour intensive clearing practices.
 - Centerline layout and forest clearing assessment for the connectivity corridor indicates that clearing initial clearing widths will vary from 52-100m. Trees are smaller at the south end (wetter area) and are taller going towards the north end. The section in the full retention area should have a clearing width of about 60m to 70m owing to shorter trees and higher

- conductor height. All efforts will be made to adjust clearing boundaries and clearing practices to reduce clearing width and intensity.
- The Vegetation Clearing Prescription Component Plan will set out vegetation clearing prescriptions prepared by a professional forester and will be specific to this area. A professional biologist will provide input into these clearing prescriptions. This component plan will be made available for review by agencies, First Nations and the Nisga'a Nation.
 - Screening of the corridor through vegetation management and clearing prescriptions has and will be considered, but effectiveness may be limited in usefulness due to the elevated position of the forestry road relative to the connectivity corridor.
 - The CEMP contains provisions to avoid work during black and grizzly bear hibernation season in high quality bear denning habitat and, if work occurs during those seasons, to conduct pre-construction surveys and establish buffers around the dens that are found.
 - Construction monitoring measures are in place under the Construction Environmental Monitoring Plan (CEMP) to evaluate compliance mitigation objectives.

Vegetation Management:

- Long term vegetation management prescriptions should prioritize species, densities and heights to mitigate potential impacts to wildlife movement. These practices may require a heightened level of vegetation management.
- Clearing prescriptions and widths will inform future vegetation management prescriptions.
- The Transmission Vegetation Management Group is moving to implement Cengea which is a GIS resource planning tool to manage road and ROW vegetation inventory and management information. ROW maintenance requirements for this area during the operational phase could be included in Cengea to ensure the appropriate maintenance prescriptions for this area are continued (Vegetation managers will have to know that they have to maintain a ROW of less than 80-100.)
- An adaptive management approach will be applied to vegetation management. Monitoring will occur periodically during vegetation management cycle to ensure effectiveness of the vegetation management prescriptions. Results of monitoring will inform future vegetation management prescriptions.

Future resource Activity:

- Final clearing area will be reported to MNRO for the partial and full retention polygons. BC agencies will consider potential residual impacts from the transmission line in any future decisions regarding resource activity within the connectivity corridor.