

**NWMO Aboriginal Dialogue 2006
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**Developing Effective Two-Way Communications
Between Canada's Aboriginal Community
and the NWMO**

***Issue Table Report
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Developing Effective Two-Way Communications Between Canada's Aboriginal Community and the NWMO

1. Introduction

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 in accordance with the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. Its initial task was to develop a recommendation to the federal government on how Canada should manage used nuclear fuel from Canada's reactors over the long term. In doing so it was asked to engage broadly with Canadians including Aboriginal people. NWMO forwarded its recommendation to the federal government on November 3, 2005.

During the time when the federal government reflects on NWMO's recommendation and decides on a management approach, NWMO is undertaking activities that will be supportive of any course of action that the federal government chooses to take. Consistent with this overarching approach, **on May 29th and 30th, the NWMO convened an "issue table" in Toronto with the goal of enhancing NWMO's understanding of how to best develop, maintain, and continuously improve a two-way capacity for communication with Aboriginal communities, elders and youth.**

This report provides a record of the complete "issue table" process. An initial draft prepared by the facilitating team was reviewed by all participants prior to finalization in this form.

Eighteen participants reflecting a broad range of values were brought together, roughly half Aboriginal and half non-Aboriginal. Individuals were identified based on their recognized knowledge and experience about Aboriginal – non-Aboriginal communications. A complete list of participants is found in Appendix 1.

The dialogue process was guided by the principles found in Appendix 2 and the meeting itself followed the agenda provided in Appendix 3.

In preparation for the Issue Table, all participants were interviewed by telephone. The following five topics were discussed:

1. **Specific Experiences.** What specific experiences in communications between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities come to mind that either really worked well or did not work well? What lessons do you take from these that would be useful to share with others at the Issue Table?
2. **Particular Characteristics.** Are there particular characteristics of Aboriginal people and their communities and organizations like the NWMO that need to be understood for effective communication?

3. **Youth.** What advice would you give about how organizations like the NWMO could communicate effectively with youth?
4. **Elders.** What advice would you give about how organizations like the NWMO could communicate effectively with elders?
5. **Other.** Any other comments about effectively communicating with Aboriginal people?

Input from the interviews was compiled as a background report. The complete Interview Report is attached as Appendix 4.

This report is organized in a simple format that reflects the process outputs. In Section 2, a set of principles is described for guiding communications between Aboriginal people and the NWMO. This is followed in Section 3 by a discussion of specific suggestions for guiding communications between the NWMO and Aboriginal communities, Elders, and youth. In a final section, the facilitators offer some observations regarding key thinking patterns, an understanding of which is key to effective Aboriginal – non-Aboriginal communication.

2. Nine Principles to Guide Effective Two-Way Communications Between Canada's Aboriginal Community and the NWMO

These principles were drawn from the discussion toward the end of the Issue Table. While there was some discussion and general agreement, it was not the intent of the dialogue to draw conclusions or reach a consensus but instead to develop some lessons and advice on communication between Aboriginal communities, elders and youth and organizations such as the NWMO. They are used here as an organizing structure for the key points made.

Principle 1. Show respect for and have knowledge of whom you are dealing with (understand history, organization structures).

Several Aboriginal participants indicated that they believe that mainstream Canadians and Canadian organizations have little understanding of Aboriginal history in Canada. The treaties, the residential school experience, and the history of marginalization are poorly understood. It is necessary to acknowledge past history with Aboriginal people and learn to understand it.

Outside organizations also need to understand the role and nature of the Aboriginal organization they wish to approach, e.g., First Nation, tribal council, political/territorial organization, Métis organization, regional or national organization. Some understanding of the linkages and relationships between and among organizations can also be useful.

Before organizations such as NWMO approach Aboriginal groups they need “to do their homework.”

Principle 2. The Aboriginal community will direct you in how to engage with them and will take responsibility for leading the process.

Communities have their own protocols for how “outsiders” and “outside ideas” will be entertained by the community. The initial approach needs to be made to the Chief and Council. In some cases the Chief and Council will be the conduit for all relationships and communications. In other cases, the Chief and Council will refer the contact to a particular group in the community, depending on the nature of the issue. There is a range of possibilities depending on the nature of the issue. Possibilities include Elders, the Band Manager, the Economic Development officer or the Community/ Economic Development Corporation, Youth Council, Resource Planning Board. It is important that the outside group understand that the community will provide direction as to how the process will unfold, and each community is different.

Principle 3. NWMO needs to be willing to do business differently.

To work effectively with Aboriginal communities NWMO will need to work differently than it might in non-Aboriginal communities. Timeframes, interaction protocols, degree of trust, and degree of awareness of the issues, may all be different than in non-Aboriginal communities. Relationships with the land and worldview are also very different adding to the complexity of the interaction.

Principle 4. Recognize that each community is different.

While there are commonalities among Aboriginal communities, each one is different. Outside interests need to do research, ask questions, listen and learn and be prepared to be responsive to these differences in order to set the stage for effective relationships.

Principle 5. Act with integrity and consistent with the Seven Grandfather teachings: respect, love, courage, bravery, wisdom, honesty (truth), and humility.

Aboriginal people and communities place a high value on acting in ways that are consistent with these teachings. Organizations wishing to work with Aboriginal communities will want to exemplify these teachings in their approaches and their work with the community.

Principle 6. Ask youth how they want to engage.

There are wide differences in how young people wish to interact with outside agencies. For some, computer communication is a familiar and accessible way to interact and get information. For others, lack of familiarity and lack of access may mean that computer communication is totally ineffective as a communication tool. There are also differences between teenagers and people in their twenties regarding their attitudes, interests and approaches to engagement.

Principle 7. Don't do anything that might be seen as "buying" support.

Aboriginal communities are sensitive to the idea that efforts could be made to "buy" their support or win their favour in exchange for small gifts or token amounts of support. While there is support and appreciation for the idea of gift giving, any appearance of using the offering of material goods in exchange for support, access or agreement should be avoided.

Principle 8. Communications is the key to long-term relationship building.

The early stages of the interaction between NWMO and an Aboriginal community would need to be seen as preparation and trust building. This stage needs to occur before more substantive discussions can take place. As well as the "getting to know you" activities, communities will need to learn about an organization like NWMO and its work in order to have a meaningful exchange of ideas and information. Relationship building needs to be seen as a long-term process, and may be a longer-term activity than is anticipated by non-Aboriginal organizations. If a siting decision were made, the relationship between NWMO and an Aboriginal community would, in effect, be permanent.

Principle 9. Respect refusal to participate, leave the door open for a change of mind.

As mentioned above, a key component of relationship building is respect. That includes respect for the community if its decision is that it doesn't want to enter into discussions or a relationship with NWMO. It should also be noted that community direction, capacity and understanding, and leadership would change over time. Those changes might result in the possibility of having discussions and considering the building of a relationship at another time. If the community requests that interactions be halted, it should be done in such a way that does not preclude the resumption of discussions at a later point.

3. Suggestions for Enhancing Two-Way Communications with Communities, Elders and Youth

Discussions at the Issue Table were focused on establishing two-way communications with elders, youth as well as Aboriginal communities as a whole. The points raised are summarized and organized according to the components of establishing communication relationships.

