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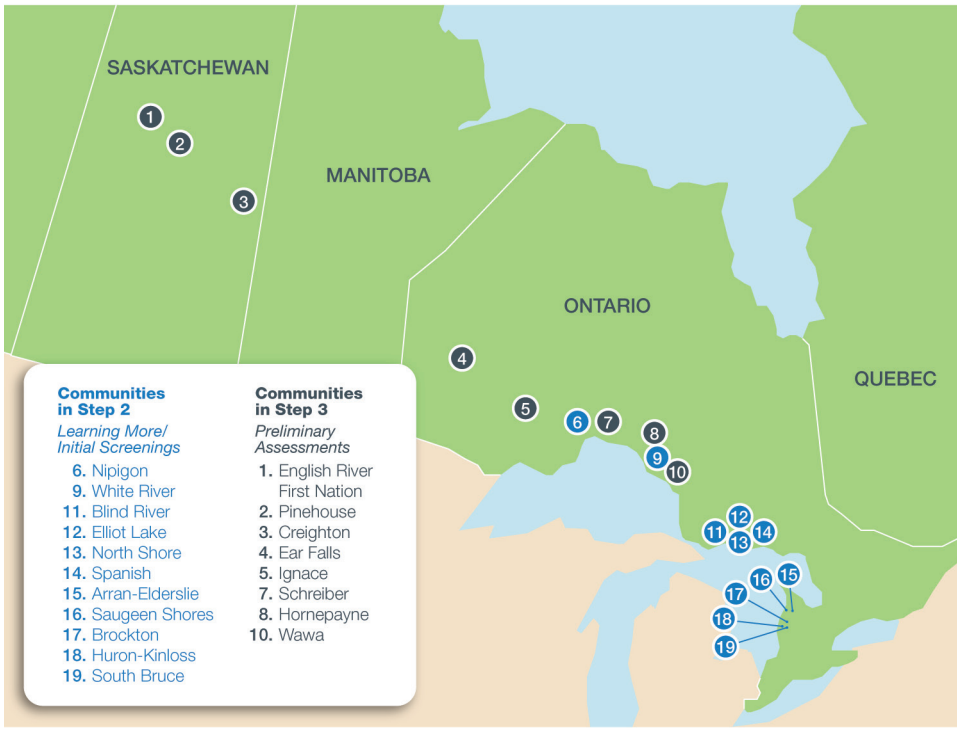
nwmo news

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Communities begin moving to Step 3 (preliminary assessments)

The communities that have expressed interest in learning more: Where they are in the process

The NWMO process to select a site for Canada's used nuclear fuel repository was launched in May 2010. Since that time, there has been a strong showing of interest, with 19 communities actively engaged in the process – three in Saskatchewan, the remainder in Ontario. Communities have entered the process at different times, and the process is designed to allow them to proceed at their own pace. Some are learning about the project and awaiting the results of an initial screening (Step 2), while others (eight as of the end of June 2012) are already undergoing preliminary assessments (Step 3).



REMINDER:
September 30, 2012, is the deadline for communities to express interest

The NWMO will suspend new expressions of interest in the project after September 30, 2012. This is to help ensure that the communities that have entered the process by that date receive the NWMO's full attention, and that the best knowledge and expertise are brought to ongoing studies and engagement activities.

Each of these eight communities, in turn, has completed an initial screening of their potential suitability for the project (Step 2) and has formally asked to continue in the site selection process with the initiation of preliminary assessments.

The results of initial screenings can be viewed online at www.nwmo.ca/sitingprocess_initialscreeningresults.

Phase 1 preliminary assessments: What's involved

Preliminary assessments are multi-year studies designed to assess the suitability of a community to host the project. These assessments address four crucial variables in the site selection process: safety and security, both for people and the environment; community well-being; the community's potential to remain engaged as the process moves forward; and the well-being of the surrounding area.

