

5.0 ABORIGINAL AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Overview

This chapter of the environmental assessment report describes the engagement history and the on-going Aboriginal and Public Engagement Program carried out on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and more specifically for the proposed All-Season Road Project linking Pauingassi First Nation and Little Grand Rapids First Nation to the Little Grand Rapids Airport (Project P7a). The P7a engagement activities focused on the proposed P7a All-Season Road which included various project components (road, bridges, stream crossings, quarries and borrow areas, construction camps, staging areas, etc.) on Provincial Crown Land as well as the two Community Access Roads located on Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations Reserve lands.

5.2. East Side Lake Winnipeg Engagement History

The engagement history of the East Side Lake Winnipeg all-season road projects stems from a comprehensive aboriginal and public participation movement that has and continues to involve the aboriginal and local communities, including Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), other stakeholders, and the general public (as shown in Figure 5-1).

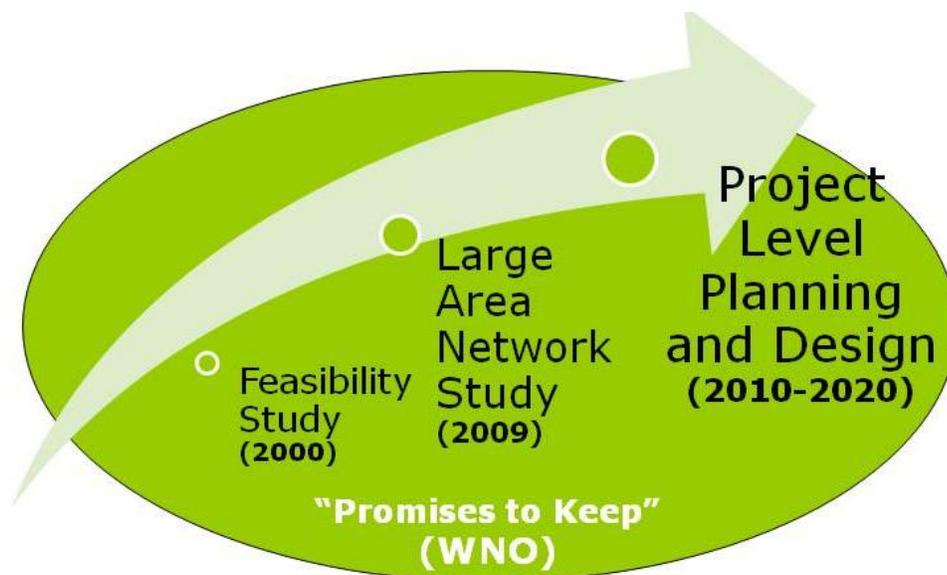


Figure 5 - 1 History of the East Side Lake Winnipeg Planning Area

5.2.1 The East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI)

In 1990, the Manitoba Round Table on the Environment and the Economy released "Towards a Sustainable Development Strategy for Manitobans" which proposed principles and guidelines of

sustainable development, and a series of strategies for promoting sustainability. This led to a multi-stakeholder initiative called the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation (COSDI). Recommendations from COSDI report (1999) included:

- Creation of Broad Area Plans across the province;
- Improved public participation and involvement of the public prior to the initiation of the formal development review process (submission of project description) and;
- Development of a protocol to ensure meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal communities in land and resource planning and decision-making processes.

In 2000, following the acceptance of the COSDI report, the Manitoba government commenced the East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI) for the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a pilot for Broad Area Planning across the province. The ESPI included a wide cross-section of stakeholders including the east side of Lake Winnipeg area communities and First Nations (FN), industry and environmental organizations to develop a vision for the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Recognizing the uniqueness of the region and the importance and abundance of natural resources in the area and the need for sustainable planning, an East Side Round Table (ESRT) was commissioned to develop the Broad Area Plan (BAP). The ESRT consisted of 21 members from local stakeholder groups including the Métis, First Nations, local communities, a First Nation Council, consisting of one Chief from each of the First Nations within the planning area as well as environment, industry and recreational organizations (MB Conservation, 2014).

The Broad Area Plan was initiated in 2000, and an East Side Advisory Committee, consisting of various stakeholder organizations, local governments, etc. was assembled to provide input from their perspectives. In 2004, the ESPI released a status report to the Province entitled *“Promises to Keep...” Towards a Broad Area Plan for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg* (2004) which makes several recommendations regarding transportation, community involvement in future Project development, local training opportunities and employment opportunities. The recommendations were based on support for an all-weather road network that included involvement of east side communities in route selection, conducting environmental baseline surveys, undertaking EIA to assess the effects of all-weather road projects including the effects of treaty and Aboriginal rights, and assess measures to provide wildlife refuge corridors.

Subsequent to the Broad Area Plan, East Side First Nations Council, later renamed Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin or WNO, was formed consisting of twenty-one members: sixteen East Side First Nation Chiefs or their designates, one representative from the Métis Nation government, or their designate, and four representatives nominated by the ESRT. Since this time the WNO has worked on the development of traditional area land use plans (TALUPs). Four communities, Poplar River First Nation, Bloodvein First Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation have created TALUPs to date.

5.3. The East Side of Lake Winnipeg All Weather Road Justification and Scoping Study

In 2000, Dillon Consulting conducted an *East Side of Lake Winnipeg All Weather Road Justification and Scoping Study* that concluded an all-weather road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg can be justified on the basis of long-term transportation costs and savings. The small size of these communities in this area, their remoteness, and the lack of major economic enterprise resulted in a transportation system that had a modest capital cost, but provided an uncertain service to local residents (Dillon Consulting Limited, 2000, page 1).

The study area extended from Hollow Water FN in the south to Bunibonibee Cree Nation in the north, Lake Winnipeg in the west to the Ontario border. The Study Team (Dillon Consulting, 2000) initiated a community engagement program with communities potentially interested or affected by the all-weather road network system. Community support for, and interest in the construction of an all-weather road network system was a central component of the justification and scoping study.

To identify the community position, the Study Team designed an engagement process to include a visit to interested communities potentially impacted by the development of a new road system. The purpose of the visit was to provide information on the study and study process and to identify community issues and concerns.

Engagements with individual communities consisted of three components:

- Initial Project introduction;
- Individual community meetings; and
- Meeting minutes/follow-up consultations.

The format of each community meeting was at the discretion of the community. The Study Team presented an overview to the Chief and Council of each community visited, followed by a community presentation and discussion. In some communities, the presentation made by the Study Team was televised and discussions with individual members took place by phone.

Presented below is an overview of community input received by the Study Team regarding several topics. Because of the wide range of opinions expressed at any one community meeting, the Study Team thought it difficult and inappropriate to attempt to assign a broad geographic consensus. The comments presented below should be reviewed with this in mind.

According to the *All-Weather Road - East Side of Lake Winnipeg Study Justification and Scoping Study* (Dillon Consulting, August 2000) discussions regarding an All-Weather Road were centred on three themes: land use, environment and potential social impacts. Each of the discussion areas were regarded as being significant; suggesting that the key points need to be addressed in a substantive way if the road was to proceed.

A generalized summary of community comments with respect to winter road/current transport system issues include:

- Winter road season is short and unpredictable;
- Rough winter road surface is hard on vehicles;
- Goods are often damaged in transit;
- Very long travel times;
- Air freight and passenger fares are expensive;
- No inter-community flights;
- Access to airports in some communities is inhibited by a requirement for over-water travel;
- Cost of air freight for perishable food items is very expensive;
- Barge system is near end of life; and,
- Personal boat travel on Lake Winnipeg is dangerous.

Community members also expressed comments with respect to land use issues, which include:

- Lack of control over natural resource development;
- Loss of traditional lands;
- Increased hunting and fishing pressure;
- Impacts to traplines;
- Social impact issues;
- Major change to lifestyle;
- Comments about drugs and alcohol;
- Comments about gang development and undesirable elements;
- Environmental impacts; and
- Water quality and wildlife.

Community members expressed the following benefits of an all-weather road:

- Reduced cost of living;
- Improved diet and better health;
- Reduced cost of construction for housing and community infrastructure;
- Improved inter-community contacts;
- Reduced isolation;
- Economic development opportunities;
- Reduced cost of transportation;
- Opportunities to visit children who are away at school;

- Opportunities to visit hospital patients; and,
- Reduced travel times.