3.1 Communications between NWMO and Aboriginal Communities

Preparation

- NWMO needs to understand political and governance structures including, regional and local arrangements. This includes knowing about First Nations who are signatories to treaties and Métis structure of government in any given area. The presence and rights of all Aboriginal rights holders needs to be understood.
- Outside groups need to be clear on what their objective is in speaking with Aboriginal communities and all parties participating in the dialogue.
- NWMO should be aware that it may take several visits to a community, provision of background information in several different formats, as well as a clear understanding of the protocols, before actual discussions begin.
- Before engaging in conversations with an organization like NWMO, communities will want to know the relevance of the issue for their area. Concepts need to have a connection to geography; this becomes part of the relevance test. Answers for practical questions of logistics, transportation and geology are needed to give the subject local, practical relevance.
- Organizations such as NWMO need to be careful of the assumption that they are talking to the right group. Generally best to approach the local Métis or First Nation organization first and then inform provincial or regional groups. People will let you know how to proceed, e.g., elders might say, “Next time you want to come, contact us.”

Getting to know you

- Get engaged with the community. Attend community cultural events such as pow wows and local celebrations or historical days. Go to cultural events, learn history, participate, listen, and ask questions. This becomes part of the acceptance process.
- There are huge gaps in Canadian understanding of Aboriginal history. This results in lack of empathy regarding current issues. “We need to teach Canadians ‘the ugly truths’.”
- The progress made by First Nations and Aboriginal communities in the last 20 years also needs to be recognized. e.g. in one example described, a First Nation is now a 20% owner of a mine. Only a few communities enjoy achievements like this.

- Aboriginal awareness by non-Aboriginal people is needed in many places, starting at junior high school. An interesting approach would be to have 20 Aboriginal and 20 non-Aboriginal people in a retreat setting. They could be given a crisis situation and would need to problem solve and work together to deal with it. It would be an exercise in learning to understand a new paradigm.
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities haven't figured out how to understand each other. First get past the "apartheid." Common ground can be found once the conversation starts.

Understanding the nature of Aboriginal communities

- There is a need to recognize the collectivity within Aboriginal communities due to community ties.
- Outsiders need to understand that the real decision-making process in an Aboriginal community is often behind the scenes. Decision-making happens outside the sight and involvement of outsiders.
- Elected Aboriginal government structures are trying to guard against disenfranchisement of women, elders, and youth. It is not NWMO's place to judge this.
- Once you're inside the collective of an Aboriginal community they will tell you how to direct the conversation, who to talk to and when. NWMO would need to create a level playing field and respect the community it wishes to talk with.
- It was noted in the post Issue Table comments that engagement of women's groups as an entity is also important. These groups take different forms in different communities and often are an important force regarding issues such as environmental quality, which have the potential to affect future generations.

Community-driven engagement

- Different strategies for engagement will be needed in different areas of the country and different regions of provinces.
- Aboriginal communities ask for respect for what they say regarding beginning a relationship process. Ideally, the outside group will be brought in/invited in by a member who will put the outside group in contact with the right people. This would include introducing them to the Chief and Council or elders; order may be important. This may lead into further discussion with the elders or some other group. In the situation of Métis communities, go to the Métis government and ask to speak to the community. As a matter of courtesy, and to prevent misunderstandings, it is important to inform the Métis government, Métis National Council, if the initiative is National in scope; the Governing Member, if provincial; and the local affiliate, if local. The outside group will need to respect the community's protocol regarding how they wish to be engaged. It may be appropriate to hold events. One-on-one conversations with elders may be important. The community will determine preference for regional or local community meetings.

- Information sharing/communication processes need to be people-driven and broad, on a regional basis. Processes need to be driven by First Nation and/or Métis organizations, led in their own way and involve information exchange. This approach leads to ownership by the community.
- In situations where NWMO is invited into the community, the lead role may be given to the elders. In that case the elders would not be operating as elected officials but outside of the local political/election process. The outside group can't prescribe the nature of the invitation. How to get the "golden key" may remain a puzzle.
- When first going into a community there is a need to explain who you are. It is best if information is sent in advance so it can be "checked out" on the "Moccasin Telegraph". Success will depend on how well you take the first few steps. Be careful of assumptions. Learn who the speakers (spokespeople) are on behalf of communities/groups of communities. There will be different protocols in different areas e.g. traditional elder vs. Christian elder. Flexibility is important. If NWMO can visit an Aboriginal territory by invitation more people will get involved. Be transparent and follow through as a demonstration of integrity. Trust is earned over time through demonstration. It will take some time before the community is ready for a complex message.
- NWMO will work with Aboriginal communities to understand community protocols and implement them in all its activities.
- There is no generic entry model. Every community is different. It takes time to build trust and relationships and partnerships. It is essential that an approach to equality be arrived at regarding decision-making and roles and responsibilities. The approach needs to be community-based and developed and evolved using trial and error, learning from mistakes and making course corrections.
- It is hard to get the public involved in complex issues. They don't like to read. In Saskatchewan Aboriginal people are very engaged and empowered. Natural resource developments in the mining industry and Aboriginal relationships are very advanced in regards to issues involving radioactive waste and uranium mining.

Climate for building communication relationships

- Trust relationships can be broken easily. Always walk with integrity. An example of some derogatory comments recorded on an answering machine was noted.
- Communities do not want to be or to feel like they are being "steamrolled". The approach needs to be 'here's an idea we want to discuss with you'.
- Groups like NWMO need to look at the two-way communications process as a long-term strategic investment. NWMO has the time to do it right.
- Within communities an oral discourse develops over topics of concern, e.g. mercury in water. This would likely also occur regarding the nuclear issue.
- One person's view and experience of the stages to go through from misunderstanding to understanding.

Misunderstanding

Discovery

Contact – invitation by the community

Engagement meeting(s)

Agreement – Memorandum of Cooperation on “how’s” of engagement

Partnership – commitment & genuine understanding

Work together & walk together side by side – cooperation

Trust building & Relationship building – takes patience

Listening – leads to understanding

Visibility – contributes to acceptance

Transparency – builds trust through honesty

Involvement – generates interest and participation

Understanding

- Another person’s conception of the stages in relationship building is shown in Figure 1 below.

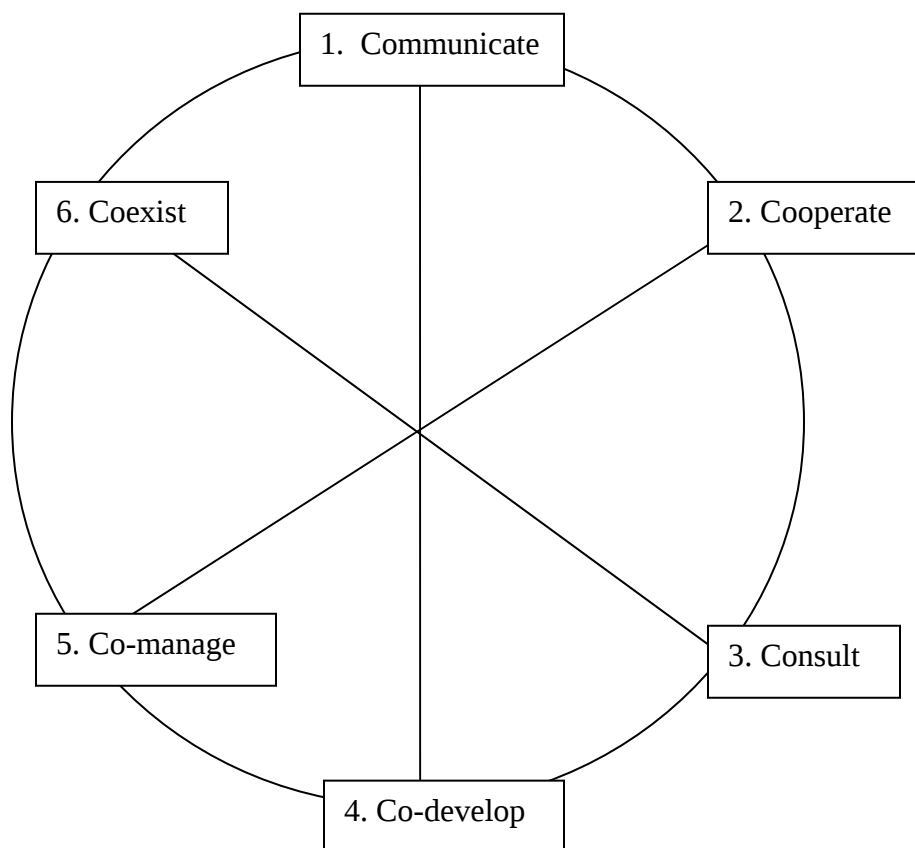


Figure 1. Stages in relationship building

Communication approaches

- The means of communications need to fit the desired outcome. An approach regarding general communication is different than one intended to lead to an agreement.
- Pique interest first to generate dialogue.
- It is important to build capacity at each step of the process.
- Respect confidentiality where needed.
- A commitment is needed to getting through difficult times together.

