

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
6911 Southpoint Drive
Burnaby, BC, V3N 4X8

April 29, 2026

BC Parks
Protected Area Planning
Attention: Nancy White, Planning Section Head
Via Email: Nancy.White@gov.bc.ca

Dear Nancy White:

Re: Request to Adjust Swan Creek Protected Area Boundary for North Coast Transmission Line -- Stage 1 Initial Proposal

1. INTRODUCTION

This letter describes BC Hydro's proposed adjustment to the boundary of Swan Creek Protected Area to accommodate the construction and operation of approximately **1.1 km** of the North Coast Transmission Line (NCTL) (the Project). Information in this letter is provided in accordance with the requirements for "Stage 1: Initial Proposal" of the *Provincial Protected Area Boundary Adjustment Policy, Process and Guidelines*.¹ This letter provides background information on the NCTL, the location and need for the Swan Creek Protected Area boundary adjustment, potential social, economic and environmental impacts resulting from the boundary adjustment, assessment of alternatives to the adjustment, and First Nations, local government, and community group engagement to date regarding the adjustment.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

NCTL Background

BC Hydro currently supplies electricity to the North Coast of British Columbia through 450 km of 500 kilovolt (kV) radial transmission lines that run from Williston Substation near Prince George to Skeena Substation in Terrace. Glenannan and Telkwa substations are located along the route. To meet the growing electricity demand in northwest BC, BC Hydro plans to construct the NCTL.

The project will involve building new 500 kV transmission lines and associated infrastructure in three phases (**Figure 1**): Phase 1 will run from Williston Substation to Glenannan Substation near Endako (~164 km). Phase 2 will run from Glenannan Substation to Telkwa Substation (~131 km), and then from Telkwa Substation to Skeena Substation in Terrace (~145 km). Phase 3 will run from Skeena Substation to Bob Quinn Substation near Bob Quinn Lake (distance to be confirmed).

BC Hydro is actively consulting with First Nations to confirm routes. In addition, as part of broader reconciliation efforts, we have been developing a partnership model with Phase 1 and Phase 2 First Nations to provide them with the opportunity to invest in and share long-term benefits from the line.

¹ [Provincial Protected Area Boundary Adjustment Policy - Final April 6 2010.docx](#)

