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nwmo NEWS

Involving Canadians in the Design of the Siting Process

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The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) has completed its public engagement activities to collaboratively design the process that will be used to identify a safe and secure site in an informed and willing community to host Canada's long-term management facilities for used nuclear fuel. The dialogue began with the release of the proposal in May 2009 and an invitation for all interested individuals and organizations to share their thoughts on whether the proposed site selection process is appropriate and what changes, if any, need to be made.

A series of Information Sessions were held in regional centres in the four provinces involved in the nuclear fuel cycle (Saskatchewan, Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick). All those interested were invited to learn more about the NWMO, the Adaptive Phased Management approach and the proposed siting process. NWMO staff were on hand at each of the 17 sessions to answer questions, and hear concerns and comments from the more than 600 visitors to the sessions. Many attendees expressed views on energy policy, while others offered specific recommendations on how the draft siting document could be enhanced.

Approximately 100 people representing Aboriginal organizations, business associations, municipal groups, non-governmental organizations, academia, the nuclear industry and professional associations participated in Multi-Party Dialogues convened in Saskatoon, Ottawa, Toronto and Saint John. Many of the dialogue participants had offered advice in 2008 on important principles and elements to be considered in drafting the proposed siting process. For the most part, they saw their guidance reflected in the draft document. While there was not always consensus, each of the dialogues surfaced a number of suggestions for strengthening the process.



Citizen Panels, established in 2008 to review various aspects of the NWMO's work, were reconvened and brought together this past fall in Toronto and Ottawa to consider the siting proposal and comment on it. Participants expressed general support for the principles and steps in the proposed process and provided comments on possible areas for improvement. These facilitated full-day sessions included presentations by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission on Canada's nuclear regulatory framework. Similar half-day sessions with randomly recruited citizens active in their communities were held during October in five cities.

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The work continues...

NWMO Releases 2010 Implementation Plan for Public Review

The NWMO invites all Canadians and Aboriginal peoples of Canada to get involved in the management of Canada's used nuclear fuel. One of the ways we encourage this participation is through the publication of the annual update to our five-year business plan, titled *Implementing Adaptive Phased Management*. The Plan for 2010 to 2014 has been released in draft for public review between December 2009 and January 2010.

The period 2010-2014 marks a new phase in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management (APM) as we plan to initiate the process for site selection. The NWMO expects to begin to work with communities interested in APM and hosting the used fuel repository. As communities come forward to learn more and proceed with initial screenings and assessments of site suitability, the NWMO will be ready to support the process. Work will continue to ensure readiness for future phases of site selection, including detailed site investigations and refinement of the generic designs and safety cases for a repository in both crystalline and sedimentary rock formations. Throughout the planning period, engagement and research will continue.

The Plan is organized along seven strategic objectives, which have been updated to reflect progress and the evolving priorities in the implementation of APM. New objectives address the siting process and the work on generic designs and safety cases. Changes to the governance objective reflect the maturity of the organization.

The annual update confirms the Plan as a living document that is regularly assessed, strengthened and redirected in the face of new information, advances in science and technology, changes in societal values and evolving public policy. APM will only proceed as quickly as Canadians, successful technology development and demonstration, and the regulatory authorities allow.

Strategic Objectives

The NWMO will:

- Build sustainable, long-term relationships with interested Canadians and Aboriginal peoples of Canada and involve them in setting future directions for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel.
- Implement collaboratively with Canadians the process for siting a deep geological repository for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel in an informed, willing host community.
- Refine and further develop the generic designs and safety cases for a repository for used nuclear fuel in both crystalline and sedimentary rock formations, and conduct technical research and development to ensure continuous improvement, consistent with best practices.
- Ensure funds are available to pay for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.
- Adapt plans for the management of used nuclear fuel in response to new knowledge, international best practices, advances in technical learning, evolving societal expectations and values, and changes in public policies.
- Maintain an accountable governance structure that provides confidence to the Canadian public in the conduct of the NWMO's work.
- Build and sustain an effective organization with the social, environmental, technical and financial capabilities for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

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www.nwmo.ca



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Beginning in the summer and running through year end, First Nation and Métis groups convened more than 25 meetings in the nuclear provinces to build their own understanding of Adaptive Phased Management and to provide input on the proposed site selection process. Following a recommendation of the NWMO Aboriginal working group, Niigani, these dialogue sessions sought input from people representing a regional and community perspective. Reports from each participating group will be taken into account as the NWMO finalizes the siting process in the new year.

Other activities in support of the process to select a site included an e-dialogue moderated by Dr. Ann Dale of Royal Roads University in October, a national telephone survey of 2,600 Canadians and submissions received through the NWMO website.

