NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

Engaging Youth

A Report on NWMO Youth Engagement Activities

November 29th, 2013

NWMO Youth Engagement

Executive Summary

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is responsible for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel. Towards that end, the NWMO is seeking a community willing to host Canada's used nuclear fuel in a deep geological repository. Given the long timeframes associated with the implementation of Canada's plan, known as Adaptive Phased Management (APM), inter-generational considerations are an important factor informing the work of the NWMO.

In the NWMO's 2008-2010 Triennial Report, the NWMO's Advisory Council noted "that long-term used nuclear fuel management is an inter-generational issue [and] emphasized the ethical dimension of incorporating opinions of youth into decision-making that will have impacts far into the future."

While the long planning and implementation horizons associated with the NWMO's work allow for many opportunities for phased and adaptive decision-making that is responsive to Canadian values and priorities they can also introduce inter-generational risks that may affect the successful implementation of the project.

The NWMO has consistently articulated a commitment to intergenerational fairness and inclusiveness. It is important that youth continue to be involved in the NWMO's range of engagement activities. Youth need to be recognized as a key stakeholder group locally, regionally, provincially and nationally who must be provided adequate opportunity to become engaged and informed.

In 2013, The NWMO continued to involve youth in its engagement program in a variety of ways. For example, the NWMO:

- Includes youth in social research and dialogue activities;
- Involves Aboriginal youth in engagement initiatives and forums;
- Provides presentations to post-secondary students in relevant disciplines;
- Supports and promotes youth science education through the Corporate Social Responsibility Program (CSRP);
- Presents engagement opportunities for youth at the local level in interested siting communities; and
- Provides presentations to Aboriginal youth at conferences and participates in tradeshows and cultural awareness activities on invitation.

For a comprehensive list of NWMO youth engagement activities to date, please click **here.**

Looking ahead, the NWMO will build upon its current youth engagement program, in alignment with the phased multi-year implementation of APM. As such, youth engagement will evolve to include individuals at the local and regional levels residing in communities involved in the siting process and who are learning more about becoming a potential host for the deep geological repository. As work proceeds, the NWMO will work with communities to identify preferred approaches for youth engagement.

The NWMO is developing a roadmap for youth engagement aimed at steadily building capacity amongst youth through multiple ages and stages of development engaging them via educational institutions and in professional environments. Engagement activities will aim to:

- Foster and promote a culture of science by supporting youth science organizations
- Ensure involvement of youth in community reflection on the potential for the Project to align with the long-term vision of the community and foster well-being
- Engagage youth through relevant post-secondary institutions, student and professional associations and career fairs
- Engage First Nation and Métis youth in activities to understand the project and how to apply Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge to project activities

Scope of NWMO Youth Engagement

Social Research and Dialogue

Since its inception in 2002, the NWMO has undertaken extensive engagement with interested Canadians and Aboriginal Peoples, including youth, to seek their input into the development and implementation of Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. This engagement included a number of activities including, for example, multi-party dialogues, citizen panels, public attitude research, e-dialogues, focus groups and workshops.

Now as the focus of engagement has become more community driven, NWMO activities have focused on working with communities to identify and implement activities to engage youth in community discussion and reflection. These activities are described in more detail below

Aboriginal Youth Engagement

The NWMO has involved youth in its Aboriginal engagement program through work with Elders, facilitated dialogues and in siting community engagement activities.

The NWMO Elders Forum held annual meetings from 2005 - 2011 comprised of First Nation, Métis and Inuit members who represented a broad range of interests, backgrounds and experiences. Each Elder appointed to the Forum invited a youth to attend the meetings to act as a support and to learn from Elders in their discussion with the NWMO, promoting the intergenerational learning that is so important in the long-term nature of the NWMO's work. In addition, the Elders Forum and its working group "Niigani", were instrumental in the design of the two Youth Outdoor Summer Camp projects conducted with Aboriginal students aimed to build understanding in the development of culturally-appropriate communication materials.