Assessments conducted during Step 3 occur in two consecutive phases, each lasting a year or more. Phase 1 studies, the ones currently underway, are all desktop studies, while Phase 2 studies will involve fieldwork and expanded engagement with the community and surrounding region.

The desktop studies carried out during Phase 1 include geoscientific assessments and assessments of the project's potential to foster the well-being of community and surrounding region.

Geoscientific assessments

The objective of these studies is to assess whether it is possible to find for each community specific siting areas that are likely to be suitable for hosting a deep geological repository. Phase 1 studies are non-intrusive in nature and include:

1. A detailed review and interpretation of available geoscientific information related to geology, structural geology, natural resources, hydrogeology and soil covers;

2. Compilation and interpretation of available geophysical surveys (e.g. magnetic, electromagnetic, gravity, radiometric);

3. Lineament studies using available satellite imagery, topography and geophysical surveys to provide information on the location, orientation and frequency of potential structural bedrock features (i.e. fractures, faults and dikes);

4. Compilation and assessment of available remote sensing data, and completion of a terrain and drainage analysis; and optionally,

5. A limited field reconnaissance to visually assess the presence of geological features identified through desktop studies.

Community well-being studies

The objective of these studies is to explore whether there is the potential to foster well-being in the community and region through the project. The first step is to develop a description of the community that can serve as a basis for beginning to explore the project's potential effects on the community's well-being, and if need be, to identify steps that would need to be taken to protect or enhance that well-being. This is done in partnership with the community, as represented by the local Community Liaison Committee (described below), through open houses and one-on-one conversations. Factors of interest in describing a community include the size of the local population; economic activities; infrastructure; local institutions and culture; natural heritage, including parks and protected areas; and the values, aspirations and plans that are unique to the community. Assessments will examine environmental, social, economic and cultural factors. Over time, this work will broaden to include neighbouring municipalities and Aboriginal communities, and to involve their residents in the process.

The role of Community Liaison Committees

Community Liaison Committees are an important resource for communities entering Step 3 of the site selection process. Comprised entirely of local volunteers, these working groups perform several key functions, among them helping to develop an accurate description of their community and the surrounding region, keeping residents informed about the results of preliminary assessments, making sure that residents' concerns are addressed, and tailoring information sessions to meet local needs in order to involve the entire community in learning about the project. Each committee's mandate is set by the community's council, and members are selected by the council. Communities that have entered Step 3 may request funding from the NWMO to cover the administrative expenses of a Community Liaison Committee, along with the salary for a halftime administrative assistant, as well as funding for third-party expert advice and community planning exercises.

What happens after Phase 1?

The first Phase 1 studies will not be completed until 2013. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that some communities may be screened out at the completion of Phase 1, either because they have a relatively low potential to be suitable sites or because they themselves do not wish to proceed. The greater detail of Phase 2 studies, in turn, will further narrow the field to the communities or siting areas, probably one or two, with the greatest suitability for the project. As with the preceding steps, a community must formally express its willingness to proceed to the next step in the site selection process.

NWMO's Ray Hatfield awarded Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of outstanding contributions to Canada's Aboriginal communities



Wayne Wouters, Clerk of the Privy Council, NWMO Ray Hatfield and Governor General David Johnston

Ray Hatfield, the NWMO's Senior Advisor for Aboriginal Community Relations, was one of 60 distinguished Canadians the Governor General personally presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. The Medal is presented to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their communities and nation or who have made achievements abroad that bring credit to Canada. An Ojibway of the Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, Ray, who holds an honours bachelor of commerce and a law degree from Queen's University, was a distinguished "departmental ambassador" with Aboriginal peoples (and organizations) for over 35 years. He worked tirelessly for the advancement of Aboriginal Canadians and actively promoted Aboriginal recruitment before retiring in January 2012 from the position of Director General of Individual Affairs in Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

International participation at the 4th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention

In May the International Atomic Energy Agency hosted the Fourth Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The Canadian delegation was led by Peter Elder of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and included representatives from Natural Resources Canada, industry and the NWMO. Canada was one of 63 countries participating in the Joint Convention.

