APPENDIX 19-IV

Project Activities in Provincial Parks And Conservation Reserves
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION**  
   1.1 Context ............................................................................................................................................. 1  
   1.2 Purpose ............................................................................................................................................... 3  

2. **PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ALTERNATIVES**  
   2.1 Transmission Structure Types, Placement and Spacing .......................................................................... 4  
   2.1.1 Structures versus Buried Line ........................................................................................................ 4  
   2.2 Access Roads ......................................................................................................................................... 5  
   2.2.1 Helicopters versus Terrestrial Access ............................................................................................. 6  
   2.3 Water Body Crossings .......................................................................................................................... 7  
   2.4 Storage Yards, Laydown Yards and Construction Camps ........................................................................ 7  
   2.5 Blasting ................................................................................................................................................ 8  

3. **PROJECT ACTIVITIES BY PROTECTED AREA**  
   3.1 Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park ........................................................................................................ 8  
   3.1.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 9  
   3.2 Black Sturgeon River Provincial Park .................................................................................................. 10  
   3.2.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 10  
   3.3 Ruby Lake Provincial Park ................................................................................................................... 11  
   3.3.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 12  
   3.4 Kama Hills Provincial Nature Reserve (Provincial Park) .................................................................... 12  
   3.4.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 12  
   3.5 Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve .................................................................................................... 13  
   3.5.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 13  
   3.6 Gravel River Conservation Reserve ................................................................................................... 14  
   3.6.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 14  
   3.7 Gravel River Provincial Nature Reserve (Provincial Park) .................................................................. 15  
   3.7.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 16  
   3.8 Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve ............................................................ 17  
   3.8.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 17  
   3.9 Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Forest Reserve ..................................................................... 18  
   3.9.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 18  
   3.10 Pukaskwa River Provincial Park ........................................................................................................ 19  
   3.10.1 Alternatives Considered ................................................................................................................ 19
APPENDIX 19-IV
PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION RESERVES

3.11  Nimoosh Provincial Park

3.11.1  Alternatives Considered

4.  SUMMARY

5.  REFERENCES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 19-IV-1

Figures of Project Components within Protected Areas
1. INTRODUCTION

NextBridge Infrastructure LP (NextBridge) is proposing to construct, own and maintain the East-West Tie Transmission Project (the Project or undertaking). The Project is a new, approximately 450 kilometre (km) long double-circuit 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that connects the Lakehead Transformer Station (TS) in the Municipality of Shuniah near the City of Thunder Bay to the Wawa TS located east of the Municipality of Wawa. The Project has been identified as a priority project by the Province of Ontario, and a needed project by the IESO to meet future electricity demand in northwestern Ontario.

The Project is subject to Ontario’s Individual Environmental Assessment (EA) process based on the voltage and length. A Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Individual EA was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) in February 2014 and approved in August 2014. Subsequently, an amended EA Report has been prepared in accordance with the approved ToR.

As noted in the approved ToR, other provincial EA requirements, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry’s (MNRF) Class EA for Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects (MNR 2003c) and the MNRF’s Class EA for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (MNR 2004a), are intended to be met through the Individual EA process. Recommendations from the MNRF on the draft and final EA Reports have been taken into account in the development of this appendix document.

1.1 Context

Ontario’s provincially protected areas are conserved through the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 (PPCRA), which provides tools for the identification and protection of the Province’s parks, recreational spaces and trails (Government of Ontario 2006). The PPCRA sets out the legislative framework for the formal protection of provincial parks and conservation reserves, allowing the MNRF (generally through Ontario Parks) to manage these areas. Development is generally prohibited or limited in Ontario’s parks and protected areas; however, Section 20(2) of the PPCRA does permit utility corridors, stating that “subject to the policies of the Ministry and the approval of the Minister, with or without conditions, utility corridors, including but not limited to utility corridors for electrical transmission lines, are permitted in provincial parks and conservation reserves” (Government of Ontario 2006). Section 21 of the PPCRA states that in approving a utility corridor under Section 20, the Minister must be satisfied that “there are no reasonable alternatives; that the lowest cost is not the sole or overriding justification; and that environmental impacts have been considered and all reasonable measures will be undertaken to minimize harmful environmental impact and to protect ecological integrity” (Government of Ontario 2006).

Through the EA process, NextBridge has identified the preferred route as the most appropriate route for the transmission line that will balance environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts and benefits. Where possible, the preferred route avoids protected areas; however, as described in Section 19.5.2.1 of the amended EA Report (Table 19-3), some Project components are proposed to cross provincial parks and conservation reserves designated under the PPCRA. Specifically, Project components of the preferred route cross through portions of Ouimet Canyon, Black Sturgeon River, Ruby Lake, Gravel River, Pukaskwa River, and Nimoosh provincial parks, which all have existing utility and/or transportation corridors.
As well, some of the preferred route Project components will cross portions of the Kama Cliffs, Gravel River and Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands conservation reserves, and the Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Forest Reserve. Section 2.0 of this appendix describes which Project components are proposed to cross through each of the identified protected areas. Figures displaying the Project components that are within each affected protected area are in Appendix 19-IV-1.

Alternative routes were assessed for the portions of the transmission line that cross through conservation reserves and provincial parks. A quantitative comparative analysis of the alternate routes for these protected areas is provided in Appendix 3-II and Appendix 3-III. Impacts on the criteria and indicators were assessed to support the position that there were not any reasonable alternatives to the identified reference route. The original route, identified as the “reference route” in the ToR, paralleled the existing Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) East-West Tie transmission line, and was consistent with the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (Government of Ontario 2014), which recommends making the best use of existing infrastructure and corridors, and that infrastructure be constructed in a coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective manner before proposing new greenfield developments that do not parallel existing developments.

Conservation Reserves

The three conservation reserves that will be crossed by Project components are the Kama Cliffs, Gravel River and Kwinkwaga Conservation Reserves. Conservation reserves are areas of provincial Crown land set aside by regulation under the Public Lands Act to complement provincial parks in protecting representative natural areas and specific landscape features. Where explicitly permitted in the applicable management statements, these areas host recreational activities (e.g., hiking, skiing, tourism related uses, and nature appreciation) and some non-industrial commercial activities (e.g., fur harvesting, bait fishing and commercial fishing). Recreational hunting and fishing are permitted uses within these conservation reserves. Commercial timber harvesting, mining, aggregate extraction and hydroelectric development are prohibited in conservation reserves.

Provincial Parks

Seven provincial parks will be crossed by components of the Project, including one operating nature reserve class park (Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park) and six non-operating wilderness and/or waterway class parks. The recreational activities permitted in provincial parks are dependent on park classification and management direction in accordance with MNRF and Ontario Parks policy. Where explicitly permitted in the applicable management plans or management statements, they host recreational activities (e.g., hiking, fishing, skiing, tourism related uses, and nature appreciation). Non-industrial commercial activities, such as fur harvesting, bait fishing and commercial fishing, and recreational hunting are generally not permitted in provincial parks, unless in accordance of O. Reg. 380/00 of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997. Commercial timber harvesting, mining, aggregate extraction and hydroelectric development are also prohibited in provincial parks.