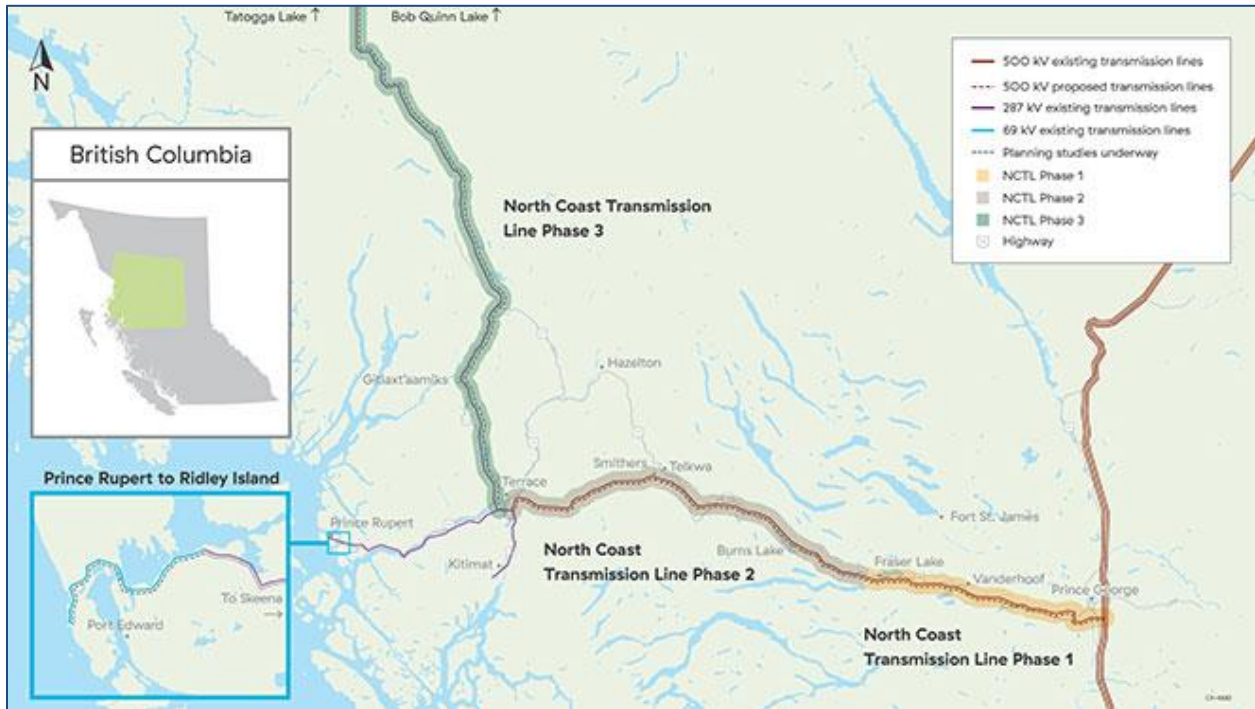


Figure 1: North Coast Transmission Line Phases.

Swan Creek Protected Area

For most of its length, the Phase 2 transmission line runs parallel to and within the same right-of-way as the existing 500kV transmission line. At “Node 3” the proposed route departs from the existing transmission line and heads southwest, running through the Zymoetz River² Valley. At this location, the preferred route runs along the south side of the Zymoetz River and through the northern portion of the Swan Creek Protected Area (Figures 2 and 3). This route was selected through a collaborative review and assessment of route options referred to as “structured decision making” with Kitselas First Nation, Kitsumkalum First Nation, Lax Kw’alaams First Nation, Metlakatla First Nation, and Wet’suwet’en First Nation.

The preferred route will require the proposed boundary adjustment to Swan Creek Protected Area. The Swan Creek Protected Area is **266.2 ha** in size. The proposed boundary adjustment would remove approximately **8.2 ha** of land (the proposed exclusion area) from the Protected Area.

² Also referred to as Copper River.



Figure 2: Western Portion of NCTL Phase 2, including Node 3 to Node 4 and location of Swan Creek PA.

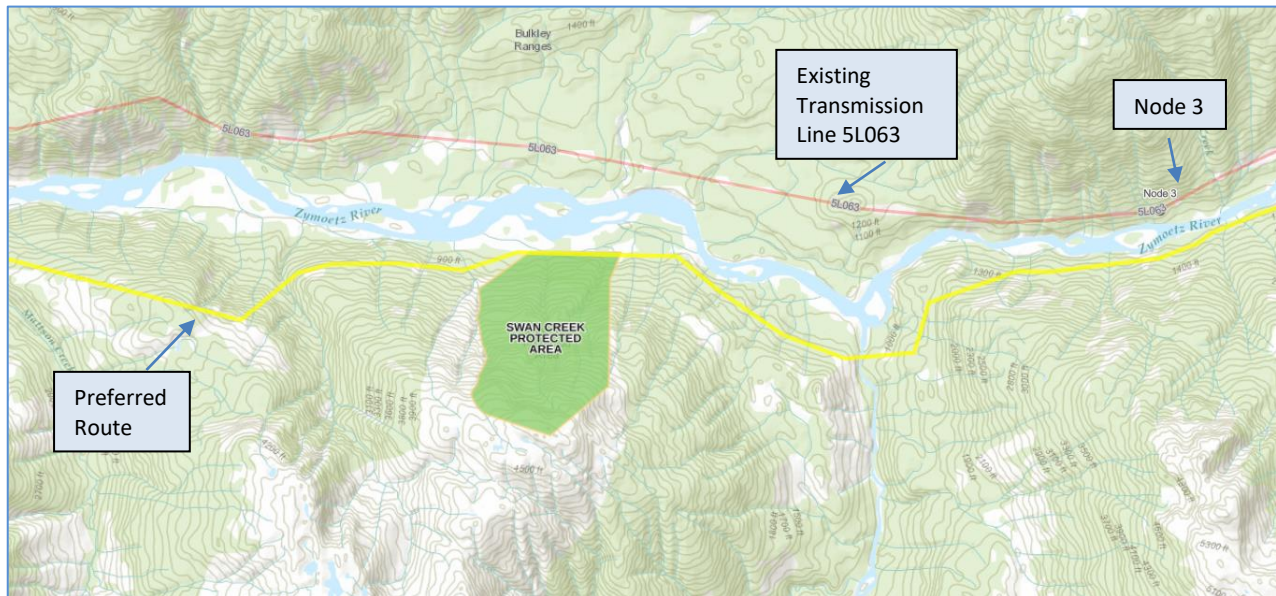


Figure 3: Preferred Route through Northern Boundary of Swan Creek Protected Area.

3. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

North Coast Transmission Line

The economic, social and environmental effects and benefits of the NCTL, including cumulative effects, are being assessed in the Environmental Protection Plan, an assessment report that BC Hydro and First Nations are co-authoring. First Nations are currently reviewing biophysical, economic and social chapters of the cumulative effects assessment. These chapters inform the Nations' assessment of impacts to Indigenous and cultural values. .

Swan Creek Protected Area

The Swan Creek Protected Area was designated on March 22, 2005 as part of the Kalum Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The LRMP identified the area as having “scenic waterfall, tourism” protection values and recommended that it be managed for recreation. The area protects a small, steep unlogged watershed with old growth trees, including western hemlock, mountain hemlock, western red cedar and subalpine fire.

Access to the northern boundary of the Swan Creek Protected Area is via Copper River Forest Service Road. The Protected Area itself does not have any trails, facilities or designated campsites. Wilderness camping is allowed and hunting occurs within the park during the open season. The nearest provincial recreation site is the Salmon Run Forest Recreation Site, immediately north of the Swan Creek Protected Area on the north side of the Copper River Forest Service Road at the ~30 km marker. This site has three campsites, picnic tables, fire rings and a pit toilet.

Figure 4 shows the 8.2 ha area that would be excluded from the Protected Area. This area is based on preliminary design and is subject to change based on field assessments, avoidance of environmental features, and danger tree evaluation. BC Hydro will continue to update BC Parks and engage with relevant Phase 2 First Nations regarding design progress. No registered archaeological sites occur in the protected area, including the proposed exclusion area. The proposed exclusion area does not overlap with any known sensitive wildlife areas such as nesting buffers, species-at-risk habitat, or designated wildlife habitat areas. A moose winter range follows the northern edge of the Protected Area but does not fall within the proposed 8.2 ha exclusion area.

All construction works required to establish the transmission line through the proposed exclusion area will be undertaken in accordance with the NCTL project's construction environmental management plan (CEMP) and relevant project conditions to mitigate potential environmental impacts. The draft CEMP has been shared with First Nations for input. Clearing and impacts to wetlands will be minimized as much as possible based on design requirements. If permission is granted to adjust the Swan Creek Protected Area boundary, construction of the NCTL may remove up to 2.7 ha of open wetland and require clearing of mature tree stands consisting of Spruce, Balsam Poplar, Cottonwood, Western Hemlock, and Amabilis Fir. Approximately 0.70 ha of the exclusion area is also within an Old Growth Deferral Area.

Three streams are shown on provincial maps, and three additional small streams or drainage channels were identified during field work. All of these small watercourses eventually flow into the Zymoetz

River, which supports several fish species, including Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*), Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), and Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*). Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize disturbance to all streams and drainage areas across the proposed exclusion area.