The Study Team concluded from the community meetings that, while opinion differed between communities, in general there was support for the road. This general support is characterized as follows:

- Support varied from community to community from strong support to cautious;
- Support is qualified;
 - Assurances are needed respecting control over local resources;
 - Participation in highway construction and maintenance is important;
 - Emphasis on maximizing community benefits; and
 - Need for in-depth community consultation on specific issues.

5.4. ESRA's Public and Aboriginal Engagement Program

The Aboriginal and Public Engagement Program (APEP) for ESRA's projects on the east side of Lake Winnipeg is considered a fundamental and influential component of its project planning processes as it intends to comprehensively engage multiple parties in all phases of project development and for the duration of the project life cycle. This section documents the framework for which ESRA's APEP was devised including the overarching goals and expectations of the program and the engagement initiatives which have been completed to date. It also includes continued efforts to adequately involve interested and affected parties¹ in this project.

5.4.1 Purpose and Objectives

The main objective of the APEP is to provide meaningful opportunities to engage in dialogue and exchange information about the project with interested and affected parties. The interested and affected parties are generally comprised of First Nation (FN) and Northern Affairs Communities (NAC), Aboriginal organizations, MMF, government agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as members of the general Manitoban public. The information exchange is factored into project design and the EIA. The APEP is independent of the Crown's Duty to Consult under Section 35 of the Constitution, but may help to frame and inform consultation between the Crown and Aboriginal Communities.

5.4.2 APEP Approach

The APEP aims to achieve the main objective in the following ways:

¹Interested and affected parties – Interested parties is defined as aboriginal and/or non-aboriginal peoples of Manitoba which may be interested in participating or learning about the project. Affected parties refer to aboriginal and/or non-aboriginal parties which may be directly or indirectly affected by the development of the project.

- Provide meaningful opportunities for the early involvement of interested and affected communities in order to ensure their continued participation throughout all stages of the Project;
- Utilize a variety of mechanisms to provide information, receive feedback, and engage with participants in a consistent and transparent manner;
- The APEP will be flexible such that it can be revised in response to expressed issues and concerns;
- Effectively use feedback gained through the APEP to assist with decision-making regarding project design and schedule, and to help avoid or minimize potential adverse effects and maximize benefits related to the Project; and
- Communicate how community, stakeholder or public input and information provided to ESRA were used.

The adopted approach for the APEP is centred on:

- Providing participation and opportunities for all interested and affected parties in the APEP;
- Addressing relevant biophysical, social and cultural concerns. These will be addressed in the impact analysis section of the EIA and considered in relation to valued ecosystem components (VECs);
- Respecting and recognizing community and traditional knowledge for its importance; and
- Conducting communication between proponent and interested and affected parties in a culturally sensitive and comprehensible manner. Where appropriate, interpreters and translation of APEP material will be provided.

5.4.3 APEP Methods

The provision of information and the way in which information is communicated; transmitted and shared is the foundation for the proper functioning of an engagement program. Table 5-1 outlines engagement and coordination methods utilized in the APEP.

Table 5 - 1: APEP and Coordination Techniques

Method	Description of Techniques
<p>Invitation / Introductory Letters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation / introductory letters utilized to establish contact and introduce the Project with communities that may be potentially directly or indirectly affected by the Project and to the general public. • Project Notification Letters sent to appropriate provincial and federal government agencies for the project to solicit interest in reviewing the environmental assessment report and to determine which government agencies are required to review the environmental assessment report.
<p>Leadership Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters of introduction and leadership meetings organized by ESRA to introduce the project and to discuss specific benefits and opportunities of the Project for individual communities. • Leadership Meetings organized in each community of the project's study area, usually preceding the community meeting / open-house. The chief objectives are to introduce the ESRA as the project proponent, the study team, the project and anticipated work and provide additional project related updates in addition to requesting permission to hold a community meeting / open-house with leadership and residents in the community.
<p>Community Meetings /Open Houses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Meeting / Open-houses organized in each of the communities of the particular study area. Organize eight rounds of in-community meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 1 – Introduce ESRA, introduce and discuss East Side Lake Winnipeg Transportation Initiative & Study, obtain input on baseline information and potential route network options. Round 2 – Discuss and confirm definition and evaluation of preferred route network options based on technical evaluation and input received from Round 1 and TEK studies. Round 3 – Discuss/identify preferred alignment within corridor confirmed in Round 2; obtain input on baseline information and initial design criteria. Discuss and confirm further alignment refinements. Round 4 – Discuss environmental assessment (EA) requirements for the project, valued environmental components (VEC), travel routes and water course crossing structures; obtain feedback and input on EA process and VEC selection.

Method	Description of Techniques
	<p>Round 5 – Discuss potential project effects and recommended mitigation measures; confirm information with community members.</p> <p>Round 6 – Present, discuss and receive feedback on results of environmental assessment report.</p> <p>Round 7 – Discuss aspects of detailed designs and project updates post environmental assessment, confirm final design with community members.</p> <p>Round 8 – Provide construction updates, obtain input on construction and project related aspects.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TK and TLUK exercises to identify traditional land uses, sites of cultural, ecological and archaeological importance for input into project and environmental assessment.
Public Open-houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Open-House to provide information and feedback opportunities to a wide range of interested and affected parties including community members living off-reserve, organizations representing interested and affected party interests, such as resource users (trapping, mining, wild rice harvesting, transportation, etc.), NGOs, as well as the general public to be involved in the APEP.
Other Stakeholder Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce & discuss East Side Lake Winnipeg Transportation Initiative projects and environmental assessment processes, provide updates on project and environmental assessment.
Display Board Exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display Board Exhibits such as maps and text boards utilized as a visual presentation aid during community meetings / open-house, meeting with community leadership and public open-house meeting to aid in information exchange with individuals
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power point presentations utilized as visual aids during the community meetings / open-houses, meetings with community leadership and public open-house meetings.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Announcements, community meeting / open-house and the public open-house publicized in local/regional

Method	Description of Techniques
	media, regular updates in Aboriginal newspapers.
Printed Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletters issued yearly, project description fact sheets, comment sheets, gift maps, and presentation print-outs to distribute during community meeting / open-houses and public open-house.
Established Communication Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Channels established such as ESRA website, ESRA contact email address, toll-free telephone and fax numbers for interested and affected parties to use to communicate feedback or solicit project information.
Surveys and Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel surveys conducted with communities in the study area to understand inter-community and long-distance travel behavior. This provides another avenue for respondents to express their personal views of the project. Traditional Knowledge Surveys and Workshops utilized to gather local knowledge on current and historic land and resource use patterns, the cultural/spiritual implications of such activity, biophysical and topographical features of the land etc. This also allows respondents to express their personal views of the project and to identify potential impacts that the project may have on the each of the communities and natural environment.
Community Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Coordinators to assist with public diffusion processes, organization and coordination of community meetings / open-houses and leadership meetings and to post local publications of project related material within each community.
Other Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members participation in environmental baseline study data collection - wildlife (via trapper program), fish & fish habitat, vegetation, heritage resources.

5.5 P7a Related Aboriginal and Public Engagement Activities

The engagement activities conducted for Project P7a aimed to:

- Gather community and stakeholder input on the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project;
- Identify issues, concerns and opportunities related to the project for early consideration in project planning and design; and
- Inform community members and the public of ESRA's proposed projects and activities.

Engagement activities for the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project included: meetings, open houses, and workshops with potentially affected and interested Aboriginal communities, First Nation Leadership, MMF, trappers, outfitters, other stakeholders, regulators and the general public to provide input into the project and environmental assessment. Local trappers and community members were involved in the APEP to support baseline studies conducted for the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project. Table 5-2 provides a summary of the engagement activities conducted for the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project.