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1 A greenfield is a parcel of land that has not been previously developed (Heid 2004).
1.2 Purpose

The PPCRA states that utility corridors are permitted in provincial parks and conservation reserves, subject to the policies of the MNRF and the approval of the Minister of the MNRF. In most cases, new utility corridors in the protected areas require approval under Sections 20 and 21 of the PPCRA.

For each protected area, the provincial park management plan or conservation reserve management statement outlines the compatibility of transmission lines and utility corridors with the provincial parks or conservation reserves. Section 19 of the amended EA Report (Table 19-4), summarizes the current provisions and existing conditions regarding transmission lines and utility corridors in the management planning documents for each protected area. Where policies do not permit the use, an amendment to the policy must be sought and approved by the Minister of the MNRF before the Project can proceed through the protected areas.

On February 7, 2017, a Policy Proposal Notice on the Environmental Bill of Rights, Registry Number 012-9685, was posted by the MNRF to propose the amendment to the management direction for the Ouimet Canyon, Black Sturgeon River, Ruby Lake, Kama Hills, Gravel River, Pukaskwa River, and Nimoosh provincial parks, to allow tenure to be issued for utility corridors associated with the Project. The amended management direction would allow the MNRF to provide tenure for a utility corridor to accommodate the development of the new East-West Tie electrical transmission line, subject to completion of an EA, approval by the Minister, and any conditions necessary to protect park values. New land disposition for commercial use may be considered in the form of land use permit or lease, provided that the proposed commercial use is consistent with conditions of the PPCRA and the project has been approved through an EA process.

This appendix has been prepared to provide additional details to fulfill the conditions of the PPCRA for new transmission lines, utility corridors and access roads. This appendix provides details for how the first two conditions for approval under the PPCRA are met for each protected area that is crossed by the Project footprint (i.e., Project components). The third condition is covered in Section 19 of the amended EA Report. These conditions are listed below.

1) There are no reasonable alternatives.

2) Lowest cost is not the sole or overriding justification.

3) Environmental impacts have been considered and all reasonable measures will be undertaken to minimize harmful environmental impact and protect ecological integrity.

Based on recommendations from the MNRF, this appendix provides a list of all the activities that are expected to take place in each provincial park and conservation reserve, as well as the reasoning behind the proposed means to implement the Project within the protected areas identified and a demonstration of the alternative methods considered. Section 19 of the amended EA Report describes the baseline conditions for each protected area, and the potential Project effects on access to the use of the protected areas (including changes in access and use, and changes in experience due to changes in environmental conditions such as noise, air quality, and visual resources). It also identifies the mitigation measures specific to the provincial parks and conservation reserves that will be undertaken to minimize environmental and social impact and protect ecological integrity. These aspects of the assessment of environmental effects are not repeated in this appendix.
As part of previous work completed for the Project, an assessment of alternative route segments that avoided provincial parks and conservation reserves was completed by NextBridge. The resulting Draft Alternative Route Assessment for the East-West Tie Transmission Project (NextBridge 2015) was submitted to the MNRF for review in December 2015. In March 2016, the MNRF provided review comments on the alternative route report. Appendix 3-II of the amended EA Report provides an update and augmentation to replace Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the alternative route report (NextBridge 2015), specifically for the evaluation of alternative route segments around provincial parks and conservation reserves. As a result, the assessment of alternative routes is not repeated in this appendix.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ALTERNATIVES

Appendix 3-II of the amended EA Report presents a quantitative routing analysis for the alternative routes around the provincial parks and conservation reserves that are crossed by the Project footprint. While Appendix 3-II presents alternatives to the preferred route, this appendix presents a discussion of the alternative methods to constructing the preferred route and provides justification for the Project activities.

For the development of the Project, the transmission structures, access roads, storage yards, laydown yards, construction camps, and construction easements were planned using best efforts to avoid and minimize adverse effects to protected areas. Environmental effects were considered when determining the route, with the objective being to minimize adverse environmental effects and to protect ecological integrity. Many factors were considered when determining the appropriate methods to construct the Project in specific areas.

In addition, since the preparation of the final EA Report in July 2017, the Project footprint has been revised and minimized to avoid specific sensitive features, for example, many access roads were removed from the Project footprint. Mitigation measures for the development, construction and maintenance of the Project are provided in the Construction Environmental Protection Plan (CEPP, Appendix 4-II) and site-specific mitigation measures are identified in Annex 5. Measures set out in the Operation Environmental Management Plan (OEMP; Appendix 4-III) will also be implemented as appropriate.

An overview of the considerations when determining the most appropriate alternative method or activities on a site-specific basis is provided in the following sections.

2.1 Transmission Structure Types, Placement and Spacing

Approximately 20.6 km (4.6% of the total length of the preferred route ROW is proposed to cross provincial parks, conservation reserves, and one forest reserve. A number of factors pertaining to the transmission structures (i.e. structures) were considered when proposing the transmission line components in and around these protected areas. These factors included the type of structure, the number of structures required, and the spans between the structures. These factors have an effect on terrestrial components such as need for clearing and visibility, ROW
width requirements, and safety. They are also impacted by technical factors such as the physical environment (e.g., terrain and unique features such as canyons or ravines) and climate.

As described in Section 4.2.2 of the amended EA Report, the typical Guyed-Y lattice structure foundation will likely be a drilled pier or capped micropile foundation (Figure 4-4 and Figure 4-5, respectively). The Guyed-Y structure and pin connection allow for smaller more efficient structure types, requiring a single approximately 1 metre (m) diameter pier and four approximately 6-inch diameter anchors for the guy wires. The self-supporting structure will require four approximately 1 m diameter piers. As a result, there is a trade-off between the distance between structures and the width of the ROW. Consequently, where there is a preference to minimize the width of ROW, there is a need for an increase in the number of structures in the ROW. Alternatively, where there is a preference for longer spans between structures, there is a need for a wider ROW.

These factors had to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where possible, NextBridge has avoided placing structures in water bodies and wetlands by proposing longer span lengths between structures to avoid construction or visual impacts in sensitive areas. Alternatively, to avoid or minimize the disturbance and area of land that the ROW occupies in conservation reserves, more structures, with shorter spans between the structures, are proposed for a narrower ROW. As discussed in Section 2.1 of this appendix, these decisions have been made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the input from the MNRF. As an example, NextBridge has determined that the structures on either side of the Pukaskwa River can be spaced farther from the river banks to minimize visual impacts to recreational users on or beside the river. Where it was not possible to avoid placing a structures within a wetland, mitigation measures are provided in Section 6.5 of the CEPP (Appendix 4-II of the amended EA Report). Where placement of structures in CLVAs were unavoidable, mitigation measures are developed and detailed in Section 4 of Appendix 4-II of the amended EA Report.

Where placement of structures in Critical Land Value Areas (CLVAs) were unavoidable, mitigation measures were developed and provided in Section 4 of Appendix 4-II of the amended EA Report.