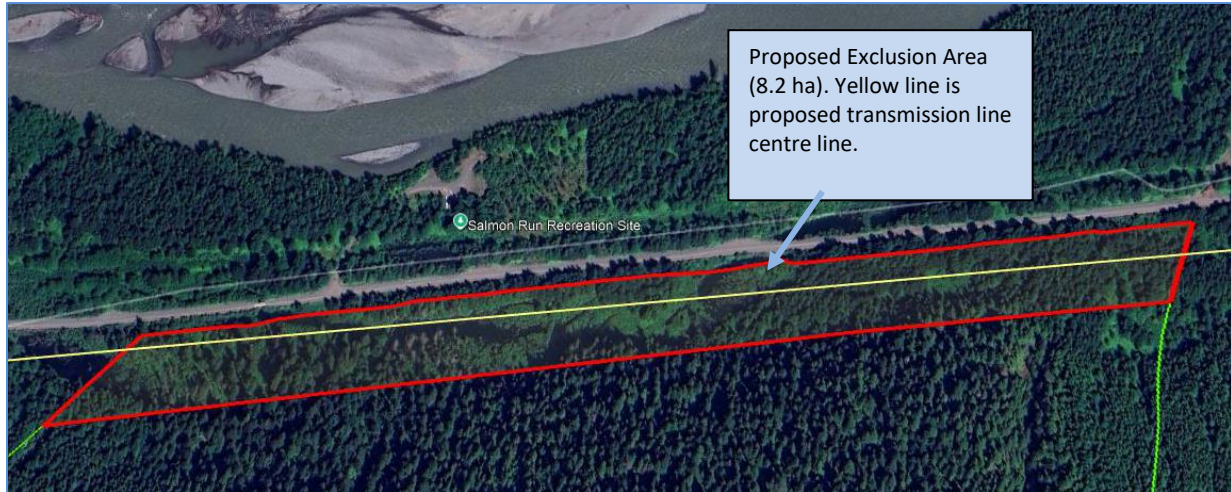


Figure 4: Proposed Exclusion Area, Swan Creek Protected Area.

4. ALTERNATIVES TO PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

Figure 5 shows the route options that were assessed for the NCTL through the Zymoetz River Valley. These route options were assessed with First Nations in terms of system reliability, impacts to the environment, Indigenous and cultural values, impacts to stakeholders, as well as safety risks and cost.

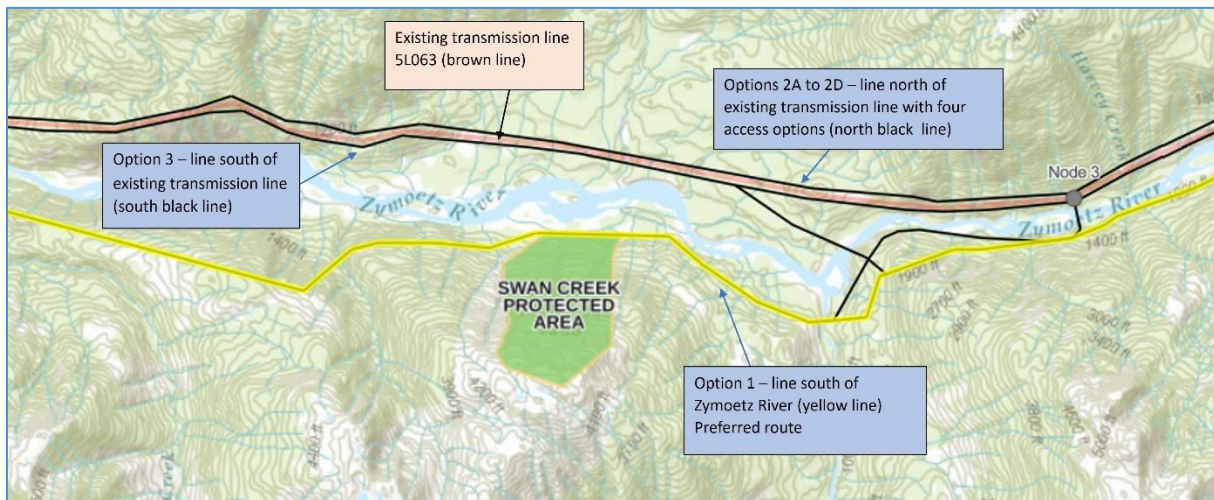


Figure 5: Zymoetz River Access Options near Node 3

Options 2 and 3 are located immediately north and south of existing transmission line (5L063) on the north side of the Zymoetz River Valley. Option 3 was assessed as having significant terrain stability and erosion risks and was removed as a viable alternative early in the structured decision-making process.

The assessment of Option 2 included various access considerations – helicopter access (2A), temporary access structures (2B), permanent bridges and roads with controls (2C) and permanent bridges and roads without controls (2D). While locating the line north of the existing transmission line reduced overall habitat fragmentation, new access to this part of the Zymoetz River Valley was assessed as increasing potential impacts to fish and aquatic habitat, and disturbance to moose and goat populations.

