

Rook I Project

Environmental Impact Statement

Section 3 Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Submitted to:

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

Submitted by:

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November 2024

Abbreviations and Units of Measure

Abbreviation	Definition
ACFN	Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
BNDN	Birch Narrows Dene Nation
BRDN	Buffalo River Dene Nation
CEA Agency	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
CEAA 2012	<i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012</i>
CNSC	Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
CRDN	Clearwater River Dene Nation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ERFN	English River First Nation
JWG	Joint Working Group
KP	key person
LPA	local priority area
MN-S	Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
NexGen	NexGen Energy Ltd.
NR2	Northern Region 2
IKTLU	Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Land Use
Project	Rook I Project
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
VC	valued component
YNLR	Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resources

Unit	Definition
%	percent
km	kilometre

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3 INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

3.1 Introduction

NexGen Energy Ltd. (NexGen) is proposing to develop a new uranium mining and milling operation in northwestern Saskatchewan, called the Rook I Project (Project). The Project would be located approximately 40 km east of the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, 130 km north of the Northern Village of La Loche, and 640 km northwest of the city of Saskatoon (Figure 3.1-1). The Project would reside within Treaty 8 territory and the Métis Homeland, and be adjacent to Treaty 10 territory. At a regional scale, the Project would be situated within the southern Athabasca Basin adjacent to Patterson Lake, along the upper Clearwater River system. Patterson Lake is at the interface of the Boreal Shield and Boreal Plain ecozones. Access to the Project would be from an existing road off Highway 955 (Figure 3.1-2), with on-site worker accommodation serviced by fly-in/fly-out access.

Section 3, Indigenous and Local Knowledge, of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides a detailed account regarding the collection and incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge¹ into the Project Environmental Assessment (EA). NexGen is committed to the meaningful inclusion and consideration of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA process, which contributes to a holistic and robust EIS for the Project. NexGen has been meeting with potentially affected or interested First Nation and Métis Groups (collectively referred to as Indigenous Groups) and local communities on the Project since 2013 (i.e., prior to exploration drilling), and is committed to fostering relationships that facilitate collaboration and respect diverse perspectives. NexGen will continue to work with Indigenous Groups to provide meaningful opportunities for Indigenous and Local Knowledge to be shared and incorporated into the EA.

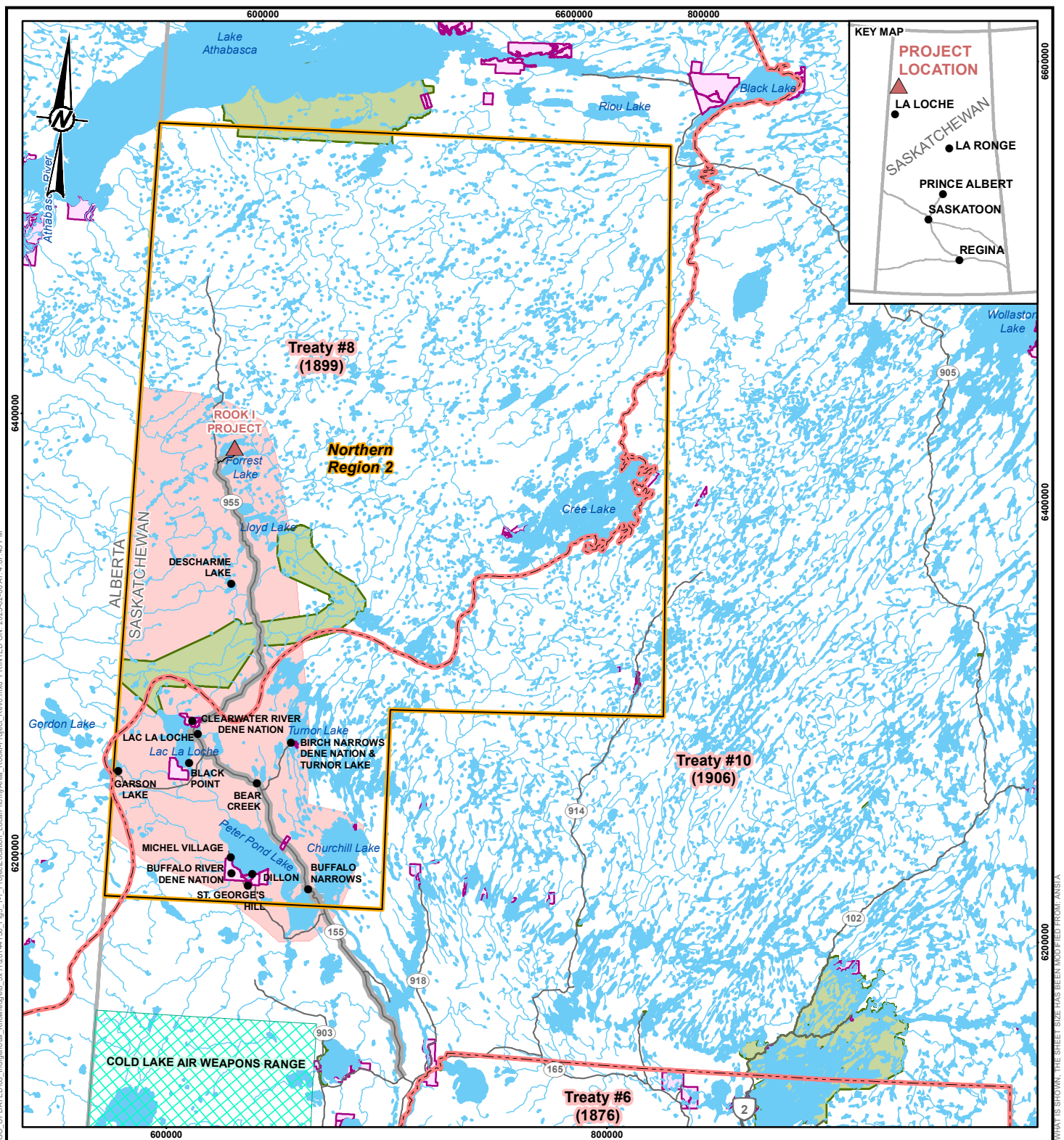
This section of the EIS discusses the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge within the EA as follows:

- **Section 3.2** introduces the Indigenous Groups and local priority area (LPA)² communities from which Indigenous and Local Knowledge was collected.
- **Section 3.3** outlines the key factors considered within the Indigenous and Local Knowledge collection framework.
- **Section 3.4** provides definitions of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge for the purposes of the EA.
- **Section 3.5** describes the sources of Indigenous and Local Knowledge.
- **Section 3.6** outlines the approach to incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA.
- **Section 3.7** discusses how Indigenous and Local Knowledge influenced Project planning and design.
- **Section 3.8** describes how Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated into the EA.
- **Section 3.9** summarizes NexGen's commitment to continued incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge throughout the Project lifespan.

¹ Indigenous Knowledge can generally be understood as the unique and collective knowledge of a group of Indigenous People that is built up through generations of living in close contact with the land and natural environment. Local Knowledge is a more general term and, for the purposes of the Environmental Assessment, represents information from a citizen or community representative, but without Indigenous Group/Elder sanction. Further details on the definition and use of these terms are provided in Section 3.4, Defining Indigenous and Local Knowledge.

² The LPA consists of the local communities closest to the Project that would experience most of the Project effects and for which NexGen would prioritize local training, employment, and business opportunities for the Project. These communities are located along, or accessed via, Highways 155 and 955 north of the intersection of Highways 155 and 925.

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LEGEND

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| PRIMARY HIGHWAY | ROUTE TO ROOK I PROJECT |
| SECONDARY HIGHWAY | FIRST NATION TREATY BOUNDARIES |
| WATERCOURSE | MÉTIS NATION-SASKATCHEWAN NORTHERN REGION 2 |
| INDIAN RESERVE | COLD LAKE AIR WEAPONS RANGE |
| PROVINCIAL PARK | LOCAL PRIORITY AREA |
| WATERBODY | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | |
| LOCAL PRIORITY AREA COMMUNITIES | |

REFERENCE(S)

1. BASE DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOGRATIS, © DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
 2. PARKS OBTAINED FROM IHS MARKET CANADA ULC.
 3. ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CANADA (AANDC) AND MEADOW LAKE TRIBAL COUNCIL, BIRCH NARROWS DENE NATION.
 4. COLD LAKE AIR WEAPONS RANGE OBTAINED FROM SASKATCHEWAN MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
- PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12 DATUM: NAD 83

PROJECT



ROOK I PROJECT

TITLE

ROOK I PROJECT LOCATION AND LOCAL PRIORITY AREA

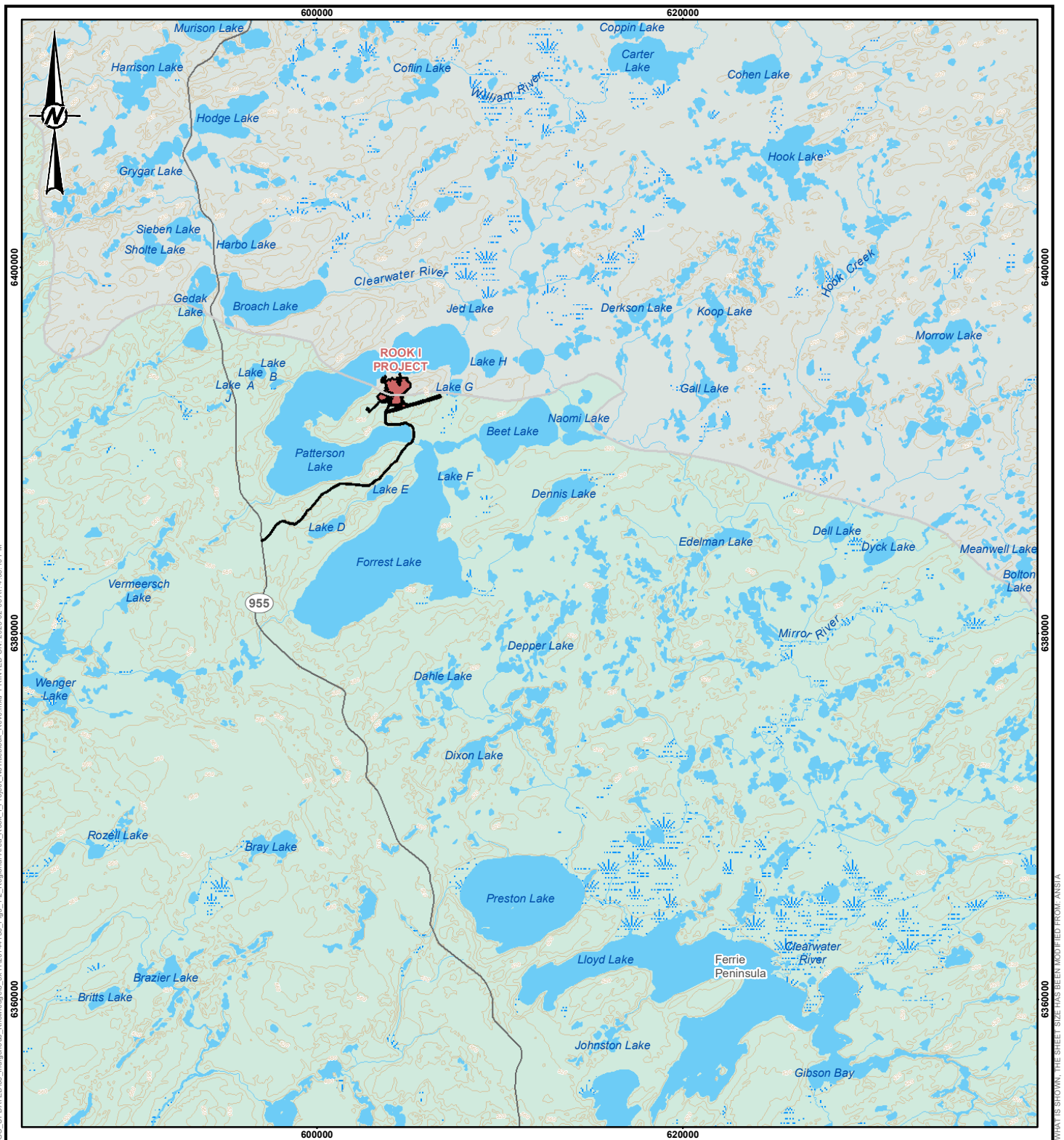
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PROJECT	20144150	PHASE	3314 - 6
DESIGN	CM	2023-02-06	SCALE AS SHOWN
GIS	NO	2023-02-06	REV. 0
CHECK	KG	2023-02-06	FIGURE 3.1-1
REVIEW	SJ	2023-02-06	

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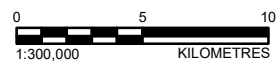


LEGEND

- ELEVATION CONTOUR (20 m INTERVAL)
- SECONDARY HIGHWAY
- WATERCOURSE
- ATHABASCA BASIN
- WATERBODY
- WETLAND
- WOODED AREA
- PROPOSED PROJECT FOOTPRINT

REFERENCE(S)

- PROJECT FEATURES OBTAINED FROM NEXGEN, APRIL 6, 2021.
 - BASE DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOGRATIS, © DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
- PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12 DATUM: NAD 83



PROJECT



ROOK I PROJECT

TITLE

REGIONAL AREA OF THE ROOK I PROJECT

CONSULTANT



PROJECT

20144150

SCALE AS SHOWN

REV. 0

FIGURE 3.1-2

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3.1.1 Inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment – General Context

The proposed Project is subject to federal approval under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012) and provincial approval under *The Environmental Assessment Act* (Section 1.3, Regulatory Framework). The inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA process may be considered under CEAA 2012; however, NexGen has committed to actively explore avenues for inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge beyond the EA process. Provincial regulatory requirements for the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge are similar to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) regulatory requirements, and outline guidelines for engaging and consulting with potentially affected Indigenous Groups, including the consideration of Indigenous Knowledge in the EA. Specific to incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA, NexGen has chosen to pursue an approach based on regulatory guidance, available literature, international best practices, and Project team experience. Consideration was also given to guidance for incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge under the new federal *Impact Assessment Act* (2019).

The inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA aligns with the Government of Canada's commitment to advancing reconciliation through a renewed relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership (IAAC 2020a). Indigenous Knowledge is playing an increasingly important role in regulatory processes and the assessment of the effects of major projects in Canada, with the understanding that different types of knowledge and diverse perspectives are needed to obtain a full understanding of the existing conditions in which a project is proposed, the potential effects of a project, and the significance of those effects, especially to Indigenous Peoples (BC EAO 2020). In recognition of this, NexGen, local Indigenous Groups, and local communities have worked together to identify opportunities to best incorporate Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the proposed Project and the EA.

Indigenous Knowledge is valuable to the EA process and to decision makers, and can contribute in the following ways (CEA Agency 2015; IAAC 2020b; MVEIRB 2005; BC EAO 2020):

- Identify key issues and interests of Indigenous Groups early in the process and incorporate these in improved project design.
- Influence the selection of valued components (VCs) that are reflective of traditional and cultural values important to Indigenous Peoples.
- Inform study design and the selection of field study sites or receptor sites for modelling based on Indigenous Knowledge of the environment, key resources, and important traditional use areas or cultural sites.
- Focus and refine baseline data collection and methods, and establish study areas.
- Characterize past and existing environmental or social conditions, including trends over time, based on experiences and long-term observations over multiple generations, and improve the understanding of the extent of potential cumulative effects on Indigenous Peoples, their rights, and their other interests.
- Identify links between components of the environment, such as water, vegetation, and wildlife, and provide a more holistic understanding of the environment and relationships between different components, including their spiritual and cultural contexts.
- Enhance the understanding of potential effects on VCs, particularly those important to Indigenous Peoples.
- Increase the accuracy of predicted effects and contribute to the significance determinations of effects.
- Strengthen mitigation measures, including avoiding or minimizing the effects on culturally sensitive sites and traditional resources.

- Contribute to more effective long-term monitoring programs by identifying monitoring priorities, appropriate indicators, and the involvement of Indigenous Knowledge holders to help observe and collect monitoring data.

