

# Dempster Fibre Project

Newsletter – fall 2020 edition



Dempster Fibre Project will ensure reliable internet service for Yukon and the North.

## About the project

The Dempster Fibre Project is an 800-kilometre fibre optic line along the Dempster Highway from Dawson City, Yukon, to Inuvik, Northwest Territories.

The Dempster Fibre Project will connect to the existing Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link in Inuvik. Once linked, the new line will complete a 4,000-kilometre network. This network will provide communities along the loop with a backup line in the event of a service disruption, ensuring they have more reliable internet and cell phone service.

There will be local employment and business opportunities for communities along the route during construction. The Government of Yukon is working with First Nations governments, Indigenous groups, local businesses and communities to make the most of these opportunities.

## Route

- A large number of communities in the North will directly benefit from the line.
- The line will be owned by the Government of Yukon and operated by NorthwesTel.



- Dempster Fibre Line
- Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link
- Existing NorthwesTel Fibre

## Project updates

### Regulatory items

The project has received recommendations to proceed from both the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

The team is now working on securing appropriate permits and approvals in both Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Once complete, work on construction of the fibre line can begin.

### Planning and design

The project's engineering design is now complete. The design was directly influenced by various environmental studies, directions from regulatory bodies, as well as feedback gathered from community visits.

The Yukon government has awarded a contract for brushing and clearing in the Dempster Highway right-of-way. Work to clear the corridor for surveys and pre-construction activities has started. This contract covers the southern part of the Dempster Highway.

The government also issued a negotiated request for proposals to the contractors shortlisted to bid on the project. This tender

process is expected to be completed in winter/spring 2021. A key aspect of the construction tender is a requirement to submit a detailed First Nations and Indigenous participation plan. This plan requires the contractor to make specific commitments on training, direct employment and subcontracting for Indigenous businesses.

### Engagement activities

The project has progressed to the current stage thanks to regular input from partners, stakeholders, contractors and businesses. Feedback was gathered at several engagement sessions and meetings. This input is very valuable and has been substantially incorporated into the design.

The project team has been setting up regular engagement meetings with the affected First Nation governments in Yukon and the Gwich'in Tribal Council in the NWT. This regular engagement outreach will continue throughout the course of the project.

Wildlife and environmental monitoring courses, offered by Aurora College, have been postponed due to COVID-19. The college will communicate new dates once conditions are safe to offer the courses.

## Upcoming activities

1. Completion of regulatory and permitting processes.
2. Continue engagement sessions with partners.
3. Construction contracting processes and negotiations.

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