



September 29, 2008

CG25277.B

Alberta Transportation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 803 Manning Road NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 7M8

Attn: Mr. Ross Dickson

**Re: Southern Region Geohazard Assessment Program  
Site S18 – Galatea Creek Rock Cut, Highway 40:12  
2008 Annual Inspection Report**

This letter documents the 2008 annual site inspection of Site S18 – Galatea Creek Rock Cut, along Highway 40:12, approximately 32 km south of the junction between Highway 40 and Highway 1 and just north of the Galatea Creek Provincial Recreation Area.

AMEC Earth & Environmental (AMEC), a division of AMEC Americas Limited, performed this inspection in partial fulfillment of the scope of work for the supply of geotechnical services for Alberta Transportation's (AT's) Southern Region (AT contract CE061/08).

The site inspection was performed on June 25, 2008 by Mr. Andrew Bidwell, P.Eng. and Mr. Bryan Bale of AMEC in the company of Mr. Ross Dickson and Mr. Roger Skirrow of AT.

## **BACKGROUND**

A general description of the geohazard conditions at this site along with the site geological setting and chronology of previous events, investigations, monitoring and repair work were provided in the previous annual inspection report<sup>1</sup> and are summarized as follows:

- The site consists of a through-cut in bedrock along this segment of the highway. The East Cut Slope is near vertical with a maximum height of approximately 16 m. The West Cut Slope is near-vertical to vertical with a maximum height of approximately 10 m.
- There is a rockfall hazard at this site that was first documented during a June 2004 call-out site inspection by AMEC.

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<sup>1</sup> AMEC report "Southern Region Geohazard Assessment, Annual Assessment Report, 2007", project number CG25263, submitted to AT on November 6, 2007.

- The east ditch does not meet the sizing recommendations from the Ritchie Ditch Chart and during past inspections up to cobble sized rockfall debris has been noted on the road surface across the northbound lane and onto the centerline. Figure S18-1 shows a typical slope and ditch cross-section around the maximum east cut slope height.
- There is also a hazard of rock block sliding, wedge or toppling failures from the East Cut Slope because the East Cut Slope is oriented unfavourably relative to the bedrock structure at this site. Numerous rockbolts were installed in the East Cut Slope during construction in order to manage the risk to the highway from these hazards.
- The west ditch meets the sizing recommendations from the Ritchie Ditch Chart and during past inspections it has not appeared that any rockfall debris from the West Cut Slope has been impacting the road. Figure S18-2 shows a typical slope and ditch cross-section around the maximum west cut slope height.

## **SITE OBSERVATIONS**

The site conditions had not changed significantly since the 2007 site inspection.

- There continued to be an accumulation of rockfall debris in both the east and west ditches, as shown in Photos S18-1 to S18-4. The rockfall debris included material up to cobble and small boulder size, which is consistent with observations from past inspections.
- As shown in the photos, virtually all of the rockfall debris was contained within the ditches at the time of the inspection. Some gravel sized rocks were noted along the east edge of the northbound lane at the time of the inspection.
- During the inspection, AMEC and AT personnel threw several gravel to cobble sized rocks up to the crest of the near-vertical East Cut Slope as an approximate simulation of a point release of a rockfall from the upper portion of the East Cut Slope. All of the thrown rocks fell and bounced down the cut slope and landed within the east ditch without bouncing or rolling onto the road.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The rockfall conditions have not changed at this site since the previous inspections, therefore there remains a risk that rockfall debris from the East Cut Slope at this site will bounce or roll onto the road surface. This has been evident from past inspections where rockfall debris was noted in the northbound lane. The risk is somewhat mitigated by the “Watch For Fallen Rock” signs in place on either side of the through-cut to warn users of the highway along with the available catchment capacity of the east ditch.

As noted in the previous inspection reports, the risk from potential rock block sliding, wedge or toppling failures in the East Cut Slope is judged to be lower than the rockfall risk because of the rockbolts installed in the East Cut Slope.

