



WEBEQUIE SUPPLY ROAD PROJECT

Community Newsletter

Issue 6 – January 2022

Greetings!

As we ring in the new year of 2022, we wanted to provide a re-cap of what happened on the Webequie Supply Road (WSR) Project in 2021. The Project Team has been working hard to progress the Project and we have reached some milestones on the Project. Read on for more details!

Approval of the Terms of Reference

The approval of the Terms of Reference (ToR) was a big milestone for the project because it meant that we were able to begin the Environmental Assessment (EA) phase. The project is currently undergoing both federal impact assessment and provincial EA.

What's the difference between the Federal IA and Provincial EA?

FEDERAL EA

The proponent (WFN) creates and submits a project description to the federal government



The Impact Assessment Agency reviews it and then tells the proponent what to study by providing them with Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (TISG)

vs.

PROVINCIAL EA

The proponent (WFN) creates a project description to lead the ToR process. The province provides some guidelines for developing a ToR. The ToR is the workplan for the EA process.



Once complete, the proponent submits ToR to the province. The ToR goes through a public review process, then the province reviews and either approves or rejects it.

The next step is to conduct the EA, which will result in a single report that will address the requirements of both the provincial (ToR) and the federal (TISG).

Study Plans

As part of the federal impact assessment process, the Project Team developed Study Plans for each of the *valued components*. These are aspects that have been identified as important to Indigenous communities, the public and stakeholders of the project, for example, community members. The Study Plan outlines how baseline information will be gathered (such as field studies and surveys) and how potential effects will be measured and assessed.

Many studies associated with each study plan have already been completed or are in the process of being completed. They are what we call field studies!

Field Studies

A key part of an EA is to determine the existing conditions of the environment, to give us something to compare to when looking at potential effects of the project. Below is a summary of the field studies we have completed this year.

Breeding Bird Surveys (February/ March 2021)

- Counts were conducted at 263 stations
- Recording units were placed at 89 locations and birds were recorded throughout the day during all four seasons
- The recording units were used to sample calling frogs in wetlands
- Over 80 species of birds were recorded



Acoustic Bat Surveys (June – October 2021)

- The presence of bats was surveyed using ultrasonic recorders
- 10 surveying locations were used
- Surveyed during both pup-rearing period (June – July) and migration/swarming period (August – October)
- Five (5) species of bats were recorded



Caribou Aerial Surveys (February/March 2021)

- Conducted using a helicopter
- Mainly surveyed caribou- also surveyed many medium and large mammals (e.g. moose, wolves, wolverine, otter, marten, and other furbearers)
- Over 500 caribou documented in 2021 survey



Caribou Collaring Study (February/March 2021)

- Aimed to determine calving areas, wintering areas and travel corridors
- Placed GPS/ radio collars on 30 female caribou- their movement will be monitored for 3 years (began in 2020 – 2021 was Year 2 of the study.)
- Data to date reveal that the majority of collared caribou are of the Eastern Migratory population that winters in wooded areas but calves along the Hudson's Bay shoreline



Wolverine Occupancy Study (Winter/Spring/Summer 2021)

- Sampling stations called “run-poles” were constructed at 25 sites within 10 km of all WSR alternative routes. Stations included snag posts to collect hair from visiting animals and two cameras.
- Wolverine stations documented at least 7 individuals, which visited 13 stations a total of 29 times.
- This is the first study along the eastern range boundary of this species in Ontario and the first targeted Wolverine baseline study for an environmental assessment in Ontario.



What to Expect in 2022

You can expect continued engagement with First Nations through various livestreaming events, Wawatay radio call-in shows, tutorials, newsletters, and open houses on different components of the EA and updates on our studies and process. We will be continuing to conduct field studies and will be engaging communities in an Indigenous Knowledge / Indigenous Land and Resource Use Program as well as a Socio-Economic Primary Data Collection Program. We will be offering more information on these programs in the new year!

We continue to offer opportunities to comment and give input through email, comment box on the website, Wawatay radio call-in shows, and during our live streaming events.



Stay Tuned!

Stay tuned for our next Project update. For additional information on the project, please visit our project website at: www.supplyroad.ca or by contacting:

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