Language

- Use of English in discussions with First Nations leadership and communities will disenfranchise some communities and some people. There are different ways to deal with language issues in communities.
- There has been linguistic erosion across generations. As a result there are different understandings of language within a community. Oral language has its own life, meanings evolve. There will need to be a two-way street regarding translating concepts. Working with translators who don't know the technical topic may be useful as these people will be learning the concepts in the same way that community members will, without the benefit of prior technical knowledge. This will help to break through linguistic isolation.

Partnerships

- What is NWMO's partnership model? What does partnership mean to NWMO and the community? There is a need to develop common understanding and shared responsibility. This can be difficult for government, but it is a fundamental success factor. The process of communication must ensure that a partnership is developed with the commitment of all parties with equal responsibility for the outcome.
- Leveling the playing field is important. For example, in their negotiations with Attawapiskat First Nation, DeBeers made the commitment that they would not build the mine unless an Impacts and Benefits Agreement was completed with the First Nation. This commitment contributed to the ability to get an agreement. The question was raised as to whether NWMO can make such a commitment. The response was that NWMO has already made a commitment, in the Final Study Report, to collaborative development of these types of agreement with all affected communities.

Adjacent communities

- There is a risk of creating misunderstandings by only talking to Aboriginal people and not talking to neighbouring non-Aboriginal communities. In some cases Aboriginal communities work closely with adjacent communities. Because everyone in an area would be affected, participants were concerned about creating an "us and them" situation by not involving both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Many of these local

relationships are a product of years of work and people would not want to see them damaged. In some cases the Aboriginal community may lead the broader regional discussion process in neighbouring communities.

Best practices

- There can be important learning from other cases in Canada both positive and negative. An example is the relationship between Hydro Quebec and the Cree regarding the East Main project (documents outlining this can be found through the Canadian Environmental Assessment review process and Hydro Quebec’s review of its consultation process.)

Within NWMO or other outside organizations

- The culture of regard for Aboriginal people needs to be represented by everyone in an organization, not just the ‘top guy’. NWMO should develop a policy regarding working with Aboriginal communities that every employee and every initiative must follow.
- Formal Aboriginal awareness sessions are needed for people who deal with Aboriginal communities, include everyone. NWMO should include Aboriginal awareness and attitude as part of interview processes when hiring staff.
- ‘The team’ is very important. Plan to have the same people visit communities more than once for facial continuity. Choose team members carefully and keep them. Invest in the team and recognize that it will take time. There is a role for the senior executive. His/her participation will signal support. The team needs some authority. They need to listen to the community and discuss the effectiveness of their approaches.
- It can be difficult for organizations that try to use relationship-building mechanisms that don’t work, e.g. dependence on letters and phone calls. They may not realize this doesn’t work. Organizations have learned lessons about what works in trying to search for a new paradigm, e.g. repeat personal visits, contact by senior people, open-ended processes, personal relationships and trust, discussions beyond elected people – including elders.
- The NWMO Board, which is composed of representatives of the spent nuclear fuel generating companies, has a credibility problem. One person suggested an idea would be to swap the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors. The Board needs to represent the community, not the industry. People will go to the root to understand the NWMO. The way the Board is structured will lead to trust. Neutrality is important.
- What is the lure for Aboriginal people to become involved with NWMO? Trust will be a key barrier to frank discussion given the current Board structure.

Federal government and broader, related issues

- Governments (especially the federal government) have a duty to consult Aboriginal people. One person described an example in which to date, Canada has not been willing to provide a copy of its consultation policy (if it has one) to an Aboriginal group that requested it. NWMO will need to deal with the Crown Consultation Unit and Natural Resources Canada regarding consultation policy to ensure consistency with it. The definition of consultation

comes from recent Supreme Court rulings. A good approach for NWMO would be to work with Aboriginal partners to discuss what these rulings mean to NWMO. There would be benefits to exploring this multilaterally.

- Each federal department is developing a Sustainability Policy. NWMO needs to know about it and may be able to lead the way, teach others, coordinate and encourage cross-fertilization.
- Systemic discrimination exists. There is a danger for NWMO to walk into situations which will have unintended negative affects on Aboriginal people. There is no one right model to address this issue, but awareness of it is important.

3.2 Communications between NWMO and Aboriginal Elders

Respect for culture

- Understand and use the Seven grandfather teachings: Respect, Love, Courage, Bravery, Wisdom, Honesty (truth), and Humility.
- To Aboriginal people Mother Earth is the teacher. This is part of the identity of Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginal organizations need to respect the Aboriginal understanding of Mother Earth and practices such as fasts on the land, appreciating the traditional way of life, taking only what is needed and the importance of natural elements.

The conversation

- Look for opportunities for open communication with Aboriginal elders.
- The community may or may not wish to involve the elders in conversations with organizations like NWMO. This is the community's decision.

Council of Elders

- It would be a good approach for NWMO to establish a Council of Elders, but that may not go far enough. NWMO will need to provide resources so that elders can go back and inform, communicate and get input in their region. The outcome of these discussions should not be prescribed by NWMO.

Scope

- In the Aboriginal perspective you can't separate nuclear energy generation from nuclear waste. When the focus is only one part of the picture it seems as if something is hidden. "We have to talk about the whole pie not one piece." Aboriginal people talk in wholes not parts. "Impregnating" Mother Earth is not a solution. A broader discussion of energy on this planet is needed. Elders will tend to take this type of holistic view.

3.3 Communications between NWMO and Aboriginal Youth

Young people worldwide

- On a global scale, 50% of the world's population is under 30 and will be until 2050. These people are now leaders in many communities worldwide.
- Young people are rooted in their own physical community and in virtual communities via electronic technology. 'Taking it Global' involves Indigenous communications channels. We need to understand better how young people interact in these media. Use of these media will require regard for the seven grandfather teachings. Non-aboriginal organizations need to learn how to use the medium in a fair and open way. Young people instinctively know how to do this. Young people are accustomed to instantaneous time frames with the capability to exit and re-engage. Outside organizations may get unpredictable responses to requests for young people to engage. Communication efforts need to be sustained to try to get a response. In the international context young people are connected to home community and the global stage at the same time. NWMO can be part of a global discussion in which young people are participating.

Youth Council

- If NWMO were to establish a Youth Council it would be information-technology driven. It would be interesting to work with Youth Council members in a way that combines traditional activities such as fasts on the land with information-technology driven instantaneous communication and dialogue.
- Youth will want to be part of designing a communications program. A Youth Advisory Committee could be helpful in this regard.

This generation of youth

- Many youth walk in two worlds, the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal world. Outside organizations need to be aware of this; to address both sides and to recognize the internal struggle that may occur for these young people.
- Many youth are part of the "troubled generation". Suicide statistics are high in many parts of the country but the reasons for this are not clear. TV shows an inaccessible other world, and results in a division between generations.

