

Community Access Road Project Newsletter

September 2020



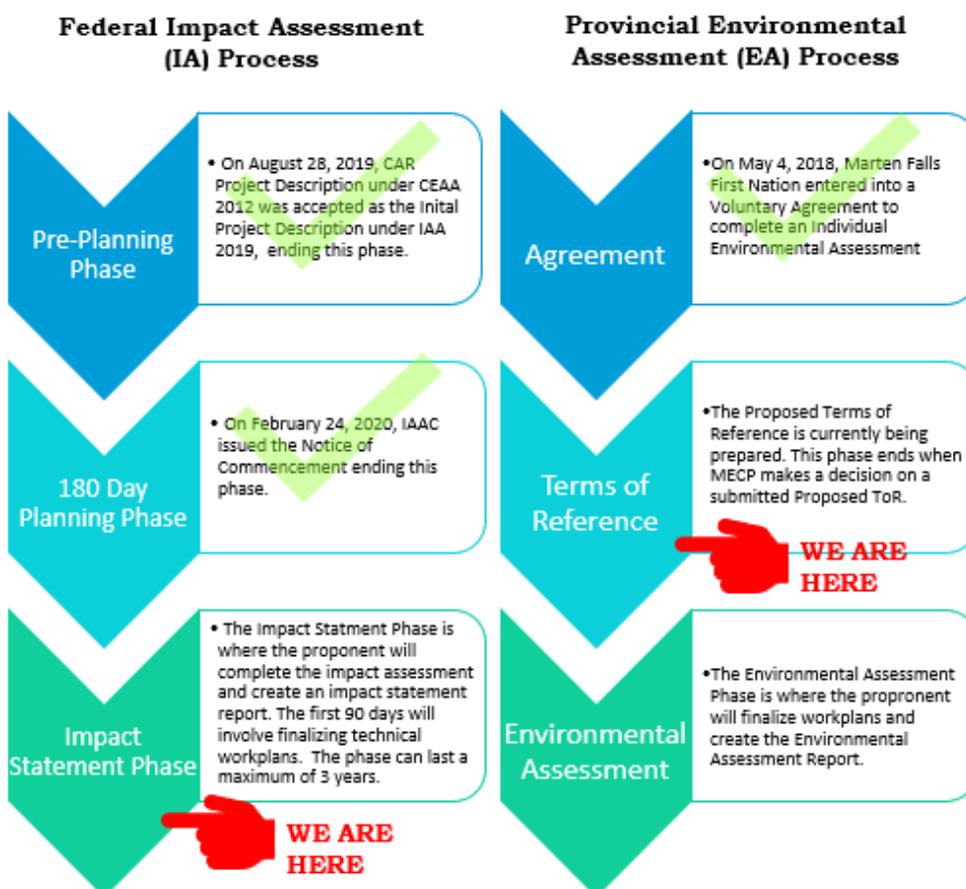
The intent of our project newsletter is to describe and explain current and ongoing activities by the Marten Falls First Nation (MFFN) Community Access Road (CAR) Project Team, and to answer common questions that come up as the provincial environmental assessment (EA) and federal impact assessment (IA) moves forward. For the most up to date information, visit our website at www.martenfallsaccessroad.ca. If you have questions, please reach out by email at info@martenfallsaccessroad.ca or by phone 1-800-764-9114.

Coordinating the EA/IA Processes

In consideration of funding and legislated timelines, the coordination and scheduling of the federal IA and the provincial EA processes for the MFFN CAR project generally falls into the hands of the proponent. Currently, the IA process is ahead of the EA as shown in the Figure 1 below. The IA process will remain ahead of the EA process until a Proposed ToR is submitted to Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and a decision is made. After the Minister's decision is received, the provincial and federal processes will both be in their respective assessment phases.

