Roads Impacts

Built from 1971 to 1973, the James Bay highway is 620 km long and links Matagami to Radisson. In 1974, the 90-km-long Chisasibi road was built, linking the James Bay highway to Chisasibi. Built from 1975 to 1979, the Transtaiga highway branches from the James Bay highway and extends eastward along the south shore of the Grande Rivière over 688 km. In 1977, the access road to the Sarcelle control structure and OA-11 dam was built on the traplines of the Eastmain and Wemindji communities. Finally, in the 1980s, two more roads were built near the newly relocated community of Chisasibi in an effort to mitigate transportation (boat and snowmobile) problems caused by the project at the river mouth. In 1985, the south shore road was built from the airport to James Bay as an extension of the Chisasibi road, and in 1986, the Longue-Pointe road was built on the north shore of the Grande Rivière to link the future La Grande-1 generating station to James Bay, in accordance with a provision of the La Grande (1986) Agreement.

Thus, before the end of the 1980s, fifteen Chisasibi traplines were accessible by road, while users of the twelve Wemindji traplines, five Eastmain traplines and six Waskaganish traplines crossed by the road network had to wait until the construction of their respective community roads in the mid-1990s to take full advantage of the road network to reach their traplines from the communities. The James Bay highway also passes though five Waswanipi traplines and four Nemaska traplines.

The main impacts of the roads as perceived by the participants to the follow-up study are the followings:
**Easier access to traplines**

- Roads improved access to the traplines, making travelling much easier.

- The roads allowed the trappers and their families to go to their camps more often, thus reconfiguring the time spent on the trapline and in the community, reducing transportation time and redefining hunting group composition.

- A general trend among the tallymen is to build camps along the road.

**Damaged and stolen equipment**

- For the great majority of the trapline users interviewed, break-ins, vandalism and stolen equipment are a common feature among those whose camps are along the roads.

- The users no longer leave valuable equipment at the camps, or when left on the traplines, equipment such as snowmobiles or canoes have to be hidden in the bush.

**Increased presence of other users**

- Better access for trapline users is seen as positive, while easier access for outsiders is considered a nuisance. The traplines now linked to the road network have experienced a large influx of users, both Cree and non-Cree.

- Increased activity by other users mainly occurs in areas that are easily accessible from the roads, which have become hunting and fishing corridors.

- Many trapline users from the various communities do not appreciate when outsiders who access their traplines leave their garbage behind, polluting the land.

**Increased pressure on resources**

- The accessibility of the traplines to outsiders has put pressure on the resources, which translates into a loss for the tallymen, and a decline of game populations. This practice
continues with total disregard for the tallyman’s right to manage the species on his trapline.

**Decline in game and fish quantity and quality/Disruption of harvesting areas**

- Some tallymen agree to say that the environmental impacts of the road’s presence are responsible for a decline in game and fish quality and quantity.

**Loss of safety**

- During the moose and caribou hunting seasons, Cree users tend to avoid staying at their camps in areas bordering the roads because of the recklessness of non-Cree hunters or simply because there is too much activity.

**Loss of control by the tallyman over land management**

- The feeling of lack of control over who is harvesting the trapline’s resources is relatively widespread among tallymen whose traplines are crossed by or linked to the road network. They feel that they can no longer manage the resources adequately because the land is accessible to outside trappers, hunters and fishermen, who are showing a lack of respect by entering the trapline without permission.

**Loss of source of drinking water**

- Some trapline users have stopped drawing their drinking water from bodies of water located near the James Bay highway because of the decline in water quality attributed to the presence of the road (culverts, de-icing products, traffic).

**Feeling associated with a lack of consideration**

- The responsibility associated with the status of warden of the trapline is seen by many tallymen as one of their duties towards the land and the way its resources are treated. A lack of respect towards wildlife also means a lack of respect for the tallymen. Accordingly, some tallymen deplored behaviour such as killing beavers and leaving
them on the side of the road, leaving dead caribou on sites, or abandoning wounded animals.

Summary of Impacts of Roads on Land Use - as Reported by the Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Component</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and camps</td>
<td>Easier access to traplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Damaged and stolen equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of campsites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting activities</td>
<td>Increased presence of other users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased pressure on resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline in game and fish quantity and quality/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disruption of harvesting areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of control by the tallyman over land management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corridor hunting along the roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued sites</td>
<td>Loss of source of drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obstacle to the transmission of traditional knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling associated with a lack of consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and common activities</td>
<td>New community-use and common-use areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transmission lines Impacts

The development of the La Grande complex required the construction of about twenty 315-kV, 450-kV and 735-kV circuits, totalizing hundreds of kilometres of transmission lines. Most of these transmission lines were built from 1978 to 1984, except for the 450-kV line, which was built in 1988 and runs south from Radisson substation, and the 735-kV transmission line toward the south from Chissibi substation, built in 1993.

In the west sector of the La Grande complex transmission lines cross 8 Chisasibi traplines, 16 Wemindji traplines, 5 Eastmain traplines, 3 Waskaganish traplines, 9 Nemaska traplines, 10 Mistissini traplines, 10 Oujé-Bougoumou traplines and 18 Waswanipi traplines.

The main impacts of the transmission lines as perceived by the participants to the follow-up study are the followings:

**Easier access to traplines and to harvesting areas**

- The ability to reach the traplines by truck or by snowmobile via the transmission line rights-of-way or maintenance roads was mentioned as a positive impact of the project by many users. In fact, many tallymen built main camps along the rights-of-way in order to take full advantage of this access.