Youth directed inquiry

- Ask young people the question "What do you want to know about nuclear waste management?" Let them direct the investigation. Discussions need to be around imagination and ideas, not compliance. It would be a mistake to look for compliance with an idea like "nuclear waste is harmless." There are many different perspectives on nuclear waste. Look at panel discussions that feature different perspectives. Questions can be

posed such as: What if your community was suitable for a site to store spent nuclear fuel? How would it affect this community, its culture?

- In some of the past NWMO consultations, youth have been engaged in reporting and dialogues. They made important contributions and identified the big questions regarding the nuclear cycle and reducing the amount of waste. Their knowledge level increased as a result of the meetings to the extent that they concluded that “We are not dealing with the whole issue.”
- Begin with youth interests and aspirations. Involve something beneficial to them. Include teamwork projects with practical tasks, physical engagement, and fun.
- In one organization’s past consultations on behalf of NWMO, youth were the most engaged. They really wanted to know the details. A key principle for youth engagement will be access. Some youth have access to new technology. Others do not.

Awareness building

- Manned tables in shopping malls with visual displays and surveys were used in another Aboriginal group’s past dialogue on nuclear waste management and are effective in attracting young people – especially if staffed by young people.

Capacity building

- There is a role for NWMO in supporting education of young people. Scholarships from NWMO could support students in science who may become interested in this topic.
- NWMO could set up computers in some communities. The computers would be used according to community plan/direction, e.g. computer literacy training, community center. It would be for access by all and could be an initial legacy of goodwill. However, care would need to be taken to ensure that it wasn’t viewed as a bribe. NWMO shouldn’t impose equipment on the community but rather respond when the community asks. This is better than dumping things on the community that it might not want or use.
- Make it possible for communities to bring youth with them to many types of meetings, with travel paid.
- A mining company offers these developmental opportunities for youth: mine tours, co-op placements for 10 days at the mine, hire youth as environmental monitors during the summer, support community youth activities, have apprenticeships committed to Aboriginal youth, support youth delegates to attend National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation career fairs.
- NWMO could contribute to virtual education skills for young people.

Community connections

- Success happens when a project helps the community meet other goals and when the concept can be part of something bigger. Being able to link to a broader community agenda provides recognition for the youth and reinforces self worth and self esteem.
- Each community has a slightly different sense of shared ownership of its students.

Approach to youth

- Comic format: Would that be seen as patronizing or respectful? A comic format has been used successfully with elders to help them learn about environmental assessment in a watershed management context. Generally, 11 - 12 year olds want a magazine designed for 17 – 19 year olds, 17 – 19 year olds want something designed for 20 somethings.
- Experiential learning is very powerful. Learning is more successful when people do something and feel they have made a contribution. This could include research or policy work.
- An example of successful learning techniques used in Climate Change education workshops was noted. ‘Climate Change Bingo’ provided fun, engaging, learning for 12 to 15 year olds.
- Electronic tools are useful but “we also need to slow down and get to know people.” Literacy is a problem. For example, 30% of people in New Brunswick are illiterate. 22% have only basic reading and writing. Other means of communications are needed in addition to the written word, e.g., television, computer, internet.
- Literacy is likely to be an ongoing problem. Virtual communication may be the best tool. A Virtual Game dealing with reality not fantasy could be created by NWMO.
- Studies are available about communicating with youth. These can provide valuable insights. The principle of integrity must be maintained. Full disclosure is needed. All communications must stay true to NWMO principles. Sources of information given were: INAC surveys of Aboriginal people and Ekos Research may be helpful.
- Technology can be viewed as the most recent tool of segregation – many Aboriginal people don’t have computer skills/comfort. Northern Manitoba reserves don’t have access to computers widely; they don’t have high speed internet. At this point in time on-line survey tools will not give a representative picture.
- The presence of someone in the community who is charismatic to the youth and can lead a local process can lead to success.

Involvement

- Open the door a crack and they burst through!

Cultural awareness

- This modern way of life may not be like this forever. Young people need land and skill based experiences to shape their cultural awareness. Being part of something real is a source of knowledge and strength.

Schools

- Re-examine work with schools – look at potential for curriculum at different levels, beyond specific agenda. First Nation schools have evolved separately from local government. There would be a need to work with schools and local governments separately and not assume that one speaks for the other.

3.4 Summary of Specific Suggestions to NWMO

Sections two and three of this report contain much advice about how NWMO can approach developing effective two-way communications with Aboriginal communities. The advice is presented in the form of principles to be followed and approaches to be used. The following list is gleaned from these sections and offers a list of specific actions that NWMO can take to build its capacity for effective communication.

1. Develop an **NWMO Aboriginal Policy** to guide NWMO's interactions with Aboriginal communities.
2. Form a **Youth Council** to provide a forum for ongoing discussions with young Aboriginal people.
3. Do research and experiments to better understand **how young people use electronic technology**, the degree to which they have access to it, and the extent to which it is an effective tool for interaction.
4. Establish a **Council of Elders** and provide resources so that the elders can go back home and inform, communicate and get input from their region.
5. Reconsider the make-up of the NWMO **Board of Directors** to include Aboriginal representatives.
6. Provide NWMO staff members with **education about the history of Aboriginal people** in Canada.
7. Develop an explicit model of the **NWMO – Aboriginal partnership**.
8. Learn about **best practices** from other situations where Aboriginal communities have worked with and entered into agreements with non-Aboriginal organizations.
9. Learn about the **federal government's duty to consult** Aboriginal people. NWMO needs to be up-to-date on the definitions of consultation in Supreme Court rulings and understand how

the federal government, through the Crown Consultation Unit, is dealing with these responsibilities.

10. Maintain a **watching brief on the federal departmental Sustainability Policies**.
11. Implement a **targeted strategy to develop capacity in young people**, e.g., scholarships, work placements, etc.

4. Facilitator's Analysis of the Messages from the Issue Table

The following section is an analysis by the facilitators of the points made during the Issue Table and their connection to communication and Aboriginal cultural thinking. From the discussions, themes emerged that characterize the differences between mainstream organizations and Aboriginal communities. These are important areas for consideration as these distinctions are not well understood. When they are not understood, difficulties can be inadvertently created.

The three themes are: Relationship Through Courtesy and Respect; Perceptions of Time; Ways of Thinking.

Relationship through Courtesy and Respect

Many speakers reiterated that the relationship between NWMO and Aboriginal individuals and communities must be characterized by courtesy rather than by a business approach. The business corporate model has been characterized by exploration or exploitation. ("What portion of our land or our resources do you want?")

Courtesy requires the NWMO to be true to its word, regardless of the cost. This implies a searching honesty on the part of NWMO representatives: of this will be born trust and trustworthiness. Courtesy is a quality of soul and is an essential attitude of the whole person. (Distress has been occasioned by the fragmented impression given by lesser models of commitment.) This attitude requires sensitivity and awareness of how the person thinks and feels. It is courageous and courteous to show genuine interest in aboriginal cultures and to enact respect and concern for its members as well as for the collective.

The NWMO is asked to give its whole attention without demanding something in return. "We've got some ideas to present to you: let's discuss them together". As an aspect of this process, Aboriginal youth and elders too will gain a sense of being appreciated for themselves. There is a need to establish committees of youth and committees of elders that would report to NWMO, and there is a necessity to include Aboriginals on the NWMO Board of Directors.