Table 5 - 2: Types of Aboriginal and Public Engagement Activities for the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project

Activity	Summary
Public Open House	Provided information on proposed project. Received stakeholder input and feedback. Winnipeg (June 25, 2009 and June 17, 2014), Pine Falls (June 12, 2014), Pine Dock (December 3, 2009), and Manigotagan (March 30, 2009).
Leadership Meetings	Provided project information and updates and received input from leadership on proposed project. WNO (January 13, 2009, March 20, 2009, April 15, 2009 and April 30, 2009, July 15, 2009); Assembly of MB Grand Chief and East Side Chiefs (July 15, 2009), MMF (April 18, 2009, August 18, 2009, December 9, 2009); Southeast Resource Development Council (February 2, 2011, August 23, 2011, January 28, 2014); Little Grand Rapids Stewardship Board (January 17, 2012, February 24, 2014). Pauingassi Stewardship Board (December 16, 2011); Pauingassi First Nation Chief and Council (11 mtgs: May 7, 2009, February 4, 2010, June 1, 2010, December 19, 2012, January 17, 2013, April 5, 2013 and September 20, 2013, April 9, 2014, May 7, 2014, July 7, 2014, October 20, 2015) and Little Grand Rapids First Nations First Nation Chief and Council (13 mtgs: June 2, 2010, October 25, 2010, February 9, 2011, April 26, 2011, December 7, 2011, January 12, 2012, May 4, 2012, May 31, 2012, October 10, 2012, November 22, 2012, January 22, 2013, August 21, 2013, September 5, 2013).
Elders Meetings	Provided project information and received input and feedback from elders prior to some of the community Environmental Assessment meetings Little Grand Rapids (September 25, 2013 and March 19, 2014) and Pauingassi (September 13, 2013, April 9, 2014 and May 7, 2014).

Activity	Summary
Manitoba Métis Federation Meetings	<p>In addition to meetings during the LATNs, provide an overview of the proposed Project, highlight changes in the proposed alignment based on previous input. Provide an overview of next steps in the EIA process, and to learn of their interest in the Project. ESRA and Manitoba Conservation held a subsequent meeting with MMF to discuss the Project and other topics (June, 2015 October 28, 2015, November 26, 2015).</p>
Community Meeting/ Open Houses	<p>Six (6) general rounds of community meetings to provide input into project and environmental assessment.</p> <p>Round 1 – Introduced ESRA, introduced and discussed East Side Lake Winnipeg Transportation Initiative & Study, obtained input on baseline information and potential route network options (May 6, 2009 in Little Grand Rapids FN and May 7, 2009 in Pauingassi FN and December 3, 2009 for both Little Grand Rapids FN and Pauingassi FN).</p> <p>Round 2 – Discussed and confirmed definition and evaluation of preferred route network options based on technical evaluation and input received from Round 1 and TEK studies (May 31, 2010 in Little Grand Rapids FN and June 1, 2010 in Pauingassi FN).</p> <p>Round 3 – Identified preferred alignment within corridor identified in Round 2; Discussed alignment refinements and training. LGR (February 15, April 26, June 5, and September 17, 2012) PFN (May 23 and September 17, 2012). Discussed Root Creek and Channel Crossings with Little Grand Rapids First Nation (December 3, 2013).</p> <p>Round 4 – Discussed environmental assessment (EA) requirements for the project, valued environmental components (VEC), travel routes and water course crossing structures; obtain feedback and input on EA process and VEC selection. (March 19, 2014 in Little Grand Rapids FN and April 9, 2014 in Pauingassi FN).</p> <p>Round 5 – Discussed potential project effects and recommended mitigation measures; confirmed information with community members (May 1, 2014 in Little Grand Rapids FN and May 7, 2014 in Pauingassi FN).</p> <p>Round 6 – Presented, discussed and received feedback on results of environmental assessment report (July 7, 2014 and October 20, 2015 in Pauingassi FN and September 25, 2014 in Little Grand Rapids FN)</p> <p>Round 7 – Will discuss aspects of detailed designs and project updates post environmental assessment, confirm final design with community members.</p> <p>Round 8 – Will provide construction updates, obtain input on construction and project related aspects during construction (pre-construction and construction phases)</p>

Activity	Summary
Traditional Knowledge (TK)	<p>Three (3) TK exercises with Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi to provide input into project and environmental assessment.</p> <p>TK Study – Obtained input on environmental, social-economic and cultural implications of project development. Obtained relevant biophysical and historical information, build long-term relationships. (May 6, 2009 in Little Grand Rapids FN and May 7, 2009 in Pauingassi FN and May 31, 2010 in Little Grand Rapids FN and June 1, 2010 in Pauingassi FN)</p> <p>TK Workshops – Conducted TK exercises with elders to map traditional areas used by Workshop in vicinity of proposed project to guide in the Heritage Resource Study (September 13, 2013 in Pauingassi FN and September 25, 2013 in Little Grand Rapids FN)</p> <p>TK Workshops – Collected local and TK information in the vicinity of the proposed project on traditionally important areas and biophysical information (December 2-3, 2013 in Little Grand Rapids FN and December 4, 2013 in Pauingassi FN)</p> <p>A Traditional Land Use Knowledge Study (TLUKS) was contracted to and conducted by MMF to identify and report on Métis traditional practices in the region (October 28, 2010 through September, 2012). Screening Survey mailed out to identify participants (Oct 2010), initial workshop held in Manigotagan (October 28, 2010), 3 post interview workshops to share information held in Winnipeg, Selkirk and Manigotagan (February 7, 2011). MMF has requested additional TK interviews, which will bolster the existing data collected in 2010 under the TKLUS study.</p>
Key Stakeholder Meetings	Presented & discussed East Side Lake Winnipeg Transportation Initiative projects provide updates on All-Season Road Project P7a and environmental assessment process. MB Lodges & Outfitters Association (May 10, 2013); Trappers Association (March 1, 2010 and November 1, 2013)
Government Stakeholder Meetings	Discuss East Side Lake Winnipeg Transportation Initiative projects, All-Season Road Project P7a, baseline/monitoring studies and environmental assessment process, and received feedback on regulatory requirements and submission. IRMT (February 10, 2012, January 21, 2013, February 3, 2014 and September 15, 2014); AANDC (March 19, 2014); Environmental Assessment & Licensing Branch, MCWS (March 1, 2013); Wildlife Branch, MCWS (December 6, 2013)
Site Meetings	Meetings held with the construction companies of each First Nation prior to and during pre-construction and construction. Chief and Councillors are invited to attend these meetings and are provided with meeting minutes. Multiple meetings

Activity	Summary
	with both LGR and PAU
Other Activities	<p>Community member participation in environmental baseline studies: Wildlife (via trapper program on November 22, 2013 in Little Grand Rapids FN) , Fisheries (September 24, 2013 in Pauingassi FN and September 26, 2013 in Little Grand Rapids FN), Vegetation (September 21, 2013 in Pauingassi FN and September 24, 2013 in Little Grand Rapids FB), Heritage Resources (September 24, 2013 in Pauingassi FN and September 25, 2013 and June 6, 2014 in Little Grand Rapids FN); Four community members from Pauingassi FN, eight community members from Little Grand Rapids FN assisted with the work and provided local biophysical and land use knowledge.</p> <p>Little Grand Rapids FN and Pauingassi FN trapper participation in wildlife data collection.</p> <p>Community members participated in training programs - Introduction to Construction: LGR -23 trainees (2012, 2013), PFN - 10 trainees (, 2012); Heavy Equipment Training: LGR - 7 trainees (2013, 2015), PFN - 7 trainees (2013-2015)</p>

5.5.1 Notification Methods

Notification was an important process throughout the Aboriginal and public engagement program and assisted ESRA in sharing project information and gathering local input into the selection of a preferred road alignment. Notification methods utilized throughout the public engagement process include the following:

5.5.1.1 Mail/E-Mail

Prior to each community meeting ESRA emailed letters Chiefs and Councils to provide a summary of what would occur at the meetings. This included the date, time and proposed location of the meetings, reasons for the meetings, and a description of topics to be discussed.

5.5.1.2 Phone Calls

Phone calls were also made to the community coordinators prior to each leadership and community meeting. The phone calls consisted of ESRA providing suggested dates for upcoming meetings and a summary of what would occur at the meetings. The summary included a proposed date, time and proposed location of the meetings, reasons for the meetings, and a description of topics to be discussed.

5.5.1.3 Posters

Posters were prepared by ESRA and provided to each community to notify interested community members of the upcoming meetings regarding the proposed project. Copies of the posters can be found in (Appendix D). The posters were placed on bulletin boards in the Band

Office, community stores, centers, and other locations throughout the community. Posters were also prepared for the public open houses held in the City of Winnipeg and Pine Falls and provided to the communities for posting.

