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nwmo news

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NWMO Suspends Expressions of Interest Phase of Site Selection Process

As announced in March of this year, on September 30, 2012, the NWMO suspended new expressions of interest from potential host communities for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel Repository and Centre of Expertise. The site selection process for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel will now focus on the 21 communities currently engaged in learning more about the project.

"The communities that have expressed interest are in the early stages of a process that will require seven to 10 years to identify an informed and willing host," said Kathryn Shaver, NWMO Vice-President of APM Engagement and Site Selection. "Communities may leave the site selection process at any time, and as the site selection process proceeds, studies will begin to focus on the subset of communities and sites which have the greatest potential to host the facility."

Each expression of interest triggers a process of broad outreach and discussion of the project with the interested communities, neighbouring communities and potentially affected Aboriginal peoples. Suspending the expressions of interest phase allows the NWMO to continue to fully support the involvement of communities currently involved and the surrounding areas, and move forward on the detailed studies required.

The site selection process, developed over a two-year dialogue (2008–2009) with interested Canadians, is designed to ensure that:

- Any community selected to host the facility is both informed about the project and willing to host it;
- Any site selected will safely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel for a very long period of time in an appropriate geological formation, and that there is an acceptable way of transporting the used fuel to the site;
- The potentially interested community carefully and thoroughly considers the project's potential benefits and risks when deciding whether to express interest, and ultimately, willingness to host the project;
- Surrounding communities affected by the project and transportation of the used fuel are involved in planning how the project will be implemented; and
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit potentially affected by the implementation of this project are involved in learning, assessment and planning of the project.

Communities that successfully pass an initial screening of the potential suitability of the community for the project as part of Step 2 of the site selection process must then decide whether they wish to proceed to the more detailed preliminary assessments and broad engagement activities that occur in Step 3. A number of communities have already proceeded to Step 3, and preliminary assessment activities have been initiated with these communities.

Communities are under no obligation to continue their exploration of the project and may leave the process at any time up until the signing of a final agreement, which is still many years into the future.

Communities Currently Exploring Their Interest in the Project

- Arran-Elderslie
- Blind River
- Brockton
- Central Huron
- Creighton
- Ear Falls
- Elliot Lake
- English River First Nation
- Hornepayne
- Huron-Kinloss
- Ignace
- Manitouwadge
- Nipigon
- North Shore
- Pinehouse
- Saugeen Shores
- Schreiber
- South Bruce
- Spanish
- Wawa
- White River

New Council of Elders Is Inaugurated With Traditional Aboriginal Ceremony

The NWMO has a new Council of Elders to advise it on the application of Indigenous Knowledge in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management. The Council also provides advice on matters that could enhance the development and maintenance of good relations with Aboriginal communities. The Council works to protect and preserve all creation: air, land, fire, water, plants, medicines, animals and humankind – guided by the seven universal teachings of love, trust, sharing, honesty, humility, respect and wisdom.

The Council is the successor to the Elders Forum. The former Elders Forum members identified a need to enhance the work they were doing, following which a working group of Elders was formed. With help from NWMO staff, and advice from the NWMO Board of Directors, NWMO Advisory Council, and Aboriginal organizations and individuals, a new Terms of Reference was developed, and a new group was formed: the NWMO Council of Elders.

The redeveloped Council of Elders, which includes seven members of the former Elders Forum and three new members, held its first meeting at the end of June. The meeting included traditional ceremonies to welcome the new members of the Council of Elders, as well as to thank the former members of the Elders Forum. The Council was given an update on the NWMO's site selection process, Aboriginal engagement activities, and technical studies. The Elders also discussed the application of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge to the NWMO's work. Elders advised the NWMO on the importance of working together and listening to the voice of Aboriginal peoples in the site selection process, saying that "it is our inherent right to invite the NWMO to speak with us, and for us to have the opportunity to learn and explore the possibilities of this project." The Elders also noted that an area may be found suitable or unsuitable, but that "it is important that people learn before decisions are made. We must all understand both the positive and negative sides of this issue."

The NWMO has been fortunate to have had the benefit of the wisdom of Elders since 2005. We wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the outgoing members of the Elders Forum for their guidance, and we honour their invaluable contribution.



Council of Elders in its inaugural meeting in June 2012

Geoscientific Review Group Meets to Discuss Preliminary Assessments Being Conducted in Step 3 Communities

In 2011, the NWMO established an Adaptive Phased Management Geoscientific Review Group (APM-GRG) to provide advice and guidance on the approach, methods and findings of the geoscientific preliminary assessments that are part of the studies conducted in Step 3 of the site selection process. The group held its second meeting in August, at which time it met with NWMO staff and consultants working on Phase 1 geoscientific assessments.

Dr. Mahrez Ben Belfadhel, NWMO Director of Geoscientific Site Evaluations, described the two-day meeting as "incredibly helpful." "Peer review is a vital part of the scientific process," he added. "Through reviews like these, we make sure that the NWMO's preliminary assessments are rigorous, and just as importantly, consistent across communities."

The APM-GRG is expected to meet several times as Step 3 assessments progress.