The relation between NWMO and Aboriginal communities is to no avail if any person who is involved in the conversation feels devalued or insignificant: courtesy requires a person be seen as an equal. There were numerous references to the concept of equality. Courtesy is lived when every man, woman and child is given opportunity for participation. At this Issue Table this was expressed in frequent expressions of concern for engagement of elders, youth, etc. Feelings are to be spoken forthrightly and courageously in the appropriate place to the appropriate person. At the Issue Table courtesy prevailed throughout the two days and even though strong negative feelings were appropriately expressed they did not swamp the mood of collegiality or permeate the atmosphere of the dialogue.

An important aspect of courtesy is respect due to a person's function or rank, whether the person be chief, university president or elder. Complete honesty, integrity and consistency ("transparency") characterize this model of behaviour. Participants noted that in the past, outside organizations have tended to approach Aboriginal communities only when they want something.

One way the NWMO can enact courteous dialogue is to make available to Aboriginal communities the knowledge of its members without an expectation of getting something back. Suggestions for NWMO included writing of science-based curriculum for high schools, the providing of scholarships as the Musselwhite Mine currently does; the ensuring of computer access in Aboriginal communities thus enacting one of the seven grandfather teachings, which is to share what has been learned.

Conclusion

Courtesy and respect include the use of ritual by elders at the beginning and at the conclusion of meetings. In its practical application, the ceremony and words of the elder acknowledge that service is to the spirit by calling on people to participate in the dialogue with an openness to courtesy and respect. This opens up a field of energy that enables the conversation. It was suggested that this courtesy be extended to holding some future forums or dialogue in the midst of Aboriginal communities.

The attitude of respect would be more evident if the histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations were acknowledged and attempts were made to understand the results of these histories. "Direct acknowledgement of this history between us would allow us to relax in the presence of that history."

Courtesy was modeled in the posing of two central questions: "How do we initiate the conversation with a community which may be a willing host?" and, perhaps the most beautiful question, "How do we issue an invitation to dance?"

Perceptions of Time

Four approaches were illustrated: the cycle, slowness, process and prophecy.

The Cycle: This major image is based on the round of the seasons and is a conception of time that is at some variance with the linear model of time that is so determinative of the business life. The cycle is sensitive to what recurs, hence, in part, the concern that NWMO might continue the process of colonization. When time is approached through cycle there is repetition.

Slowness: A cyclical approach to time gives appropriate time and space for process to take place: "slow down to speed up."

Process: It is the nature of personal process to be non-linear, thus slower. The individual consciousness circles around or circumambulates the point at issue until recognition or understanding dawns. For example, particular importance is accorded to the necessity and time required for aboriginal youth to work through their own process. Questions from youth include "Why was waste created in the first place?", and "Why is the focus not on the sun as the source of energy?"

A most valuable part of youth process, is their openness to imaginative solutions. Also highly valued, is the direction they are given by elders to go out onto the earth at specified times of both outer and inner seasons in their lives. Such experiences give youth sensitivity to how their thinking fits with their spirit.

Prophecy: Time Future. Prophecy is an attempt to anticipate the future: we share concern about the shape of life on earth in times to come and wonder how long there will be life on this earth. One Aboriginal prophecy is apocalyptic: it anticipates the extinction of forms of life, and, as a result, the necessity for survival teachings to be given to those who remain. It is noted that the concept and the practice of survival are vivid concerns for NWMO. In the words of participants, “We desire to co-exist in perpetuity” and to “be keepers of the earth”. “Survival is a matter of arranging a roof over our head, eating something each day, drinking clean water, and providing for our children.”

Ways of Thinking: Analogy, Metaphor, Animistic Logic, Conceptual Logic, Critique

English is the language in which most discussions between Aboriginal communities and outside agencies are conducted. Since English is a highly conceptual, Latinate language, concern was often expressed about the difficulties in communication this gives rise to. This difficulty is compounded by that fact that in many communities, English is a second language for people. When a thought experience (a concept) is separated from a visual experience, understanding may vanish. It is necessary to bring the pre-conceptual or imaginal together in communications with Aboriginal people. The use of a range of information sharing techniques, particularly those with pictures can be helpful, e.g., storyboards, diagrams, maps, videos, drawings.

Analogy. Participant comments provided many examples of analogical thinking. Focused analogical thinking results in the expression of metaphor that attempts to tell the truth via a major image. There were various metaphors spoken at the Issue Table, including: Mother Earth; the earth as our home; moccasin telegraph; seven grandfathers; doublespeak; playing field; depth dimension; walking the walk; dialogue as dancing together.

Metaphor. Metaphorical thought makes use of comparison to illustrate a point or thought; hence the transmission of knowledge to Aboriginal communities is enhanced by setting up objects of comparison and by images (“story-boards”). The method of understanding images is not to try to interpret them but to look at them until their interpretation becomes clear. These two related methods of communication would begin to address the concerns that “whatever is said in writing may be irrelevant” and “there are difficulties in explaining concepts to some members of our communities.”

The shape of metaphorical thought is also the shape of wisdom: what a human mind must do to comprehend a metaphor is a version of what it must do to be wise. Those who think metaphorically are enabled to think truly because the shape of their thinking echoes the shape of the world. To illustrate, several speakers talked about localized impacts on the natural

environment and, through the use of metaphorical thinking, could picture impacts and consequences on a much larger scale.

Animistic and Conceptual Logic and Critique. One source of misunderstanding is the different kinds of logic applied by Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

Indigenous, oral people have an animistic logic: ostensibly “inanimate” objects like stones or mountains are thought to be alive; certain names spoken aloud may be felt to influence at a distance the things or beings they name; for these people particular animals, particular places and personas and powers may be felt to participate in one another’s existence, influencing each other and being influenced in turn. This concept is currently called interdependence.

In this approach to understanding the world, participation is a defining attribute of perception itself. There is an active interplay between the perceiving body and that which it perceives.

Non-Aboriginals prefer conceptual logic. From the perspective of metaphorical thinking, the concept functions in isolation rather than being viewed from the broader context, hence the reiterated requests during the Issue Table for the necessity to look at the larger picture or context, in order to come to an understanding by an arrangement of elements of the whole. When presented as a larger picture, there is a possibility of a transfer or a migration of concepts. In order to grasp the meaning of a word (“community”, “roots”, “consultation”) it is necessary to examine the missing parts of the contexts from which the word draws its usefulness, and hence the reiterated desire for a clear definition of the aforementioned words. There were repeated requests for the NWMO to discuss these “missing parts”. The request is for a logic that is not piecemeal. When one context or concept is laid over another, aspects and outlines spring into focus and their pattern becomes discernable.

Conceptual logic puts high value on discrimination between ideas and objects. A shadow side of this value may be a system of thinking that inadvertently discriminates against people and alternative ways of thinking. Such determining systems need critique. It was agreed at the Issue Table by several speakers that there is a role for critique (“skepticism”): this process remains welcome as an aspect of NWMO dialogue since the openness enabled in critique can create opportunity for insight.