5.5.1.4 Media

Notification for the public open houses held in the City of Winnipeg during June 2009, June 2014 and Pine Falls 2014:

- Winnipeg Free Press
- CBC Radio
- CBC TV
- Native Communications Inc. (NCI) radio
- Other local/regional media

A sample of the notices provided to the media is found in Appendix D.

Notification for the community meetings held in Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations included:

- Local Radio
- Posters

5.5.2 Summary of Aboriginal and Public Engagement Activities Conducted for P7a

Six rounds of community engagement took place between May 2009 and September 2014 and numerous stakeholder meetings occurred within that time so that parties that might be affected by the project had the opportunity to receive information and provide input into the various stages of the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project as shown in Figure 5-2. Appendix D provides additional information and details of the engagement activities conducted focusing on the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project (Rounds 3-6). Rounds 1 and 2 engagement activities are detailed in the SNC Lavalin Large Area Network Study. Rounds 3 and 4 engagement activities focused on obtaining input from the community to finalize a road

Steps to Select, Design and Construct an All Season Road

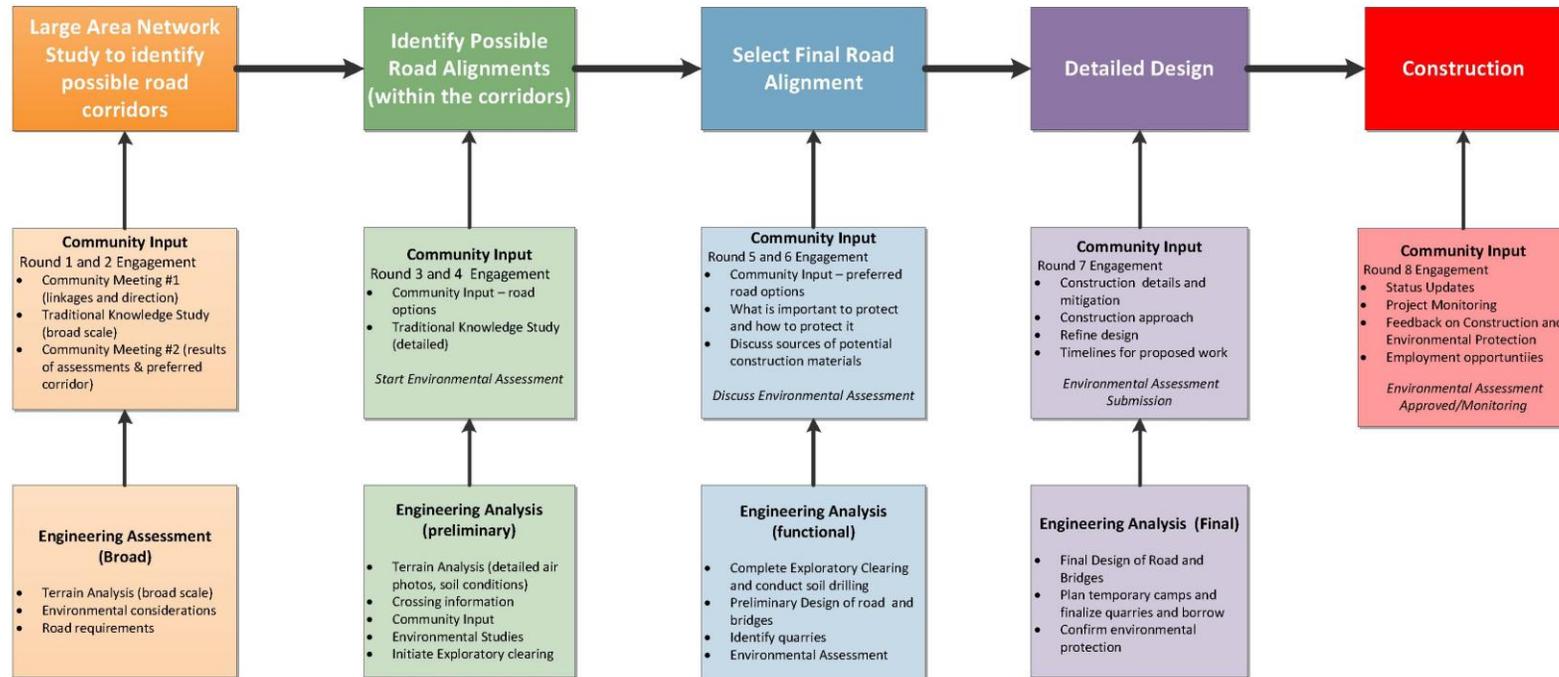


Figure 5 - 2: ESRA's All-Season Road Design Process Involving Eight Rounds of Engagement.

alignment to focus environmental and engineering studies. Rounds 5 and 6 engagement activities focused on the discussions related to the Environmental Assessment including effects and mitigation measures and results of the environmental assessment. The information obtained from the engagement activities was used in selecting a preferred road alignment and preparing the environmental assessment on the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project. Leadership meetings with Chief and Council were held prior to each community meeting when possible.

5.5.3 Round 1 – 2009 – Large Area Transportation Network Study (LATNS), Information Gathering

Round 1 consisted of meetings and TK studies conducted by ESRA and their consultants during the Large Area Transportation Network Study with all of the communities on the First Nation (FN) and Northern Affairs Communities (NAC) East Side of Lake Winnipeg. The meetings were located in community with additional meetings in Winnipeg, Manigotagan and Pine Dock and took place between May to December 2009. ESRA met with Aboriginal leaderships and engaged communities and the public. The purpose of this round of engagement was to inform stakeholders about the LATNS and solicit input into the possible route corridors connecting the communities to the pre-existing highway system.

Two in-community meetings were held in both Little Grand Rapids FN and Pauingassi FN. In Little Grand Rapids, thirty-six (36) people attended the May 2009 meeting and twenty-seven (27) people attended the December 2009 meeting. In Pauingassi, thirty nine (39) people attended the May 2009 meeting and nine (9) people attended the December 2009 meeting. Seven initial network options, the selection criteria by which they were developed, and potential future All-Season Road connections were discussed. During each of these community meetings members of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations expressed a clear preference to be connected to the south (Winnipeg) via Berens River or Bloodvein. Based on this, ASR route options were identified to connect the two communities to the future PR304 – Berens River All-Season Road (Project 1) segment of the transportation network. Input helped to focus data gathering including TK and incorporated into the analysis of options.

Traditional Knowledge (TK) Studies were conducted with all of the communities on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg with the exception of Norway House to gather biophysical and historical information and receive input from local residents on the potential environmental, social-economic and cultural implications of the project development on traditional lands and land uses. The TK studies included the traditional areas of Little Grand Rapids FN, Pauingassi FN and Little Grand Rapids NAC. Members of the Aboriginal communities who were considered holders of the community's traditional knowledge (elders, trappers, hunters) were interviewed to collect information on traditional activities. Participants were identified by the local TK coordinator in each community. In Little Grand Rapids FN thirty-three (33) participants responded to the questionnaires; twenty-seven participants (27) were active trappers and twenty-nine (29) participants actively hunted and fished. In Pauingassi FN, twenty (20)

participants responded to the questionnaires; fourteen participants (14) were active trappers and nineteen (19) participants actively hunted and fished. Input from these studies helped to identify broad ecological, cultural and historical areas of importance and was used for analysis of corridor options.

5.5.3.1 Meetings

Public

A general summary of comments and questions received from the open houses include:

- Importance of road for residents of the east side - decrease the cost of living, better access to health care and education, provide more opportunities for youth, and increase linkages between First Nations and the rest of the province;
- Requesting details on First Nation communities located on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg i.e. living standards, housing, employment and demographics of the communities;
- Interrelationship between the all-season road network and the Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage Site;
- Concern that the road will never be built or that it will be built solely for government and industry use;
- Winter road would disappearing with global warming;
- Access to hunting areas by non-community members and no regulations to protect these areas;
- Protection of the environment of the east side of Lake Winnipeg;
- Loss of control over traditional lands;
- Training and employment opportunities for affected communities;
- Use of recycled material from affected communities in road construction.