2.1.1 Structures versus Buried Line

NextBridge considered burying the transmission line for aesthetic concerns in some locations, but determined that burying the line would have to be completed for full segments of approximately 6 km rather than at site-specific features such as a river crossing. It was determined that burial would have more environmental effects from trenching and large equipment along the Project footprint, and could require more blasting and other feasibility issues. As a result, burying the line was not identified as a preferred method in any of the protected areas.

2.2 Access Roads

As described in Section 4.2.3 of the amended EA report, temporary and permanent access roads will be required for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Project. Since the submission of the final EA Report in July 2017, efforts have been made to minimize new road construction and improvements or widening in the provincial parks and conservation reserves, by utilizing existing roads to access the ROW where possible. New roads are proposed only where there are no reasonable alternatives to access the ROW.
Construction will require temporary access to the preferred route ROW for clearing and site preparation, to each structure location with heavy equipment for structure installation, and for clean-up and reclamation activities. Existing roads and trails will be used where practicable to limit disturbance resulting from construction of new access roads. Construction of new access roads will be limited to areas where required to access the ROW or transmission structures and where terrain prevents the use of the ROW. For instance, in some cases, suitable roads or trails do not already exist within the provincial parks or conservation reserves, and alternative roads around the protected areas do not exist or do not provide connected access to areas required. Similarly, in some areas there are terrain barriers (e.g., large water bodies, steep terrain or unique physical features such as ravines), therefore new construction access is required in some locations. In these cases, NextBridge has proposed to build new access roads for construction. Construction or upgrade of the access roads will follow MNRF guidelines for access roads, including the Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings document (MNR 1990). Gates and fencing for both temporary and permanent access roads may be used for safety purposes, where determined to be appropriate in consultation with relevant stakeholders. NextBridge will require approval(s) from MNRF to place gates or fencing on provincial Crown land.

Operations will require occasional access to the ROW for lighter vehicles such as pickup trucks or all-terrain vehicles conducting inspections, maintenance, emergency repairs, and vegetation management. Only the permanent construction access roads will be maintained for operation and maintenance of the Project.

2.2.1 Helicopters versus Terrestrial Access

The use of helicopters to bring in equipment, materials and labour into protected areas for construction was considered as an alternative to needing access roads. Use of helicopters to install structures was also considered. Helicopters may be used for some purposes as described in Section 4 of the amended EA Report, but will not negate the need for conventional ground transportation and access roads installation (e.g., to transport large equipment that cannot be transported by helicopter).

Helicopters may be used to air-lift materials in to challenging terrains and may help to avoid terrestrial disturbance created by upgrading or construction access roads; however, activities such as clearing, grading and excavations will be required for the ROW and the footings for the structures. While some of these activities could be undertaken manually (e.g., hand clearing), in most cases the use of equipment is preferred as the more reasonable option to complete the work within schedule given the length of the route and terrain. For example, it was calculated that mechanical clearing has approximately six times the efficiency of hand clearing and would result in unrealistic timelines for Project completion. Likewise, some activities such as excavations for footings could not be completed manually. As a result, large equipment is required for the Project activities and this equipment cannot be brought in by helicopter; therefore, access roads would still be required.

In addition, the noise and area disruption by continuous use of helicopters over the parks or conservation reserves for a long period (i.e., to bring workers in and out on a regular basis) could have impacts on visitor enjoyment of the protected areas and sensory disturbance to wildlife.
2.3 Water Body Crossings

Water body crossings (e.g., culverts, clear-span bridges, and rig mats) for access roads will be required.

The type of crossing structure proposed is a key mitigation measure; therefore, water body crossing structures were identified for each water body. The number of water body crossings will be minimized to the extent practicable by using existing water body crossings or working around the water bodies (without crossing) where possible during construction.

Temporary water body crossings will be installed on the temporary new and improved access roads where required. The temporary water body crossings will involve the installation of rig mats (i.e., temporary bridges), ice bridges or snow fills (for winter construction), temporary clear-span bridges, and temporary culvert installation. The type of crossing and construction method has been determined on a case-by-case basis depending on fish habitat potential, bank-full width of the water body, whether crossing was temporary or permanent, construction timing, other physical properties of the water body (e.g., bank stability) where known, and consultation with regulators. Permanent water body crossings will be installed on the permanent access roads and will involve the placement of bridges or culverts.

NextBridge is committed to completing fish and fish habitat and surface water surveys where required during the permitting stage to determine fish habitat and presence at specific crossing locations, and to design suitable crossing structures, and to confirm the appropriateness of the proposed mitigation measures. The results of these surveys will be incorporated into permit applications in consultation with the MNRF. Details for selection of the water body crossing structures are discussed in Section 13.6.1 (Fish and Fish Habitat) of the main body of the amended EA Report. The restricted activity timing windows for each water body crossing will be finalized during permitting, but proposed restricted activity timing windows have been included in the Appendix J of the CEPP (Appendix 4-II).

Crossing types and construction methods will be finalized as part of ongoing Project engineering and design, in consultation with Project stakeholders, and where required, regulatory approvals will be obtained from the applicable regulatory agencies prior to installation of the water body crossing structures, as required. Permanent and temporary water body crossings will be constructed and operated to conform with DFO Measures to Avoid Causing Harm to Fish and Fish Habitat Including Aquatic Species at Risk (DFO 2016) and MNRF Environmental Guidelines for Access Roads and Water Crossings (MNR 1990), including the application of sediment and erosion control measures. Clearing of riparian vegetation will be limited to the extent practicable, and to the requirement of the access road width only.

2.4 Storage Yards, Laydown Yards and Construction Camps

No temporary storage yards, laydown yards, construction camps or construction easements are proposed to be located in provincial parks, conservation reserves or forest reserves. All laydown yards will be placed outside of the protected areas, in locations that will have limited effects on park viewscapes, as discussed in Section 3.
2.5 Blasting

Explosives may be required during construction for the installation of structure foundations in specialized areas (i.e., installation on challenging terrain) or for construction of new permanent access roads. Contingent upon access and terrain, it is expected that the mobilization of the blasting equipment and materials will either occur using reasonable conventional ground access or be air-lifted into the area. Prior to blasting, NextBridge will review blasting locations and make sure regulatory requirements are being followed with respect to residents, wildlife and fish. Specifically, blast operations will be carried out in accordance with DFO guidelines and Ontario Provincial Standard Specification 120 General Specification for the Use of Explosives. NextBridge is committed to developing a blasting plan for the Project for avoiding and mitigating serious harm to fish and engaging with DFO on the plan, as appropriate. Blast or waste rock will be spread on the ROW or removed from the ROW, as appropriate. Blast wastes will be dealt with according to regulatory requirements.

3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES BY PROTECTED AREA

The designated protected areas that will be crossed by the Project footprint are listed in the following sections. Each section provides a description of the alternatives considered and demonstrates why, after considering a number of factors, the Project components proposed are the most reasonable options. These Project components are summarized in a table in Appendix 3-III, which details the routing and individual project components that impact each protected area.