3.2 Indigenous Groups and Local Priority Area Communities

A goal for the development of the EIS was to incorporate Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA for the proposed Project. An important early step was to identify the specific Indigenous Groups and local communities who should be engaged. Section 3.2.1, Indigenous Groups, describes the Indigenous Groups engaged for the Project (including the process to identify the appropriate Indigenous Groups) and Section 3.2.2, Local Priority Area Communities, describes the communities in the LPA.

Further information on the Indigenous Groups and LPA communities is included in Section 2, Indigenous, Regulatory, and Public Engagement. Details regarding the definitions of Indigenous and Local Knowledge are included in Section 3.4, Defining Indigenous and Local Knowledge, and information regarding how Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated within the EA is included in Section 3.6, Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge.

3.2.1 Indigenous Groups

NexGen has worked closely with the communities local to the Project since 2013 to help develop meaningful relationships based on trust and respect. Prior to commencement of the EA process in 2019 through the submission of the *Project Description for the Rook I Project* (NexGen 2019), NexGen regularly engaged with local Indigenous Groups on proposed exploration activities and early Project development aspects. In addition, NexGen and the local Indigenous Groups and communities collaborated to develop programs focused on youth, with an emphasis on education, health and wellness, and building economic capacity. Among other things, these activities provided NexGen an opportunity to identify the local Indigenous Groups, including gaining an understanding of their level of interest towards the proposed Project. Information on engagement activities conducted by NexGen prior to the formal commencement of the EA process for the proposed Project can be found in Section 2.

After submission of the Project Description, one of the formative means by which Indigenous Groups were initially identified for inclusion in the EA process was through letters of notification issued by the CNSC and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment inviting Indigenous Groups to participate. These letters provided key context to help determine which groups should be considered the primary groups for engagement (i.e., invited to participate) based on likely Project effects and those who should be considered as other groups for engagement (i.e., informed). NexGen's approach for achieving a deeper level of engagement with primary Indigenous Groups was established during early EA engagement activities through the signing of Study Agreements in 2019 (Section 3.3.2, Study Agreements). The identification of Indigenous Groups for engagement on the Project is described in more detail in Section 2.4.1, Identification of Indigenous Groups for Engagement.

NexGen has been engaging with the following primary Indigenous Groups on the Project:

- Clearwater River Dene Nation (CRDN);
- Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) Northern Region 2 (NR2) through the MN-S;
- Birch Narrows Dene Nation (BNDN); and
- Buffalo River Dene Nation (BRDN).

NexGen has actively consulted the primary Indigenous Groups and will continue to explore opportunities to involve and collaborate with these Indigenous Groups as the proposed Project develops. An overview of each of the primary Indigenous Groups is provided in Section 3.2.1.1, Clearwater River Dene Nation, to Section 3.2.1.4, Buffalo River Dene Nation. A more detailed overview of these Indigenous Groups is provided in Annex X, Socio-economic Baseline Report, Section 5.1.2.2, History and Settlement Patterns.

In addition to engagement activities with the primary Indigenous Groups, NexGen has been engaging with the following other Indigenous Groups on the Project, consistent with CNSC and Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment letters indicating these groups would be informed of the Project:

- Black Lake Denesūliné First Nation, as represented by the Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resources (YNLR);
- Fond du Lac Denesūliné First Nation, as represented by the YNLR;
- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN); and
- English River First Nation (ERFN).

An overview of each of the other Indigenous Groups is provided in Section 3.2.1.5, Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resources, Section 3.2.1.6, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, and Section 3.2.1.7, English River First Nation.

NexGen has informed the YNLR, ACFN, and ERFN of the Project and will continue to inform these Indigenous Groups as the Project advances.

3.2.1.1 ***Clearwater River Dene Nation***

The CRDN is a Denesūliné Nation, formerly known as the Portage La Loche Band. The CRDN traditional territory in Alberta and Saskatchewan encompasses the upper reaches of Churchill River and west and north of the eastern shores of Lake Athabasca (TSD V.1: CRDN).

The administrative office of the CRDN is in the village of Clearwater River, Saskatchewan, on the eastern shore of Lac La Loche. The CRDN's current reserve lands and settlements are Clearwater River Dene 222, Clearwater River Dene Band 221, Clearwater River Dene Band 223, and La Loche Indian Settlement (CIRNAC 2021a; Figure 3.2-1). There are also CRDN members living off reserve, including some in the Northern Village of La Loche. The CRDN holds Treaty Rights under Treaty 8.

3.2.1.2 Métis Nation – Saskatchewan Northern Region 2

The MN-S is the governing body that represents the political, socio-economic, cultural, and educational interests of the approximately 80,000 Métis citizens in Saskatchewan through a representative system of 12 regions and approximately 130 locals (TSD IV: MN-S). The MN-S NR2 includes Métis citizens in northwest Saskatchewan and extends geographically from Cree Lake in the east to the Saskatchewan-Alberta border in the west, and from Buffalo Narrows in the south to Lake Athabasca in the north (MN-S 2021; Figure 3.2-1). The MN-S NR2 represents the following Métis locals within the LPA for the Project:

- Local 39, La Loche;
- Local 40, Turnor Lake;
- Local 62, Buffalo Narrows;
- Local 65, Michel Village;
- Local 70, St. George's Hill;
- Local 156, Bear Creek; and
- Local 162, Black Point.

The MN-S asserts Aboriginal Rights and title within the Métis Homeland.

3.2.1.3 Birch Narrows Dene Nation

The BNDN, also referred to as the Birch Narrows First Nation, is a Denesūliné Nation in the Upper Churchill River Basin, with an administrative centre in Turnor Lake, Saskatchewan (TSD II: BNDN). In northern Saskatchewan, the Dene people have occupied territory that extended as far west as Lake Athabasca, and east to Wollaston Lake (Heber 2005 in TSD II: BNDN). The BNDN's current reserve lands are Churchill Lake 193A, Turnor Lake 193B, and Turnor Lake 194 (CIRNAC 2021b; Figure 3.2-1). The BNDN holds Treaty Rights under Treaty 10.

3.2.1.4 Buffalo River Dene Nation

The BRDN is a Denesūliné First Nation, and their Dene ancestors traditionally occupied territory in northern Saskatchewan that extended from Lake Athabasca to the north, Ta Touie Lake to the east, Cold Lake to the south, and the Athabasca River to the west (BRDN 2017). The BRDN is located on the western shore of Peter Pond Lake, or Buffalo Lake, at the mouth of the Dillon River, or Buffalo River, and the administrative centre is in Dillon, Saskatchewan (MLTC 2020a). The BRDN's current reserve land is Buffalo River Dene Nation 193 (CIRNAC 2021c; Figure 3.2-1). The BRDN holds Treaty Rights under Treaty 10.

3.2.1.5 Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resources

The YNLR is a non-profit organization established in 2016 and owned by Hatchet Lake Denesūliné First Nation, Black Lake Denesūliné First Nation, Fond du Lac Denesūliné First Nation, and the municipalities of Stony Rapids, Uranium City, Wollaston Lake, and Camsell Portage (YNLR n.d.). The administrative centre for the YNLR is located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. For the purposes of the EA, the YNLR represents the Athabasca Denesūliné of Black Lake First Nation and Fond du Lac First Nation. The Black Lake First Nation's current reserve lands are Chicken 225, Chicken 226, and Chicken 224 (CIRNAC 2021d; Figure 3.2-1), and the Fond du

Lac First Nation's current reserve lands are Fond du Lac 227, Fond du Lac 228, Fond du Lac 229, Fond du Lac 231, Fond du Lac 232, and Fond du Lac 233 (CIRNAC 2021e; Figure 3.2-1).

The Black Lake and Fond du Lac Denesųliné First Nations, along with the Hatchet Lake First Nation, are collectively termed the Athabasca Denesųliné. Their traditional territory is Nuhenéné. Athabasca Denesųliné culture, history, and way of life are interwoven with the movements and health of the caribou herds. Where there have been barren-ground caribou, there are Athabasca Denesųliné. This has been true for at least 2,600 years. Current land use activities are well documented in the vicinity of the proposed Project and archeological records of the Denesųliné and their closest ancestors, the Taltheilei, correspond very closely to the caribou range which fluctuates due to natural cycles, and impacts such as climate changes, forest fires, and development. The Athabasca Denesųliné are signatories to Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 (TSD VI: YNLR, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5).

3.2.1.6 Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

The ACFN is an Athabaskan-speaking Denesųliné nation (ACFN n.d.a), with an administrative centre located in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. The ACFN have described their core territory as extending “north, east, west and south from the Peace Athabasca Delta in Alberta, including the Lower Athabasca River and lands to the south of Lake Athabasca, and the lands south of Fort McMurray” (ACFN n.d.a). The ACFN's homelands are mapped along the boundary of the Firebag River south of Lake Athabasca and west of the Project (ACFN n.d.b).

The ACFN's reserve lands are on the south shore of Lake Athabasca, on the Athabasca Delta, and on the Athabasca River, and include Chipewyan 201, Chipewyan 201A, Chipewyan 201B, Chipewyan 201C, Chipewyan 201D, Chipewyan 201E, Chipewyan 201F, and Chipewyan 201G (CIRNAC 2021f).

3.2.1.7 English River First Nation

The ERFN is based in Patuanak and composed of both Dene and Cree people (ERFN 2022). The ERFN have 19 reserves, settlements, and villages, including but not limited to La Plonge 192, Wapachewunak 192D, Ile A La Crosse 192E, Elak Base 192A, Knee Lake 192B, Dipper Rapids 192C, Cree Lake 192G, and Primeau Lake 192F (CIRNAC 2021g; MLTC 2020b).

3.2.2 Local Priority Area Communities

Local Knowledge included in the EA has primarily been obtained from LPA communities. The LPA comprises the communities north of the junction between Highway 155 and Highway 923, and extends south of Peter Pond Lake, north of the Firebag River, east of Highway 155 and Highway 955, and west to the Saskatchewan border (Figure 3.1-1). These communities include the northern villages of La Loche and Buffalo Narrows and surrounding northern hamlets and settlements, and the communities around the CRDN, BNDN, and BRDN. All LPA communities are within the MN-S NR2 (Figure 3.2-1).

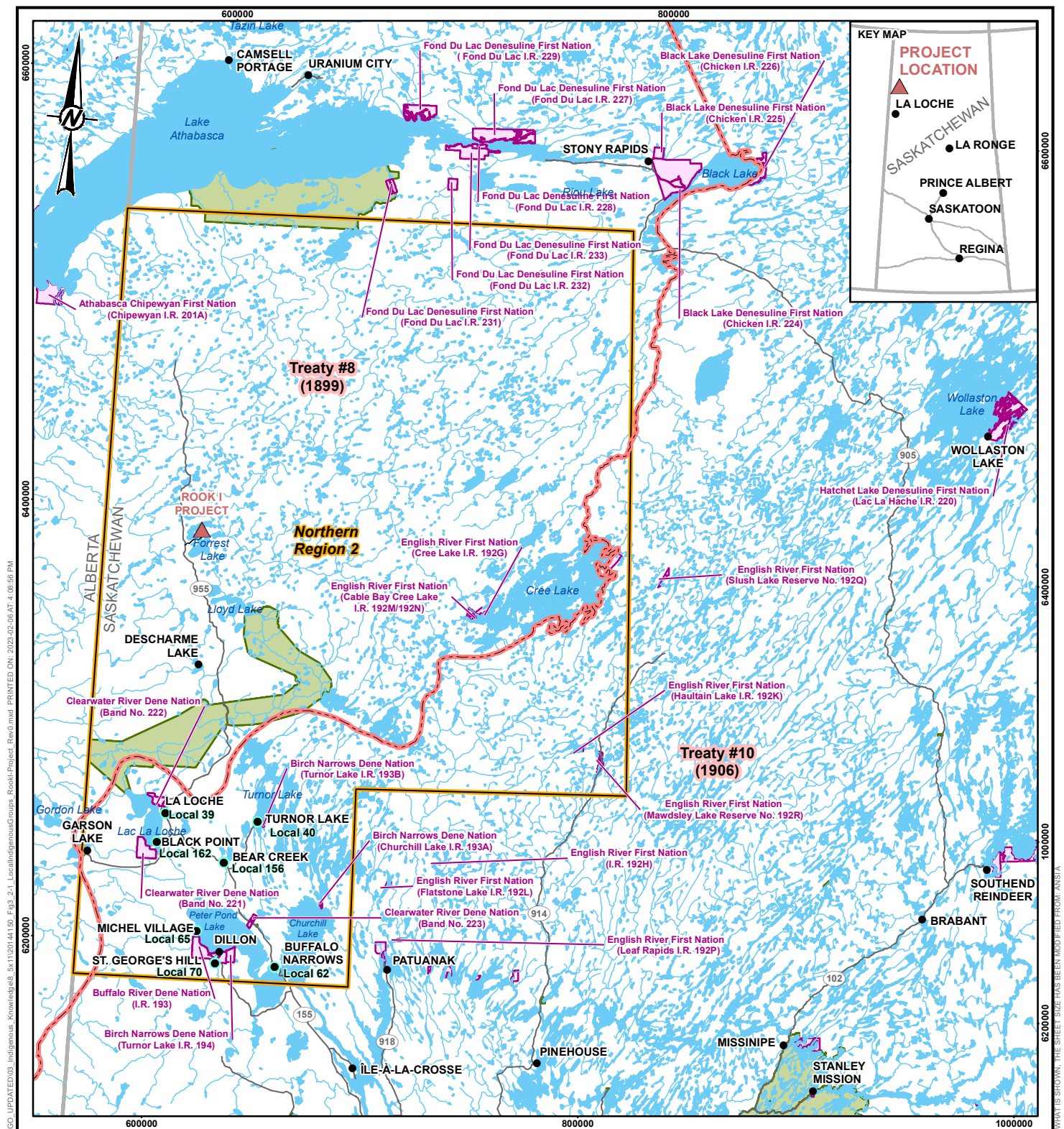
Communities within the LPA are generally composed of Métis citizens, off-reserve Dene Nation citizens, those who have identified as other Indigenous persons, and those who have identified as non-Indigenous (Statistics Canada 2016). Overall, approximately 96% of the LPA community members have identified as being Indigenous. Table 3.2-1 outlines the LPA communities arranged by proximity (closest to farthest) to the proposed Project. Populations are included based on the 2016 Census data to note the size of each community in proportion to the total LPA population.

Table 3.2-1: Population of Local Priority Area Communities by Increasing Distance to the Rook I Project

Local Priority Area Communities	Population (2016 Census)
Northern settlement of Descharme Lake	5
Northern village of La Loche	2,372
Northern hamlet of Black Point	43
Northern hamlet of Bear Creek	33
Northern settlement of Garson Lake	10
Northern hamlet of Turnor Lake	149
Northern village of Buffalo Narrows	1,110
Northern hamlet of St. George's Hill	131
Northern hamlet of Michel Village	57
Total	3,910

Source: Statistics Canada 2016.

Obtaining Local Knowledge for the EA from the LPA communities has been and will continue to be important as members of these communities are known to use the area around the proposed Project and are most likely to be affected by the Project, both positively and negatively. Members of the LPA communities are also the people that NexGen is prioritizing for employment, business, education, and training opportunities from the Project.



LEGEND

- POPULATED PLACE
- SECONDARY HIGHWAY
- WATERCOURSE
- INDIAN RESERVE
- PROVINCIAL PARK
- WATERBODY
- ▲ PROJECT LOCATION
- LOCAL PRIORITY AREA COMMUNITIES
- FIRST NATION TREATY BOUNDARIES
- MÉTIS NATION-SASKATCHEWAN NORTHERN REGION 2

NOTE(S)

MÉTIS LOCALS HAVE ELECTED LEADERSHIP AND OPERATE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL WITHIN EACH MÉTIS NATION - SASKATCHEWAN REGION.