MECP generally does not complete a technical review of Study Plans in advance of Terms of Reference submission, to ensure that both the provincial and federal technical experts are reviewing the same versions of the study plan documents, MECP has agreed to review Study Plans at the same time as the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC). Study Plans are documents that outline how we plan to collect baseline information and analyze it during the environmental assessment. MECP and IAAC have begun a coordinated technical review of the Study Plans. This is in line with the coordinated process, where a single Environmental Assessment/Impact Statement report that will satisfy both the provincial EA process and federal IA process will be prepared. The next major phase of coordinated government technical review will happen once the draft EA & Impact Statement is complete.

Figure 1: Diagram showing CAR Project progression through the EA/IA processes.



ToR Update

AECOM has prepared responses to all comments submitted through the Draft ToR public comment period. First Nations who submitted comments had the opportunity to review and discuss our proposed responses if desired.

All 22 First Nations we must engage with received a copy of their community specific record of consultation for review. The primary purpose of the review was to allow First Nations the opportunity to identify sensitive information to be protected from the public record.

All feedback received by July 10, 2020 will be included in the ToR that is scheduled to be submitted to MECP later this fall. Feedback received after July 10, 2020 will be addressed during the EA. Once submitted

for review, MECP will facilitate a comment period on the Proposed ToR.

Community Access Road Project Newsletter September 2020



Study Plans

Study Plans provide the road map for how data will be collected and analyzed to characterize baseline conditions for specific valued components. Study Plans are technical documents written to allow the regulators to assess whether our planned studies are sufficient to meet federal and provincial requirements. In total we have 20 Study Plans listed in the table below with a high-level description of each plan. The Study Plans, like the environment, are all interconnected, and data collected under one study plan may be part of another study plan. This is particularly true for the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and Interests and Consultation programs which will document indigenous knowledge and feedback and convey the information to technical disciplines for incorporation into the provincial EA and federal IA processes. Our primary means to communicate to First Nations and stakeholders is through our consultation program and communication leads.

