

Construction

Construction on the Lower Mattagami Project began in early June. Detailed engineering, planning, and procurement continue. At the sites brush clearing, and grubbing is now underway. Later in July workers will start construction of the coffer dams. These temporary dams will hold back water, so that construction work on the stations can be done.

Camp

A project camp that will house about 800 people is being constructed at Smoky Falls. By mid September it is expected that about 500 people will be stationed at the camp.

Respect for Cree Culture and History

Ontario Power Generation is working closely with the Moose Cree First Nation to ensure that locations of cultural significance are not disturbed by the work. A Moose Cree site monitor (who has been working on site for several years and has knowledge of traditional sites and archaeology) is on site, as is a senior archaeologist.

Over a three year period archaeological studies were conducted in collaboration with the Moose Cree First Nation. The Moose Cree First Nation have records of the families who lived near the stations. Using these records, archaeologists and the Moose Cree worked together to contact Elders, and descendants of those families. Interviews were conducted to determine the location of sites of cultural, heritage, or archaeological significance. Work was planned so that these sites would not be disturbed. Moose Cree First Nation and archaeologists have also identified through field surveys and interviews the potential existence of burial sites north of Kipling and at Little Long that are now protected areas. Moose Cree First Nation and archaeologists have also discovered an ancient tool east of the Smoky Falls power station and this area is now identified and established as a Moose Cree First Nation heritage area.

Recently some Moose Cree members living in Kapuskasing raised concerns about construction work interfering with significant locations at the Smoky Falls site. The Moose Cree First Nation representatives working with the archaeologist have done additional interviews with Elders to confirm that the information gathered over the last three years is correct. The additional interviews confirm that the work is in fact not interfering with sites of historical significance. The Moose Cree First Nation representatives continue to protect and maintain Moose Cree First Nation sites for the future recognition of Moose Cree First Nation occupation and land use.