REFERENCE(S)

1. BASE DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOGRATIS, © DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
 2. PARKS OBTAINED FROM IHS MARKIT CANADA ULC.
 3. ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CANADA (AANDC) AND MEADOW LAKE TRIBAL COUNCIL, BIRCH NARROWS DENE NATION
- PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12 DATUM: NAD 83

PROJECT



ROOK I PROJECT

TITLE

INDIGENOUS GROUPS AND LOCAL PRIORITY AREA COMMUNITIES IN THE VICINITY OF THE ROOK I PROJECT

CONSULTANT



PROJECT	20144150	PHASE	3314 - 6
DESIGN	JO	2023-02-06	SCALE AS SHOWN
GIS	NO	2023-02-06	REV. 0
CHECK	KG	2023-02-06	FIGURE 3.2-1
REVIEW	SJ	2023-02-06	

3.3 Indigenous and Local Knowledge Framework

The following subsections describe the key framework components considered for the collection and incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA. This includes discussions on NexGen's philosophy, Project-specific engagement agreements with Indigenous Groups, the context for applying Indigenous Knowledge, and regulatory context.

3.3.1 NexGen Philosophy

Key aspects of NexGen's philosophy to working with people (Section 1.1.6, Working with People) have informed the overall approach to engagement and the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA. As a foundational principle, NexGen acknowledges and values the interests and aspirations of potentially affected Indigenous Groups and LPA communities. NexGen is committed to fostering trusting relationships that facilitate collaboration and maximize the benefits of the Project to Indigenous Groups and LPA communities. Aligned with this philosophy, NexGen is committed to the following:

- respecting the diverse cultures and perspectives of those with whom the Project interacts;
- proactively engaging with communities;
- enhancing workers' awareness of the history, traditions, and rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- supporting the economic participation of affected communities in training, education, employment, and business opportunities from the Project;
- seeking to provide opportunities resulting in sustainable, lasting benefits to local communities beyond the Project lifespan; and
- providing clear and timely information to those who have direct interest in the Project.

NexGen's values of honesty, respect, resilience, and accountability serve as the roadmap to creating as much positivity for as many people as possible. These values, which are applicable across the design and implementation of the engagement program, include:

- **Honesty:** Transparent and clear with self and others; open to giving and receiving feedback.
- **Respect:** Treat others in the way we want to be treated and without judgement.
- **Resilience:** Agile and entrepreneurial, nimble with the structure to pivot.
- **Accountability:** Clear in our expectations; curious and open, we have ownership of our work and execute with excellence.

NexGen is committed to strong ethical standards, and the company's reputation is built through the conduct and interactions of all members of the NexGen team, including directors and officers, employees, consultants, and contractors. NexGen's Code of Ethics is built on its core values and beliefs. The following Code of Ethics aspects form a basis for all NexGen activities, including NexGen's engagement program approach:

- Act in a way that upholds and reflects NexGen's values.
- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Act ethically and with courtesy and respect to others.
- Treat communities and the environment in which NexGen operates with respect.

- Never use one's power or status in an effort to gain undue benefit or advantage over others.
- Maintain confidentiality, where required, to protect corporate, personal, and third-party information.
- Take responsible steps to avoid any conflicts of interest, either real or perceived.
- Always comply with the law and relevant rules and regulations.

3.3.2 Study Agreements

NexGen entered into a Study Agreement with each of the primary Indigenous Groups (i.e., CRDN, MN-S, BNDN, and BRDN) for, among other things, the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge (Section 3.5, Indigenous and Local Knowledge Sources). Study Agreements are agreements signed by NexGen and each primary Indigenous Group that outline the engagement approach, as well as resources and funds provided by NexGen to support Indigenous Group participation in the Project EA process. These agreements were signed in September and October of 2019.

While the content of each Study Agreement is confidential, the focus of the Study Agreements with each primary Indigenous Group is as follows:

- Develop a Joint Working Group (JWG) structure for each Indigenous Group to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge into the EA process and to facilitate regular, ongoing engagement.
- Assist in the identification of VCs for the EA.
- Explore special interest topics for each Indigenous Group.
- Support Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Land Use (IKTLU) Studies³ in various forms particular to each Indigenous Group.
- Establish a Community Coordinator position in each Indigenous Group to act as the primary contact between NexGen and the Indigenous Group.

Each Study Agreement formalized an engagement process between NexGen and individual Indigenous Groups to, among other things, identify and characterize potential effects on Indigenous (i.e., First Nation and Métis) Rights and socio-economic interests resulting from the Project, and to collaboratively identify potential avoidance, mitigation, and accommodation measures related to all identified effects on those Rights. The Study Agreements also acknowledged that, notwithstanding the activities contemplated under the Study Agreement, the responsibility for fulfilling the Duty of Consult remains with the Crown (Section 1.3).

In addition to the above, each of the Study Agreements:

- commits NexGen to providing capacity funding for the JWG engagement, the retention of technical support by the Indigenous Group, and the completion of a self-directed IKTLU Study (Section 3.5.2, Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Land Use Studies); and
- commits NexGen and each individual Indigenous Group to negotiate in good faith to formalize a Benefit Agreement, and for NexGen to provide funding to assist in negotiating such an agreement.

A Study Funding Agreement was also signed in 2020 with the YNLR on behalf of the Black Lake Denesųliné First Nation and Fond du Lac Denesųliné First Nation as the YNLR identified an interest in sharing Indigenous

³ Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Land Use Studies include all land use studies developed by the potentially affected Indigenous Groups for the Project, including Traditional Land Use and Occupancy studies, Traditional Knowledge and Use studies, Indigenous Rights and Knowledge studies (henceforth referred to collectively as IKTLU Studies).

Knowledge through an IKTLU Study. This Study Funding Agreement between NexGen and the YNLR was strictly for funding an IKTLU Study.

Through the Study Agreements and the Study Funding Agreement, the CRDN, MN-S, BNDN, BRDN, and YNLR formally shared Indigenous Knowledge to inform the EA for the Project.

3.3.3 Application of Indigenous Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment

Indigenous Peoples in Canada have been calling for greater collaboration and participation in EAs for decades, including the incorporation of their knowledge, values, and perspectives into the regulatory process and decisions. While recent EA processes in Canada have attempted to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Peoples have criticized the ability of EAs to meaningfully engage with and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge (Eckert et al. 2020). For example, a comment was made by a JWG member on the Cluff Lake Mine process that the community was forgotten about after that project was approved (MN-S-JWG 2019). Other comments were made about Indigenous Groups feeling apprehension to share their Indigenous Knowledge with proponents because of the perception that their knowledge would be used for the purpose of permitting other projects, without respect of the community's ownership and control of their knowledge, and with no benefit to the community (MN-S-JWG 2019; BNDN-JWG 2019a).

Feedback from Indigenous Groups during engagement for the Project has informed the approach to the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge in the EA (Section 3.6). The JWGs were established to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, include a broader group of voices and perspectives from the communities, and facilitate two-way dialogue. Comments made by Indigenous Groups related to the value of incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into all stages of the EA process included the following topics:

- The inclusion of both Indigenous Knowledge and Western science in the EA is important (BRDN-JWG 2020).
- Indigenous Groups have acquired in-depth knowledge of the land and “how it works”, which is rooted in living off the land for generations (BRDN-JWG 2019; MN-S-JWG 2019).
- Indigenous Groups have a unique local knowledge of particular places based on generations of use (TSD V.2: CRDN; MN-S-JWG 2019).
- It is important to listen to and incorporate the knowledge of Elders (BNDN-JWG 2021b; BRDN-JWG 2019; CRDN-JWG 2021).
- Indigenous Knowledge plays an important role in helping proponents mitigate potential project effects, including avoiding areas where there are sacred sites, traditional plants, or harvesting sites (MN-S-JWG 2019).
- Sustainability is critically important; the environment and land and resources must be protected for future generations (MN-S-JWG 2019; BNDN-JWG 2021e).
- Indigenous Knowledge can provide information about the cumulative effects of past and existing activities on both culture and the environment (TSD IV: MN-S; TSD V.2: CRDN).
- Incorporating community-led, long-term environmental testing and monitoring during construction and operation of the Project is important (TSD IV: MN-S; TSD V.2: CRDN; TSD VI: YNLR; BNDN-JWG 2021e).

- The inclusion of cultural awareness training for all employees working on the Project site is essential, given that Indigenous Peoples have a long history that is not always well understood (BNDN-JWG 2021d; BNDN-JWG 2021c; BRDN-JWG 2019; BRDN-JWG 2021c; MN-S JWG 2021).

Through the JWGs, IKTLU Studies, and other engagement activities, Indigenous Groups have shared invaluable Indigenous and Local Knowledge, including what Indigenous Knowledge means to them (Section 3.4.1, Defining Indigenous Knowledge) and comments on why it is important to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into the EA.

3.3.4 Regulatory Context

On 20 February 2020, the CNSC issued a Record of Decision (DEC 19-H112; CNSC 2020a) on the scope of the EA for the proposed Project. In this document, the CNSC stated “pursuant to section 19 of the CEAA 2012, [the Commission] determines the scope of the factors for the Environmental Assessment of the Rook I Project proposed by NexGen Energy Ltd. to include the factors mandated in paragraphs 19(1)(a) to (h) of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, with no additional factors” and “the Commission accepts CNSC staff’s submission that, in accordance with subsection 19(3) of CEAA 2012, Indigenous traditional knowledge and community knowledge shall inform the EA for the Rook I Project”⁴.

The incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA considered regulatory guidance provided by both the federal and provincial governments, which are described in Section 3.3.4.1, Federal Regulatory Context, and Section 3.3.4.2, Provincial Regulatory Context.

3.3.4.1 Federal Regulatory Context

From a federal perspective, the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA was guided by the following regulatory documents from the CNSC and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEA Agency; now the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada):

- *Considering Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Environmental Assessments Conducted Under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEA Agency 2015).
- *Generic Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement - Pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, Version 2* (CNSC 2021a).
- Public and Indigenous Engagement, *Indigenous Engagement: REGDOC-3.2.2, Version 1.2* (CNSC 2022).
- E-DOC #6470679: *Guidance on Indigenous Engagement for Proposed Projects undergoing Environmental Assessments under CEAA 2012* (CNSC 2021b).
- E-DOC #6474990 *Version 2: CNSC Guidance Key Documents Expected of Proponent by CNSC to fulfill Indigenous Engagement Requirements for Designated CEAA 2012 projects in the key regulatory guidance section* (CNSC n.d.).
- E-DOC #6515310 *Version 1: Additional information on the role of Indigenous groups who will be participating in the technical review of the EIS and preparation of the CNSC EA Report under CEAA 2012* (CNSC 2020b).

⁴ For the purposes of the EIS, the term “Indigenous traditional knowledge” and “Aboriginal traditional knowledge” are represented by “Indigenous Knowledge” and the term “community knowledge” is represented by “Local Knowledge”. When referring to both simultaneously, the term “Indigenous and Local Knowledge” is used.

Subsection 19(3) of CEAA 2012 states that “the Environmental Assessment of a designated project may take into account community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge”. The CEA Agency (2015) provides guidelines on how Indigenous Knowledge can be considered throughout the EA process and the general principles that should be followed when working with communities and their knowledge:

- Work with the community.
- Seek prior informed consent.
- Access Indigenous Knowledge with the support of the community.
- Respect intellectual property rights.
- Collect Indigenous Knowledge in collaboration with the community.
- Bring Indigenous Knowledge and Western knowledge together.

The CNSC Generic Guidelines for the Preparation of an EIS Pursuant to CEAA 2012 (CNSC 2021a) provide guidance on Indigenous Engagement in accordance with the CNSC REGDOC-3.2.2 (CNSC 2022), while Part 1, Section 3.3.2 of CNSC (2021a) outlines the requirements for considering and documenting Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EIS, including that “[a]greement should be obtained from Indigenous groups regarding the use, management, and protection of their existing traditional knowledge during and after the EA”. Section 3.3.2 also outlines that the EIS should document the Indigenous Knowledge gathered and how it was gathered, the sources of Indigenous Knowledge, and how the proponent considered Indigenous Knowledge in the assessment (CNSC 2021a).

Ongoing engagement to distribute Project information and provide opportunities for Indigenous and community participation are important aspects of the EA process. Regulatory Document 3.2.2, Indigenous Engagement (CNSC 2022) provides guidelines for early engagement and the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge:

Early engagement provides the opportunity to start or further develop relationships with Indigenous communities and can help build trust and respect. For example, it may provide Indigenous groups the necessary time to gather and share information on local and Indigenous knowledge (IK). IK may help to identify potential impacts from the activity described in the licence application on traditional land use, treaty rights, Indigenous rights, and culturally important sites, including archeological sites. Gathering of IK must be approached respectfully, in collaboration with the Indigenous group, and with the understanding that the IK may be sensitive or proprietary. IK must be understood in the context of the Indigenous group’s world view.

The E-DOCS #6470679 (CNSC 2021b) and #6474990 v2 (CNSC n.d.) provide guidance on the CNSC’s requirements for the key steps of the EA process and guidance for fulfilling Indigenous engagement requirements as part of an EA for a designated project under CEAA 2012. The E-DOC #6470679 (CNSC 2021b) states that an EIS should contain a balanced presentation of issues and conclusions drawn from scientific, engineering, technical, traditional, and local knowledge, and should document how scientific, engineering, traditional, and local knowledge were collected and used to reach conclusions. It also provides guidelines on Indigenous engagement methods, which can include sources of Indigenous Knowledge, and to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge shared during Indigenous engagement is incorporated into an EIS. The E-DOC #6474990 v2 (CNSC n.d.) provides a description of the key documents proponents are expected to produce to fulfill Indigenous engagement requirements as part of an EA for a designated project under CEAA 2012 at the key stages of the process.

The E-DOC #6515310 (CNSC 2020b) outlines the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous Groups participating in the technical review of an EIS and the preparation of an EA report. It states that the participation of Indigenous Groups in the technical review process provides an opportunity for them to provide specific Indigenous Knowledge and expertise with respect to their community as it relates to an EIS.

The approach taken by NexGen to engage and work collaboratively with Indigenous Groups through the terms and conditions of the Study Agreements (Section 3.3.2), including the establishment of the JWG (Section 3.5.1, Joint Working Groups) and the funding to conduct independent IKTLU Studies (Section 3.5.2) to facilitate the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA process, aligned with guidelines from the CEA Agency (2015) and the CNSC (2021a, 2022). NexGen's approach was also developed in consideration of current best practices from the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC 2020a, 2020c). NexGen has been and remains committed to facilitating meaningful opportunities for Indigenous Groups to share their knowledge according to their protocols and in their preferred format, and to respect the knowledge provided.

Further information specific to the regulatory context for public and Indigenous consultation and engagement is presented in Section 2.3.2, Regulatory Context.

3.3.4.2 Provincial Regulatory Context

From a provincial perspective, the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA was guided by the following regulatory documents from the Government of Saskatchewan:

- *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework* (Government of Saskatchewan 2010).
- *Proponents Guide – Consultation with First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan Environmental Impact Assessment* (Government of Saskatchewan 2014).
- *Proponent Handbook – Voluntary Engagement with First Nations and Métis Communities to Inform Government's Duty to Consult Process* (Government of Saskatchewan 2013).

The provincial regulatory requirements are similar to the CNSC regulatory requirements discussed in Section 3.3.4.1, and outline guidelines for engaging and consulting with potentially affected Indigenous Groups, including the consideration of Indigenous Knowledge in the EA.

The *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework* (Government of Saskatchewan 2010) states that consultation with First Nations and Métis communities is to be undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, including the consideration of Indigenous Knowledge. The framework describes the Duty to Consult Policy, including its application and interest-based engagement of First Nations and Métis communities.

The *Proponents Guide – Consultation with First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan Environmental Impact Assessment* (Government of Saskatchewan 2014) encourages proponents to work with First Nations and Métis communities to gather and present Indigenous Knowledge through methods such as project-specific Traditional Knowledge and/or use studies, and to incorporate relevant Indigenous Knowledge in the EIS. The guide outlines the Crown's duty to consult, the role of the proponent, and how consultation activities are assessed by the Crown.

The *Proponent Handbook – Voluntary Engagement with First Nations and Métis Communities to Inform Government's Duty to Consult Process* (Government of Saskatchewan 2013) states that proponents should consider "learning about, recognizing and respecting First Nations and Métis cultural activities, traditional practices and knowledge and uses of lands and resources" to facilitate effective engagement and build strong

relationships. The handbook also describes how proponents could engage and how engagement should be documented to inform the Crown's duty to consult, among other topics.