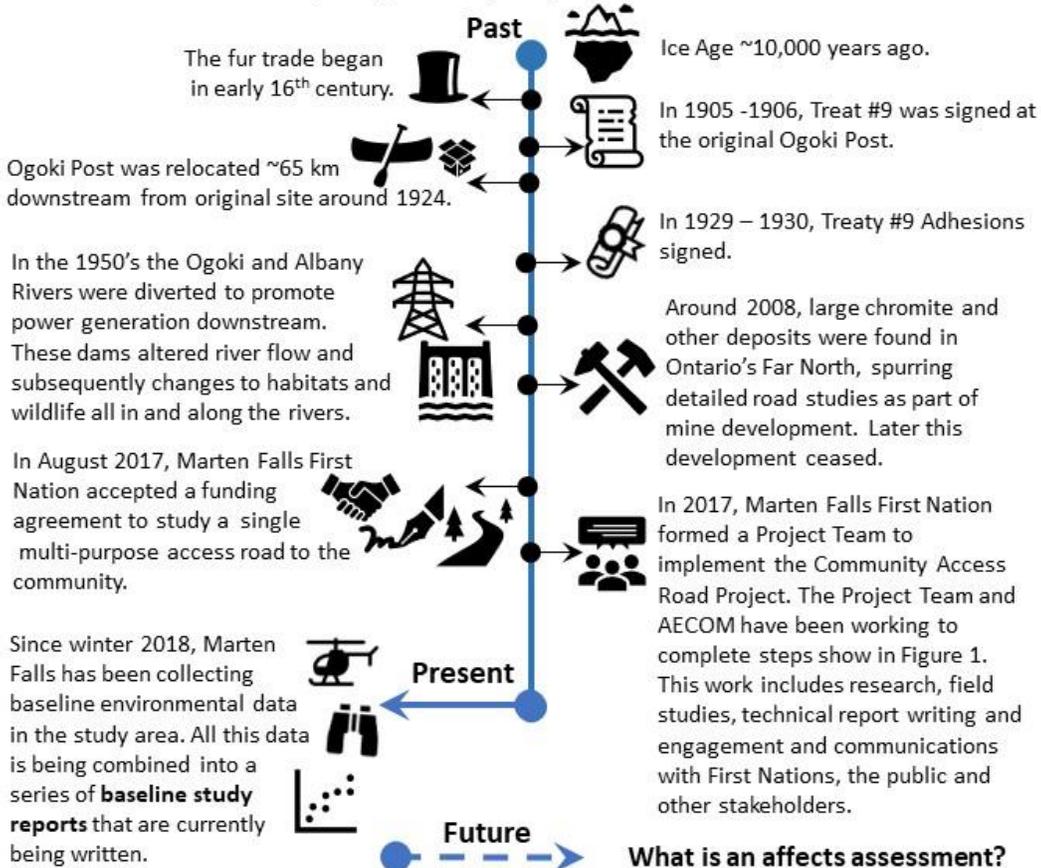
Study Plan Name	Purpose of Study Plan
Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and Interests	Aims to identify aboriginal and treaty rights and interests directly impacted by the project and collect indigenous knowledge to support other Study Plans.
Acoustic Environment	Aims to characterize existing noise levels in the project study area and how the road will affect noise levels if constructed
Atmospheric Environment	Aims to collect baseline air quality data and characterize the existing atmospheric environment in the project area and potential affects if the road is built.
Climate Change	Looks at how climate change could affect the road and how the project will potentially affect greenhouse gas emissions.
Cultural Heritage	Looks to characterize existing archeology, or the study of human history and prehistory, and other heritage resources – western science’s closest equivalent to indigenous knowledge.
Socio-Community Assessment	Looks at how the social environment and community features will be affected by the project including changes to population and demographics, education opportunities, houses, services, infrastructure, and community well-being.
Economic	Aims to look at how the economic environment and features may be affected by the project including the regional economy, prices, business environment, labour market, training, and public finances.
Land and Resource Use	Looks at how the road will affect land and resource use, recreation, and navigation with a focus on use not related to aboriginal treaty rights and interests.
Human Health and Community Safety	Aims to collect data to address issues related to: biophysical determinants of health including air quality, noise, vibration, country foods and drinking water; and, social determinant of health including diet, substance abuse, access to health services, food availability, psychosocial factors, violence and criminal activity.
Physiography, Geology, Terrain and Soils	Aims to collect enough data to characterize the shape, rocks, soils that make up the existing landscape and identify potential affects of the road and how to avoid or reduce negative affects.
Ground Water	Aims to collect enough data to characterize the existing conditions and identify potential affects of the road on groundwater flows and quality in the project area.
Fish and Fish Habitat	Aims to collect enough data to characterize fish and fish habitat across the study area and to identify potential affects of the road and how adverse affects can be avoided or minimized.
Surface Water	Aims to collect enough data to characterize the existing conditions and potential affects of the road on surface water and surface water users in the project area including how to avoid or minimize adverse affects.
Peatlands	Looks to characterize existing conditions and geographic extents of the peatlands within the project study areas that will be directly impacted or potentially impacted by the road and how to avoid or minimize adverse affects.
Vegetation	Looks to characterize existing vegetation conditions and geographic extents of different vegetation types within the project study areas that will be directly impacted or potential impacted by the road and how to avoid or minimize adverse affects.
Wildlife	Looks at characterizing existing wildlife and species such as birds, bats, amphibians, and mammals, that will be direction and indirectly affected by this project and identify how to minimize adverse impacts. Does not include the study of fish or ungulates.
Ungulates	Ungulates is a scientific biology term that refers to a group of animals that all have hooves. The Ungulates study plan focuses on collecting data to characterize conditions of moose and caribou in the project area and identifying potential affects of road construction.
Visual Aesthetics	Aims to describe how the road and landscape will look after road construction.
Consultation	Describes how we plan to consult First Nations, public, other stakeholders, and regulators.