Reports on all NWMO engagement activities are posted online as they become available at www.nwmo.ca. The NWMO has now begun the task of reviewing all comments it has received on the proposed siting process before refining and finalizing the document in 2010.



www.nwmo.ca

Advancing Technical R&D

International Collaboration

The NWMO's technical program remains a fundamental part of implementing Adaptive Phased Management (APM). Partnering with other national radioactive waste management organizations allows the NWMO to foster international cooperation on research, development and demonstration of technology, and to keep abreast of developments in repository design for various host rock formations. The NWMO/SKB five-year Äspö Hard Rock Laboratory Agreement is being extended to June 2010 to enable the NWMO to actively participate in joint underground research and demonstration of repository technology in crystalline rock.

Increased Staff

The NWMO is also making sure that it has the necessary personnel to carry out its expanding work program in design development, safety assessment and geoscience to support preparation and implementation of a siting process. In 2009, more than a dozen specialized professionals were hired in the areas of geoscience, safety assessment, repository engineering and regulatory affairs, bringing their extensive experience in the nuclear and mining industries, and reinforcing our existing workforce.

Regulatory Interface

In November 2009, the NWMO met with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) staff to give an annual update on the APM technical program, addressing such topics as developments in used fuel repository engineering designs, modelling glaciations events, and improving our understanding of geosphere stability and characteristics of sedimentary rock formations. A pre-licensing review meeting also took place in November to discuss the progress in APM design and safety case update, as well as the scope and schedule of the CNSC review.

Peer Review

Over the course of a two-day meeting in September in Toronto, the Independent Technical Review Group (ITRG) convened to review several aspects of the NWMO's technical program. The focus of the ITRG review was on the NWMO's current work program following the recommendations of the 2008 ITRG Report and the NWMO's five-year plan for technical program activities. The 2009 ITRG Report was presented to the NWMO Board of Directors in November 2009.

Memorandum of Understanding between NWMO and NRCan in Relation to Consultations with Aboriginal Peoples

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Natural Resources Canada and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was signed on August 14, 2009. This MOU clarifies the roles and responsibilities of NRCan and the NWMO with respect to any obligation for consultations with Aboriginal people, pursuant to the Government's duty to consult and the NWMO's statutory obligations in relation to the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*.

The NWMO site selection process has not yet been initiated. Site selection will only begin after the process for site selection has been confirmed and finalized.

Please visit www.nwmo.ca/memorandumofunderstanding for more information about the MOU.

NWMO Becomes Founding Donor to Strengthen Aboriginal Governance

In 2009, the NWMO pledged to donate $105,000 over three years in support of the Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University. This is a unique and historic initiative which will considerably impact on capacity building and help strengthen governance in Aboriginal communities across Canada.



ABOVE ❯❯ Dr. Pam Palmater has been appointed as the Chair of Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University.

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Youth Pursue Excellence in Science



Some of the 46 high-school students from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick who formed this year's Team Canada at the 12th MILSET Expo-Sciences International held in Tunisia. Students were selected by their provincial youth science organizations based on the quality of their projects, as well as their ability to communicate their science and serve as ambassadors of Canada. The Canadian delegation competed against over 75 countries and won the "Best Delegation Award" for the first time. As a proud sponsor, the NWMO congratulates Team Canada on its achievement.

The International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology (MILSET) is a non-governmental, non-profit and politically independent youth organization. MILSET organizes a non-competitive event every two years, bringing together young people from over 75 countries, with the aim of instilling a culture of science by fostering networking and international collaboration.

My Experience with the NWMO Youth Roundtable



Khaled Haggag

The email came in around the end of 2008 from my physics department at the University of Saskatchewan. The NWMO was looking for participants to form a Youth Roundtable to gather input from young Canadians on how best to engage that specific demographic around the topic of the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

At that time, I was in my second year of university and was not really involved in extracurricular activities, but the NWMO sounded really interesting. As a student majoring in physics, with minors in computer science and astronomy, I was already interested in nuclear energy. Thus, I was motivated to learn more about nuclear waste.

So I sent my application in, and after an interview process, I was told that I was accepted! I was very excited that I would be joining other young people from Saskatchewan, Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick (all provinces involved in the nuclear fuel cycle) for three in-person conferences in Toronto. Those three meetings were complemented by online discussion sessions, as well as individual interviews between the members of the Youth Roundtable and their peers. The Youth Roundtable also commented on the NWMO's draft site selection process.

The Youth Roundtable is a group that I will never forget. I had never been amongst such a diverse group of people. Talking to everyone and getting to know them was a very rewarding experience. It is important for me to know that my views on the subject and recommendations were being heard and taken into account. The experience of having an organization listen to you and seek out what you have to say is truly rewarding. This is a multi-generational issue and should not be tackled by just one generation. Knowing that they agreed with this was very important to me.

Over the course of five months, the work of the Youth Roundtable culminated in a report that was presented to the NWMO Advisory Council in May 2009. This whole experience has provided me with a much better understanding of Canada's used nuclear fuel and the responsibility all Canadians have towards its proper management. In 2010, the NWMO is planning one more in-person meeting for the Youth Roundtable where we will learn about what the organization has done with our recommendations. I look forward to the next meeting to learn more about the NWMO's plans.

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