Through the engagement and collaborative approach described in Section 3.3.4.1, NexGen is also compliant with regulatory requirements in Saskatchewan (Government of Saskatchewan 2010, 2013, 2014).

3.4 Defining Indigenous and Local Knowledge

To facilitate proper use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA, deriving appropriate definitions for both of these terms was important. The process for establishing these definitions included consideration of regulatory guidance, input from Indigenous Groups, and relevant literature.

3.4.1 Defining Indigenous Knowledge

The concept and application of Indigenous Knowledge has been evolving in the CEAA process since 2012. The new federal *Impact Assessment Act* identifies Indigenous Knowledge as a holistic system embedded in the unique cultures, languages, values, and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples (IAAC 2020c, 2020b). For the purposes of the EA, Indigenous Knowledge is specifically defined as information sanctioned (i.e., authoritative permission or approval given) by an Indigenous Group as an official statement, document, or position. Further information on how the Indigenous Groups internally defined Indigenous Knowledge for sanctioned use in the EA is provided in this subsection.

During early JWG meetings between NexGen and Indigenous Groups in October 2019 (Section 2.6.1, Indigenous Engagement), Indigenous Groups were asked to define Indigenous Knowledge based on their own perspectives and explain what it means to their community. In addition, Indigenous Knowledge was described in the IKTLU Studies. In general, Indigenous Groups described Indigenous Knowledge as being tied to history, places, spirituality, and Indigenous Peoples' intimate relationship with the land and resources (TSD II: BNDN; TSD III: BRDN; TSD IV: MN-S; TSD V.2: CRDN; TSD VI: YNLR).

Indigenous Knowledge was described by Indigenous Groups in terms of being rooted in living off the land for generations and the intimate relationship with the land and resources that is developed from the long-term practice of traditional activities. For the CRDN, harvesting activities and cultural practices are integral to the distinctive identity of Denesųliné Peoples, and the maintenance and strengthening of Denesųliné identity and heritage includes the transmission of Indigenous Knowledge (TSD V.1: CRDN).

Throughout time immemorial, Indigenous societies such as CRDN have relied on the oral transmission of stories, lore, histories, teachings, and other knowledges to sustain unique ways of life and identity as a people. (TSD V.2: CRDN)

Similarly, a member of the MN-S described Indigenous Knowledge as being part of the community's fabric and being "who we are" that is gained from "living in the bush" and surviving off the land, and spending a lifetime hunting, trapping, and gathering medicines (MN-S-JWG 2019). A member of the BRDN described Indigenous Knowledge as the community's way of life, and how knowledge is accumulated from living and surviving off the land, as well as from the teachings of Elders (BRDN-JWG 2019). The YNLR described the importance of the land to the Athabasca Denesųliné culture and way of life, which has been passed down through the generations (TSD VI: YNLR).

Members of the BNDN and BRDN highlighted the critical role of experiential learning, where specialized knowledge and skills required to hunt, trap, fish, or gather plants is taught to younger generations by learning

and doing while out on the land with family members and Elders (TSD II: BNDN; TSD III: BRDN). The CRDN also described the importance of learning on the land, and how “the land is simultaneously the teacher and the school room”, as noted below:

Within Dene societies, children learn the values, traditions, and customary practices by listening, observing, and emulating Elders and adults within extended families. This learning takes place directly on the land and includes the acquisition of intimate knowledge of particular places, of the plants and animals living in those places, and their unique habits and seasonal cycles. It also includes the ancestral stories associated with such spaces. (TSD V.2: CRDN)

The critical importance of passing down knowledge to younger generations for the preservation of knowledge and maintenance of culture was emphasized by Indigenous Groups (MN-S-JWG 2019; TSD IV: MN-S; TSD III: BRDN; TSD II: BNDN; TSD V.1: CRDN; TSD V.2: CRDN; TSD VI: YNLR).

Their ancestral Métis Knowledge, accumulated over generations, is integral to the legacy of Métis understanding and interaction with the natural world, and the transfer of natural and cultural environmental Métis Knowledge to younger generations is vital for the maintenance of Métis culture. (TSD IV: MN-S)

We’re teaching that young generation how to live off the land. And in order for them to do that, this is something that has to be out [on the land]. (TSD V.2: CRDN)

I teach, we teach lots. Our kids and our grandkids, until today. We teach them all the traditional ways Like everything, hunting, trapping, fishing, everything. Yeah. Everything! (TSD V.2: CRDN)

The vital role of the extended family in sharing and preserving knowledge was highlighted by a member of the BNDN (BNDN-JWG 2019b). The CRDN also described the essential role and responsibilities of parents, grandparents, and great grandparents within extended family networks to pass down Denesų́liné customs, traditions, and knowledge to younger generations:

Like our parents, our ancestors, like they were raised off the land, and that’s how I was raised. And that’s how he [husband] was raised. So this is what we’re doing right now for our children and our grandchildren, you know. We took our children to those kind of camps, we teach them to hunt, to trap and everything. And now - their parents are working and our grandchildren we are teaching because their parents won’t be there for them, to teach them, because they are working. You know, like we take them out and we show them how to do things. (TSD V.2: CRDN)

The ability to transfer knowledge to younger generations requires access to the land and availability of high-quality, abundant resources (TSD II: BNDN; TSD III: BRDN; TSD IV: MN-S; TSD V.2: CRDN). For the CRDN, the maintenance and strengthening of Denesų́liné identity and heritage includes the transmission of Indigenous Knowledge, which is tied to “a healthy productive land base which draws on the knowledge and experience of the ancestors, Elders, and current harvesters” (TSD V.1: CRDN).

Indigenous Knowledge was also described by a member of the MN-S as having a vast understanding of the land and how it works, including its resources, the interrelationships between different environmental components, and the importance of sustainably managing resources for future use (MN-S-JWG 2019). Showing respect for the environment and resources that are depended upon was emphasized by the MN-S, a teaching that has been

passed down from Elders and then transferred on to children and grandchildren (MN-S-JWG 2019). Similarly, the CRDN described how “CRDN families (past and present) have fostered deeply respectful relationships with the land and have acquired an intimate knowledge of the features and living and non-living beings sharing this same space” (TSD V.2: CRDN).

The long-term observations, including observed environmental trends, have been expressed by Indigenous Groups as important components of Indigenous Knowledge. Observations included, for example, changes in migration patterns of wildlife and in predator-prey dynamics, decreasing wildlife populations and increasing prevalence of unhealthy animals, and the delayed onset of spring and changes in ice and water (MN-S-JWG 2019). The MN-S noted that Indigenous Knowledge can also provide information about the cumulative effects of past and existing activities on both culture and the environment (TSD IV: MN-S).

Indigenous Knowledge was described by members of the CRDN, MN-S, BNDN, and BRDN as being place based and building on historical connections with specific places used in the past (TSD II: BNDN; TSD III: BRDN; TSD IV: MN-S; TSD V.2: CRDN). For the BNDN, the transmission of knowledge plays a vital role in identity by connecting people with their ancestors, particularly through stories from the past (TSD II: BNDN). The CRDN described how learning on the land includes the acquisition of intimate knowledge of particular places, which includes the ancestral stories associated with such spaces (TSD V.2: CRDN). For example, specific locations where medicines and berries have been gathered or moose have been harvested for generations are also associated with particular stories and teachings.

Members of the CRDN, MN-S, and BNDN discussed how Indigenous Knowledge is being lost, including from the loss of language and ceremonies, and how culture and identity that comes from being on the land is slowly being eroded (TSD V.2: CRDN; MN-S-JWG 2019; BNDN-JWG 2019a,b). The importance of preserving Indigenous Knowledge for future generations and the maintenance of culture was emphasized, including through revitalization of language and ceremonies, teaching Indigenous Knowledge in schools, time spent with Elders and at cultural camps, and land-based education (MN-S-JWG 2019). Many CRDN members who lost touch with Denesūliné traditional ways for some time have now returned to the land and traditional ways because they want their children to know and fully embrace their Denesūliné heritage and identity (TSD V.2: CRDN). The CRDN highlighted the essential role that Elders play in teaching Denesūliné knowledge, teachings, and traditions to younger generations through school- and land-based education.

In summary, Indigenous Knowledge can generally be understood as the unique and collective knowledge of a group of Indigenous People that is built up through generations of living in close contact with the land and natural environment. The body of knowledge builds upon the historical experiences of a people and adapts to social, economic, environmental, spiritual, and political change; therefore, it is cumulative and dynamic (CEA Agency 2015; IAAC 2020c). Indigenous Knowledge is place based, unique to each Indigenous community and culture, and specific to community context, the biophysical environment, the knowledge holder(s), and often to the language of the Indigenous Group. It is passed down within a community to the next generation orally through language, stories, ceremonies, teachings, and observations (ICT 2018; IAAC 2020c).

Indigenous Knowledge is often associated with the exercise and protection of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, which are supported by the continued accumulation of Indigenous Knowledge through use of lands and resources for traditional purposes (IAAC 2020c).

3.4.2 Defining Local Knowledge

Local Knowledge is a more general term than Indigenous Knowledge and, for the purposes of the EA, represents information from an LPA citizen or representative, but without Indigenous Group/Elder sanction (i.e., it is not an official position, statement, or document); therefore, this information is not considered to be Indigenous Knowledge. However, the information has still been captured in the EA. Local Knowledge is sometimes used when describing the knowledge of local people who may or may not be Indigenous and who hold knowledge that is based on personal and collective experiences of their local environments over time, without necessarily having generational connections to a place (Hill et al. 2006 in Williams et al. 2020). Local Knowledge is created within particular social and political contexts (Turnbull 1997; Bowker 2010 in Johnson et al. 2016). For example, Local Knowledge holders can include commercial fishers, hunters, recreationists, and others who have a stake in, and interact with, the local environment (Johnson et al. 2016).

Given that approximately 96% of the population in the Project's LPA communities identify as Indigenous, the inclusion of the term "Local" in "Indigenous and Local Knowledge" is used to recognize the necessity to capture the information provided by locals in the EA, but not as the official Indigenous Knowledge sources provided by Indigenous Groups. In this regard, Local Knowledge captures both information provided by various community members in the LPA and information collected through formal engagement processes as agreed to with Indigenous Groups. As examples, Local Knowledge was shared during community information sessions, site tours, and other formal and informal meetings, as well as through research conducted as part of environmental and socio-economic baseline data collection. Collection and consideration of Local Knowledge from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is described further in Section 2.

3.5 Indigenous and Local Knowledge Sources

Indigenous Groups and members of communities within the LPA have shared Indigenous and Local Knowledge with NexGen through a variety of engagement activities and sources of information. In general, sources of Indigenous Knowledge were identified through methods associated with the signed individual Study Agreements (e.g., JWG, IKTLU Studies) with each primary Indigenous Group (i.e., the CRDN, MN-S, BNDN, and BRDN) and through the Study Funding Agreement with the YNLR (Section 3.3.2). Indigenous and Local Knowledge was also shared by the Indigenous Groups in forms such as individual presentations describing important historical information, cultural practices, and knowledge. The majority of Local Knowledge was shared through EA baseline activities or other formal or informal individual and community events, including the community information sessions held in 2019.

Section 3.5.1, Section 3.5.2, and Section 3.5.3, Sources of Local Knowledge, provide more details regarding the processes associated with the collection of Indigenous and Local Knowledge.

3.5.1 Joint Working Groups

Joint Working Groups were established in late 2019 with each of the four primary Indigenous Groups as a means of early engagement and collaboration between representatives of NexGen and each Indigenous Group to facilitate regular, ongoing engagement during the EA process. These JWGs are composed of NexGen and Indigenous Group representatives, the latter of which were chosen by the leadership of each Indigenous Group. A goal of the JWGs is to meet every four to eight weeks, with the meeting cadence being set by each Indigenous Group; NexGen has been and will continue to be committed to meeting as often as requested. Detailed

transcripts⁵ from each JWG meeting are prepared by an independent consultant and distributed to each JWG member for review, editing, and feedback, including the identification of information considered sensitive or confidential that should not be included in public reporting. A Community Coordinator for each Indigenous Group acts as a liaison between the community and NexGen and helps coordinate the planning of JWG meetings. For each Indigenous Group, the Community Coordinator position is funded by NexGen as part of the individual Study Agreement.

The JWGs were established to include a broader group of voices and perspectives from the community during the EA process. The JWGs facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of Indigenous and Local Knowledge, including understanding each Indigenous Group's protocols on consent, ownership, access, control, and possession of their knowledge. The JWGs support the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into the EA, including the identification of VCs, characterization of certain baseline conditions, discussion of potential effects of the Project, and identification of potential mitigation measures to avoid or minimize those effects. The JWGs were also planned to facilitate the review of and afford an opportunity to provide feedback on the EIS. A summary of JWG activities, including topics discussed, is presented in Section 2.6.1.1, Summary of Indigenous Engagement Activities.

While JWG meetings were generally held regularly between NexGen and the Indigenous Groups during development of the EIS (i.e., between 2019 and 2021), there were times where the usual cadence was not possible. When the COVID-19 pandemic first impacted Canada, JWGs were paused between April 2020 and July 2020, re-initiating in August 2020. Late in 2019, the CRDN proposed a specific agenda for three JWG meetings, two of which were held in 2020. The third meeting, scheduled to occur after completion of CRDN: TSD V.2, has not yet occurred at the date of writing this report. In addition to these three meetings scheduled as part of the CRDN agenda, one additional JWG meeting was held in March 2021. The MN-S paused their participation in the JWGs in December 2020 and reengaged in May 2021 with a restructured JWG membership that included new members and some members from the original JWG. As part of this restructuring process, the MN-S communicated in early May 2021 that a two-month meeting cadence would be their preference, and provided a list of topics of interest for discussion. However, the MN-S subsequently were unable to maintain this schedule. Regular meetings occurred with both the BNDN and BRDN at their preferred cadence. More information on the JWG meetings, including topics discussed, is included in Section 2.6.1.1.1, Summary of Joint Working Group Activities.

⁵ Joint Working Group transcripts are detailed records of the conversations dictated from a recording of the meeting. Participants have agreed to the meetings being recorded, with sensitive components like prayers not recorded as requested by Indigenous Groups.

3.5.2 Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Land Use Studies

As part of the Study Agreements, each Indigenous Group was responsible for undertaking a self-directed, community-led IKTLU Study related to the Project for consideration in the EA. The purpose of the IKTLU Studies was for each Indigenous Group to share information on their traditional uses of the area around the proposed Project and their importance to the community, the key resources used and their value to the community, cultural resources, Indigenous Knowledge, and how the Project could potentially affect traditional use. Each of the Indigenous Groups selected their own third-party consultant to work with to undertake the IKTLU Study in a way deemed appropriate for their community by the Indigenous Group. To date, the CRDN, MN-S, BNDN, BRDN, and YNLR have all completed IKTLU Studies, which have been shared with NexGen for incorporation into the EA:

- TSD II (BNDN), Birch Narrows Dene Nation Traditional Knowledge and Use Study Specific to NexGen Energy Limited's Proposed Rook I Project;
- TSD III (BRDN), Buffalo River Dene Nation Traditional Knowledge and Use Study Specific to NexGen Energy Limited's Proposed Rook I Project;
- TSD IV (MN-S), Métis Nation – Saskatchewan Northern Region 2 Traditional Land Use & Diet Study for the NexGen Rook I Project;
- TSD V.1 (CRDN), Preliminary Identification of Issues and Concerns Related to the Proposed NexGen Energy Ltd. Rook I Project in the Patterson Lake Area; A Review; Clearwater River Dene Nation; Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Mapping Interviews; 2010 – 2016;
- TSD V.2 (CRDN), Clearwater River Dene Nation Indigenous Rights and Knowledge Survey Related to the Proposed NexGen Energy Ltd. Rook 1 Project in the Patterson Lake Area;
- TSD V.3 (CRDN), Socio-economic and Harvest Study; Clearwater River Dene Nation; NexGen Rook 1 Project; and
- TSD VI (YNLR), Provision of Athabasca Denesųliné Traditional Knowledge, Land Use and Occupancy Information for the NexGen Rook I Project Environmental Assessment.