Appendix 1. List of Participants

Chief Hugh Akagi	St. Croix/Scoodic Band of Passamaquoddy Indians, St. Andrews, New Brunswick
Helen Cooper	NWMO Advisory Council, Kingston, Ontario
Heather Creech	Director of Knowledge Communications International Institute for Sustainable Development, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Linda English	Marketing Manager (acting) Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Dr. Andy Fyon	Director, Ontario Geological Survey Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Sudbury, Ontario
Dr. John Gammon	Director, Mining Initiatives Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario
Norville Getty	Policy Advisor Union of New Brunswick Indians, Fredericton, New Brunswick
Keven Kantén	Communications and Marketing Consultant Aboriginal Multi Media Society, Edmonton, Alberta
Robert McDonald	Director of Public and Media Relations Métis National Council, Ottawa, Ontario
Donald Obonsawin	NWMO Advisory Council, Toronto, Ontario
Frank Palmater	Consultant Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association, Ottawa, Ontario
Alan Penn	Science Advisor, Cree Regional Authority Grand Council of the Cree, Montreal, Quebec
Michael Pierre	Research Associate Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Colin Seeley	Manager (retired), Aboriginal affairs and Corporate Relations, Placer Dome (CLA) Ltd., Black River, New Brunswick

Dr. Don Sharp	Director of Environment/Nuclear Coordinator Métis National Council, Ottawa, Ontario
Gillian Thiessen	Consultant Askiy Consulting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Billy Two-Rivers	Elder Advisor to the Assembly of First Nations and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, Kahnawake, Quebec
Dr. Paul Wilkinson	President Paul F. Wilkinson & Associates, Inc., Montreal, Quebec
Pia Wilkinson Chapman	Aboriginal Relations Advisor Encana Corp., Calgary, Alberta
Andy Yesno	Capital Projects Manager, Senior Advisor to Chief and Council, Eabametoong First Nation, Eabamet Lake, Ontario

NWMO staff and workshop team

Dr. Anthony Hodge	NWMO
Cynthia Jourdain	NWMO
Michael Krizanc	NWMO
Pat Patton	NWMO
Margaret Wanlin	Facilitator and Report Writer Wanlin & Co.
Susan Tiura	Scribe and Author of the Analysis Section Wanlin & Co.

Appendix 2. Principles of Participation

Below are listed eleven assertions that provide a draft protocol to guide participation in the NWMO's Issue Tables. These principles were included in the meeting package and discussed at the beginning of meeting. There was general agreement with the intent although a detailed consensus process was not used.

Our intent is:

1. To explore, not negotiate;
2. To share, not to decide;
3. To inform and when requested, to advise;
4. To understand the diversity of perspectives and build relationships;
5. To consider how to widen the network of connections with which NWMO will need to build linkages;
6. To seek identification of areas of common ground, of differences and the various underlying reasons; and
7. To respect that participation and contributions are not to be seen as an endorsement by any participant of NWMO decision-making (or any specific outcome of it).

Representation:

8. Participants in this discussion have been identified to reflect a range of interests and values. However, they are not invited as formal "representatives" of any interest, nor is there any expectation that they will report back to or seek approval from any interest or organization. Rather, participants are invited to share their knowledge, experience and particular perspective as an expert in their own right.

Attribution of comments:

9. No specific attribution of any comment made by any participant(s) will be referenced in any notes unless specifically requested by the participant(s).

Notes:

10. Notes will be prepared from the meeting and shared, either with a representative group if identified by the meeting or the full group prior to finalization. Notes shall typically be of a summary nature and will include a list of participants.
11. Any notes prepared should include at the beginning, these "Principles of Participation" which shall have been discussed with participants at the beginning of the activity.

Modified from Glenn Sigurdson, CSE Group, SFU Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver BC

Appendix 3. Agenda

Evening, Monday, May 29th

6:00 p.m.	Opening Prayer Introductions Dinner NWMO Status Report – What is NWMO’s Mandate and Status Issue Table Objectives and Output, meeting approach – Facilitator What did we learn from the interviews? – Facilitator <u>Opening Circle:</u> Observations on how the NWMO might most effectively communicate with Canada’s Aboriginal Community, particularly youth. Open ended and broad discussion.
9:00 p.m.	Adjourn for evening

Tuesday, May 30th

7:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00	Agenda review
9:15	<u>Question 1.</u> What methods would be most effective for two-way communications between the NWMO and <u>Aboriginal communities</u> ?
10:30 am	Refreshment break
10:50 am	<u>Question 2.</u> What methods would be most effective for two-way communications between the NWMO and <u>Aboriginal elders</u> ?
12:00	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	<u>Question 3.</u> What methods would be most effective for two-way communications between the NWMO and <u>Aboriginal youth</u> ?
2:20 pm	Refreshment break
2:40 pm	<u>Summary of Key Principles</u> <u>Final Circle</u> - Final comments from each participant (<i>messages for the NWMO - what worked well in this Issue Table, what needs improving and how; what is your one key message you would leave the NWMO</i>)
4:30 pm	Closing remarks, What the NWMO heard
4:45	Closing prayer

Appendix 4

INTERVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

May 24, 2006

**Developing Effective Two-Way Communications
between Canada's Aboriginal Community and the
Nuclear Waste Management Organization**

INTERVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

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1. Introduction

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in November 2002 in accordance with the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. Our initial task was to develop a recommendation to the federal government on how Canada should manage used nuclear fuel from Canada's reactors. In doing so we were asked to engage broadly with Canadians including Aboriginal people. Consistent with this charge we forwarded our recommendation to the federal government on November 3, 2005.

We are now in a period of transition while the federal government reflects on our recommendation and decides on a management approach. During this time, we are undertaking activities that will be supportive of any course of action that the federal government chooses to take.

Since its inception in late 2003, the NWMO has sought dialogue with Canada's Aboriginal community regarding the challenge of managing used nuclear fuel over the long term. Our "Aboriginal Dialogue" has been supplementary to a broad program of engagement involving Canadians from all walks of life. Throughout the Aboriginal Dialogue, NWMO's goal has and continues to be "to build the needed foundation for a long-term, positive relationship between NWMO and the aboriginal people of Canada."

As our work evolves, the NWMO remains committed to ensuring that two-way communication with Canada's Aboriginal community is maintained and improved over time. This issue table explores how to best do this.

In preparation, interviews were conducted with each participant regarding their thoughts on communicating effectively with Aboriginal people. A template of five questions was circulated in advance to guide each discussion. This Report provides an un-attributed synthesis of the responses to each of the five questions.

2. Lessons Learned from Specific Experiences

What specific experiences in communications between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities come to mind that either really worked well or did not work well? What lessons do you take from these that would be useful to share with others at the Issue Table?

Specific Experiences

Communication and Training Sessions: Communication and training sessions involving government and industry and aboriginal communities were described as helpful in exchanging information and enhancing mutual understanding. These sessions involved visits by government and industry to the community to become aware of aboriginal issues and to listen to community concerns and conversely the community learned of issues facing government and industry.

This process allowed sufficient time for a full exchange of ideas and dialogue. Throughout the process the government visited the community and spent time with children and families in order to build trust.

Memorandum of Cooperation: One community's Memorandum of Cooperation with a provincial ministry commits both parties to act together rather than in a confrontational manner as in the past. This understanding is working in the community.

Development of a glossary of mineral terminologies: Another community's positive experience was the development of a glossary of mineral terminologies in Aboriginal languages which involved the whole community.

It was a joint effort involving elders, adults and school kids who did drawings to show things in a visual way. The glossary was [in] English, Ojibway along with Ojibway phonetics and pictures. What is most important about the glossary is that we engaged all different parts of the community. It's a win-win. Relationship building, trust-building occur when you participate and work together; we walk together side by side.

Resource Planning Board: One northern community's Resource Planning Board is an effective communication mechanism. There are two factors that ensure this effectiveness. One is its makeup and the second is its process of community involvement. This Resource Planning Board is made up of a representative of each trapline family plus representatives of non-trapline families in the community. This Board considers issues that arise for the community regarding traditional land and community impacts. The Board will learn about an issue or development, consult with the community and make a recommendation to the Chief and Council. This method provides the community with direct knowledge and participation in the discussion and decision-making.