Community Specific Comments

The feedback and input from the community engagement meetings and TK are summarized for each community as follows:

Little Grand Rapids FN

May 2009 Meeting (36 people in attendance):

- Support for the road as it is expected that the road will decrease the cost of goods in the community;
- The road will also provide an alternative means of transportation for the community, also decreasing the cost of living;

- Support for the road as it would bring employment opportunities and training opportunities (specifically safety training identified) that would be made available to community members;
- Questions on cottage development in the area as a result of the road being constructed;
- Questions about the long term environmental impacts of the project and the impact the project would have on the traditional lifestyle;
- Questions about the road creating access to land that can be exploited by mineral exploration companies and;
- The community members want to ensure that they do not lose control of their traditional lands to non-community members and companies.

December 2009 Meeting (27 people in attendance):

- Support for the road as goods are currently expensive;
- Concern for gangs coming to the community;
- Interested in the road for job and educational opportunities;
- Suggestion of building the road to Little Grand Rapids after the construction of PR304 to Berens River ASR is complete and;
- Concern that funding of the road will be jeopardized.

TK (33 responded to the questionnaires; 27 are active trappers, and 29 actively hunt and fish)

- Traffic effects from construction / operations;
- Increased accidents;
- Potential effects to watercourses, fish, trees/forests, birds, and wildlife migrating to other areas;
- Animal habitats being disturbed, moose routes being affected, and watercourses being blocked.
- Potential effects of road on predators;
- Potential effects on the existing environment;
- Potential effects to the rivers, lakes and forest from tree cutting;
- Outsiders entering community members' fishing areas;
- Road will affect their access or access by others to areas of interest/traditional lands and forests;
- Increased poaching and;
- Vandalism; and drug and alcohol problems.

Pauingassi FN

May 2009 Meeting (39 people in attendance):

- Questions related to duration of construction phase;
- Questions of whether there will be a new airport in Pauingassi and;
- Not having a road has implications on health care delivery.

December 2009 Meeting (9 people in attendance):

- Support for the road;
- Prefer the road to go to Winnipeg;
- No desire to go to the northern communities;
- Support for the road because the road would enable inter-community travel and access to familial traplines;
- Potential effect of road deterring animals from traplines if constructed.

TK (20 responded to the questionnaires; 14 are active trappers, and 19 actively hunt and fish)

- Blasting due to the heavy equipment utilized for construction;
- Increased accidents;
- Migration of wildlife;
- Clearing of trees;
- Animals will relocate;
- Bridge construction will result in fish relocation;
- Road will affect predator routes;
- Road will affect nesting areas and common ground for animal;
- Concerns for major developments occurring on their land;
- Road will affect the community's access or access by others to their areas of interest/traditional lands including: increase access for outsiders to their hunting areas and;
- Road will allow outsiders to gain access to the community.

5.5.4 Round 2 – 2010 – Large Area Network Study, Route Identification

As a part of the Large Area Transportation Network Study, between May and June 2010, ESRA and their consultants conducted meetings with all of the communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg with the exception of Norway House Cree Nation to report on results of Round One engagement. Detailed findings of the short-listed alternative route options based on results of the multiple account evaluation that included stakeholder input and the results of the TK studies were presented. Completed TK surveys were returned and additional input on the project was solicited from community. Interviews with selected community representatives (band manager, school principal/teacher, healthcare officer, airport manger, local general store manager) were held to supplement the open-house community engagement to provide more in-depth feedback from key respondents in each community.

Feedback received during Round 2 engagement helped identify community concerns and perceptions towards the All-Season Road Network. Members of both communities expressed a general support for the road to reduce costs of living, improve employment opportunities, and increase access to health services with concerns being expressed related to protection of the environment, access to traditional resource use areas by non-community members, and both positive and negative effects on social aspects. Information collected was used to refine the preferred route and to support baseline environmental studies and the environmental assessment.

5.5.4.1 Meetings

The following is a summary of the communities' support and feedback from key respondents for the All-Season Road connection to the existing highway network and preference on the connection point as expressed during the community meetings and interviews respectively:

Little Grand Rapids FN

May 2010 Meeting (19 people in attendance):

- Concern for length of time for community to have All-Season Road connection; priority is to connect to PR 304 to Berens River ASR;
- Need to protect wildlife within the Southern network options forks to Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation;
- There is a sand ridge running east to west that should be considered as it was the main crossing causing an influx of deer into the area and;
- General support for road – more benefits than impacts i.e. health care benefits, decreased cost of living and desire to be connected to Berens River and Bloodvein First Nations.

Interviews with Key Respondents (4 respondents):

- ASR would decrease the cost of living all year round. Prices at local Northern Store can be 2-3 times lower during winter road season compared to the rest of the year;
- Local residents travel by winter road to Winnipeg to get supplies, but do not have enough money to buy supplies for the whole year;
- Commercial fishing is cost-prohibitive due to no road, existing fishing lodges are 95% American owned and do not hire aboriginal people;
- Drugs and alcohol are already a big problem - the ASR might provide more controls by policing;
- Poor nutrition is a problem in community, people eat whatever they can buy from the local Northern Store;

- Nursing station currently provides very limited services – child birth and other surgeries have to go to Winnipeg, with ASR, people would still have to be flown out during emergency;
- With ASR, schools could be consolidated locally to offer senior high classes;
- Hockey team and baseball team currently go to Winnipeg or Ontario already, with ASR there would be more access to sports facilities and;
- ASR would give youth opportunities to see outside world.

Pauingassi FN

June 2010 Leadership Meeting (in advance of community meeting):

- Support for road;
- Community can no longer rely on short winter road season to bring in outside building supplies and;
- Boat travel through rapids to get to Little Grand Rapids Airport for medical evacuations at night is difficult and dangerous.

June 2010 Community Meeting (20 people in attendance):

- Support for road to Little Grand Rapids with a connection to Pauingassi from approximate midway point westerly to the Bloodvein/Berens River Road;
- Controls should be put in place to protect wildlife, berries, animal habitat, medicinal plants etc.;
- Road will decrease costs of food & living expenses, and provide opportunities for employment;
- Concern the project will not happen, construction should start as soon as possible;
- Possibility the road could result in negative effects to the community; community members are willing to take responsibility for mitigating negative social impacts and;
- Support for a road; interim improvements to travel that may be provided to the community would not be accepted as sufficient for the long term. The government should not disregard long term plans for an All-Season Road connection for the community.

Interviews with Key Respondents (4 respondents):

- Concern about protected areas impacted by road and environmental protection;
- Lower cost of living and longer period available for travel with ASR;
- Potential fishing and tourism development; concern about fishing depleting stock and commercialization due to tourism;
- Increase in employment from construction of ASR;
- ASR may increase the amount of drugs and alcohol use in the community, there is currently more alcohol usage during the winter road season;

- Some recreation facilities are shared by Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids; ASR may increase the usage of these facilities;
- Currently very high cost to transport patient to hospitals outside of community:
 - For 4 months a year, helicopter transport is needed for patients in emergency situations;
 - Helicopter only works during daylight;
- ASR would allow for emergency transport to airport and transport by road for non-emergency;
- With ASR, there are potential opportunities to have expanded medical services locally;
- Youth could go on more field trips and take day trips to city; more opportunities for youth to travel outside of the community for sporting events, especially in summer;
- More employment in community could provide motivation for kids to stay in school and;
- Community wants to have ASR built to airport first; eliminating high risk water transport by boat.

5.5.5 Round 3 – October 2010 to September 2014 – Alignment Selection and Refinement

Round 3 consisted of meetings with Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation communities and leaderships (see Appendix D). The purpose of the meetings was to provide project updates as well as to solicit input for P7a project alignment/refinement, design and environmental assessment.

TK and design workshops were also conducted with Pauingassi First Nation and Little Grand Rapids First Nation and a Traditional Land Use and Knowledge Study (TLUKS) was conducted by the MMF during this period. The purpose of these studies and workshops was to gather more detailed biophysical and historical information on the area and receive input from residents and other resource users on the potential environmental, social-economic and cultural implications of the project development on traditional lands and land uses for use in project design, baseline studies and the environmental assessment.

Input from Round 3 meetings, workshops and studies helped to further identify ecological, cultural, historical and other areas of importance, refine the project alignment and design criteria, and support environmental baseline studies and the environmental assessment.