In some instances, the IKTLU Studies were delivered in a staged approach where Indigenous Groups provided draft reports to NexGen to allow for incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into the EA, with final IKTLU Studies issued at a later date. In these instances, final IKTLU Studies were reviewed for consistency and to determine if any new information should be incorporated into the EA.

Indigenous Knowledge was also shared by the CRDN through a community-led household harvest survey (TSD V.3: CRDN) that was completed in conjunction with their IKTLU Study to identify and quantify the use of valued cultural resources in the vicinity of the Project. In conjunction with their IKTLU Study, the MN-S also conducted a community-led Traditional Foods study to support the inclusion of community-specific information in the EA.

3.5.3 Sources of Local Knowledge

Local Knowledge was provided to NexGen through a variety of public and Indigenous engagement activities, which are provided in greater detail in Section 2.5, Engagement Approach. In general, these activities fell into one of two different categories: Project engagement activities and EA environmental and socio-economic baseline programs.

Project engagement included a broad range of activities, with Local Knowledge primarily provided to NexGen through in-person interactions. These activities included meetings with LPA community members, organizations, and municipalities; JWG breakout sessions; site tours; and community events.

Local Knowledge obtained through the EA environmental and socio-economic baseline programs was primarily derived through key person (KP) interviews, as well as workshops with youth (i.e., local high school students) and trappers active in the area of the proposed Project. Key person interviews covered a broad range of topics such as current and historical Indigenous land and resource use, participation in traditional and wage economies, business operations and opportunities, perception of community well-being, education, and local services, among other topics. Individuals who participated in the KP interviews were specifically selected for their knowledge and subject matter expertise.

NexGen has also employed locally based field staff during baseline field studies and monitoring, including individuals from the local Indigenous Groups and communities. In addition, in 2016, NexGen initiated a summer student program that hires students from the LPA communities for various jobs at the Project site or within the LPA. In both instances, these individuals provided local insights, knowledge, and perspectives; however, as they were not in a position to speak on behalf of the Indigenous Group, these insights and knowledge were included in the EA as Local Knowledge. In 2021, NexGen also opened an office in La Loche, staffed with a well-respected, knowledgeable former community leader. The La Loche office provides a community-based access point where people can learn about the Project, submit inquiries, and provide Local Knowledge.

In addition to the in-person activities, some Local Knowledge was obtained through more passive engagement methods such as individual conversations and electronic communications. NexGen maintains a telephone number and email address for community members and stakeholders to contact the company regarding the Project, and has a Project website, which provides information on both NexGen and the Project.

3.6 Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge

The process for incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into the EA was defined through two main themes: guiding principles (Section 3.6.1) and approach and methods (Section 3.6.2).

3.6.1 Guiding Principles

NexGen is committed to taking a comprehensive approach to the EA by considering all types of knowledge to produce a full understanding of the potential effects of the Project and identify ways to avoid and mitigate potential negative effects and enhance positive effects. The consideration of different types of knowledge contributes to an enhanced understanding in the EA and can serve as a starting point for further knowledge generation, as well as a way to identify the need for additional collaborative monitoring or management programs to address any discrepancies between the types of knowledge (BC EAO 2020).

The following principles have guided the identification of Indigenous Knowledge and the way it would be utilized throughout the Project lifespan (BC EAO 2020; IAAC 2020a,b,c; GNWT n.d.):

- **Establish and maintain collaborative relationships:** A collaborative approach is required to support the involvement of Indigenous Groups throughout all phases of the Project. Early engagement with Indigenous Groups promotes meaningful and ongoing dialogue and a better understanding of the context of any Indigenous Knowledge that is provided. Only Indigenous Groups and Indigenous Knowledge holders (e.g., Elders) are positioned to share their Indigenous Knowledge.

- **Adhere to community-based protocols:** Indigenous Groups will establish acceptable ground rules for engagement regarding the gathering, use, and management of Indigenous Knowledge. Community protocols and procedures should be understood, respected, and followed.
- **Understand and respect the value of Indigenous Knowledge:** Indigenous Knowledge and Western science are equally valued as distinct ways of knowing that can both inform the EA. Indigenous Knowledge should be viewed as complementary and influential information alongside Western science and considered throughout all phases of the EA. It should be examined in the same way as other evidence, including by looking at its relevance and keeping it in full context, and be given full and fair consideration of the information provided.
- **Confirm informed consent:** Indigenous Knowledge is to be used with appropriate permission and according to the governance, laws, policies, and practices of each Indigenous Group. The collection and use of Indigenous Knowledge requires informed consent from Indigenous Groups and individuals sharing their knowledge and their ongoing, active participation. Formal agreements are put in place to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of Indigenous Knowledge and to confirm consent is explicit and not assumed.
- **Respect local ownership and control:** The Indigenous Groups' principles of ownership, control, access, and possession as they relate to Indigenous Knowledge are to be respected. Indigenous Groups retain inherent rights to their Indigenous Knowledge, cultural practices, and traditions, even when this information is being shared. Indigenous Knowledge is under the authority and control of each Indigenous Group, and each community makes decisions on who can use it and how it can be used.
- **Protect sensitive Indigenous Knowledge:** Indigenous Groups will determine whether to share their Indigenous Knowledge and what aspects of that knowledge they wish to share in confidence. Privileged and/or confidential information is to be protected, and there must be a clear understanding and agreement on its storage, use, and release.

Reasonable best efforts were made to adhere to the above principles. The establishment of the Study Agreements between NexGen and each Indigenous Group (Section 3.3.2), which define the approach to the IKTLU Studies and the JWGs, is aligned with these guiding principles. The processes of understanding and respecting the value of Indigenous Knowledge and how Indigenous Knowledge was incorporated into the EA are described in Section 3.6.2, Approach and Methods, and have been documented in each EA discipline section.

The IKTLU Studies that were shared with NexGen were prepared by each Indigenous Group, and each Indigenous Group determined how the information was gathered and from whom (e.g., knowledge holders, Elders) and what information they wished to share, with the understanding that the information would be used for the purposes of the Project and be incorporated in the EA process. NexGen worked collaboratively with each Indigenous Group to understand their knowledge protocols and procedures, including their preferred approach and methods for incorporating their knowledge in the EA, and to discuss how their knowledge is used, managed, and protected. NexGen suggested three options for consideration by each of the primary Indigenous Groups and the YNLR: inclusion of the full IKTLU Study, partial redactions of key details of the IKTLU Study to protect confidential information, or references only to a fully confidential IKTLU Study (i.e., not included for public review). Each Indigenous Group was asked to provide their preferred option. NexGen also advised any Indigenous Group who provided an IKTLU Study that if no preferred option was provided, the default was to designate the IKTLU Study as fully confidential to protect Indigenous Knowledge.

NexGen has made efforts to interpret and present Indigenous Knowledge in the appropriate context by staying true to the information presented by Indigenous Groups in the IKTLU Studies and striving not to take information out of context. Wherever possible and applicable, direct quotes and carefully paraphrased information have been used in the EIS. Where applicable, NexGen sought guidance from Indigenous Groups regarding their preferences for presentation of information from the IKTLU Studies in the EIS.

3.6.2 Approach and Methods

Section 3.6.2.1, Gathering Indigenous and Local Knowledge, Section 3.6.2.2, Incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge, and Section 3.6.2.3, Documenting Use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge, describe the process of gathering, incorporating, and documenting Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA.

The engagement program for the Project, including the gathering of Indigenous and Local Knowledge, was faced with challenges, particularly associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic. In-person engagement events were largely not possible throughout most of 2020 and 2021, requiring NexGen and the Indigenous Groups to be flexible in their approach and hold the majority of engagement events and meetings online to allow for ongoing communications to be conducted in a safe manner. Transitioning to online engagement activities posed some difficulties associated with being able to successfully present technically complex information and have meaningful discussions, while also understanding limitations with respect to internet connectivity, access to technology, and the ability of Indigenous Groups to participate effectively. NexGen and the Indigenous Groups regularly evaluated the online approaches in an effort to seek improvements that could be implemented in subsequent engagement activities. While all parties recognized a preference for in-person meetings such as those conducted during pre-pandemic conditions, overall engagement processes were informative and beneficial, and allowed collaboration between NexGen, Indigenous Groups, and community members. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities were still sought to meet in person where possible and safe to conduct. Some in-person sessions were held later in 2021 and into 2022.

3.6.2.1 Gathering Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Prior to the establishment of the JWGs and as part of NexGen's early engagement activities, community information sessions were held in four communities in June 2019 (Section 2.6.3.1.2, Summary of Community Information Sessions). The purpose of these sessions was to update the communities of the proposed Project, answer questions, provide information regarding the EA process, and solicit initial feedback on the Project, including on the selection of VCs (Section 2, Appendix 2E, Summary of Community Information Sessions). Key interests and concerns related to the potential identification of VCs and intermediate components were recorded, and specific surveys for soliciting feedback on VCs were available for participants to complete. The comments received are detailed in Appendix 2E.

During JWG meetings with Indigenous Groups held between late 2019 and mid-2021, specific EA topics were presented and discussed to facilitate a two-way exchange by providing information about the Project and EA process, as well as to solicit input and feedback from Indigenous Groups on the EA. The JWG topics that were discussed are summarized below and presented in Section 2, Table 2.6-3.

- In late 2019 and early 2020, the scoping of the EA was discussed at JWG meetings (Section 2.6.1.1.1), including the selection of preliminary VCs. NexGen presented the list of preliminary VCs for fish and fish habitat, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat (i.e., biophysical VCs) and social, cultural, and economic VCs (i.e., socio-economic VCs), which were informed in part by input received during community information sessions. Feedback from Indigenous Groups was then used to refine the list of VCs. During

these initial JWG meetings (i.e., October 2019 to February 2020), NexGen presented on the human health risk assessment, and requested feedback from Indigenous Groups on proposed receptor groups and locations, items comprising the Traditional Foods diet, and recommended species (e.g., wildlife, fish, plants) to be used as receptors.

- Between January 2020 and March 2020, NexGen presented information and requested feedback and input from Indigenous Groups on socio-economics and community well-being, the baseline and existing environment results for the terrestrial and aquatic components, and the potential pathways identified and assessment methods.
- In August 2020, NexGen provided an update on the Project and regulatory process, reviewed the JWG meetings to date, and presented a summary of the youth workshop that was held in La Loche on 12 March 2020. In December 2020, the CNSC gave a presentation on various topics related to uranium mining, the environmental review process, and radiation protection.
- Between January 2021 and March 2021, NexGen presented information and requested feedback from Indigenous Groups on modelling and the EA process, Project alternatives that were assessed, results of the women's interviews, terrestrial and aquatic baseline studies, environmental interactions (i.e., pathways), and cumulative effects.
- Between April 2021 and June 2021, NexGen presented information and requested feedback and input from Indigenous Groups on the topics of traffic accidents and malfunctions, EA methods (i.e., pathway analysis, residual effects classification, determination of significance, prediction confidence and uncertainty, and monitoring and follow-up programs), and the Caribou Mitigation and Offsetting Plan. The pathways for community well-being and Indigenous land and resource use were also presented and discussed, as well as the measurement indicators for the community well-being assessment.

In addition to feedback from JWG meetings, early engagement (i.e., late 2019 and early 2020) and the IKTLU Studies were used to identify the initial list of VCs for socio-economic and biophysical components as well as intermediate components such as air quality, noise, hydrology, and water quality. These intermediate components support the assessment of biophysical VCs, including the VCs assessed for the fish and fish habitat, vegetation, and wildlife and wildlife habitat disciplines. Air quality, noise, water quality, human health, and specific social and economic topics were also identified as key interests and concerns expressed by attendees at the community information sessions held in 2019 (Appendix 2E).

The IKTLU Studies were generally completed and shared with NexGen between December 2019 and December 2020, with one IKTLU Study being provided in November 2021. These IKTLU Studies were reviewed for applicable Indigenous Knowledge and to identify and confirm effects pathways for biophysical and socio-economic intermediate components and VCs. In some instances, the IKTLU Studies were delivered in a staged approach where Indigenous Groups provided draft reports to NexGen to allow for incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into the EA; final IKTLU Studies were issued at a later date and reviewed for consistency and any new information that should be incorporated into the EA.

In parallel to JWGs and the completion of IKTLU Studies by the Indigenous Groups, KP interviews and workshops were held with LPA community members. Key person interviews were conducted with key information holders within organizations and the KP interview process was approached collaboratively with communities through the Community Coordinators hired for each of the JWGs. A total of 78 KP interviews were conducted with community members, primarily through telephone unless another method was requested. Interviews were completed with business owners, principals and staff of schools, housing clerks, health care

directors, band councillors, and the RCMP. Workshops included a youth workshop held in La Loche in 2020, which included 75 students and 9 members of staff from high schools in BRDN, Buffalo Narrows, BNDN, CRDN, and La Loche, and a Fur Block N-19 trapper's workshop held in 2021. A workshop with women planned for March and April 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19. The workshop was reorganized into a series of individual interviews with women identified by each Indigenous Group who had direct or indirect experience with mining employment. Further information on KP interviews and workshops is included in Annex X.

Local Knowledge was also obtained during site tours, which occurred at various times between 2013 and 2021.

Feedback provided by Indigenous Groups and community members on the information presented during community information sessions and at JWG meetings, and information received through IKTLU Studies, KP interviews, and workshops, was incorporated into the EA.

3.6.2.2 ***Incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge***

Available sources of Indigenous and Local Knowledge described in Section 3.6.2.1 were shared with the EA discipline leads (i.e., specialists leading the assessments for social and environmental disciplines such as hydrology, water quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, Indigenous land and resource use, community well-being, and others) for their review and incorporation into their respective assessments. Specifically, the discipline leads were responsible for reviewing the IKTLU Studies and JWG meeting transcripts for applicable Indigenous and Local Knowledge to include in their assessments. In addition, a guidance document was distributed to the discipline leads that outlined the definitions of Indigenous and Local Knowledge, the sources of available Indigenous and Local Knowledge, how to appropriately include Indigenous and Local Knowledge, and how to document the Indigenous and Local Knowledge included in their assessments.

The guidance document included instructions to discipline leads to include Indigenous and Local Knowledge alongside scientific information in the relevant assessment subsections by incorporating and viewing Indigenous and Local Knowledge as equally valuable, complementary, and influential information alongside Western science. Discipline leads were also instructed to limit any analysis or interpretations of the Indigenous and Local Knowledge shared, to present it as closely as possible to the original source, and to quote directly where appropriate. To guide discipline leads in considering how Indigenous and Local Knowledge influenced their respective assessments, they were asked if Indigenous and Local Knowledge:

- confirmed or verified currently known information;
- improved or enhanced known information;
- contradicted current information, and if so, whether there were any perspectives shared that were critical to the Project assessment; and
- informed methods, mitigation, analysis, or the monitoring approach/design.

The incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge into each discipline assessment was reviewed by an EA coordinator with experience incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge into EAs for accuracy and consistency, and to determine if there was any additional information to be considered by cross-referencing the Indigenous and Local Knowledge that was used in the assessments with what was available in the sources provided. This step served as an additional check that available and applicable Indigenous and Local Knowledge was captured in the appropriate way and was not misinterpreted or taken out of context.

General concerns (e.g., Project effects on water) and specific issues (e.g., Project effects on the water quality of Patterson Lake) expressed by Indigenous Groups and LPA communities through the collection of Indigenous

and Local Knowledge that were relevant to intermediate components and VCs were considered and used to inform the scoping of Project interactions and identify potential Project effects (i.e., how they were considered in the pathways analysis). Further information on issues and concerns raised by Indigenous Groups and LPA communities is provided in Section 2.