Option 1 on the south side of the Zymoetz River was selected as the preferred route primarily because it does not require new access development to the north of the Zymoetz River Valley. While this option is not parallel to the existing transmission line corridor, it follows an existing major Forest Service Road and the Pacific Northern Gas pipeline corridor for most of its length. In addition, while this route is close to five archaeological sites, this risk was assessed as manageable through avoidance and compliance with the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

5. FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

BC Hydro's consultation and engagement with First Nations on NCTL has been ongoing since Fall 2022 through multiple collective tables and bilateral discussions. The portion of the transmission line that includes the Zymoetz River Valley falls within the traditional territories of the Kitselas First Nation, Kitsumkalum First Nation, Lax Kw'alaams First Nation, Metlakatla First Nation, and Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

Between October 2024 and September 2025, BC Hydro invited all five nations to participate in the review and assessment of route options to identify a preferred route for this section of the line. During this time, BC Hydro met with First Nations, shared project mapping and information including an environmental constraints analysis and information related to the objectives being assessed for each route option (i.e., system reliability, impacts to the environment, impacts to stakeholders, safety risks and cost. BC Hydro also offered helicopter rides (accepted by Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Metlakatla, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations) and site visits to view the route options. Nations shared perspectives and information about key priorities and values for consideration when assessing the route options, including access management, protecting wildlife habitat, protecting archaeological and cultural values, assessing new and existing clearing and roads, and construction and operation costs.

Based on the collaborative assessment, Option 1 was selected as the preferred route. Kitsumkalum First Nation indicated support for route Option 1. Kitselas First Nation indicated that Option 1 would be more favourable in terms of Kitselas Values. Wet'suwet'en First Nation noted that route Option 1 does not intersect with their territorial boundaries. Lax Kw'alaams have not indicated a preference to date. Metlakatla has not to date provided agreement or support for the preferred route or the proposed Swan Creek Protected Area boundary adjustment. An overview of the routing decision was shared with all Phase 2 Nations at a forum on February 6, 2025. On February 12, 2025, BC Hydro sent letters to Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Metlakatla, Lax Kw'alaams, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations advising that, based on the collaborative assessment, Option 1 was likely the preferred route and inviting any additional input.

Kitselas First Nation provided feedback, and several follow-up meetings were held between Kitselas and BC Hydro to discuss routing considerations. These discussions concluded with confirmation of Option 1 as the preferred route in September 2025. Engagement between Kitselas and BC Hydro remains ongoing, with a continued focus on routing considerations related to cultural use sites.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY GROUP ENGAGEMENT

The Swan Creek Protected Area lies within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine and is approximately 38 km east of Terrace, via Highway 16 and the Copper River Forest Service Road. BC Hydro has engaged with the City of Terrace and Regional District of Kitimat Stikine at the political and staff levels and has contacted community groups with potential interest in the Swan Creek Protected Area and proposed boundary adjustment. No issues or concerns have been raised to date. BC Hydro will continue to engage with interested parties on the boundary adjustment and other aspects of the project as it advances.

7. ANTICIPATED PROJECT SCHEDULE

Clearing and access road construction for Phase 2 of the NCTL is scheduled to take place in phases/segments, commencing in July 2027 and continuing until March 2029. Line construction is planned to start in April 2029 with an in-service date prior to June 2032. Restoration works may start as early as October 2030 and may continue to 2033.

8. PROJECT PERMITTING

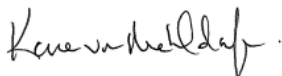
In May 2025, the Province designated the NCTL as a streamlined project subject to the permitting authority of the BC Energy Regulator under the *Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act*. BC Hydro is working closely with the BCER to seek provincial permits for NCTL under the *Land Act*, *Water Sustainability Act*, *Forest Act*, *Wildlife Act*, *Heritage Conservation Act*, and – if required – the *Mines Act*.

Construction of the NCTL through the Swan Creek area will require a *Land Act* Licence of Occupation, *Forest Act* cutting permit, and *Water Sustainability Act* approvals for any required instream works through this portion of the route. BC Hydro plans to share draft applications for these works with Phase 2 First Nations in September 2026 with a final application submitted to the BCER in December 2026. BC Hydro plans to start construction in this area by July 2027. BC Hydro understands that BC Parks' approval of the Protected Area boundary adjustment will be required before permits can be issued for this portion of the route.

9. CLOSURE

I trust this submission provides information you require to consider BC Hydro's request to adjust the boundary of the Swan Creek Protected Area. We look forward to discussing this request with you further. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Regards,



Karen von Muehldorfer
Regulatory Manager, BC Hydro

Cc: Siobhan Jackson, Director, North Coast Transmission Line, BC Hydro
Mark Alexander, Project Manager, North Coast Transmission Line, BC Hydro
Greg Scarborough, Environmental Manager, BC Hydro