This appendix focusses on the alternative methods considered for each park, conservation reserve, and does not duplicate the assessment of alternative routes considered in Section 3. Similarly, it does not duplicate the assessment of the effects of the proposed Project considered in Section 19. Appendix 5-I includes maps of the environmental features crossed by the Project and the associated proposed mitigation for the features (Appendix 5-IA Environmental Alignment Sheets and Appendix 5-IB Access and Construction Environmental Maps).

3.1 Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park

Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park is the only operating day-use park crossed by the Project footprint. It is located west of Dorion and northeast of Thunder Bay. It has a picnic area located near the main parking lot and trailhead, and features a 1 km trail to two viewing platforms along the canyon’s rims. The park was designated as a nature reserve because the canyon formation, together with the occurrence of distinct arctic-alpine flora, represent a distinctive natural habitat and landform of the Province (MNR 1985). As such, the area is protected for education purposes and as gene pools for research to benefit present and future generation. The park is a prime tourist attraction, as a loop trail offers visitors an opportunity to experience the scenic Ouimet Canyon. The park contains visiting pods, a walking trail, bridge, and interpretive display panels that provide visitors with additional information about nearby points of interest. Quiet pastimes such as scenic viewing, nature study, photography, art, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are encouraged in this park (MNR 1985). Non-compatible activities in the
APPENDIX 19-IV
PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION RESERVES

park include rock climbing, snowmobiling, ATVs, horseback riding, camping and organized team sports. The park has an access road and parking lot, as well as a picnic area at Gulch Lake and a lower trailer parking lot. Sport fishing is permitted in Gulch Lake; however, sport hunting and commercial trapping are not permitted (MNR 1985). The Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park Management Plan does not identify any existing transmission lines or utility corridors in relation to the park (MNR 1985).

3.1.1 Alternatives Considered

The preferred route will not cross Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park. As a result of the Dorion Loon Lake Re-route a greenfield alternative route segment has been selected which results in the preferred route ROW not crossing the park.

Transmission Structures: The preferred route ROW will not cross the park and no transmission structures will be placed in the park; therefore, alternatives were not identified for consideration.

Access Roads: In the final EA Report, it was previously proposed that an existing two-lane paved road that currently runs south to west through the southern portion of the park be used as a temporary access road to access the construction footprint. This road provides access to the viewing platforms in the park, but does not connect to adjacent land outside the west boundary of the park. It was previously proposed that this road would be upgraded and extended approximately 17 m to the western edge of the Park to connect to an existing road on the adjacent land outside the west boundary of the park. Based on feedback from the MNRF, it was determined that this was not a reasonable alternative; thus, an alternative access road running north-south outside and to the west of the park, connecting the proposed laydown yards, has been proposed. This road will not be within the park boundaries and is considered a reasonable alternative.

An existing road within and along the southern portion of the park is proposed to be used, but is not identified as requiring improvement or widening. Alternatives to the use of this existing road through the park have been considered, but there are no other well-developed roads or reasonable alternatives that exist in reasonable proximity outside the park. Utilizing the existing road within the southern portion of the park will minimize environmental impact by not requiring the construction or widening of roads in greenfield areas, also avoiding need to bring in gravel from aggregate sources and disturbance of other undeveloped areas, which would have greater impact than performing minor road maintenance. The proposed approach was selected based on having the least impact and no reasonable alternatives, cost was not the sole or overriding justification in its selection.

Temporary Workspaces: No temporary workspaces (i.e., laydown yards, storage yards, construction camps or construction easements) are proposed within the park. In the final EA Report, up to five laydown yards were proposed outside park boundaries on the west and south sides. The MNRF raised concerns about views from the viewing platforms being impacted by visibility of closest laydown yard. As a result, NextBridge has removed the laydown yard on the south-east corner of the park from the Project footprint. NextBridge has also removed a second laydown yard to the south-west of the Park. With these changes, it is not anticipated that the Project will impact the views of the park. Since there are no other temporary workspaces impacting the park, no additional alternatives have been considered.
3.2 Black Sturgeon River Provincial Park

The Black Sturgeon River Provincial Park is a non-operating park located northwest of the Township of Nipigon. It hosts a recreational waterway that is used for fishing, hunting and canoeing. The park is designated a waterway class park in recognition of its representative natural features and potential to provide high quality water-based recreational opportunities.

The park provides day-use opportunities for angling on its many lakes and rivers, paddling opportunities along its entire length, rock climbing northwest of Nonwatin Lake, and beach areas for family picnics and swimming. During the winter, the park provides cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities. The Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School uses sections of the park during dogsledding and winter camping programs. Part of the Trans-Ontario Provincial System snowmobile trail also passes through the park. Camping occurs along most of the access points to the park, as well as in the interior, along the Black Sturgeon River. Within the park, nature reserve zones, development zones, access zones and natural environment zones have been designated (MNR 2003a). The Black Sturgeon River is also recognized as a priority for protection of lake sturgeon habitat. Table 31 of the Policy Report in the Black Sturgeon River Provincial Park Management Plan identifies that existing bait fishing, existing commercial fur harvesting, Crown disposition commercial use, native species fish stocking, existing and new road development, vegetation management, wildlife population management, on-trail snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, hunting, mountain biking, private motor boat use, non-motorized recreation travel, sailing, sailboarding, scuba diving, sport fishing and trail development are all permitted in the park (MNR 2003a).

According to Section 10.6 of the Park Management Plan, there are two natural gas pipeline corridors that cross Black Sturgeon River Provincial Park, one at the south end of the park, and the other between Eskowanwatin Lake and the camp 42 bridge. There are also two hydro transmission corridors that cross the south end of the park and another line crossing the middle of the park associated with a pipeline (MNR 2003a). While these will continue to be a permitted non-confirming use, new utility corridors require a plan amendment (NextBridge 2015).

3.2.1 Alternatives Considered

Transmission Structures: The preferred route ROW that crosses the park is approximately 1.1 km in length. It is proposed to be directly adjacent to the existing transmission line, across one of the narrowest portions of the park (i.e., using the shortest path across) to minimize adverse environmental and recreational effects. Alternative methods included a similar route through the park that had more planned structures within the park.

The proposed route in the final EA Report had three structures located within the park. The preferred route ROW in the amended EA Report reduced the ROW width as recommended by the MNRF. Reducing the preferred route ROW within the nature reserve zone of the park, protects talus slopes and wetland communities. The width of the preferred route ROW is based on health and safety considerations for conductor blowout (i.e., to provide a safe distance to prevent flashover to trees and potential for forest fires) and cannot be reduced beyond best practice clearances. NextBridge has identified an alternative that will further setback the structures from the water’s edge on each side of river to reduce visibility. This option has also reduce the number of transmission structures from three to two. However, this resulted in an increase of the spans between structures, the width of the ROW, and the total area required for each structure footprint. These structures will be designed to take into account the existing dam (i.e., to not impede dam works) and potential for changing water levels.
Access Roads: 0.7 km of new temporary access road is proposed for construction along the preferred route ROW on the southern side of the park, but will not cross the Black Sturgeon River. No permanent access roads are proposed within the park on the north side of the river. The MNRF has indicated that it supports using the existing ROW to enter the park from the west side and the east side of the river for clearing during construction and maintenance. This route for the transmission line has been chosen not due to the lower cost, but because there are no reasonable alternatives that maintain a route that is contiguous with an existing transmission line and that minimize environmental effects to the park to the extent possible using the most direct (i.e., shortest) route.