3.6.2.3 *Documenting Use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge*

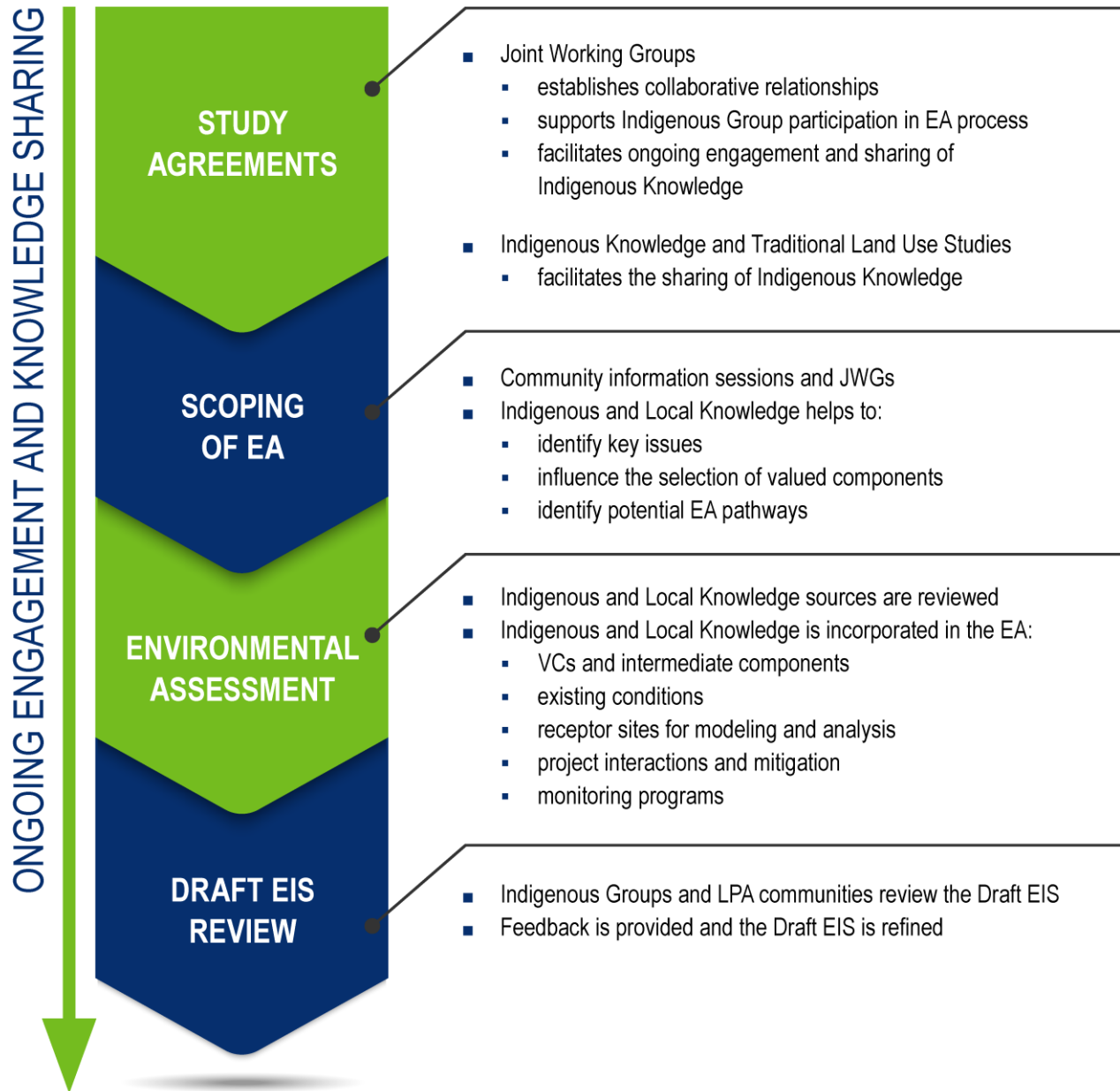
To support the documentation of the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA, discipline leads were asked to identify the specific information used from Indigenous Groups and LPA communities to clearly document where Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated in the following aspects of the EA:

- Project design;
- engagement processes (e.g., site visits, additional effort to engage);
- baseline study design and methods;
- defining spatial and temporal boundaries;
- VCs and intermediate components;
- existing conditions;
- assessment methods and modelling;
- scoping and pathways analysis;
- mitigation measures;
- residual effects analysis and classification;
- monitoring, follow-up, and adaptive management; and
- cumulative effects considerations.

The general process of Indigenous and Local Knowledge incorporation into the EA is included in the component methods subsection of each discipline assessment. This subsection in each discipline assessment also describes the sources used and the specific assessment subsection where Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated (e.g., selection of VCs, existing conditions, Project interactions and mitigation measures, residual effects analysis, monitoring programs). Section 3.8, Influence on the Environmental Assessment, presents a compiled summary of where Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated in each discipline assessment.

Information on how Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in Project planning and design, and how it would be considered through the life of mine, is summarized in Section 3.7, Influence on Project Planning and Design, and Section 3.9, Use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge through the Rook I Project Lifespan, respectively. Figure 3.6-1 graphically summarizes how ongoing engagement and Indigenous and Local Knowledge has informed the development of the EIS through the EA process. NexGen views ongoing engagement and knowledge sharing as a critical success factor for the Project, and this relationship will continue throughout the EIS review phase and into all other future Project phases (Section 3.9).

Figure 3.6-1: Indigenous and Local Knowledge throughout the Environmental Assessment Process



EA = Environmental Assessment; JWG = Joint Working Group; VC = valued component; LPA = local priority area; EIS = Environmental Impact Statement.

3.7 Influence on Project Planning and Design

NexGen's goal is to leave lasting benefits to the communities well beyond the Project's Decommissioning and Reclamation (i.e., Closure) Phase. Advancing design for the Project has incorporated this goal through a life cycle planning approach in consideration of current and future generations, and in recognition of the role that Indigenous and Local Knowledge has in guiding aspects of decision making throughout the Project lifespan. Knowledge of community values, commitment to high standards, and understanding of lessons learned from other mining operations complement NexGen's commitment to life cycle engagement for the Project that is early, often, and lasting.

The knowledge of community values, commitment to high standards, and understanding of lessons learned from other mining operations led to key early design decisions being incorporated into the Project. As NexGen has proceeded through the regulatory process and advanced development of the Project, engagement activities have evolved as necessary to provide Indigenous Groups and local communities opportunities for effective information exchange and dialogue specific to each stage of the Project. Indigenous and Local Knowledge and feedback received during these engagement activities was considered during relevant Project planning and design phases. This approach has resulted in consideration of Indigenous and Local Knowledge both early (i.e., prior to submission of the Project Description in 2019) and during the ongoing EA activities to date (i.e., through the development of the EIS). More information on results of engagement with local Indigenous Groups and communities can be found in Section 2.6.1.

3.7.1 Early Project Decisions

NexGen's commitment to certain design decisions was made during early definition of the Project and was influenced by feedback received by local Indigenous Groups and communities. Key examples include the decisions to permanently store all tailings from the Project underground and eliminating ammonia from the metallurgical process.

- The decision to store all tailings underground was consistent with the expressed preference heard through engagement with local Indigenous Groups and communities, and would result in a smaller Project footprint, reduced access restrictions for local land users, and reduced potential effects on Patterson Lake and, more broadly, water, vegetation, and wildlife.
- The decision to utilize a metallurgical process to eliminate ammonia (i.e., strong acid stripping) would reduce potential effects on air quality and water quality, and was reflective of feedback heard through Indigenous and Local Knowledge on the importance of reducing potential effects to Patterson Lake, and, more broadly, water, vegetation, and wildlife.

These decisions were validated through formal engagement activities completed during the EA process.

3.7.2 Project Planning and Design Process

Consistent with NexGen's life cycle approach to engagement, ongoing planning and design continued to consider Indigenous and Local Knowledge and feedback received through Project advancement phases following early design decisions. This process included incorporation of feedback from both the public review of the Project Description and engagement with local Indigenous Groups and communities, including Indigenous

and Local Knowledge (e.g., information from JWGs, community information sessions, IKTLU Studies, workshops, KP interviews). Key themes NexGen has heard through engagement to date include:

- recognizing, accepting, and respecting the local communities' Indigenous rights and cultural links to, and reliance on, the land and its resources to support current and future generations;
- protecting the quality of the water, air, land, and wildlife through all phases of the Project;
- minimizing, to the extent possible, disturbances to the water, air, land, and wildlife through all phases of the Project;
- continued, effective, and respectful engagement with the local communities through all phases of the Project; and
- maximizing potential business and employment opportunities for local people through all phases of the Project to support current and future generations.

Specific to Project design, the following key concerns and feedback were identified through the engagement process:

- The protection of Patterson Lake, and subsequently downstream waterbodies and watercourses, from potential negative effects during all phases of the Project, is paramount, including during upset conditions (i.e., unanticipated discharges).
- The continued ability to pursue traditional activities is important for the preservation of culture, and the ability to safely use the land after closure is important.
- There is a preference for designs that reduce the size of the Project footprint, and subsequently the potential effects on vegetation, wildlife, and local land users.
- There is a preference for the placement of process tailings underground as opposed to the long-term storage of tailings on surface.
- Protecting the safety and health of workers, Indigenous and other land users, and local community members, is vital.

Information provided by local Indigenous Groups and communities was considered, where applicable, in the completion of the feasibility study (NexGen 2021), the assessment alternatives for the Project (Section 4, Project Alternatives), and the current design of the Project that forms the basis of the EA (Section 5, Project Description).

Key design changes and their relation to feedback received from Indigenous Groups and local communities included:

- **Relocation of the underground tailings management facility:** This relocation resulted in a reduction of potentially acid generating material, and a subsequent reduction of on-surface, permanent disposal required. This change was consistent with feedback heard through Indigenous and Local Knowledge on the importance of reducing potential effects on Patterson Lake, and, more broadly, water, vegetation, and wildlife.
- **Reduction of the Project footprint:** This reduction was achieved through decisions to relocate the worker accommodations from the southern part of the proposed Project footprint to a location more central to the mining and processing access, and consolidating various ancillary infrastructure (e.g., laydowns, water intakes, sewage treatment facilities). Relocation of Project infrastructure facilitated the optimization of the site road routing (i.e., avoiding a wetland); reduced the total length of all on-site roads; and removed the

requirement for a second set of water intake infrastructure from Patterson Lake. This surface footprint optimization was reflective of feedback heard through engagement with Indigenous Groups and local communities, and would result in reduced access restrictions for local land users and reduced potential effects to Patterson Lake and, more broadly, water, vegetation, and wildlife.

- **Reduction in Project infrastructure:** This reduction facilitated further optimization of water management, including replacing a bermed runoff collection area with a more centralized pond system that would allow greater control of contact water, and centralizing the location of the proposed treated effluent and treated sewage discharge locations within Patterson Lake. This design approach was reflective of feedback heard through engagement with Indigenous Groups and local communities, and would result in a smaller Project footprint, reduced restriction of access for local land users, and reduced potential effects on Patterson Lake and, more broadly, water, vegetation, and wildlife.

To provide an illustrative demonstration of how the Project design has evolved, Figure 3.7-1 provides snapshots of Project layout (i.e., design) iterations from the Project Description (NexGen 2019) through to that considered for the EA, including an interim layout developed during the Feasibility Study phase.

Specific examples of how Indigenous and Local Knowledge has influenced Project planning were the subject of engagement with JWG's in 2020 and 2021 (BNDN-JWG 2021a; BRDN-JWG 2021a; MN-S-JWG 2021; CRDN-JWG 2020a). Feedback from members of the JWG's during these meetings indicated that members had greater understanding of the Project design:

In general, I think the underground facility is a good approach from a preliminary standpoint. There is that trade-off . . . [NexGen] mentioned some will go into the shaft and other places. Any opportunity, even during operations, to store waste rock in mined-out areas should be maximized. (BNDN-JWG 2021a)

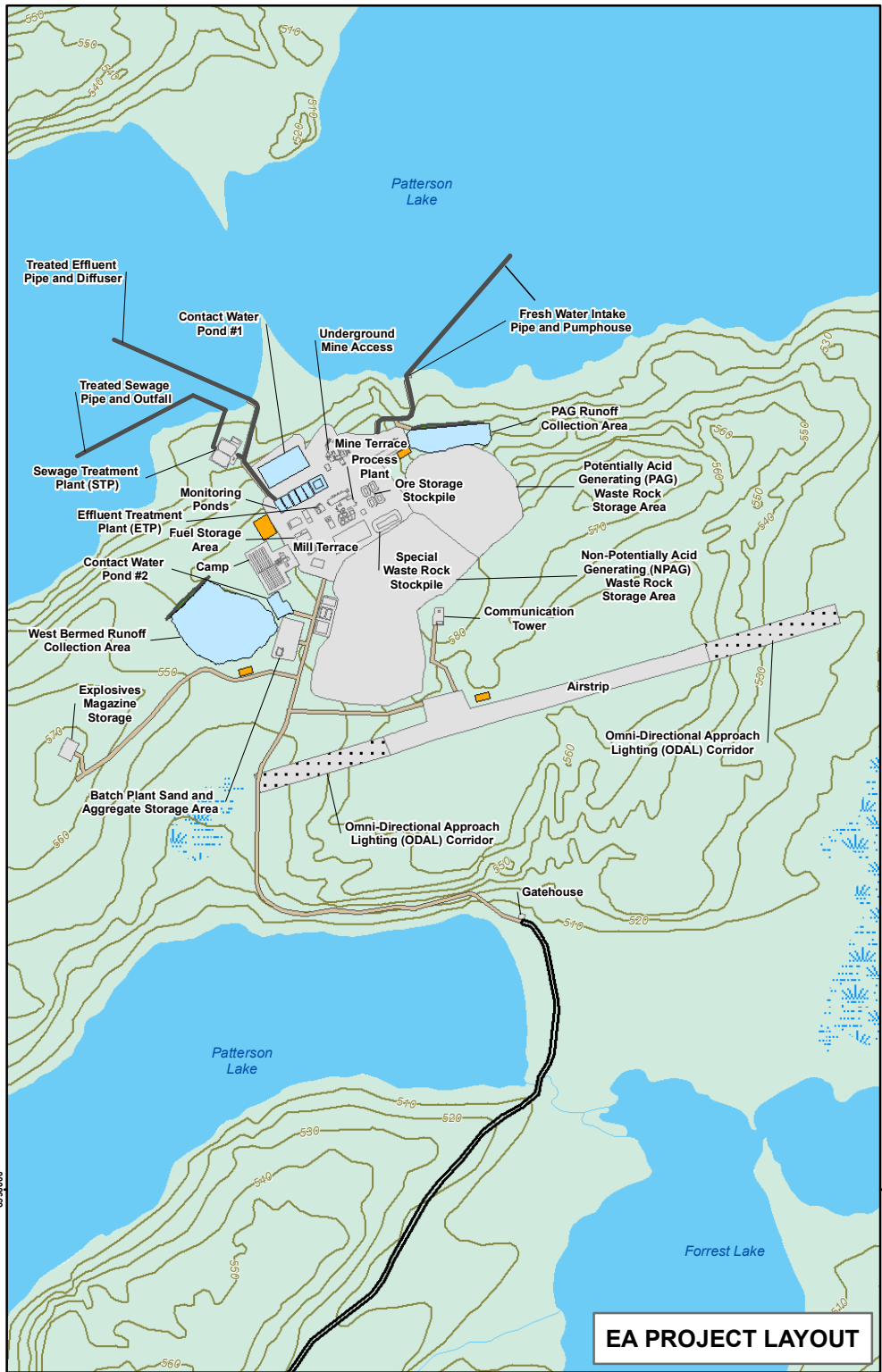
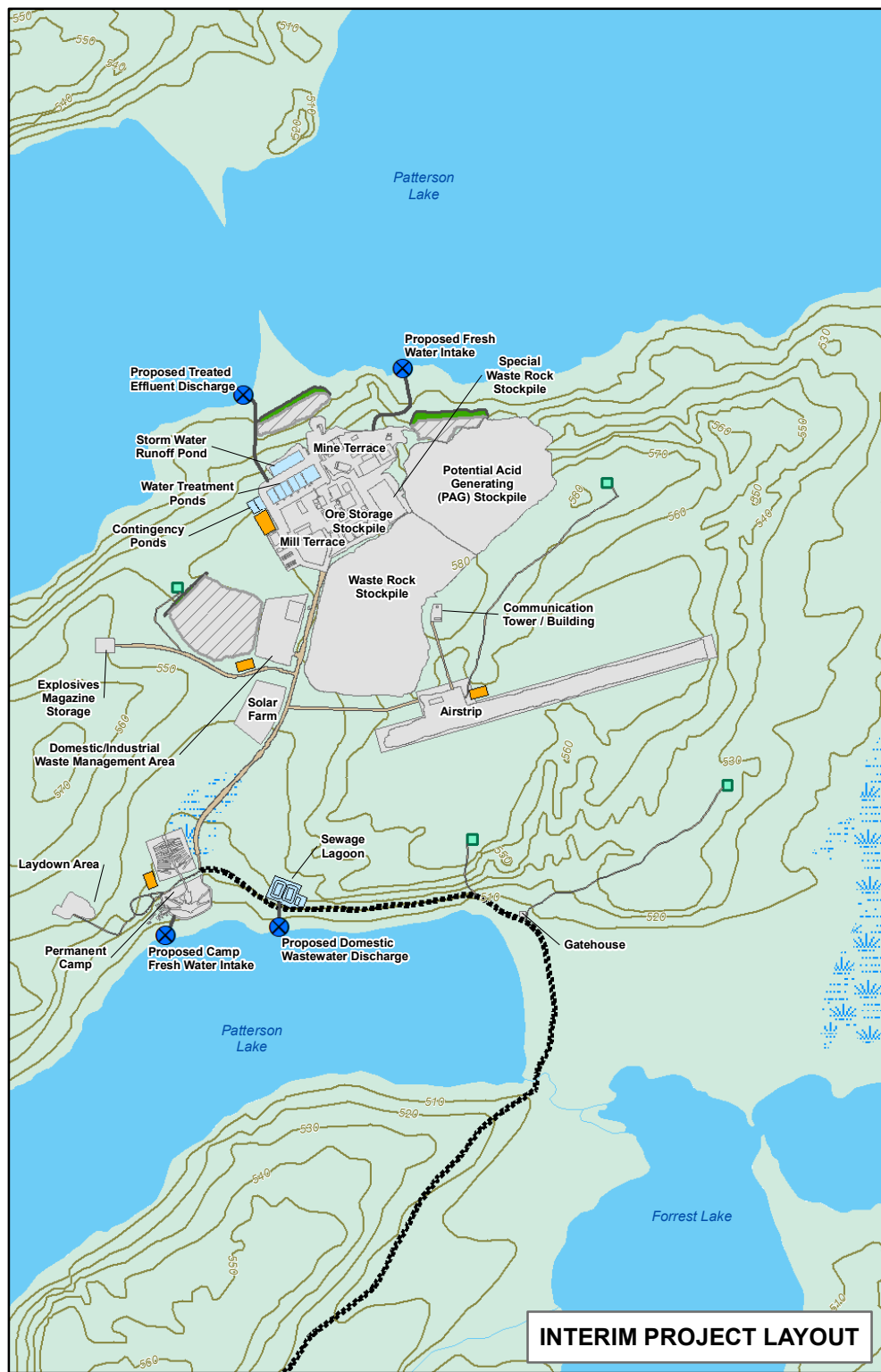
When we initially started talking about waste rock and tailings, I couldn't comprehend what that all meant. I was thinking of waste rock as still being radioactive. Now I have a clear understanding of what this means. At the time I couldn't understand how you can still have safe drinking water when we're storing all this stuff on surface. Now it makes sense for me. (BNDN-JWG 2021a)