**Damaged and stolen equipment**

- Break-ins, vandalism and stolen equipment are a common feature for the tallymen whose camps are along the transmission line right-of-way or maintenance roads.

- Trapline users have to hide their equipment instead of leaving it in the camps or choose to carry valuable material back to the community.
**Snowmobiling under the transmission lines**

- The transmission line rights-of-way are sometimes used as snowmobile trails to reach the traplines.

**Safety concerns**

- Interview participants from all the communities expressed concern about the possible effects of electric fields on the health and safety of people and animals.

- Some tallymen have also voiced concerns about the fact that chemical defoliants may have been used under the transmission lines. They are concerned that vegetation, game and people may have been affected.

**Noise from transmission lines**

- Most of the users have complained that the noise from the transmission lines can be heard for quite a distance, and is disturbing, particularly during bad weather. They consider this to be a nuisance and say that there is no longer any peace and quiet on the trapline. Some tallymen mentioned having abandoned campsites due to the disturbing noise.

- The noise produced by the transmission lines has also scared away the animals. Some tallymen have observed this phenomenon in goose hunting areas, moose hunting areas and beaver trapping areas.

**Interference with bush radio transmissions**

- Almost all interview participants from every community have experienced problems with radio transmission in the bush because of the transmission lines.

**Increased presence of other users**

- The traplines now linked to the road network via the transmission line rights-of-way have experienced a greater influx of users, both Cree and non-Cree; this is even more
true in the southernmost communities. Better access for trapline users is seen as a positive factor, while easier access for outsiders is considered a nuisance.

• Many new non-Cree camps have been built near the rights-of-way, particularly on Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi traplines. Some tallymen from these communities have abandoned some areas of their trapline, where activities have become too intensive.

**Increased pressure on resources**

• The accessibility of the traplines to outsiders has put pressure on the resources, translating into a loss for the tallymen. Many interview participants have expressed concern about the growing presence of outsiders on their traplines and consider it a major factor that has contributed to the decline of fish resources in certain lakes, or the decline of resources in formerly harvested hunting grounds.

**Corridor hunting along the transmission line rights-of-way**

• Some Tallymen occasionally hunt along the transmission lines rights-of-way.

**Loss of control by the tallyman over land management**

• The feeling of lack of control over who is harvesting trapline resources is relatively widespread among tallymen whose traplines are crossed by transmission lines. They feel that they can no longer adequately manage the resources because the land is open to outside trappers, hunters and fishermen, who show a lack of respect by entering the trapline without permission.

**Disruption of harvesting activities**

• Many tallymen from the southernmost communities of Mistissini, Nemaska, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi observed a decline in hunting and fishing sites following construction of the transmission lines. However, some tallymen noted that it was not
easy to distinguish between the impacts related to the transmission lines and the ones related to logging activities.

**Concerns about the quality of the resources under the transmission lines**

- Many interview participants have expressed concern about the quality of resources in the transmission line rights-of-way that may be affected by the electric field or by chemical defoliants, and may therefore not be fit for consumption.

---

**Summary of Impacts of Transmission Lines on Land Use, as Reported by Interview Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental component</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Transportation and camps** | Easier access to traplines and to harvesting areas  
Damaged and Stolen equipment  
Snowmobiling under the transmission lines  
Safety concerns (electrical field)  
Noise from transmission lines  
Interference with bush radio transmissions |
| **Harvesting activities** | Increased presence of other users  
Increased pressure on resources  
Corridor hunting along the transmission lines rights-of-way  
Decline in game quantity  
Loss of control by the tallyman over land management  
Disruption of harvesting activities  
Concerns about the quality of the resources under the transmission lines |
| **Valued sites** | Feelings of loss  
Loss of source of drinking water |
Waskaganish Trapline and Study Area

The total land use area of Waskaganish as defined by the community’s 34 registered traplines covers a total area of 29,205 km² or 7% of the 408,760 km² of the 303 traplines for all of Eeyou Istchee.

The study area boundary is defined by 6 traplines (4,283 km²). They were impacted by:

- The James Bay highway, built during Phase I;
- Four transmission lines, built during Phase I.

Nemaska Trapline and Study Area

The total land use area of Nemaska as defined by the community’s 15 registered traplines covers a total area of 15,502 km² or 4% of the 408,760 km² of the 303 traplines for all of Eeyou Istchee.

The study area boundary is defined by 13 traplines (13,402 km²). They were impacted by:

- The James Bay highway, built during Phase I;
- 14 transmission lines, built during Phase I and Phase II.

Mistissini Trapline and Study Area

The total land use area of Mistissini as defined by the community’s 75 registered traplines covers a total area of 121,372 km² or 30% of the 408,760 km² of the 303 traplines for all of Eeyou Istchee.
The study area boundary is defined by 10 traplines (12,960 km). They were impacted by:

- 9 transmission lines, built during Phase I and Phase II.

Ouje-Bougoumou Trapline and Study Area

The total land use area of Ouje-Bougoumou as defined by the community’s 13 registered traplines covers a total area of 10,336 km or 3% of the 408,760 km of the 303 traplines for all of Eeyou Istchee.

The study area boundary is defined by 10 traplines (9,252 km). They were impacted by:

- 13 transmission lines, built during Phase I and Phase II.

Waswanipi Trapline and Study Area

The total land use area of Waswanipi as defined by the community’s 52 registered traplines covers a total area of 32,250 km or 8% of the 408,760 km of the 303 traplines for all of Eeyou Istchee.

The study area boundary is defined by 23 traplines (15,776 km). They were impacted by:

- The James Bay highway, built during Phase I;
- 7 transmission lines, built during Phase I and Phase II.