The risk to the highway from rockfall from the West Cut Slope is low because the west highway ditch is larger and able to contain virtually all of the rockfall debris from the West Cut Slope.

## **RISK LEVEL**

The current recommended Risk Levels for this site, based on AT's rockfall geohazard risk matrix, are as follows:

### East Cut Slope

- A Probability Factor of 15 is recommended based on the apparent frequency of rockfall due to weathering and freeze/thaw effects on the exposed rock.
- A Consequence Factor of 3 is recommended based on the history of cobble-sized rocks rolling onto the pavement at this site.

Therefore, the recommended Risk Level for the East Cut Slope is 45. This value is unchanged from the previous site inspection.

### West Cut Slope

- A Probability Factor of 12 is recommended based on the apparent frequency of rockfall from the West Cut Slope.
- A Consequence Factor of 1 is recommended because there has been no evidence of rockfall debris from the West Cut Slope reaching the road.

Therefore, the recommended Risk Level for the West Cut Slope is 12. This value is unchanged from the previous site inspection.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Maintenance and Short Term Measures**

- AT's maintenance contractor should clean the accumulated rockfall debris from the east and west ditches as often as practical in order to maintain the ditches reasonably close to their maximum capacity. This should be treated as an ongoing maintenance issue and cleaning done as required.

- Any rocks that are deposited on the road should be cleared as soon as they are noted. The most practical and efficient method of ensuring that the road is clear of rockfall debris on an ongoing basis would be to have maintenance contractor personnel visually inspect the site each time they travel by during their other work and kick any rocks on the road into the ditch.
- If the debris is not cleaned out and kept off the road as described above, the Consequence Factor for the rockfall risk from the East Cut Slope will increase.

### **Long Term Measures**

- The Consequence Factor for the East Cut could be reduced by increasing the capacity of the east ditch to contain rockfall debris.
  - The ditch width and depth could be increased. The ditch sizing criteria on the Ritchie Ditch chart should be used as a guide.
  - Alternatively, a line of jersey barriers could be placed along the east shoulder of the road in order to increase the effective depth of the ditch. This should only be done if AT's requirements for a minimum clear width and/or sideslope angles can be met (and also practicality with respect to snow plowing). The barriers would also be effective in preventing vehicles that may run into the east ditch for other reasons from striking boulder-sized rockfall debris that has been contained in the ditch.

It should be noted that it will be necessary to keep cleaning the rockfall debris from the east ditch after the ditch is further excavated or jersey barriers are in place.

- This site should be included in the planned work package for scaling at several rock cut slope sites in the Southern Region that AT intends to put out to bid. Scaling at this site should reduce the Probability Factor at least for the short term.
- The annual inspections at this site should be continued. The purpose of the site inspections will be to check the slope conditions, the rate of rockfall debris accumulation in the ditches, and note specific locations where large blocks of rock in the cut slope may require further stabilization. The information from these inspections, particularly the rate of debris accumulation, can be used to determine if additional measures are necessary to reduce the Risk Level at this site and reduce the reliance on timely cleaning of the ditches. Additional measures could consist of mesh or draped rockfall nets to guide falling rocks to land close to the toe of the cut slope, additional scaling, or perhaps additional rockbolts to supplement or replace existing ones.

## **Investigation**

No further investigation work for this site is recommended at this time.

## **CLOSURE**

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of Alberta Transportation for the specific project described herein. Any use which a third party makes of this report, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it are the responsibility of such third parties. AMEC Earth & Environmental, a division of AMEC Americas Limited, cannot accept responsibility for such damages, if any, suffered by any third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report. This report has been prepared in accordance with accepted geotechnical engineering practices. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made.

We trust that this meets your needs at this time. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions or require any further information.

Respectfully Submitted,

**AMEC Earth & Environmental,  
a division of AMEC Americas Limited**

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Associate Geological Engineer

APEGGA Permit to Practice No. P-04546

Reviewed by:

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Principal Geotechnical Engineer

Attachments: Cross-Sections  
Photos