You're on the right track in terms of the UGTMF [underground tailings management facility]. It reduces the pathways for contaminants to enter the environment and the food chain. I was a little skeptical when I first read the Project description, but it makes a lot of sense. It's a good approach . . . It's positive to see the site changing in this way; reducing the surface disturbance as you've done is certainly a way to reduce the impact. You're on the right track. (BNDN-JWG 2021a)

You have addressed my concerns [regarding tailings and waste rock interdependency]... When you showed what they were doing before, and what we're doing now, it makes sense, but we need visuals . . . I'm trying to envision how it will look on surface at the end of the Project. I took a tour of Cluff Lake after it shut down and saw the waste rock pile – they planted trees on it and it looks not too bad. But for this one we're putting stuff back underground so there will be less visual disturbance, it will look aesthetically pleasing. (BRDN-JWG 2021a)

These decisions were validated through formal engagement activities completed during the EA process.

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LEGEND

	ELEVATION CONTOUR (10 m INTERVAL)		AIRSTRIP		POTENTIAL DOMESTIC/INDUSTRIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT AREA
	WATERCOURSE		CLEAN WASTE ROCK		POTENTIAL SOLAR FACILITIES
	WATERBODY		CONSTRUCTION CAMP		POTENTIAL WASTE INCINERATOR
	WETLAND		CONTINGENCY RETENTION BERM		POTENTIAL WIND TURBINE
	WOODED AREA		EXHAUST SHAFT		PRODUCTION SHAFT AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE
	POTENTIAL INTAKE AND DISCHARGE LOCATIONS		EXPLOSIVE STORAGE		ROAD
	EXISTING ACCESS ROAD		DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY		SPECIAL WASTE ROCK PAD
	INTAKE OR DISCHARGE PIPE		MILL OPERATIONS AREA		STORAGE/MONITORING POND
			ORE PAD		STORMWATER RUNOFF POND
			PERMANENT CAMP		

REFERENCE(S)
1. EA PROJECT LAYOUT FEATURES OBTAINED FROM NEXGEN, APRIL 6, 2021 AND UPDATED JUNE 8, 2021.
2. INTERIM PROJECT LAYOUT FEATURES OBTAINED FROM NEXGEN, OCTOBER 28, 2019 AND MARCH 4, 2020.
3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION LAYOUT FEATURES OBTAINED FROM NEXGEN, NOVEMBER 2018.
4. BASE DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOGRATIS, © DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12 DATUM: NAD 83

PROJECT		ROOK I PROJECT			
TITLE		EVOLUTION OF ROOK I PROJECT DESIGN			
CONSULTANT	PROJECT	20144150	PHASE		3305 - 1
	DESIGN	DW	2020-03-13	SCALE AS SHOWN	REV. 0
	GIS	NO	2023-02-06	FIGURE 3.7-1	
	CHECK	KG	2023-02-06		
	REVIEW	SJ	2023-02-06		

3.7.3 Summary of Influence on Project Design

An understanding of community values resulted in early Project design decisions that have been further informed and refined through receipt of Indigenous and Local Knowledge through the EA process. Key Project design changes to date are included in Table 3.7-1.

Table 3.7-1: Indigenous and Local Knowledge Key Influence on Rook I Project Design

Theme	Key Considerations	Key Project Design Considerations
Environment	- Minimizing disturbances to and protecting the quality of the air, water, land, and wildlife - Protecting Patterson Lake, and preferring alternatives with smaller footprints and thus lesser potential effects on vegetation, and wildlife throughout all phases of the Project, as well as post-closure	- Underground storage of all tailings - Eliminating ammonia from metallurgical process - Relocation of the underground tailings management facility to reduce generation of potentially acid generating material - Redesign of site road and construction camp to avoid a wetland - Optimization of water management approach - Optimization of Project surface footprint (e.g., removal of bermed runoff collection area, reduction of site roads)
Health and safety	- Negative perception of the surface storage of uranium tailings - Operating in a manner that is protective of workers, Indigenous and other land users, and local communities	- Underground storage of all tailings - Optimization of water management approach - Optimization of Project surface footprint
Traditional land and resource use	- Recognizing, accepting, and respecting the local communities' cultural links to, and reliance on, the land and its resources as a critical part of the well-being, identity, and culture - Minimizing (to the extent possible) restrictions on the ability of Indigenous land users to access area land and resources throughout all phases of the Project, as well as post-closure	- Underground storage of all tailings - Optimization of Project surface footprint - Removal of second fresh water intake location in Patterson Lake
Community well-being	Considering both the positive and negative social effects of the Project on the local communities, and providing the necessary support to mitigate negative effects	Inclusion of a dedicated space for Elders on site to be available to support Indigenous employees

NexGen is committed to incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge throughout the Project lifespan. This approach has been consistent through early engagement activities, has continued during the EA process, and will continue as more opportunities to share knowledge become available through engagement activities with Indigenous Groups and LPA communities (Section 3.9). As part of the EA, information received through Indigenous and Local Knowledge was also used to inform discipline-specific assessments conducted for the Project (Section 3.8; EIS Section 7, Air Quality, Noise, and Climate Change, to EIS Section 19, Community Well-Being).

3.8 Influence on the Environmental Assessment

To support the documentation of the incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the EA, discipline leads were asked to identify the specific information used from Indigenous Groups and LPA communities to clearly document where Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated in the various EA Sections, including but not limited to VCs and intermediate components; component methods; existing conditions; scoping and pathways analysis; mitigation measures; and monitoring, follow-up, and adaptive management. The approach is described in more detail in Section 3.6.2.2.

An accounting of how Indigenous and Local Knowledge was incorporated into the EA is provided in Table 3.8-1. The information is presented according to each discipline and detailed for each relevant aspect of the assessment.

NexGen has committed to the development of detailed monitoring plans and follow-up activities (Section 23, Summary of Mitigation, Monitoring, and Follow-Up Programs). Monitoring programs are in various stages of development, and all disciplines would incorporate Indigenous and Local Knowledge through the following means:

- Considering feedback provided by Indigenous Groups during engagement, including recommendations, in the development of monitoring and follow-up activities.
- Considering ongoing feedback from Indigenous Groups on the effectiveness of mitigations when updating monitoring and management plans.
- Independent Indigenous Monitors chosen by each primary Indigenous Group having opportunities to participate in environmental monitoring programs for the Project.

Table 3.8-1: Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment

Discipline	EA Component	How Indigenous and Local Knowledge was Incorporated into the EA
Air quality	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 7.2.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the air quality intermediate component and reflects: - the importance of having access to “clean fresh air” while practising traditional activities and contributing to community well-being - the interrelationships between different environmental components and the critical role air quality plays in aquatic and terrestrial environmental health
	Existing Conditions (Section 7.2.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - the air quality being “clean” in the communities where Indigenous Groups live - observations of the cumulative effects of air emissions from regional industrial developments on aquatic and terrestrial environmental health and human health - observations related to the effects of reduced air quality on vegetation, wildlife populations, and health
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 7.2.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects of air emissions from industry, including from dust and machinery exhaust, on aquatic and terrestrial environmental health and factors affecting the safety of wild foods and risks to human health
Noise	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 7.3.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the noise intermediate component and reflects: the importance of the land use experience and enjoyment (e.g., peacefulness, solitude, sense of place) found while practising Indigenous and other land and resource use activities
	Component Methods - Existing Conditions (Section 7.3.2.6)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the identification of receptors in the LSA and RSA for the noise analysis through the identification of active or historical cabins, campsites, hunting sites, fishing sites, and areas of recreational, cultural, or spiritual importance by Indigenous Groups.
	Existing Conditions (Section 7.3.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - existing noise conditions in the LSA and RSA and larger region including the experiences of Indigenous land users with noise disturbances in the area of the Project - observations of the cumulative effects of noise from industrial activities and increased traffic on traditional use and wildlife abundance and distribution in the region
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 7.3.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures including: - observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects of noise from industry and increased traffic on wildlife abundance and distribution, and subsequent effects on traditional hunting and trapping - the effects of sensory disturbance on the experience and enjoyment of Indigenous and other land and resource use
Climate change	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 7.4.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the climate change VC and reflects: - its ecological and socio-economic / cultural value to Indigenous Groups - observations and experiences of shifts in weather, increasing frequency and magnitude of forest fires and declines in wildlife populations
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 7.4.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analysis, and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations related to the cumulative effects of reduced air quality and climate related effects in the region from industry, including mining activities
Hydrogeology	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 8.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the hydrogeology intermediate component and reflects: - the importance of both above-ground and underground water for supporting traditional land use activities and contributing to community well-being and health - the interconnectedness of above-ground and underground water systems, and to other aquatic and terrestrial environmental components, including the value of Patterson Lake and the Clearwater River as an interconnected system and fresh water resource
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 8.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analysis, and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects from industry, including mining activities, on hydrogeology measurement indicators / effect pathways
Hydrology	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 9.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the hydrology intermediate component and reflects: - the importance of water for supporting traditional land use activities including habitation, harvesting, and transportation, and to community well-being and health - physical features on the landscape, including water (e.g., lakes and river valleys), contribute to a sense of place and are often used for travel to access traditional use areas and as navigational landmarks - the interconnectedness of rivers and lakes and to other environmental components
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 9.2.3)	The approach used to select spatial boundaries, which includes a portion of the Clearwater River system and connecting waterbodies, was supported by Indigenous and Local Knowledge about the interconnectedness of the region’s waterways and the Clearwater River as a holistic river system.
	Existing Conditions - Hydrographic Setting (Section 9.3.2) and Surface Water Uses (Section 9.3.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - the interconnectedness of the Clearwater River, Patterson Lake, and other large waterbodies in the LSA - the importance of the waterways in the LSA for fishing and other harvesting activities, recreation, and travel

Table 3.8-1: Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment

Discipline	EA Component	How Indigenous and Local Knowledge was Incorporated into the EA
Surface water quality and sediment quality	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 10.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the surface water quality and sediment quality intermediate components and reflects: - the importance of fresh water for supporting harvesting activities and contributing to community well-being and health - the interconnectedness of rivers, lakes, and other waterways, and the relationship of water to aquatic and terrestrial environmental health - the value of Patterson Lake and the Clearwater River as an interconnected system and fresh water resource
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 10.2.3)	The approach used to select spatial boundaries, which includes a portion of the Clearwater River system and connecting waterbodies, was supported by Indigenous and Local Knowledge about the interconnectedness of the region's waterways, and the Clearwater River as a holistic river system.
	Component Methods - Existing Conditions (Section 10.2.6)	The waterbodies sampled (e.g., Patterson Lake) to represent existing conditions generally align with Indigenous and Local Knowledge provided regarding culturally important areas for harvesting activities, fresh water, occupancy, and travel.
	Component Methods - Residual Effects Analysis (Section 10.2.8)	Constituents of potential concern that were identified through Indigenous and Local Knowledge were included in the residual effects analysis.
	Existing Conditions - Water Quality (Section 10.3.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - the quality of the surface water in the Clearwater River, Patterson Lake, and other large waterbodies in the LSA - changes in water quality, fish, vegetation, and wildlife health observed over time
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 10.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects of changes in water quality (e.g., air emissions, dust) and effects from industry, including mining activities, on water quality and aquatic and terrestrial environmental health
Fish and fish habitat	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 11.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the fish VCs and reflects: - species identified that are important for traditional purposes - the value of traditional fishing for cultural purposes, as an important component of traditional diets and health, and in playing a key role in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 11.2.3)	The approach used to select spatial boundaries, which includes a portion of the Clearwater River system and connecting waterbodies, was supported by Indigenous and Local Knowledge about the interconnectedness of the region's waterways and the Clearwater River as a holistic river system.
	Component Methods - Sampling Locations and Activities (Section 11.2.6.1)	The waterbodies that were sampled (e.g., Patterson Lake) to represent existing conditions generally align with Indigenous and Local Knowledge provided regarding culturally important areas used for traditional fishing.
	Existing Conditions - Fish Communities (Section 11.3.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - fish species observed or fished in the waterbodies and Clearwater River in the baseline study area - observations of trends in fish populations
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 11.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analysis, and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects of industry, including mining activities, on water quality, fish populations, and aquatic health
Terrain and soils	Component Methods - Valued Components and Intermediate Components (Section 12.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the terrain and soils intermediate component and reflects: - the broader importance of "land", in which terrain and soils are key components, the inter-relationships between different components of the biophysical environment, and the importance of having access to a healthy and productive land base for harvesting activities - the physical features of the landscape (e.g., ridges, river valleys, frozen lakes) contribute to a sense of place and are often used for travel to access traditional use areas and as navigational landmarks
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 12.2.7)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures, including: - observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative adverse effects from industry, including mining activities, on air and water quality, and subsequent effects on terrestrial environmental health - observations related to the successfulness of reclamation activities
Vegetation	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 13.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the traditional use plant species VC and reflects: - the importance of traditional use plants and plant gathering as a cultural activity that contributes to community well-being - the value of traditional plant gathering for spiritual and ceremonial purposes, as an important component of traditional diets and health, and in playing a key role in the transmission of knowledge and maintenance of culture - the selection of traditional use plants used in the assessment are species identified that are used for food, medicinal, spiritual, and ceremonial purposes
	Component Methods - Existing Conditions - Traditional Use Plant Species (Section 13.2.6.2)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the list of traditional use plant species (e.g., medicinal plants, berries) used in the description of baseline conditions for traditional use plants.
	Existing Conditions (Section 13.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - information regarding traditional use plant species (e.g., medicinal plants, berries) considered important to Indigenous Groups was used to inform the baseline conditions for availability and distribution of traditional use plants - traditional use plant gathering areas - existing conditions related to increasing wildfires in northern Saskatchewan in recent years - observations of the cumulative effects of air emissions (e.g., dust) on vegetation from existing or previous industrial developments, including oilsands and mining activities
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 13.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the cumulative effects from industry, including mining activities, and subsequent effects to terrestrial environmental health, including traditional use plants

