Council of Elders and Youth

Record of Discussion # 25

APM-REP-00676-0217 **October 2019**

Rebekah Wilson

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Document History

Title:	Council of Elders and Youth Record of Discussion # 25		
Report Number:	APM-REP-00676-0217		
Revision:	R000	Date:	October 2019
Author Company(s)			
Authored by:	Rebekah Wilson		
Verified by:	Jessica Perritt		
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Nuclear Waste Management Organization			
Reviewed by:			
Accepted by:			

Revision Summary		
Revision Number	**Date**	**Description of Changes/Improvements**
R00	YYYY-MM	Initial issue

Report Template Notes (remove in report):

- *Names and affiliation are to be printed, not signatures. Signatures are to be recorded on separate page for filing with NWMO Records (e.g. NWMO-FORM-AD-0006).*
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- *Inclusion of a revision summary necessary if a revision is being made, along with the R000 notation with Report number*

Record of Discussion
NWMO Council of Elders and Youth
Kingbridge Conference Centre, King City, ON
July 10-12, 2019

Attendees:
NWMO Council of Elders and Youth
Chair: Donna Augustine, Norman Stagg
Members: Angus Gardiner, Bob Goulais, Diane Longboat, Grace Manitowabi, Dorothy Parenteau, Billie Schibler, Roland St. Germain, Debbie Plain, Theresa Hall, Paul Robitaille, Brandon Pehtategoose
Advisors: Joanne Barnaby, Fred Kelly, Melanie Hadley
NWMO: Caitlin Burley, Joe Gaboury, Joe Heil, Jessica Perritt, Greg Plain, Laurie Swami, James Wagar, Bob Watts, Rebekah Wilson, Garrett Ugray, Christina Vechsler, Jamie Matear, Kevin Muloin, Donna Chief, Sean Ross, Mehran Behazin
Guests: Ron Jamieson, Chanice Johnston, Paul Jones, Dean Jacobs, Aly McIvor

Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Opening Ceremony

Elder Fred Kelly opened the day with a smudge ceremony. Elder Kelly asked female Elders to speak to the water and sing opening songs. Elder Kelly then led a sharing circle welcoming members to share good news since the previous meeting.

Indigenous Relations Report

Bob Watts and Jessica Perritt provided an update on NWMO's Indigenous Relations activities including Jessica's participation in and presentations at various events. Jessica made presentations at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conference in Australia and also met with Reconciliation Queensland while there. She also made presentations at Queen's University, Western University, as well as NWMO's annual Geoscience Seminar where an Elder also gave opening remarks and did an opening prayer.

Bob Watts spoke about current activities such as the ongoing drafting of the Reconciliation Policy, the Reconciliation Training Program for NWMO staff as well as the Board and Executive Committee. NWMO staff also are continuing to receive Cultural Awareness Training. Bob also commended Laurie Swami on her engagement and dedication as President and CEO to prioritize educating staff on Indigenous history. As part of NWMO's corporate objectives for the year, 75% of all staff will receive the Reconciliation Training in partnership with Reconciliation Canada. Having Elder and Youth members of the council involved is also a priority as staff noted their desire to have more opportunities to interact with them, and Council members expressed desire to participate in the training.

Jessica also reported back about Water Presentations being made in Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLON) for their Women's Circle.

The first four videos in the Reconciliation Series were shown as well as the draft water video. Feedback on the videos and the reconciliation policy include:

The Council met in camera for the remainder of the day.

Thursday, July 11, 2019

Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks

Elder Fred Kelly conducted a ceremony to begin the meeting which included a Pipe ceremony and a female Elder spoke to the water. A food offering of blueberries was passed around following the smudge. Another female Elder did an opening prayer and passed around felt red dresses as recognition of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Another council member read the Declaration of the Keepers of the Land, and the group did a roundtable of introductions for new members and guests.

Bob Watts noted a significant comment he had heard regarding the growth of NWMO following suit with the growth of the Council to strengthen the organization. An Elder member of the council noted that there has been a significant growth in the interweaving of Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science over past years with the acceptance of water being alive and having memory. Council members noted they are mindful of external things going on that may have an impact (positive and/or negative) on the project.

Council members feel that it needs to be driven home that no matter where the project is completed, it will be on Indigenous territory. The used fuel will be going into Mother Earth and it is their tie to the land that makes them responsible to care for us. Council members agreed that they would like young people for generations to come to enjoy the same way and quality of life as they do and their ancestors did. They feel that if their culture and language had been respected in the first place, reconciliation would not need to happen. Everyone defines reconciliation in their own way and many questions whether true Reconciliation is actually possible.

Land Access Strategy Update

Allan Webster made a presentation on Land Access and Acquisition as part of the Site Selection Process. He shared with the group that the land owner will continue to live on and use the land above ground (if selected) aside from a small area for the facility to be built and accessed on an ongoing basis. The land owner will receive payment for option and sign an agreement with NWMO. Payment and the agreement will remain with the land owner even if they are not selected for the final site. The agreement is an opportunity to educate them about potential concerns and opportunities, to overcome stigma of used nuclear fuel. The Learn More Process for communities will continue to be in place so that the community can continue to learn about potential impacts.