The problem of changing personnel: Repeated changes in a company's personnel engaging with a community can lead to loss of trust in the company. The personnel chosen to engage with a community must also have the authority to speak on behalf of the company otherwise a lack of trust can develop. One such example was related of a case in which a community felt that the company was not providing the correct level of authority and consistency in personnel. The company did not understand the nature of the problem that existed and did not act until the issue was raised by the community. The issue was finally addressed by the company president through a personal visit to the community followed by the assignment of an appropriate liaison person with decision-making authority who was closely connected to the president.

NWMO Dialogue: Reference was made to the recent NWMO dialogue. Aboriginal organizations were provided with the financial resources to conduct a dialogue in the manner best suited to their needs. In this case, one organization visited communities to talk directly with people.

There is a lot of talk in government that consultation should take place, but rarely are the necessary funds available to do it correctly; NWMO provided an opportunity to go to communities.

Lessons Learned

Trust, Relationship-building and Respect:

All participants noted the need to develop trust and respect with and for Aboriginal people and to build relationships for the long term. In this process communication with all levels of the community was identified as being necessary to build long-term relationships.

Failure has occurred as a result of distrust or when people have had different understandings; this can lead to entrenchment of positions and results in the breakdown of communication. Due to their history with government and corporations Aboriginal people feel that they have not always been treated with respect and they are therefore, distrustful of mainstream initiatives.

Trust and relationship-building

Trust was described as a two-way equation: the company must have trust in the community and the community must have trust in the company and each party must be committed to the communication process over the long term.

False starts can create problems with relationships. If you are going to do exploration [or other types of development projects] make sure that there is a reasonable degree of certainty that you are going to go ahead before going into the community. If you change your mind they will think that you have lied to them when changes are made and will ask, "Why did you come to our community and waste our time?"

Many participants identified the need to speak with the Chief and Council as the elected body but that the company or organization must also speak with the members of the community in order to have a full dialogue and to build the needed relationships.

Respect

Aboriginal people will want to know the company and the individual's values and that their values are understood by the company.

People will recognize if you are just providing lip service and will not be trusting of the information.

If you want to gain from communication with Aboriginal people, you must go into the situation already believing the end result is worthwhile enough to take the time to get down to the real communication.

Mutual respect can be achieved. Although many recognized the challenges of building effective relationships they felt that mutual respect can be achieved.

You don't necessarily have to agree on something to have respect for each other.

We don't want to be adversarial; we want to be treated as an equal partner; we try to provide value-added information for a "win-win" situation.

Time: Time was described as having two dimensions, 1) Time must be allowed to facilitate the necessary learning, education, knowledge development and decision-making within a community, and, 2) time must be viewed in its long continuum of past, present and future when making decisions.

In the first case, sufficient time must be allowed for communities to learn about an issue, to develop understanding and to discuss the components of the issue among themselves.

Aboriginal people in northern communities may or may not have a lot of experience with mining and issues such as nuclear waste, depending on where they live and their exposure to the subject.

...Aboriginals are not at the leading edge of technology; not all Aboriginal people have computers or have easy computer access; it is hard to participate effectively if not given time. We need clear time frames that are within the reality of Aboriginal people.

Sometimes government departments give us two or three weeks to respond to an issue but that's not enough time for an effective response.

In the second case, Aboriginal people keep in mind the long time frame of the past, the present and the future and the impact on future generations when considering issues and decisions. This is an essential component in considering a project such as in the long-term management of used nuclear fuel.

Any discussion on nuclear waste has to take into account immediate as well as long-term impacts, including the present generation of even more waste as we speak (something this workshop may be reluctant to do). This must be put on the table and Native people will want to give this top priority (to truly respect the "generations").

Who to talk to: Aboriginal communities are made up of the elected Chief and Council and the traditional or hereditary leaders. These are not necessarily the same people. In meeting with a community it is necessary to meet with the elected leaders as well as the community members and the Elders.

Various levels within communities and organizations can be helpful in ensuring that everyone who should be involved is and that information and knowledge is shared.

National and regional organizations should be involved and informed for coordination, transparency and equality but communication and dialogue must occur with people at the grass roots level in Aboriginal communities.

Appropriate protocol must be observed:

When meeting with the grass roots of a community the chiefs must be informed.

There are different factions with different viewpoints in native communities just as there are in non-native communities. Aboriginal groups will consider the information available and communicate differently. Getting to know each group and developing a network of contacts within organizations and communities will enhance communication at all levels.

Two-way communications is a relatively new process for communities; people are often amazed and shocked when asked what they think; their experience for many generations has been that they have not been asked what they think and have not had a role to play; two-way communications is a new opportunity.

Imposing viewpoints is inappropriate: This lesson has been learned as a result of many, many years of experience in communities where development has occurred.

Bad experiences have occurred in situations in which one side or the other (this could be a government, a government agency, or a bureaucracy), has taken the attitude that they can do anything they want because they have concluded it to be beneficial to either a people or an area (here it is important to differentiate between "people" meaning the general public, mostly represented by the "dominant society" and "a People" mostly representative of a community such as a "Native Community"). For example, they believe that bringing jobs to an area or a city is a benefit that justifies almost any development. Imposing such conclusions, does not work well for any Native community.

This justification is usually linked to profit. With such an attitude there is little need for understanding and even less need for compromise; here too is where accountability and obligations disappear. If there are those willing to sacrifice that which sustains us, what could possibly force them to see the value of considering the interests of others with whom they would see themselves in competition over these same resources?

Tensions are arising within communities because there are differences in assessing community success: There are differing viewpoints on how success might be viewed within an Aboriginal community. On the one hand there is the viewpoint that success is not sufficiently determined by the provision of jobs and money. From this point of view the land, trees, air, water, etc. must not be sacrificed in the pursuit of jobs and money. On the other hand, it seems that some Native communities have linked their success to money and perhaps this is a reason to sacrifice their land, community and culture.

Here is the division and strife...which is ripping reserves apart.

There appear to be changes in the way people are doing business: There are indications now, however, that there might be different ways of doing business.

Native people have a different way of looking at the planet and there seems to be some growing acceptance of this. It appears that the two cultures are beginning to discover ways of actually working together.

Practical Suggestions

1. **Ensure that the right people with decision-making authority are involved:** Ensure that the people visiting and speaking with a community have the authority of the company and the ability to make decisions and ensure that senior company people are involved.
2. **Budget adequate time and provide resources:** Budget the time necessary to thoroughly explore each issue. Time and resources are needed for an Aboriginal community to develop the knowledge they need for a full dialogue.
3. **Hear & listen:** Diligently try to understand one another's point of view.
4. **Be honest:** Never lie.
5. **Build relationships over time:** Make repeat visits to build on relationships previously established. Develop networks of contacts within organizations. Devote the time needed to get to know a community and for the community to get to know you. For example, visit the community for a full day and spend time with the Chief and Council to learn their views. Have lunch with the community. Spend social time with the community in addition to the dialogue time. Bring gifts of food that the community might not normally have access to. This helps to break the ice.
6. **Develop local skills in the community:** Help communities to develop the skills to do the work being proposed. In mining for example Aboriginal people can prospect their areas and become local experts providing the services a company will need over the long term.
7. **Follow community protocol:** The protocol of a community must be followed by outside organizations seeking to work with Aboriginal groups. Permission must be sought to visit a community and hold a dialogue. The community's spiritual protocol must also be observed.
8. **Have Aboriginal people deliver the message whenever possible:** Successful communication has been achieved when the communication is delivered BY Aboriginal people TO Aboriginal people. When done in this manner people in communities trust the information and promotions being brought to them.
9. **Speak to all levels of the community in a manner appropriate to the people:** Organizations such as the NWMO should speak at a very grass-roots level and in a very simple manner due to the technical nature of the subject. However, many people may be very knowledgeable and learned and can easily grasp complex topics. The people should be approached as any other group would be approached.
10. **In meeting with the community make a presentation and then listen:** Make a presentation to the community using video or other presentation methods prepared in the language of the community. It is preferable that the people in the video be First Nations or Aboriginal and the work being described should be done by First Nations or Aboriginal actors. It is also preferable that the video/presentation be made by a First Nations company if possible.