Table 3.8-1: Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment

Discipline	EA Component	How Indigenous and Local Knowledge was Incorporated into the EA
Wildlife and wildlife habitat	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 14.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the selection of wildlife VCs and reflects: - species that were identified as important for cultural and economic purposes - the value of wildlife resources as an important component of traditional diets and health, to food security, and as a source of fur and other resources - the value of hunting and trapping activities for subsistence and livelihood; as a foundation of culture and way of life; in contributing to community well-being; and in playing a key role in the transmission of knowledge and maintenance of culture
	Existing Conditions (Sections 14.3.1, Woodland Caribou, 14.3.2, Moose, 14.3.3, Grey Wolf, 14.3.4, Black Bear, 14.3.5, Beaver, 14.3.9, Common Goldeneye, and Section 14.3.10, Mallard)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was shared about: - wildlife population trends and wildlife habitat and distribution in the RSA, including hunting and trapping locations in the RSA - the movement of caribou, moose, and black bear across Patterson Lake North Arm at the narrows - observations of some of the factors contributing to changes in wildlife abundance and distribution (e.g., forest fires, industrial disturbance)
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 14.4) and Residual Effects Analysis Sections 14.5.1, Woodland Caribou, 14.5.2, Moose, 14.5.3, Grey Wolf, 14.5.4, Black Bear, 14.5.5, Beaver, 14.5.9, Common Goldeneye, and Section 14.5.10, Mallard	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures, including: - observations and experiences of Indigenous Groups and community members related to the cumulative effects of natural and anthropogenic disturbances (e.g., forest fires, mining and exploration activities, noise, linear disturbances) on wildlife habitat, abundance, and distribution - the cumulative effects to air, water, and vegetation from previous or existing industrial activities on wildlife health and the safety of wild foods
Human health	Component Methods - Valued Components and Receptors (Section 15.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the human health VC and reflects: - the importance of traditional hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering to subsistence, survival, and livelihood, and as a key aspect of community well-being and culture - Traditional Foods (i.e., wildlife, plant, and fish species) and water as key parts of diets and the promotion of health - the importance of having access to a healthy land base, clean air and water, and high-quality resources for human health
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 15.2.3)	The approach used to select spatial boundaries, which includes a portion of the Clearwater River system and connecting waterbodies, was supported by Indigenous and Local Knowledge about the interconnectedness of the region's waterways, and the Clearwater River as a holistic river system.
	Component Methods - Existing Conditions (Section 15.2.6).	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the assumptions on the Traditional Foods diet, including: the proportions of different Traditional Food categories consumed (e.g., prevalence of berries, representative plants, fish, game, and birds), and ingestion rates to be included in the Traditional Foods exposure assessment
	Component Methods - Risk Assessment (Section 15.2.8)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the selection of human health receptor groups and receptor locations based on where people reside and locations where fresh water is collected and Traditional Foods are hunted, trapped, fished, and gathered.
	Existing Conditions (TSD XXI, Environmental Risk Assessment, Section 5.1.3.2.1, Total Food Diet General Assumptions, and Section 5.1.1.2, Subsistence Harvester)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped develop an understanding of the Traditional Foods diet, including: the specific fish, mammal, bird, berry, and plant species that are traditionally used for food, medicine, and other purposes, which informed the Traditional Foods categories
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 15.2.7)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures including: observations and experiences of Indigenous Groups related to the cumulative effects of industrial disturbances (e.g., mining, exploration activities) to air and water quality and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, and associated effects to the safety of wild foods and human health
Cultural and heritage resources and Indigenous land and resource use	Component Methods - Valued Components, Measurement Indicators, and Assessment Endpoints (Section 16.2.2)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the Indigenous land and resources use VC and reflects: - the importance of traditional hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering for subsistence and cultural purposes - the importance of habitation sites (e.g., cabins, camp sites), travel routes, culturally important sites (e.g., ceremonial, spiritual sites) and the cultural landscape to Indigenous land and resource use - the value of quality of resources and quality of the land use experience to Indigenous land users
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 16.2.3)	The spatial boundaries selected reflects shared Indigenous and Local Knowledge regarding the locations of travel routes used to access traditional use areas, including travel routes from Highway 955, along the existing access road, and east to destinations on the Clearwater and Mirror rivers.
	Existing Conditions (Section 16.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the characterization of existing conditions through: - the identification of occupancy and travel routes, and fishing, gathering, hunting, trapping, and culturally important sites in the LSA and RSA - the level of use and species targeted for harvesting - trends in the populations of moose and fish - how mining and exploration activities in the Patterson Lake area have affected access and harvesting activities
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 16.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analyses, and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of Indigenous land users related to the existing and cumulative effects of mining and exploration activities on access to and area available for land and resource use, changes to quality and availability of wildlife and fish, and changes to the quality of the resource use experience
	Residual Effects Analysis (Section 16.5)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge, including long-term observations and experiences of Indigenous land users in the Patterson Lake area, was used to inform the residual effects analysis related to changes in access and availability of land and resource use areas, and the quality of the Indigenous land use experience.

Table 3.8-1: Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment

Discipline	EA Component	How Indigenous and Local Knowledge was Incorporated into the EA
Other land and resource use	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 17.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the other land and resource use VC and reflects: - the importance of commercial fishing and trapping to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users for income and supporting livelihoods and community well-being - the value of cabins, travel routes, quality of resources, and quality of the land use experience to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users
	Component Methods - Spatial Boundaries (Section 17.2.3)	The spatial boundary selected for the LSA reflects shared Indigenous and Local Knowledge regarding the specific locations of travel routes used to access trapping and other harvesting areas, including travel routes from Highway 955, along the existing access road and east to destinations on the Clearwater and Mirror rivers.
	Existing Conditions (Section 17.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the characterization of existing conditions through: - the identification of cabin locations and travel routes - the level of use and species targeted for commercial trapping and fishing - trends in the populations of moose, furbearers, and fish - the effects of wildfires on resource use - how mining and exploration activities in the Patterson Lake area have affected other land and resource use
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 17.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analyses, and consideration of mitigation measures, including: observations and experiences of land users related to the existing and cumulative effects of mining and exploration activities on access to and area available for land and resource use, quality of the resource use experience, changes to air or water quality, and availability of wildlife and fish
	Residual Effects Analysis (Section 17.5)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge, including long-term observations and experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users in the Patterson Lake area, was used to inform the residual effects analysis related to changes in access and availability of land and resource use areas and the quality of the resource use experience.
Economy	Component Methods - Valued Components (Section 18.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the economy VC and reflects: the importance of the traditional economy to Indigenous Groups and LPA communities by contributing to the economic and community well-being of people and communities
	Existing Conditions - Economy (Section 18.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the description of the existing economic conditions, including: - changes to primary industry over time - the prevalence of temporary jobs (i.e., short-term work) versus the number of careers (i.e., long-term work) - types of industries and different employment opportunities by gender - the types of traditional economic activities that are undertaken - factors that influence how and when people participate in the traditional economy - the understanding of participation trends in the traditional and wage economies, and how government transfers can affect participation in both - how people in the local communities interact with and move between the wage economy and the traditional economy - how community members view money and savings
	Project Interactions, Mitigations, and Benefit Enhancements (Section 18.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge helped to inform the scoping of Project interactions and pathway analysis and consideration of mitigation measures. This included the following pathways considered in the assessment: - employment, income and training opportunities - business and contracting opportunities - participation and employment in the traditional economy - population migration
Community well-being	Component Method - Valued Components (Section 19.2.2.1)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge was considered in the selection of the community well-being VC and reflects the importance of physical and mental health, social cohesion, cultural continuity, spirituality, and educational and employment opportunities to Indigenous Groups and LPA community members.
	Component Methods - Existing Conditions- (Section 19.2.6)	Characterization of existing conditions was informed by Indigenous and Local Knowledge and community perspectives provided by Indigenous Groups and LPA community members through the KP interview program conducted in all communities, and through other engagement activities including community information sessions, JWG meetings, and workshops with trappers, youth, and women.
	Existing Conditions (Section 19.3)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge and community perspectives were shared by Indigenous Groups and LPA community members to characterize existing conditions related to: - community context and cultural continuity, including the maintenance of traditional ways of life and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge - safety and security - governance, including the maintenance of cultural identity and ways of life - health, including mental health, addictions, and traditional diets - the physical environment - education and employment
	Project Interactions and Mitigations (Section 19.4)	Indigenous and Local Knowledge informed the scoping of Project interactions, pathway analyses, and consideration of mitigation measures. This included the following pathways considered in the assessment: - increased educational and training opportunities - opportunities for resource harvesting - increased disposable income potentially leading to increased community issues - population changes - contracting and employment opportunities - access restrictions - local quality of life, cohesion, and family stability

EIS = Environmental Impact Statement; EA = Environmental Assessment; JWG = Joint Working Group; VC = valued component; LSA = local study area; RSA = regional study area; LPA = local priority area.

3.9 Use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge through the Rook I Project Lifespan

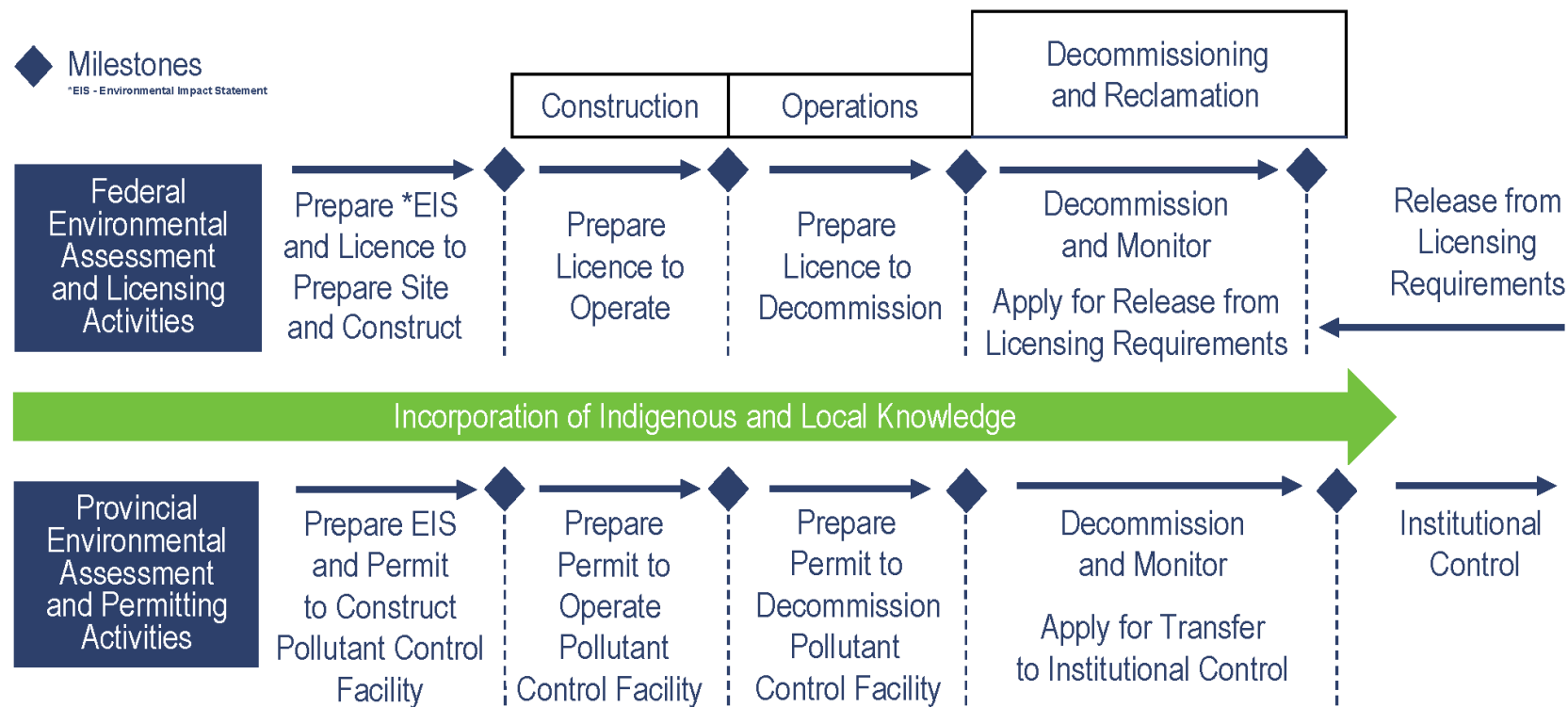
NexGen is committed to incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge throughout the Project lifespan. This approach has been consistent through early engagement activities (starting in 2013) and during the EA process, and will continue as more opportunities to share knowledge become available through engagement activities with Indigenous Groups and LPA communities (Figure 3.9-1). This includes consideration of additional Indigenous and Local Knowledge that may be brought forward during the Construction, Operations, and Decommissioning and Reclamation (i.e., Closure) phases of the Project as part of ongoing planning and development.

Evaluation of the environmental, technical, social, and economic performance of the Project design is an ongoing process that would be reviewed and optimized as the Project evolves through the EA process, permitting, and ultimately, through Construction, Operations, and Closure. As NexGen proceeds through the regulatory process and advances development of the Project, engagement activities would evolve as necessary to include Indigenous Groups and local communities in a manner that provides the opportunity for effective information exchange and dialogue specific to each stage of the Project. NexGen would continue to take an adaptive and respectful approach to engagement to allow adequate opportunity to respond to the needs of local communities as new information becomes available, while also respecting specific government policy and/or legislation.

As part of the evaluation of Project performance, monitoring and adaptive management are expected to represent key aspects of Project development, and would provide opportunities for inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge. NexGen has proposed the formation of an Environmental Committee with each of the four primary Indigenous Groups. Each Environmental Committee would be composed of representatives from the Indigenous Group and representatives from NexGen and act as an oversight committee to monitor the environmental performance of the Project and to verify the parties (i.e., NexGen and the Indigenous Group) are implementing the regulatory and environmental commitments made in respect of the Project. The Environmental Committee would be fully funded by NexGen for the entire life of the Project. In addition to the Environmental Committee, NexGen has proposed funding a full-time, independent Indigenous Monitor chosen by each of the primary Indigenous Groups (i.e., one monitor per group). The intent of these positions is to provide unrestricted environmental monitoring opportunities, including independent environmental sampling, for the life of the Project (i.e., through Construction, Operations, and Closure). The Indigenous Monitors would also participate in annual community meetings to report openly and without restriction on the environmental performance of the Project to community members.

Opportunities for the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the Preliminary Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan, including end land use planning, are also anticipated. Evolution of the Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan is planned to occur throughout the lifespan of the Project. Initial conversations regarding the Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan were held during JWG meetings in February 2020 and March 2021 (BRDN-JWG 2021b, BNDN-JWG 2021b, CRDN-JWG 2020b,c). At that time, NexGen shared the intent to work with the local communities on end land use and reclamation planning throughout all phases of the Project, including Construction, Operations, and Closure.

Figure 3.9-1: Engagement and Incorporation of Indigenous and Local Knowledge throughout the Rook I Project Lifespan



3.10 References

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