Restructured in 2012, the Council of Elders is exploring ways to involve youth in the Council and established a sub-committee to study options moving forward. At a 2013 gathering, the Council explored the following options:

- Youth representation and the role of youth to take on a more active role in discussions;
- The Elders will focus on teaching by example—taking pride in their culture while providing counsel on the application of Indigenous Knowledge in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management;
- Youth to provide input to Council of Elders to enhance perspectives on issues in the development and maintenance of good relations; and
- Providing youth opportunities to learn communication skills between knowledge systems— a bridge to understanding Traditional Knowledge and Western Science

The Council of Elders will explore options and confirm a preferred approach in the near future.

Youth Outreach through Educational Institutions

As in past years, NWMO staff members in 2013 attended university seminars as guest lecturers in various disciplines to build understanding among students about the APM project and the work of the

NWMO. These presentations allow NWMO to reach out to, and raise awareness amongst, youth pursuing studies in disciplines directly related to the APM project (such as engineering, earth sciences, public policy, environmental studies etc.). At the same time, this engagement has allowed the NWMO to strengthen relationships with existing networks of university faculty in key program areas. The NWMO will continue to undertake outreach to post-secondary institutions to build a base of understanding about APM among young Canadians undertaking relevant disciplines of study. In addition, the NWMO will explore opportunities for engaging young Canadians through related youth chapters of professional associations.

Communications Materials and Resources

In 2013, the NWMO continued to build youth interest in the topic of used nuclear fuel and the APM project through the development of appropriate communications materials and resources.

Based on recommendations from the Youth Roundtable regarding how best to communicate with youth, the NWMO has enhanced existing communication materials and developed new communication products that use simplified language, greater use of graphics and visuals, and increased use of animation when possible. In addition, the NWMO is in the process of developing a social media presence and an online virtual exhibit.

The virtual exhibit will reflect all of the information experienced through the physical NWMO exhibit with the opportunity to access additional layers of information according to each user's level of interest.

Build Understanding of, and Foster Opportunities for, Youth in a Potential Host Community and Region

Since the initiation of the siting process in May 2010, the NWMO has worked with communities learning more about being a potential host for the APM project to identify opportunities for engaging youth in their community. The NWMO has provided presentations to school children about the project and underlying science and has hosted school groups at community open houses to view the interactive mobile exhibit developed to explain the project. In total, between 2010-2013 presentations were made to 700 elementary and highschool students in communities participating in the site selection process.

Communities in Step 3 of the siting process have established Community Liaison Committees (CLC) to assist the community in learning more about the project. Several communities have included youth representatives on their CLC in order to bring forward a youth perspective and identify opportunities for local youth engagement.

Moving forward, the NWMO will identify, collaboratively with communities, youth opportunities related to implementation of the project and the planning required to ensure future workforce and related career opportunities for youth.

Support for Youth Science Organizations - NWMO Corporate Social Responsibility Program

Through its Corporate Social Responsibility Program (CSRP) the NWMO provides support to a range of youth organizations focused on encouraging science learning amongst youth at the local, provincial and national levels.

In 2013, the NWMO continued to identify youth science organizations in the nuclear-cycle provinces involved in youth science learning. The NWMO provides funding support for student awards, financial aid for students attending science competitions and camps. In addition, the NWMO volunteers staff to attend related events as award presenters, project judges and guest speakers, where possible.

Examples of youth science organizations that received support in 2013 from the NWMO include:

- Youth Science Canada
- Shad Valley
- Science North
- Scientists in Schools
- University of Saskatchewan Science Ambassador Program

For more information on the NWMO's CSRP, please visit:
http://www.nwmo.ca/corporatesocialresponsibility

Priorities

The following priorities have been identified for 2014 and onwards:

1. **Outreach to Youth to Build Understanding of APM**
    - As the siting process advances, the NWMO will continue to work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to identify opportunities to enhance youth engagement and learning opportunities about APM.
    - The NWMO will work with communities to ensure involvement of youth in community reflection on the Project as part of Step 3, Phase 2 assessments.
    - NWMO will build upon established relationships with key faculty members in relevant programs and seek opportunities to present the work of the NWMO to students and expand opportunities for learning.

2. **Communications Materials and Resources**
    - Development of an online "Learning Zone"
        - NWMO will look to develop content on its website to engage younger audiences. Components might include interactive fact sheets and animated videos.
    - Development of a Social Media Strategy
        - NWMO will explore the effective use of social media tools.