Baseline Study versus Affects Assessment

Currently, we continue to develop Study Plans and collect and document information to describe the environment in the project area as you see it today – the baseline. Once we have a baseline for the project area as it is now, AECOM will make comparisons to the baseline to assess and describe the potential effects of the road to each of the valued components outlined in the Study Plans – the affects assessment. After the effects of the project are identified work can begin to look for ways to avoid or minimize the adverse effects on each valued component and maximize benefits of the project. Although we know there is a long history of western societies impacts on the landscape in the project area as shown in the timeline below, the purpose of this EA/IA is to focus on describing what is there now and how it will change if the road is constructed. It is important to understand that we will have limited ability to look at effects of past activities like the dams and future projects like mines. Cumulative impacts can only be assessed for reasonably foreseeable projects with publicly available information and the full impacts of mining are best left to individual mine proponents and their experts.

Timeline of Key Regionally Important Historical Events



What are baseline study reports?



A **baseline study report** will describe one component of the environment as it exists now in detail. These reports will acknowledge but not describe affects of past events.

Baseline studies create a single snap shot of the environment during a period of time following western science protocols set out in policy and regulations. The results of the baseline reports are use to complete an **affects assessment** during the environmental assessment and, to compare monitoring results to in the future to detect changes to environment features, if any.



What is an affects assessment?

Technical experts will look at the **baseline study reports** and then think about and describe what affects, positive or negative, will happen to each environmental feature if the road is built. Once project affects are identified, the next step is to start looking at what we can do to can avoid, minimize or reduce negative impacts and/or maximize project benefits.

Community Access Road Project Newsletter September 2020



What does this all mean to a grassroots project follower?

AECOM and the Project Team have been working with MFFN to develop the Terms of Reference document for nearly two years. We engaged with Marten Falls First Nation membership in Ogoki and Thunder Bay throughout the development to present and ask for feedback on the content of the document before the public release of the Draft Terms of Reference in the spring. Although the release of a draft was not a regulatory requirement, the idea was that more feedback early in the planning process would produce a better document overall. After the draft comment period, we followed up with First Nations again in the summer to see if there were any further comments or to provide them the opportunity to review our responses to their comments. Since the end of the draft comment period, AECOM has made revisions and prepared a Proposed Terms of Reference document ready for submission to the MECP. The revisions that have been made are based on feedback received from First Nations, other stakeholders, and regulators. These revisions have been endorsed by the Project Team, community members and consultant advisors and are being presented to MFFN Chief and Council prior to submission and public release.

The Proposed Terms of Reference document and supporting materials are roughly 700 pages and written in a technical language meant to satisfy regulatory requirements. We have videos, fact sheets and a plain language guide that provide key information about the status of the project and content of the Terms of Reference which will be available on the project website.

Notices will be sent out to those on our distribution list to inform First Nations, public and other stakeholders that our Proposed Terms of Reference has been submitted. MECP will facilitate a public review period during which questions and comments will be accepted by MECP. You can submit questions and comments directly to the Project Team at any time. The Project Team is open to receiving feedback throughout the process to guide our thinking and decision making. However, feedback will only be formally incorporated into documents at key milestones as outlined in the consultation plan for the environmental and impact assessments.

Learn More or Reach Out to the Project Team

Website

www.martenfallsaccessroad.ca

- Check out our website for all your project information needs including project documents, newsletters and videos.
- Reach out to us with your questions or comments using our contact page.

Email

info@martenfallsaccessroad.ca

- Send questions and comment to our general email at any time.
- Emails are forwarded to individual team members best able to respond on behalf of the project team.

Phone

1-800-746-9114 (Toll Free)

- Reach us by phone if you cannot contact us online.
- Leave a voice mail with your name, contact number and a brief message including the name of who you want to reach, if applicable and your call will be forwarded to the individual team member best able to respond

Distribution List

Request to be added

- Make a request to be added on the website, email or by phone and include your name and contact information.
- Sign up to receive newsletters, project notifications, and meeting notices directly to your email.

Videos & Fact Sheets

Available on our Website

- An advanced viewing of videos and fact sheets that provide plain language summaries of the the Terms of Reference content will be available to Marten Falls First Nation members on September 16, 2020.
- Public release of the videos and fact sheets is currently scheduled for October 15, 2020.