On May 15, 2012, the Canadian delegation delivered a presentation on progress since the last Review Meeting and updates since the publication of its Fourth National Report to the Contracting Parties (other participating countries). NWMO staff provided an update on progress made toward the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel since 2009 (the year of the most recent Convention). The discussions covered a broad range of topics, including used nuclear fuel inventory, facility costs, community dialogue and engagement activities, and the next steps in the site selection process. The peer review by the Contracting Parties noted that Canada has a solid plan to move forward on the long-term management of used nuclear fuel.

NWMO's annual Geoscience Seminar marks its tenth anniversary

Every year the NWMO holds an annual geoscience seminar to present the latest research undertaken as part of the Adaptive Phased Management technical program. By furthering its understanding of geosphere evolution, the NWMO is better able to characterize and assess the suitability of sedimentary and crystalline rock settings for safely hosting a deep geological repository over time frames on the order of one million years. The 2012 seminar, which took place the first week in June, included researchers from 11 different Canadian universities. Among them were the seven graduate students the NWMO helps support through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's Industrial Postgraduate Scholarships Program. Each of these students made a poster presentation of his or her work.

During the day-and-a-half event, 21 presentations were made on a broad range of topics that included geomechanical and hydrogeologic properties of sedimentary rock formations; the predicted history of the next glacial ice sheet advance, the application of site-specific natural analogues to assess formation scale properties and solute migration on geologic time frames; the characterization of pore fluid composition in low permeability sedimentary rocks; the microbiological characterization of deep-seated groundwater systems; and numerical analyses to explore processes and mechanisms responsible for hydraulic and geochemical signatures preserved within the low permeability rock of sedimentary basins.

Researchers from two of the NWMO's sister organizations, the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB) and Switzerland's National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (Nagra), gave talks on the lessons learned from international programs related to subsurface site characterization of candidate sites and the implementation of various radioactive waste management concepts, including the multi-barrier deep geological repository concept in crystalline and sedimentary rock formations.

NWMO at the 2012 Canada-Wide Science Fair

The Canada-Wide Science Fair is one of several initiatives the NWMO helps support through its Corporate Social Responsibility Program. The 2012 Fair was held in Charlottetown, P.E.I., with organizers awarding nearly $1 million in cash prizes, awards and scholarships to the winning finalists. At the awards ceremony, the NWMO funded and presented 147 bronze medal awards to finalists in the junior, intermediate and senior categories. Participants also had the opportunity to talk with NWMO technical staff at our display booth, where the exhibits that interested them the most were the components of a used fuel bundle and the use of bentonite clay as part of a multiple-barrier system for safely containing and isolating used nuclear fuel.



Bronze medal award winners, junior category, at the 2012 Canada-Wide Science Fair.

Minister of Natural Resources Canada cites progress in implementing the site selection process



In March the NWMO presented its 2011 Annual Report, *Learning More Together*, to the Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources Canada. In his statement responding to the report, the Minister expressed satisfaction with the number of communities expressing an interest in learning more about the project. “I am pleased, at this early stage of the Organization siting process, that communities are demonstrating an interest in learning about this project and considering the possibility of hosting the long-term waste management facility in the future,” he said. The Minister also encouraged interested Canadians and communities to “read the Nuclear Waste Management Organization annual report and to learn more about the progress it is making to address an important public policy issue.”

NWMO staff do their part to reduce air pollution

This marks the third year in a row that NWMO staff have participated in Pollution Probe’s annual Clean Air Commute. The week-long challenge (June 18-24) is a friendly competition among workplaces that encourages commuters to choose more sustainable forms of transportation, whether by biking, walking, taking public transportation, carpooling or telecommuting. More than 50 NWMO employees rose to the challenge, and among them, prevented 2.5 tonnes of pollutants from being released into the air.

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NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

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