5.5.5.1 Traditional Land Use Knowledge Study (TLUKS)

The Manitoba Métis Federation conducted a Traditional Land Use Knowledge Study (TLUKS) between October 2010 and September 2011. The purpose of the TLUKS was to obtain Manitoba Métis input and collect information on Manitoba Métis use of lands and resources for traditional purposes to support road alignment design, project planning, environmental

assessment and design of all season roads within the P1, P4, P7, and P7a project areas on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

A screening survey was mailed to the Manitoba Métis community at large (as identified by MMF membership registration and/or MMF's Métis Harvester Card Registration). It was determined that ninety-nine (99) respondents indicated they engage in one or more traditional use activities within the project areas (P1, P4, P7, and P7a), and another forty-seven (47) respondents indicated they engage in one or more traditional use activities in the south east quadrant of the province (boundaries lay north of Poplar River, extending east to the MB/ON border, south to the US/Can border, and west along the shores of Lake Winnipeg and Red River to the US/Can border), but did not indicate a specific location.

An initial workshop was held in Manigotagan in October 2010 to present ASR project overview and TLUKS was attended by twenty-three (23) MB Métis. Twenty-nine (29) TLUKS interviews were completed, documenting the “what, where, when, who and why’ aspects of use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, as well as the location and nature of historic and contemporary sites and features that hold cultural and/or spiritual value to Manitoba Métis, and traditional ecological knowledge” (MMF, 2011). Data was collected on harvesting activity, overnight places and access routes, cultural and historic places and traditional knowledge.

In February 2011 the MMF hosted three workshops to share the findings of the Screening Survey and TLUKs interviews. The MMF received feedback and input on the TLUKS and project; four (4) participants attended the Winnipeg workshop, twelve participants attended the Selkirk workshop, and twenty participants attended the Manigotagan workshop.

5.5.5.2 Community Meetings

Community meetings were held in Little Grand Rapids First Nation on Feb 12, 2012 (111 recorded participants) (Figure 5-3) and in Pauingassi First Nation on May 23, 2012 (~40 participants) to select an alignment within the preferred route as determined by Round 1 and Round 2 activities. The meetings consisted of asking the community where the alignment should be located within the identified corridor. ESRA presented a proposed alignment to the communities and held open discussions with the help of local translators. The results of these discussions are presented in Figure 3-6 showing realignment of the route. The majority of the community discussion was held in the Ojibwe language, the traditional language of the area.

An additional community meeting was held on December 3, 2013 with Little Grand Rapids First Nation at the request of its Elders to discuss the two bridge crossings. ESRA and its consultants presented project updates for twenty-four (24) recorded participants. Specific topics included presenting technical and field data from studies conducted for the project, discussion of project details including the two bridge crossings, measures to maintain drainage across the landscape, measures to accommodate continued traditional activities and use of the area along the alignment during construction and operation of the all-season road. Time was spent discussing the road and implications to the local trapper whose trapline is crossed by the proposed

alignment. Community members were satisfied with the information and discussions and maintained general support for the proposed All-Season Road Project. Feedback received from the community members was used to refine project design criteria and informed baseline studies being conducted for the environmental assessment.



Figure 5 - 3: Photo of the Alignment Meeting with Little Grand Rapids on February 12, 2012.

5.5.5.3 TK Workshops – Heritage Resources

Traditional Knowledge workshops were held in Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids in September 2013. Five (5) Elders from Little Grand Rapids and (6) Elders from Pauingassi participated in the mapping workshops to share their traditional knowledge and discuss the project. The focus of the workshop was to identify the presence of spiritual or cultural areas, medicinal areas, burials, land use/activities and other areas significant to the community. This information was used to guide the Heritage Resource Study as well as the EIA.

5.5.5.4 TK Workshops – Design Features

TK Workshops were held with trappers and resource users in both communities in December 2013. Community participants provided information on the following subjects that aided with

planning of the road and construction activities, informing baseline studies, as well as with the project environmental assessment:

- Fishing
- Hunting and trapping
- Plant harvesting
- Cultural and sacred sites
- Important community use sites
- Travel routes
- Animal migration routes
- Environmentally sensitive sites

Little Grand Rapids

Fourteen (14) Elders and resource users participated in the workshops led by ESRA. During the workshop, Elders identified three broad areas of concerns during the mapping exercise:

- Area below Root Lake contains a wide variety of resources and is an area that is readily accessed by community members because of its proximity to the community
 - Concerns regarding habitat disturbance for moose, commercially trapped small animals as beaver and fish spawning along many small creeks were expressed (Wildlife and fish and their habitats are important);
- Root Creek is the gateway to trapping in Ontario and is rich in a variety of resources, including fish, beaver and moose
- The channel between Fishing and Family Lakes is an area of known historic Anishinaabeg use and occupancy in this area. Elders noted that there were burials all along the west bank that were in association with the former settlement. Additionally, the Elders identified the location of a culturally sensitive site area.

Pauiingassi

Thirteen (13) Elders and resource users participated in the workshops led by ESRA. A summary of information gathered revealed there was a general consensus among the Elders at this time, that they were satisfied with the proposed route. The participants provided information on sustenance hunting (moose) and fishing (walleye, northern pike and whitefish) and commercial trapping (furbearers such as martin and beaver). They also stated that when the construction commenced in that area they would move their resource activities to other areas since all areas contained the same resources and there were no rare or endangered species as far as they were aware in this area. The participants provided some additional information for use in planning and environmental assessment of the road including:

- The area through which the road will pass was once a one-owner trapline, but now is used more like a community trapline;
- Culturally sensitive site located along the west side of the Family Lake;

- An area of medicinal plant gathering was identified;
- An old trapper's cabin was located near the shoreline on the west side, but it had been abandoned and later burned in a forest fire and;
- The cultural sensitivity of the south and west shores of the Pauingassi First Nation Reserve was also noted. Elders note that they did not want anything occurring in that particular area.

5.5.6 Round 4 – March / April 2014 – Environmental Assessment: Scope

Round 4 meetings were conducted by ESRA and their consultants with Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation in March and April 2014. The purpose of the meetings were to provide project updates, discuss environmental assessment (EA) requirements for the Project, valued environmental components (VEC), travel routes and water course crossing structures and obtain feedback and input on EA process and VEC selection. Input from these meetings helped to identify and confirm the focus of the EA and VECs to be used in the environmental assessment and to further refine the project alignment and design. Meetings were also held during this Round with provincial and federal government agencies to discuss the project and the environmental assessment processes. Additional refinement of the alignment stemming from these discussions is presented in Figure 3-6.

5.5.6.1 Little Grand Rapids

General comments and questions raised by the community members who attended the community meeting include:

Overall Project

- No concerns identified with the route or proposed environmental review process and;
- Suggestion that ESRA go ahead and build the access roads as it would benefit the community.

Environment

- Support for the P7a All-Season Road Project, but members also wanted to ensure that the project was carried out in a manner that protects the environment;
- Root Creek water levels fluctuate greatly over season and year. Some years in spring it is low and you can walk across Root Creek just upstream of the rapids. Some years in spring the water levels are higher and you cannot walk across Root Creek;
- Root Creek is navigated by canoes outfitted with 4hp motors. The proposed bridge site is not navigable due to the presence of rapids. The community members always need to portage at this site regardless of water elevations. Canoes are portaged on both the east and the west sides of Root Creek in the summer and snowmobiles use the east portage in the winter to access Douglas Lake;

- Several species of fish have been confirmed as present in Root Creek, Root Lake and Douglas Lake. Community members use these areas for sustenance fishing. Suckers are known to spawn upstream from the proposed bridge site. Fish species that community members identified as being important included: walleye, northern pike, sauger, whitefish, yellow perch and suckers. One community member indicated that sturgeon used be an important fish species, but that it has not been seen for at least 30 or 40 years;
- Beaver dams are present along Root Creek between Root Lake and Douglas Lake;
- There is an existing camp site located where Root Creek enters Root Lake;
- Medicinal plants that were identified as being important to the community members included sage, sweetgrass and weekaynsh (sweet flag). Food plants that were identified as being important to community members included blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. Community members indicated that there are plants that tend to attract large wildlife located along Root Creek;
- Community members identified the following wildlife as being important to them: birds of prey including eagles, osprey, owls, hawks; waterfowl including Mallards, geese, divers and loons; songbirds including whip-poor-will, American robin, chick-a-dee, yellow birds, whiskey jack, bluebirds; moose; and frogs, turtles and snakes. One community members also indicated that caribou had not been seen in a long time, approximately 30 to 40 years and;
- Community members identified the following as being culturally and traditionally important to them: trapping of beaver, fox, otters, martin, lynx, minks, Fisher, muskrat, wolverine, wolf; fishing for walleye, sauger, whitefish, northern pike, suckers; hunting for moose, mallards, geese, deer, partridge, rabbits; travel routes near Root Creek; and a cultural/spiritual site that is located in proximity of the MTS communication tower.