Council members had specific questions about Treaty Territory specifically around the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON). This will be an ongoing conversation throughout the site selection process and NWMO will ensure that project does not move forward without their consent in this region. They have regular meetings with the SON environmental group. One step in this process has been cultural verification and traditional knowledge studies done by SON. NWMO and community are both clear that this work does not mean that the communities support the project but would like to continue learning.

Reconciliation Policy Review

The Council received a revised draft of the Reconciliation Policy for review. Jessica Perritt noted that NWMO is hopeful to have the policy finalized by the October meeting. An Elder member noted that it is

important to include spirit as part of the policy, especially in the implementation and the knowledge that comes from spirit.

Another Elder member acknowledged that there is no such thing as a perfect policy but that it should be brought forward to ceremony to ensure it is being done in a good way. It will continue to be a living document and the spirit reignited each year in the implementation. Jessica Perritt noted to the Council that NWMO is open to ideas for the upcoming ceremony at the October meeting. She also mentioned that there is strong support from the Board on the policy. In addition, she mentioned that the advantage to developing a yearly implementation plan is it provides an opportunity to review the policy each year to make sure it remains current and relevant.
Comments from the Council included:

- Concerns over the statement that the past can be put behind us. Elder members felt this was inappropriate and would like to have it reworded. This statement was included in wording pulled from Reconciliation Canada documentation. NWMO will work with Elder members to find a comfortable solution

There is a need to reach a 'sunset' on policy changes/revisions and get to work on implementation – the 'spirit' of the policy

Developing Approaches to Regional Collaboration

David Flood presented his final report to the Council and shared about some successful projects in other communities where they have been working with Elders through ceremony. He made a suggestion to NWMO to create regional frameworks and a regional body for engagement. The ultimate goal should be to leave something good behind whether the site is in a region or not. David also spoke about some specific case studies completed focused around the role of women and the agency of Mother Earth. Elder members wanted to have clarification on the role of consultation and Indigenous decision making in the process. David noted that in his process, he felt that setting up good consultation processes and responding to dialogue to find the best possible solution using an Indigenous way of working has been successful.

Indigenous Engagement Update

The Indigenous Engagement Team provided updates on the recent activities they have undertaken, as well as shared with the Council the remaining milestones to get to the 2023 goal of selecting a final site.

Given the rapid pace of learning taking place in communities and the urgency as the 2023 goal approaches, Council members requested to have 4 quarterly meetings per year if possible. NWMO said they would look into the possibility of this.

Friday, July 12, 2019

The Council Chair and Co-Chair introduced the day. The day opened with a ceremony by Elder Fred Kelly, an opening prayer by Bob Watts and Jessica Perritt spoke to the water.

Policy Review Cont'd

The Council spent some additional time reviewing the policy and discussing next steps for developing an implementation plan. Council members felt it was important to recognize that the policy is not a traditional tool and felt that they need to see spirit in the implementation through ceremony. An Elder member suggested bringing the policy into the sweat lodge. It is also important to co-create the policy with communities as community members will want a say in how the project moves forward. The Council would also like to see specific mention of their activities in the yearly implementation plan. The next steps will naturally unfold as Creator intends them to. Council members also felt it is important to remember that they are independent advisors but that communities are involved deeply. It is also important to consider the role of Municipalities in the policy and their understanding of it. All communities need to be involved in this strategic plan. The implementation of it may be different in each region and should be adaptable to suit each community. This process has been a deliberate evolution of NWMO and its meaningful relationship with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and carries on the legacy of past members and their spirits included in its intent. Council members suggested incorporating a reference to Declaration of the Keepers of the Land in the policy but keep it independent to maintain separation. Council members felt it is important to avoid paternalistic system of writing the policy and assuming the NWMO knows best, and use ceremony to ensure it is done in a good way.

Journey of Water – Presentation # 3: Water and Copper

Rebekah Wilson and Mehran Behazin presented Water Presentation # 3 on Water and Copper.

Comments from Council members included:

- Important to recognize significance of copper's trade value as it had been traded all the way from Thunder Bay to South Florida decades ago
- Recommendation to find out traditional names for the Great Lakes and why they are called that. These were homelands of many Indigenous nations and were named accordingly
- Word for copper means belongs to Thunderbirds, the winged ones
- Acknowledge the formation of Canadian Shield 2.5 billion years ago
- NWT copper miners have recognized healing power of copper. It was used as a medicine and gifted to Indigenous communities
- Water has its own realm, water is the lifeblood
- Copper is valuable because of its spirit, brings it strength
- Wabigoon made an offering to the water. Ceremony they did told them to offer copper and a feast dish at the borehole site
- Copper that will be used in the project is used in ceremony
- Copper offering was made at the borehole site
- Suggestion of putting a map of Indigenous trade routes pre-contact in the presentation

- Include copper artifacts from Canadian Indigenous history
- Include community land-based knowledge
- In Indigenous history, copper breast plates were buried with people, especially children as protection

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be October 16-18, 2019 at the Kingbridge Conference Centre. This meeting will include a joint meeting with the NWMO Board of Directors
- Angela will be in touch to book travel

Closing Ceremony

Elder Fred Kelly conducted the closing Ceremony and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the members of the Council of Elders and Youth. Council Members were given parting gifts while Elder Kelly sang and the group joined in dance.

Date notes taken: July 10-12, 2019

This note was prepared by staff and has not been approved and/or reviewed for accuracy by other meeting participants.