APM-GRG members (from left to right): Dr. Michael Stephens, Senior State Geologist with the Geological Survey of Sweden; Dr. Richard Smith, Exploration Geophysicist, Professor at Laurentian University; Dr. Peter Kaiser (APM-GRG Chairman), Vice-President of Research at the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI), Professor at Laurentian University; Dr. Sandy (Alexander) Cruden, Head of the School of Geosciences at Monash University (Australia); and Dr. Andreas Gautschi, Division Head of Geology, Safety at Nagra (the National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste in Switzerland).

NWMO Teams Raise Money for the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign



NWMO participants in the 2012 YMCA Relay for Strong Kids

July marked the fifth year in a row that NWMO employees have participated in the Toronto YMCA Corporate Team Challenge to raise money for the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign, an initiative that helps children, teens and young adults live healthier and happier lives. This year's course was Toronto's Honda Indy Racetrack. Thirty-five employees, divided into five teams of runners and five of walkers, made the circuit.

NWMO Geoscientists Take Part in the V.M. Goldschmidt Conference

Geosciences staff from the NWMO helped host two sessions at the annual V.M. Goldschmidt Conference, held this June in Montreal, Quebec. The conference brings together geochemists from all over the world, from academe as well as industry. Through 19 oral and three poster presentations, the two sessions allowed researchers to exchange information about research underway internationally in the geochemical and microbiological characterization of low-permeability rocks.

The first session, "Geochemical and microbiological site characterization methods in low-permeability and low-porosity formations," was convened by Niklaus Waber (University of Bern), Jennifer McKelvie (NWMO) and Sarah Hirschorn (NWMO). Christophe Tournassat of Andra, the NWMO's sister organization in France, discussed the modelling of water-rock interaction processes in clay-rock formations in his keynote address.

The second session, "Assessing groundwater transport processes using natural geochemical tracers," was convened by Sebastien Savoye (French Atomic Energy Commission), Laura Kennell (NWMO) and Monique Hobbs (NWMO). Martin Mazurek of the University of Bern gave the keynote address, which highlighted the various methods used for extracting porewater from clay and shale rocks and the interpretation of the geochemical results.

In these sessions, contractors working with the NWMO had an opportunity to present results from their work on deep geological repositories, as did the graduate students the NWMO supports through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's Industrial Postgraduate Scholarships Program.

"The conference provided a great opportunity to share important information," said Sarah Hirschorn, one of the NWMO geoscientists who attended. "It's one of the ways the people on my team keep on top of the latest developments in the field."

Two New Milestones in Quality Management

Two of the NWMO's fundamental values are Excellence and Transparency. As part of implementing these values, the NWMO has developed its management system to be compliant with internationally recognized standards and to have a third party acknowledge this compliance. In 2012, the organization received certification to CSA Z1000:2006 Occupational Health and Safety Management and ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management Systems. This is in addition to the certification to ISO 9001:2008, which the organization achieved in 2010. The three certifications also demonstrate that the NWMO's management system is well-integrated. Going forward, the NWMO will have to show continual improvement to maintain compliance with these standards. To ensure we stay the course, the organization will be audited on an annual basis.

NWMO Issues Draft Implementation Plan for Public Review

The document *Implementing Adaptive Phased Management 2013 to 2017 – DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW* is our annual five-year strategic plan for implementing Canada's plan for the safe, long-term care of used nuclear fuel. The NWMO invites all interested individuals and organizations to engage in our work and to review our plans and activities as we move forward. Kindly forward your comments by mail or through our website by January 10, 2013. The document is available on our website at www.nwmo.ca/implementationplan, and printed copies are available on request.



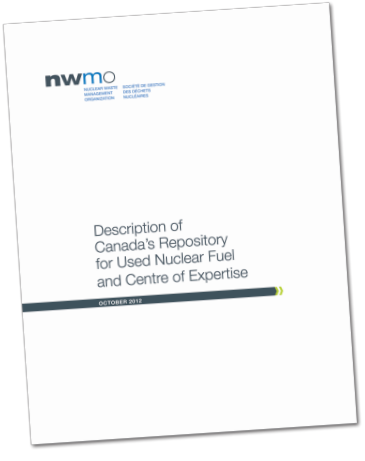
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NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

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NWMO Releases Two New Brochures to Answer Your Questions

Check out the NWMO's newest brochures: *Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise* and *Safe and Secure Transportation of Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel*. They are available online at www.nwmo.ca/brochures.



The *Description of Canada's Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel and Centre of Expertise* is designed to help further the conversation with communities and others who are interested in learning more about the deep geological repository and centre of expertise to be constructed as part of Canada's long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Inside you will find details about the surface facilities, the underground facilities, the centre of expertise, the project's economic impact on the community and region that host it, and much more.

The transportation of used nuclear fuel raises a host of important questions: What sort of transport package will be used to safely and securely contain it? Who regulates shipments? How good is the safety record? How do other countries transport their own radioactive waste? How much exposure to radiation is there? These questions and more are answered in *Safe and Secure Transportation of Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel*.



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