Temporary Workspace: No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park.

3.3 Ruby Lake Provincial Park

The Ruby Lake Provincial Park is a non-operating park that is used recreationally for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, and has trails with viewpoints. The park is located east of the Township of Nipigon and the Township of Red Rock. It is classified as a natural environment park because of the park’s provincially and regionally significant natural features, as well as its regional historical legacy and recreational values. The park’s extensive trail system offers park visitors opportunities for day-use that includes hiking, scenic and wildlife viewing and nature interpretation. Due to the area’s topography, the park offers numerous excellent scenic lookouts, including panoramic views of the distinctive mesa-cuesta landforms, such as Doghead Mountain and the Kama Hill Formation. The park is also accessible by boaters and sea kayakers from Lake Superior. Backcountry/interior camping associated with hiking and/or hunting is not permitted within the park, except for camping along the shoreline of Lake Superior. Informal cross-country skiing and snowshoeing occur in the winter. Motorized vehicle use on hiking trails within the park is prohibited; however, ATVs and snowmobiles are allowed on existing hauling roads during hunting seasons for moose, deer and grouse, and to access the trap lines and baitfish operations.

Commercial uses not permitted within the park include: timber harvesting; prospecting, staking mining claims, developing mining interests, working mines; extraction of sand, gravel, topsoil or peat; commercial hydroelectric power development and/or electricity generation; and commercial fishing.

According to Section 9.4 of the Park Management Plan (MNR 2009), there is a small portion of the park that is crossed by the Ontario Power Generation Northwest Power Group transmission corridor on the north boundary. The preferred route ROW is proposed to cross only 400 m (approximate) of the narrowest portion of the park. The new transmission line will be directly adjacent to the existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize adverse environmental and recreational effects. The only disturbance remaining in the park is the construction of one structure, which has been relocated out of the wetland at the north end of park.

The Project components crossing this park are being proposed not due to the lower cost, but because there are no reasonable alternatives that maintain a route that is contiguous with the existing Hydro One transmission line and that minimize environmental effects to the region to the extent possible using the least infrastructure and shortest route.
3.3.1 Alternatives Considered

**Transmission Structures:** One transmission structure is currently planned within the park. The alternative of not placing a structure in the park was deemed to not be technically feasible due to the span of the crossing; therefore only the option of having a structure in the park was considered, though alternatives for the placement of the structure were also considered.

For the final EA, the structure was sited within a wetland area. As an alternative, NextBridge has moved one of the proposed structures outside of the boundaries of the wetland to decrease the level of environmental impact within the park. This was determined in consultation with the MNRF as it would result in a wider ROW (e.g., 75 to 90 m in width) because a longer span between structures would be required. The preferred route ROW may be visible from the northern trail in the park, but the Project will not affect the majority of the viewscapes and will not cross the trail system.

**Access Roads:** A short segment (200 m long) of new temporary access road required to construct the proposed structure is currently planned to cross the park boundary on the southwestern side. Through the assessment of alternatives, the access roads were reassessed and removed as appropriate. As a result, an access road within the park has been removed from the revised Project footprint to minimize impact. There are not any new permanent access roads proposed to be constructed within the park. These changes may also minimize adverse effects to recreational activities and reduce concerns about viewpoints.

**Temporary Workspaces:** No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park.

3.4 **Kama Hills Provincial Nature Reserve (Provincial Park)**

The Kama Hills Provincial Nature Reserve is located within the Kama Cliff Conservation Reserve, east of the Township of Nipigon and the Township of Red Rock. It hosts recreational opportunities for hiking and wildlife viewing. The nature reserve was established for the protection of an earth science feature, specifically the type section of the Kama Hill Formation. The only land use or recreational activity permitted within the nature reserve is wildlife viewing, which is encouraged. The nature reserve is also identified as a prime candidate for educational purposes (MNR 1991). No commercial activities are permitted within the nature reserve (i.e., an existing trapline was removed from the nature reserve, and the Interim Management Statement identifies that steps would be taken to exclude the nature reserve from overlapping forest management agreements). Road construction is not permitted within the nature reserve (MNR 1991).

The Interim Management Statement (MNR 1991) does not reference existing utility corridors within the park boundaries, nor precludes or prohibits the development of future corridors.

3.4.1 Alternatives Considered

To decrease potential recreational and environmental impacts, NextBridge considered a second alternative to modify the width of the ROW in that area to completely avoid overlap of the ROW with the park. This avoidance alternative has been be chosen not due to the lower cost, but because it addresses MNRF concerns and avoids direct environmental impacts to the park.
Transmission Structures: No transmission structures have been proposed within the park.

Access Roads: While the park is not proposed to be crossed by the preferred route ROW or other infrastructure, approximately 100 m of temporary construction easement was previously proposed to cross the park in the final EA Report. This alternative was not preferred by the MNRF.

Temporary Workspaces: No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park.

3.5 Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve

The Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve is near the Township of Nipigon, along the north shore of Lake Superior. It hosts recreational opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking and snowmobiling. It is known for its hiking and canoeing trails, nature appreciation opportunities, and the educational teaching and scientific studies that take place onsite. There are several sites of cultural importance onsite that remain in traditional use (MNR 2001). Through the conservation reserve there is a snowmobile trail and several hiking trails, including the Mazukama Falls Hiking Trails.

Section 6.4 of the Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve Statement of Conservation Interest (MNR 2001) indicates that there are two existing transmission lines that bisect the conservation reserve.

3.5.1 Alternatives Considered

Approximately 3.7 km of the preferred route ROW is proposed to cross the conservation reserve, though this will be adjacent to the existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize environmental effects.

Transmission Structures: Eleven structures are proposed to be installed within the conservation reserve boundaries. All of the proposed structure structures will be located outside of CLVAs. When working adjacent to CLVAs, low pressure equipment will be used to minimize impact.

Access Roads: Access roads were placed outside of the protected area to minimize effects on the conservation reserve wherever feasible; however, avoidance of new or improved access roads was not achievable given the extensive size of the conservation reserve. A number of short segments of new temporary access roads (2.4 km total length) are proposed to be constructed to access the construction workspace from other existing trails or roads that are proposed to be upgraded and widened. The new access road of greatest distance is proposed to be created by improving and widening an existing trail to provide temporary access for construction of the transmission line. The proposed access road crosses two of the hiking trails in the park. No other existing roads are available for use and no other reasonable alternatives have been identified.