Land Use and Recreation

- None

Traditional Lifestyle

- Some specific species, plants, special sites added to valued environmental component posters. No disagreement or concern expressed over those already under consideration.

Employment and Training Opportunities

- Discussions on job registration for work and training. Job registration forms were available at the community meeting.
- Concerns that Chief and Council will provide recommendations for which community members receive training for project jobs and that women are not chosen.

Personal Family and Community Life

- None

Construction Activities

- The community had questions regarding the start date of construction activities and the start date of the Introduction to Construction training program.
- The community inquired about potential business partnerships between the First Nation construction company and other construction contractors, including joint venture partnerships.
- Members of the community asked who would be conducting construction activities on reserve land.
- Community members were interested in knowing what types of construction equipment will be required to complete the construction activities.

5.5.6.2 Pauingassi

General comments and concerns raised by the community members who attended the community meeting include:

Overall Project

- Community members indicated they understand that there will be impacts from the road, but that they want the road;
- Community members also commented on new technologies are being used by the government to mitigate or reduce the impact of projects and;
- Community members indicated they are looking forward to having the road to be able to travel to the airport.

Environment

- Community members indicated that protection does not mean we want to shut down everything, but that they want to protect the land from major projects that could harm the environment.
- Medicinal plants that were identified as being important to the community members included puffball, pine cones, birth trees, alder (bark), weekays (prolific in marshes under marshgrass), “Lynx stick” (Pysewstik) and “waterplant”. Food plants that were identified as being important to community members included blueberries, saskatoons, chokecherry, raspberry, cherry, birchtree (syrup) and wild rice.
- Community members identified the following wildlife as being important to them: birds of prey were eagles; songbirds including white throated sparrow, chick-a-dee, loon, hummingbirds; waterfowl including geese, mallards, grouse/spruce grouse; and

furbearers including beaver, martin, mink, wolves, lynx, wolverine, fisher, muskrat, fox, otter, rabbit (food), weasel.

- Fish species that were identified as being important as food for community members, included: whitefish, pickerel, northern pike, tulibee, white sucker (sucker eggs and flour also used for food), redhorse, burbot (liver used as a food source 50 years ago and eggs used for oil). Community members also indicated that there are no sturgeon.
- Community members identified the following as being culturally and traditionally important to them: travel routes to protect navigation; a fishing camp site that was identified on the route map, and an archaeological site identified west of the community
- Pauingassi indicated that the water levels can raise 4-5 ft in the spring.
- Concerns regarding chemicals will get into the creeks and impact the fish and wildlife. ESRA stated that they have a specification that includes environmental protection measures. An example of this is a required setback distance for refueling equipment.
- Community members expressed concern over the potential impacts on wildlife and inquired if impacted wildlife will return to the area after the completion of the Project. ESRA ensured that measures are taken to reduce the impact on wildlife and that most impacts are expected to be temporary.

Land Use and Recreation

- Pauingassi indicated that the boats used on Fishing Lake are typically 16ft long and have 25 hp or 40 hp motors.
- Concerns regarding areas where snowmobiles trails and portage routes intersect the proposed road.

Traditional Use Areas

- Community members understand that there are trees, medicinal plants, and wild berries that will be disturbed by the clearing, but they know that the clearing will not be of large areas just along the right of way.
- Community members indicated they do not want large industries like mining, forestry, or hydro to come to their traditional territory
- Major activities in the area include hunting, trapping, and fishing.
- Animals that are hunted include moose, rabbit, beavers, mink, lynx, fisher, and fox.

Employment and Training Opportunities

- Discussions on job registration for work and training. Job registration forms were available at the community meeting.
- Concerns that Chief and Council will provide recommendations for which community members receive training for project jobs and that women are not chosen. ESRA indicated they would discuss this concern with the training coordination staff.

Personal, Family and Community Life

- None

Construction Activities

- Community members asked if any chemicals will be used during the construction of the road that could potentially impact fish.
- Community members inquired if Best Management Practices will be used during the construction phase of the Project.

5.5.7 Round 5 – May 2014 – Environmental Assessment: Effects & Mitigation

Round 5 meetings were conducted by ESRA and their consultants with Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation in May 2014, additional meetings were held in Pine Falls and Winnipeg to engage other stakeholders and the public. The purpose of the meetings were to present potential effects and mitigation for the P7a Road ASR Project connecting Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations to the Little Grand Rapids Airport and receive input on potential ASR Project effects and proposed mitigation. Input from these meetings helped to identify and confirm design criteria, effects and mitigation measure to be used in the environmental assessment and construction specifications and to further refine the project alignment and design.

- During Round 4 of the engagement process with Little Grand Rapids FN, community members pointed out a change in the Little Grand Rapids reserve boundary that was not reflected in ESRA maps. Prior to May 2014, ESRA had been designing the proposed route alignment based on the earlier version of the Little Grand Rapids FN reserve boundary. The previous on-reserve access road alignment was changed to reflect the change in the reserve boundary. The shorter revised route alignment is considered to be more appealing for the following reasons: Construction crews will have easier access to construction sites located on the alignment as it is closer to the community and existing access roads can be utilized; and
- A shorter, on-reserve access road will facilitate the application and assessment process for federal environmental approvals.
- The changes were vetted with Chief and Council with support from those in attendance at the community meeting. The results of these discussions are presented in Figure 3-6 showing realignment of the route. A BCR supporting the on reserve alignment was signed.

5.5.7.1 Little Grand Rapids

Comments received during the Round 5 community meetings included:

Overall Project

- Positive feedback from community member's on proposed alignment change near Little Grand Rapids.
- Comment that community members will be waiting a long time for the Federal Government to construct anything.

Environment

- Root Creek and the possible changes in fish habitat. The community has witnessed an apparent decrease in fish abundance at Root Creek this past year (2014).
- Water quality concerns as a result of the sewage treatment plant.

Land Use and Recreation

- In the 1990's community member set up camp at the bottom of Root Creek where it flows into the lake and camped out until June. Now, no one goes to camp there because there aren't a lot of fish. Community members still check this area to see if fish are there.

Traditional Lifestyle

- None

Employment and Training Opportunities

- Members of the community inquired about the Job Recruitment Forms that had been filled out by community members two years prior. ESRA has kept these forms on file.
- Community members inquired about the Heavy Equipment Operator Training and when training sessions can be expected to occur in the community.
- Community members asked about the availability of summer student opportunities with ESRA consultants.

Personal, Family and Community Life

- Community members asked who the traffic authority will be for the proposed road once the Project is complete.

Construction Activities

- Community members inquired about a possible renewal of the previous Community Benefits Agreement (CBA).

- Concern was expressed by the community regarding the height of the proposed bridge over Root Creek. ESRA informed the community that the bridge clearance will be 8.5 ft.
- The community requested clarification regarding the change to the on-reserve portion of the proposed road.

5.5.7.2 Pauingassi

Comments received during the Round Five community meetings include:

Overall Project

- None

Environment

- Speed control signs should be erected as soon as possible to avoid vehicle-wildlife collisions.
- Residents saw caribou migrating north within the last two weeks close to the community. Caribou were following hydro transmission right-of-way.
- Community members inquired about the presence of beaver dams along the proposed alignment. ESRA will work with local trappers to remove dams that impede construction and mitigate problem beavers.

Land Use and Recreation

- Community members expressed concern over potential impacts on medicinal plants and berries. ESRA's goal is to avoid impact through continued communication with the community.

Traditional Lifestyle

- Concern regarding blasting of rock along the roadway – suggested that ESRA inform the community of any blasting so that it does not impact traditional activities.

Employment and Training Opportunities

- Community members requested an update on the timeline and structure of future training sessions in community.

