

## FIELD STUDIES INFORMATION SHEET

### April – June 2011 – Garter Snake Hibernacula Study

The Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C) is now in Stage 3, the environmental and regulatory review phase, which will include an independent environmental assessment. Stage 3 work includes conducting environmental and engineering field studies on and around the Peace River between the Williston Reservoir and the Alberta border. BC Hydro anticipates formally entering the environmental assessment process in early 2011 with the submission of a Project Description Report to the provincial and federal environmental assessment agencies.

This spring, BC Hydro is conducting a field study to gain a better understanding of the winter hibernacula of garter snakes in the proposed Site C project area. The study methodology and approach meet current best practices and will be conducted under a Wildlife Act Permit. The core study area extends from the Peace Canyon Dam east to the Alberta border, encompassing the core Peace River corridor.

Using the Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) that has been prepared for the Peace River valley, a draft species model developed for the two species of garter snakes found in the Peace River valley, and existing data sources (such as local knowledge and information from Ministry of Environment staff), biologists have developed a map that classifies potential and confirmed locations of garter snake hibernation habitat. Field work will spatially identify and confirm locations and field-truth habitat ratings.

The field work will be conducted by two Registered Professional Biologists. Routes searched, time spent searching, snake species, locations of snakes and shed skins observed will be recorded. Any hibernacula sites found will be photographed, and habitat ratings will be completed.

Access will be primarily by road and foot, but a riverboat may be required to access some portions of the south bank of the river where there are no roads to the specific locations.

Field data will be used to revise the habitat ratings and generate a final map depicting known and potential hibernacula sites.

For further information, please contact:  
Kate O'Neil, Community Relations  
Site C Clean Energy Project  
Community Consultation Office – Fort St. John  
Office: 250-785-3415 Cell: 250-793-5416

#### GARTER SNAKE HIBERNACULA STUDY April – June 2011

- BC Hydro is studying the winter hibernacula of garter snakes in the Peace River valley
- BC Hydro will obtain the necessary permissions before land is accessed
- All work will be conducted under a Wildlife Act permit
- Keystone Wildlife Research is leading the work
- Work will be conducted by two Registered Professional Biologists