The use of helicopters as an alternative for installing the structures and as a means to avoid developing access roads for construction was considered. This approach would require flying or walking in crews to create safe landing areas, which would require manual clearing, stripping and grading. Without roads, the same activities would have to be completed manually for the 3.68 km length of the ROW. Based on an average of 50 m a day for hand clearing versus 200 to 400 m a day for conventional methods, calculations determined that, due to the distance of the route, hand clearing would take approximately six times as long as conventional methods (i.e., one to one and a half months for hand clearing whereas equipment is expected to complete the work in one week). Both the clearing and subsequent activities such as stripping, grading and excavations for tower footprints would
require numerous daily helicopters trips to bring people and materials in and out on the conservation reserve. Given the time required to complete the work in this manner, frequent helicopters carrying labour and materials would have an adverse effect to the environment through sensory disturbance to wildlife, such as caribou and peregrine falcons which are known to have presence in the region, potentially affecting normal behaviour patterns. Providing daily access or workers by helicopters would extend the timeframes of work on the project, which would put the project schedule at risk and extend the duration of the environmental effects. In addition, the noise generated from the helicopters over an extended period could affect the recreational enjoyment of the area. Furthermore, some large equipment would still need to be brought in using conventional ground transportation to prepare the ROW for the tower installation. As a result of these factors, it has been determined that helicopter use is not a complete substitute for conventional ground transportation and access roads would still be required.

Consequently, the proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives avoid the development of access roads and risk to schedule, while concurrently minimizing environmental and social effects in comparison to the proposed activities.

**Temporary Workspaces:** No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the conservation reserve.

### 3.6 Gravel River Conservation Reserve

The Gravel River Conservation Reserve has recreational opportunities for canoeing, fishing, hunting, backpacking and camping. The conservation reserve is near the Pays Plat First Nation and the unincorporated community of Rossport, and is accessible via canoe or backpacking from Gravel River. Its southern boundary abuts the northern boundary of the Gravel River Provincial Nature Reserve. This reserve is known for its views and vistas, waterfalls, cliffs and opportunities for canoeing, fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, photography and camping (MNR 2013b). There are two canoe routes that run through the conservation reserve, along with a snowmobile trail that follows the existing utility line and four tourist outpost camps.

Section 6.4.2 of the Gravel River Conservation Reserve’s Management Statement (MNR 2003b) does not identify existing utility corridors within the reserve.

#### 3.6.1 Alternatives Considered

The Project ROW in Gravel River Conservation Reserve parallels the existing Hydro One line. The preferred route ROW was selected for overall safety and to minimize the extent of outages. Moving the line at this location would result in two crossings of the existing Hydro One line. Maintenance on either line could pose a risk of unintentional damage or interruption to the other line, causing outages in the northern Ontario. Moving the Project ROW to avoid affecting the CLVA, crossing the Hydro One line or complete avoidance of the conservation reserve would result in additional greenfield disturbance. A south route would still require structures within the conservation reserve and would impact CLVAs within the conservation reserve. Approximately 0.8 km of the preferred route ROW is proposed to cross the conservation reserve adjacent to the existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize adverse environmental effects. To minimize impact NextBridge will use low-pressure tread equipment and rig mats in the CLVA in the conservation reserve.

**Transmission Structures:** Two structures are proposed to be installed within the conservation reserve boundaries. Avoidance of structure placement within CLVAs was not possible within ROW’s current route.
alignment, and would result in a greenfield re-route causing additional disturbance. The preferred route ROW and all other infrastructure have been sited to the north of the meandering Gravel River to avoid potential adverse effects.

**Access Roads:** Permanent roads were placed outside of the protected area to minimize effects on the conservation reserve wherever feasible; however, avoidance of new or improved access roads was not possible given the size of the conservation reserve. As the snowmobile trail and the preferred route ROW both parallel the existing Hydro One transmission line, the snowmobile trail may be affected. The corridor and access roads will not affect the canoe routes or the outposts camps as those activities occur further north in the conservation reserve.

A number of short segments of new temporary access roads totalling 3.6 km in length are proposed to be constructed to access the construction workspace from other existing trails or roads that are proposed to be upgraded and widened. The longest new access road is proposed to run from the TransCanada Highway north to the preferred route ROW. This would require improving and widening an existing road to provide temporary access for construction of the transmission line. No other existing roads are available for use and no other reasonable alternatives have been identified.

The use of helicopters was considered as an alternative to developing access roads, and determined to have a greater adverse environmental effect. As a result of the factors discussed in Section 3.5 for the Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve, it has been determined that helicopter use is not a complete substitute for conventional ground transportation and access roads would still be required. The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives avoid the development of access roads and risk to schedule, while concurrently minimizing environmental and social effects in comparison to the proposed activities.

**Temporary Workspaces:** No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the conservation reserve.

### 3.7 Gravel River Provincial Nature Reserve (Provincial Park)

Gravel River Provincial Nature Reserve is a non-operating park that features a meandering river that provides recreational attractions for boating and wildlife viewing. The park is located along Highway 17, east of the Township of Nipigon, and is considered significant due to the high quality and uniqueness of earth science features. Recreational activities within the nature reserve include canoeing, fishing, hiking/walking, nature appreciation and wildlife viewing. A day-use canoe route travels down the Gravel River (MNR 2013). In addition, multi-day canoe trips are possible on the Gravel River, but the route is difficult and is only recommended for experienced paddlers. Gravel Point and Mountain Bay have long been recreation destinations, with many visitors accessing the sand beach on the west side of the peninsula by boat, even before the construction of the railway and Highway 17. Presently, an informal walking trail exists, connecting Mountain Bay Road to the cobble beach on the eastern portion of Gravel Point. This trail is maintained by residents of the nearby cottage subdivision (MNR 2013). There is no existing park infrastructure or commercial tourism infrastructure located in this park, and campgrounds will not be developed. Within the park, sport fishing is permitted, and scuba diving and snowmobiling on-trail may be permitted through planning. Commercial fishing and bait fishing, trapping, tourism operations, and other resource harvesting activities occur surrounding the park, however not within the park.
The Interim Management Statement (MNR 2013) indicates that there is an existing land use permit for a Hydro One transmission line that crosses the northern end of the park, and does not preclude or prohibit the development of future corridors.

### 3.7.1 Alternatives Considered

Approximately 800 m of the preferred route ROW crosses the Gravel River Provincial Nature Reserve, though it is proposed adjacent to an existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize adverse environmental effects. The transmission line corridor is proposed to cross through the northern, narrowest, section of the park.

**Transmission Structures:** Two structures are planned to be constructed within the park. The corridor and all other infrastructure have been sited to the north of the meandering Gravel River to avoid potential for adverse effects. NextBridge did consider spanning the park to eliminate the need for towers, however this was not possible due to required minimal span lengths between structures.