Personal, Family and Community Life

- None

Construction Activities

- Community members inquired if the proposed road is expected to be straight. ESRA informed the community that the road will be curved to follow the terrain.
- The community requested an updated project timeline, with focus on the construction start date.

5.5.8 Round 6 – June to September 2014 – Environmental Assessment: Results

Round 6 meetings were conducted by ESRA and their consultants with Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation between July and September 2014 (see Appendix D). The purpose of the meetings were to present a summary of the environmental assessment including, VEC's identified by community and others, mitigation proposed, monitoring, follow-up, and next steps for the P7a All-Season Road Project and the opportunities for continued community input on the project. Input from these meetings confirmed agreement with environmental assessment findings and helped to identify communication and reporting needs during the detailed design and construction phases. ESRA also provided a project update to provincial government stakeholders (IRMT).

5.5.8.1 Little Grand Rapids

Comments received during the Round Six community meetings include:

Overall Project

- None

Environment

- Root Creek is very important to the community; the portage and navigation at Root Creek should be kept intact.

Land Use and Recreation

- None

Traditional Lifestyle

- None

Employment and Training Opportunities

- Community members were interested in taking ESRA's a heavy equipment training course.
- A community member was disappointed with ESRA's plan to train only four heavy equipment operators and that many community members are getting frustrated as jobs and training opportunities are taking too long.

Personal, Family and Community Life

- None

Construction Activities

- Community members asked ESRA to clarify the difference between ESRA and Manitoba Conservation. ESRA informed the community that ESRA is the proponent of the Project and Manitoba Conservation is a provincial regulator.
- Community members requested clarification on activities completed by the First Nation construction company and payment procedures for completed work.

5.5.8.2 Pauingassi

Comments received during the Round Six community meetings include:

Overall Project

- None

Environment

- Speed control signs should be erected as soon as possible to avoid vehicle-wildlife collisions.
- Residents saw caribou migrating north within the last two weeks close to the community. Caribou were following hydro transmission right-of-way.

Land Use and Recreation

- None

Traditional Lifestyle

- Concern regarding blasting of rock along the roadway – suggested that ESRA inform the community of any blasting so that it does not impact traditional activities.

Employment and Training Opportunities

- None

Personal, Family and Community Life

- None

Construction Activities

- None

5.5.8.3 Public Open Houses

Pine Falls Public Open House – June 2014

- Four participants signed the Pine Falls Open House Registry. No comments were received from the attendees.

Winnipeg Public Open House – June 2014

- Three participants signed the Winnipeg Open House Registry. Comments received from the attendees included:
 - Opportunity to provide accommodation that could be used as tourist or teacher accommodation at end of project.

5.6 Government Engagement

The following is a list of meetings that were held with government departments to discuss the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project:

5.6.1 Integrated Resource Management Team

ESRA presented the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project alignment, project details and project updates to the IRMT Meetings held on February 2, 2013, January 21, 2013 and February 3, 2014, September 15, 2014, and April 13, 2015.

5.6.2 Wildlife Branch, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

ESRA gave a presentation to the Wildlife Branch, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship on December 6, 2013, to discuss the wildlife baseline data collection and analysis

conducted for the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project route between Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations.

5.6.3 Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

A meeting was held between ESRA and the Environmental Licensing and Approvals Branch at Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship on March 1, 2013 to present and discuss the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project alignment between Pauingassi First Nation and Little Grand Rapids First Nation.

5.6.4 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

A meeting was held with ESRA, Falk Environmental Inc. and AANDC on March 19th, 2014 to discuss requirements for the project description and environmental assessment report that are required for the Community Access Roads to be constructed on Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nation as part of the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project.

5.6.5 Department of Fisheries and Oceans

ESRA will be engaging the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as specific crossing design details from engineering consultants become available. Detailed project information will be submitted for their review and decision to require Authorization prior to crossing construction.

5.7 Other Stakeholder Engagement

Project presentations were given to Resource Stewardship Boards, the South East Resource Development Council, federal and provincial government agencies, the Trappers Association, and the Lodges & Outfitters Association.

The following is a list of meetings that were held with other stakeholders to discuss the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project:

5.7.1 Southeast Resource Development Council

ESRA was invited to present an overview of the proposed All-Season Road Project P7a between Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations and project updates to representatives of the Southeast Resource Development Council on February 3, 2011, August 23, 2011 (LGR) and January 28, 2014. ESRA did not attend the meeting in its entirety; minutes of the meeting were not provided.

5.7.2 Manitoba Trappers Association

ESRA met with the Manitoba Trappers Association on March 1, 2009 and November 1, 2013 to introduce and provide updates on the East Side Transportation Initiative and All-Season Road

Projects. Discussion revolved around potential effects to trappers and provision of access to traplines as noted by ESRA construction contracts for the P1 PR304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project.

5.7.3 Lodges and Outfitters

A meeting was held with ESRA and Paul Turenne from the Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association to discuss the East Side Transportation Initiative including the proposed P7a Road Project. An article was published in the Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Magazine in Summer, 2013 was published describing the Initiative, identifying the corridors and calling on lodge operators and outfitters in the area to contact Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association to identify concerns and feedback which would be forwarded to ESRA for consideration in project planning and design.

5.7.4 Trapper Program

The Trappers Program was initiated in fall of 2013 with trappers from Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations and will continue during construction. The purpose of the Trappers Program is to initiate trapper involvement in research and monitoring activities being conducted on furbearers. The Program helped to acquire baseline data and assess the potential effects of construction and operation and maintenance of the proposed P7a All-Season Road Project on furbearer distribution and harvest by trapping. Trapping Program initiatives were developed with the specific intent to incorporate local trapper knowledge in monitoring and research activities and to promote collaboration with the trapping community.

Initial meetings with trappers were held with consultants on behalf of ESRA and community coordinators to discuss the trappers program. Information collected in the field included baseline data on local and regional furbearer distribution, movement and behaviour, and traditional and current land uses by community members. Trappers were provided with journals (Appendix D) to be used in the field to document information collected.

Pre-season surveys were conducted with trappers to obtain information on the following:

- Animal migration routes;
- Animal wintering areas;
- Calving and birthing areas;
- Waterfowl nesting sites;
- Animal denning sites;
- Other special area used by animals and;
- What areas should be protected because they are important for animals.

Photographs of animal, bird and reptile and amphibian species were shown to the participants to determine if they have seen these species when they are trapping.

Post season trapping surveys were also conducted with local trappers to obtain information on the trappers history including the number of years trapped and location of traplines. Other information included trapping practices, species common in their area and species they trap, changes that affect trapping and recovery times. Recommendations on improvements that ESRA could make to the Trappers Program and information that ESRA should consider in the future were asked in the survey. A complete list of the questions asked of participants is provided in Appendix D. ESRA initiated trapper involvement (trappers program) in the research and monitoring activities related to furbearers.

Materials used to obtain trapper information included:

- Trapper Checklist: a questionnaire to help determine if the trapper is willing and able to do the work;
- Tasks for Community Coordinator: duties that may be required of the community coordinator;
- Community Trapper Study Overview: general purpose of the proposed Road Project and how it will take place;
- Pre-Season Traditional Knowledge Survey: conducted with the trapper to gain additional information on his/her trapping knowledge and experiences and;
- Post-Season Trapping Survey: conducted with the trapper to see how the season went and what could be changed and improved upon for future years.

Examples of these materials are provided in Appendix D.

5.8 Summary

This chapter of the environmental assessment report described the history and on-going Aboriginal and Public Engagement Program carried out on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and more specifically for the proposed All-Season Road Project linking Pauingassi First Nation and Little Grand Rapids First Nation to the Little Grand Rapids Airport (Project P7a). The Aboriginal and Public Engagement Program consisted of:

- Meetings with First Nation Leadership, First Nation community members, MMF, government representatives, other Aboriginal groups, and other interested stakeholders;
- Public Open Houses;
- Traditional Knowledge Workshops & Studies;
- Newspaper notifications;
- Radio and local television ads and;
- Mail and e-mail correspondence.

Information is being collected and disseminated through eight (8) rounds of engagement activities, conducted in parallel with ESRA's design processes and construction with the

intent to facilitate two-way communication and understanding amongst stakeholders throughout the duration of the project. Six rounds of engagement activities have occurred to date.