**Access Roads:** There are not any formally maintained recreation trails in the park, however there are mapped existing roads, which the MNRF has identified as trails. It is proposed that one of the existing roads/trails that currently runs from the TransCanada Highway will be improved and widened to allow large equipment to access a more northern area of the park, and an additional new temporary access road (0.6 km long) is proposed to start from the existing road/trail to access the preferred route ROW, with one road extending to the northwest and the other to the northeast. Alternatives to these roads were considered and included the existing road to the west of the park within the conservation reserve; however, the natural topography is a constraint in this area. An existing road will be used for accessing the ROW to the west; however, a large ravine prevents access to the eastern portion of the ROW within the park where an additional structure must be located. A similar constraint exists on the eastern side of the park where a required structure location is otherwise inaccessible due to a large ravine on the east side of the park. Because this portion of the preferred ROW in this area can only be approached from each side of the ravine, no reasonable road alternatives exist in this area. Use of this access would be temporary, while the access to the west would be considered permanent.

The use of helicopters was considered as an alternative to developing access corridors. As a result of the factors discussed in Section 3.5 for the Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve, helicopter may not be a complete substitute for conventional ground transportation and access roads would still be required. However, recognizing the potential for environmental effects and the potential challenges with improving the existing road/trail, NextBridge has committed to considering the feasibility of using helicopters to bring in the equipment required for hand clearing and installation of the structures requiring the proposed access road within the park. This will be confirmed in conjunction with the ground-truthing exercise with the contractor.

The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternative roads exist to access the area in question within the park. NextBridge will continue to explore the feasibility of the use of helicopters to avoid the development of access roads and risk to schedule, while concurrently minimizing environmental and social effects in comparison to the proposed activities.

**Temporary Workspaces:** No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park.
3.8 Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve

The Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve near the Township of White River hosts recreational opportunities for fishing, hunting, and canoeing. The main tourism use is the White River Canoe Route. The conservation reserve features shoreline campsites, a sandy beach, and canoeing and wildlife viewing opportunities for birdwatchers and naturalists (MNR 2004a).

Section 6.1.1 of the Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve Statement of Conservation Interest (MNR 2004a) indicates that the park is crossed by one existing utility corridor, and while new corridors should avoid the park where possible, they may be permitted in extenuating circumstances.

3.8.1 Alternatives Considered

The preferred route ROW that is beside the Kwinkwaga Conservation Reserve is proposed to run adjacent to the existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize adverse environmental and recreational effects. For the majority of the distance of the conservation reserve, the preferred route ROW is outside the boundary of the conservation reserve, running parallel to the border of the protected area, except along the western portion of the conservation reserve, where there is not sufficient space to maintain the buffer between the existing transmission line and the conservation reserve boundary. In this area, approximately 3.8 ha of the conservation reserve will be crossed where an overlap of approximately 10 m of construction easement with the conservation reserve is required. Consideration was given to minimizing the preferred route ROW width further; however, the proposed width must be maintained for health and safety considerations in the case of a conductor blow-out (i.e., to provide a safe distance to prevent flashover to trees); therefore, it cannot be reduced beyond best practice clearances. The alternative of moving to the south side of the existing transmission line was also considered, but was eliminated as it is not feasible to cross over the existing Hydro One transmission line.

Transmission structures: As a mitigation in this area, self-supporting structures will be used to minimize the width required for the preferred route ROW (i.e., to avoid putting Guyed Y wires in the conservation reserve). No structures or footings will be placed in the conservation reserve.

Access Roads: There are not any new temporary access roads proposed in the park, however 0.4 km of new permanent access roads will be constructed along with 0.5 km of road upgrades. The majority of the temporary access roads will detour around the conservation reserve, except for one temporary access road within the western portion of the reserve. This road is required to avoid the meandering White River and related water features to the south of the existing corridor. Best efforts have been made to avoid effects to the conservation reserve and its recreational users. The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives are available for this portion of the route.

Temporary Workspace: No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within the conservation reserve, although two are proposed to the south of the conservation reserve south of the existing and proposed transmission lines. Given the location on the south side of the existing corridor, these are not anticipated to affect the conservation reserve or recreational users of it.
3.9 Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Forest Reserve

The Kwinkwaga Ground Forest Reserve offers limited recreational opportunities and represents two mining claims which have been designated as “forest reserve.” Forest reserves are nature reserves where notable vegetative species or habitats are located, within which protection of natural heritage and special landscapes is deemed a priority (MNR 2003a). In accordance with Section 5.7 of the Statement of Conservation Interest (MNR 2004b), the intention is for this area to be added to the Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve if the claim or lease is retired.

3.9.1 Alternatives Considered

The forest reserve is directly adjacent to the west of the Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve. The preferred route ROW that crosses the forest reserve is approximately 820 m long, which is proposed to be adjacent to the existing transmission line to minimize adverse environmental and recreational effects. Similar to the Kwinkwaga Ground Moraine Uplands Conservation Reserve, there is not sufficient space to maintain the buffer between the existing Hydro One transmission line and the forest reserve boundary. In this area, an overlap of approximately 10 m of construction easement with the forest reserve is required; however, no structures or footings will be installed in the forest reserve. Consideration was given to minimizing the preferred route ROW width further; however, the proposed width must be maintained for health and safety considerations in the case of a conductor blow-out (i.e., to provide a safe distance to prevent flashover to trees); therefore, it cannot be reduced beyond best practice clearances. The alternative of moving to the south side of the existing Hydro One transmission line was also considered, but was eliminated as it is not feasible to cross over the existing line.

Similar to the conservation reserve, best efforts have been made to avoid adverse effects to the forest reserve. The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives are available for this portion of the route.

Transmission Structures: No structures will be placed in forest reserve. As a mitigation in this area, self-supporting structures will be used to minimize the width required for the ROW.

Access Roads: There are not any access roads proposed within the forest reserve.

Temporary Workspaces: No access roads, laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the forest reserve.
3.10 Pukaskwa River Provincial Park

Pukaskwa River Provincial Park is a non-operating waterway class park, located south of the Town of White River and northwest of the Town of Wawa. It offers remote recreational opportunities in canoeing and camping. The park is designated as a waterway class park in recognition of its outstanding recreational water routes, which provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. Pukaskwa River Provincial Park contains notable scenery and offers a remote white-water river experiences for persons with advanced canoeing, kayaking and camping skills. The park is remote and relatively inaccessible, and as such, offers an advanced wilderness recreation opportunity, especially to canoeists of the Pukaskwa River canoe route (MNR 2006b). There is no existing park infrastructure or commercial tourism infrastructure located within this park, however there are four unmanaged campsites located on the canoe route (MNR 2006b). The use of motorboats and sport fishing is permitted. Existing authorized wild rice harvesting, existing sport hunting (including existing commercial bear hunting), existing commercial baitfish harvesting, and existing commercial fur harvesting is permitted in the park; however, new wildlife and vegetation harvesting activities are not permitted (MNR 2006b). There are no authorized snowmobile, ATV or hiking trails in the park. Where existing forest access roads are needed to access forestry areas beyond the park, and alternatives do not exist, existing roads will continue to be available for access (MNR 2006b).

Section 5.1.4 of the Interim Management Statement (MNR 2006b) indicates that the park is crossed by one Hydro One utility corridor, and while new corridors should avoid the park where possible, they may be permitted.

3.10.1 Alternatives Considered

The preferred route ROW is proposed to cross approximately 600 m of the Pukaskwa River Provincial Park and includes two structures, one on each side of the Pukaskwa River. The preferred route ROW is currently sited as close as feasible to an existing road and bridge to the west to minimize visual and recreational effects. Having the transmission line near the road minimizes the effect of construction on wildlife and canoers using the river. It was not feasible to locate the preferred route ROW more closely to the road through the park because the existing road curves and it would require more structures for the transmission line to be sited adjacent to the road.

The transmission line will intersect the river perpendicular at a narrow point to shorten the crossing, and parallel existing infrastructure to minimize visual disturbance, in terms of both viewing area and duration, to park visitors using the river. Constructing the preferred route ROW in proximity to the highway will minimize visual impacts.

Transmission Structures: To minimize effects on the viewscapes from the river, NextBridge has committed to consider setting the structures back farther from the river by using a longer span width; however, this will require a wider ROW (e.g., approximately 90 m) in the area.

As an alternative to the transmission line crossing the river, NextBridge considered burying the transmission line to address the potential aesthetic concerns, but determined that burying the line would have more environmental effects from trenching and disruption of shore lands, particularly as it would have to be completed for a full segment (e.g., 6 km), not just the one span under the river. Equipment for drilling under the river would require much larger temporary workspaces and is likely to require more blasting in this area.
Access Roads: The current proposed access plan requires 300 m of new temporary access roads to create access to the proposed structure locations. These temporary access roads are spur roads from the existing road to the west and are required because of the configuration of the existing road. The temporary access roads are expected to be set back farther from the river and decreased in length if the structure locations can be modified. There are not any permanent access roads proposed within the park.

Temporary Workspaces: No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park, although one laydown yard is located approximately 600 m to the southeast of the park. This area will be reclaimed as per the mitigation in the Construction Environmental Protection Plan (CEPP; Appendix 4-II) and in consultation with appropriate regulators.

Best efforts have been made to avoid adverse effects to the park and its recreational users. The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives that minimize environmental and social effects in comparison to the proposed activities are available for this portion of the route.

3.11 Nimoosh Provincial Park

The Nimoosh Provincial Park is in a non-operating park, located west of Wawa. The park’s waterway class designation is in recognition of its recreational water routes, which provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. Nimoosh Provincial Park contains approximately 22 km of the Dog River routing through the park, which is a demanding white-water canoe route. Given the white-water character of the river, the use of motorboats is limited and while their use is permitted, motorboats are discouraged within the park. In addition to the white-water paddling, another highlight of the Dog River is a 2-km hiking trail at the mouth of the river, which travels upstream to Denison Falls. The hiking trail is only accessible by water, from the Lake Superior coast. Given that Nimoosh Provincial Park is not easily accessible, other than by means of canoe or kayak, recreational use of the park is considered low. Camping, fishing, hunting, exploring, and general nature appreciation may occur in conjunction with paddling activities. Other than water access, the park is accessible from forest access roads extending south from Highway 17, including a forest access road to the north portion of the park, which provides access to an existing hydro corridor and forest harvest adjacent to the park. Designated snowmobile or ATV trails are not present within the park. There is no existing park infrastructure, or commercial tourism infrastructure located within this park. Within the boundary of Nimoosh Provincial Park, sport hunting and sport fishing are permitted. In addition, existing commercial bear hunting operations, existing commercial fur harvesting operations, and existing commercial bait harvesting are permitted.

Section 4.1.4 of the Interim Management Statement (MNR 2006a) acknowledges that the park is transected by three utility corridors. The River Gold Mines Limited transmission line crosses the park twice in St. Germain Township. A Hydro One transmission line crosses the park in Warpula Township. The corridors of these transmission lines are included in the park boundary.

3.11.1 Alternatives Considered

The preferred route ROW that crosses the Nimoosh Provincial Park is approximately 1.1 km, which is sited adjacent to an existing Hydro One transmission line to minimize adverse environmental effects.

Transmission Structures: Two structures are planned in the park. Longer span lengths, increasing the span length between structures, and widening the ROW have been considered in the park to reduce the number of structures in
the park required for construction. It was determined that longer span lengths would be unsafe based on a weather study performed in this area that indicated that ice would be a risk to structural integrity of the line. Therefore, fewer structures with increased span lengths are not practicable in this area for safety reasons.

The alternative of moving to the north side of the park was also considered, but was eliminated due to the substantially greater distance of the route, the fact that it did not parallel an existing linear feature, and the environmental disturbance that would result (Appendix 3-IB).

**Access Roads:** New temporary construction roads are proposed to be placed parallel to portions of the preferred route ROW to minimize effects to aesthetics and wildlife. To diminish the amount of new roads created within the park, an existing road through the park is proposed to be upgraded.

**Temporary Workspaces:** No laydown yards or other infrastructure are proposed within or directly adjacent to the park, although one laydown yard is located east of the park. This area will be reclaimed as per the mitigation in the CEPP (Appendix 4-II) and in consultation with appropriate regulators.

Best efforts have been made to avoid adverse effects to the park and its recreational users. The proposed methods have not been chosen due to the lower cost, but because no reasonable alternatives that minimize environmental and social effects in comparison to the proposed activities are available for this portion of the route.

4. **SUMMARY**

The preferred route ROW crosses five provincial parks, three conservation reserves, and one forest reserve, representing approximately 4.6% of the total route length. The preferred route ROW has been sited and designed to be adjacent to existing linear infrastructure in these areas rather than designed as a greenfield route (i.e., not adjacent to existing infrastructure). This siting approach aligns with provincial direction to locate the Project adjacent to the existing East-West Tie transmission line. Siting of the preferred route in and adjacent to provincial parks and conservation reserves considered different alternative route segments, and a number of alternative methods for implementation of the preferred route, in an effort to identify the best alternatives.

The portions of the route and the proposed Project components that are located in the protected areas were selected because there are not any reasonable alternatives. During Project planning, each conservation reserve and park was reviewed individually to determine the appropriate and feasible measures that could be implemented to decrease potential adverse effects on environmental and recreational features of concern. The lowest cost was not the overriding justification, but the preferred route ROW and related Project components were chosen to reduce the amount of adverse environmental and social effects, while also minimizing risk to Project schedule. During the construction of the Project, measures will be implemented to minimize environmental effects and protect ecological integrity, as outlined in the amended EA Report and the CEPP (Appendix 4-II). Project engineering and mitigation measures will be further refined in consultation with regulatory agencies during the permitting and detailed design phase of the Project so that the construction and operation of the Project will be in accordance with the Minister of the MNRF’s approval conditions for the provincial parks and conservation reserves.
5. REFERENCES


APPENDIX 19-IV
PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION RESERVES


APPENDIX 19-IV-1

Figures of Project Components within Protected Areas