Follow this with listening to the community's views.

Hear from the English speaking pro-active young people in the community.

Listen to the Elders. They will speak in their own language and translation will be needed. Ensure that enough time is allowed for this as they will require time to tell their stories.

11. ***Allow the community time to review an agreement and discuss among themselves:***
Once a company decides to go ahead with further development the company President or person second in command with decision making authority, should go to the community and develop an agreement. A draft of the agreement should be left with the community so that they can review it and discuss it throughout the community on their own.

3. Particular Characteristics of Aboriginal people and their communities and organizations like the NWMO

Are there particular characteristics of: a) Aboriginal people and their communities; and b) organizations like the NWMO, that need to be understood for effective communication?

Need for adequate time to build trust and respect: Aboriginal people tend to feel that time constraints are not all that important. They believe that time should be taken to talk.

Need to follow through on promises: Relationships must be developed and commitments must be carried through. Aboriginal communities have experience of promises being made and not followed through. People then lose faith.

Follow through is important to demonstrate your own integrity; if you don't have the answers then say you will find out and follow through.

Need to understand and respect different perspectives: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people view situations entirely differently.

There is a great gulf in understanding of culture and communication on both sides.

Aboriginal people have a long-term, strong relationship to the land and it is necessary to develop long-term relationships with Aboriginal people and communities.

Aboriginal peoples' viewpoint with respect to different organizations or issues may vary. For example, the Inuit would look at the nuclear waste issue differently than status Indians in one area of the country or another. Aboriginal people living in nuclear provinces may view the issues differently than those that don't and people in the north may view the issues differently than those in areas close to reactor sites.

Many rural northern communities are going through a transition and communities are not one, homogenous group. Elders are curious and traditional. Adults know both the traditional and the modern worlds and can speak about both "cautionary" and "exploitive" options. Young people know only the modern way of life and have a different perspective. Communities are in the midst of transition and this can cause a clash.

Need to understand and respect both verbal and non-verbal communication: Behaviour and action influences how an outsider is viewed and vice versa. The behaviour and actions of Aboriginal people can be misunderstood. Shyness may actually be a sign of respect.

What looks like a lack of interest may be fear of how the person will be treated if they do speak up [due to past experiences of being excluded or having input devalued].

Many times people are soft spoken and shy; it may be that people are unable to speak in front of a group due to such things as shyness, or that there are certain spokespeople for the community or a family that are not in attendance; there may

also be personal or political alliances in the group that people are considering before they will speak.

Need for appropriate education: Information must be given in small bits as it will take time to learn and understand all there is to know. Patience is necessary.

In many cases there may be a reduced level of confidence among Aboriginal people due to bad experiences in the past. They may have had limited experience with the education system and their voices were not heard when they attempted to speak up in the past. This has eroded their confidence that they will be heard if they wish to be proactive. The result can be a lack of interest or lack of trust that something will be done, and possibly anger.

It is important to remember that just because people are silent does not mean that they are in agreement.

In addition, the outside world is affecting Aboriginal communities more and more, and can affect what they are doing and are interested in.

Things that are happening in the outside world may affect when the NWMO might launch a communications campaign [or initiative].

Need for Aboriginal control of communication: The greatest participation will occur when the discussion is controlled by the people themselves.

4. Effective Communication - Youth

What advice would you give about how organizations like the NWMO could communicate effectively with youth?

Different and changing Aboriginal youth: Aboriginal youth today are different than previous generations. They have grown up not speaking their native language and have not lived off the land. They have grown up with access to TV and have had many socially negative experiences e.g. gangs. Their unemployment rate is very high. They are more likely to be similar to non-Aboriginal youth than previous generations. They are beginning to have more access to the internet as well.

However, compared to non-Aboriginal youth they are more likely to think in a traditional manner and to consider the future due to their upbringing and their closeness to Elders or having listened to Elders in their communities.

Communication with youth from “the video game generation” means that messages have to be high-touch, fast paced, loud and non-linear. They are tactile and visual so communication must engage all of their senses. The internet is becoming a bigger consideration for Aboriginal youth and television is a strong influencer.

Young people require their own communication strategy.

They can be divided into three groups:

- 1) Those who participate in strengthening their community through internal development and linkages with the mainstream system and want to work within it; these are the ones who will participate in community processes and are often recognized as role models.
- 2) Those who are isolated and live in dysfunctional environments and cannot see the point in being involved because they do not feel empowered.
- 3) Those who are pro-active and outraged with the treatment of Aboriginal people and First Nations historically and currently; they're focused on injustices and are not typically open minded to considerations that add balance to a situation.

Changing youth leadership: Youth leadership changes often and quickly. It is unlikely that the same leadership will be in place in youth organizations over a long time. As a result, youth organizations will need continual updating. There are many Aboriginal youth organizations developing and regional and national youth councils seem to be developing across the country.

Practical Suggestions

1. **Offer hope for the future:** In order to engage with Aboriginal youth a company must offer hope; must offer good jobs that will bring credit to them and their community.

2. **Meet separately with youth if they wish:** Youth may not wish to attend workshops but youth need to have their own sessions separate from other people in the community.
3. **Find the youth leaders in a community:** It is helpful to find the one, two or three individuals in each community who influence others.

Peer education is better than non-peer education.

4. **Use different forms of communication:** Youth like and/or need different forms of communication; e.g. video, interactive games, Powerpoint, individual group work, group meetings, etc.
5. **Material distributed through school children can be a good way to reach into the community:** Adults in the community might be reached through children as they bring information home from school.

Be sincere; tell people that everyone is teaching and learning from one another; let them know that they have knowledge and experience that is vital and that you, the facilitator, are there to learn from them. They appreciate this as often they are not asked for their thoughts.

Make them feel safe that they can participate freely; within the situation and with one another.

5. Effective Communication - Elders

What advice would you give about how organizations like the NWMO could communicate effectively with elders?

Elders are special: Many Elders have lived a traditional life and may not be familiar with the outside world and how it has changed. They carry the decisions of the community on their shoulders. They worry about the social ills affecting their children and youth. They want to be constructive in finding solutions to the problems they see in their communities.

Elders are the key influencers to decisions. They are respected and recognized for their wisdom, their work in the community and the knowledge they have acquired. It is necessary to know who are the leaders and influencers in the community. This is determined by visiting the community and spending time in the community. Elders will not necessarily be identified but will be apparent over time.

It is not always simple to recognize the Elders of a community as they are not necessarily old. In order to communicate with Elders in a community you have to find out who they are by talking to people in the community. This can only be done by getting into the community.

Appropriate communication with Elders: Don't interrupt; never interrupt when someone is speaking.

Elders will not speak bluntly; they will often tell a story of their experience. The answer to the question is in the story; if interrupted they may lose their train of thought; interrupting may be considered rude.

There are different types of communication with Elders. Some live traditionally and speak traditional languages; they may not read papers but do listen to the radio and watch television; others may be comfortable with written media and even the internet. Some also will attend meetings.

Encourage them to proceed in whatever way is applicable to them; include an opening prayer (either traditional or Christian as appropriate to the community.)

Go slow; be transparent; before you start you have to tell them where you come from and why you are there and of your expectations and hopes. If they don't know who you are or where you come from they won't engage with you.

Never lie; always be truthful; don't pretend; don't give vague answers; use plain language.

Know that they tell stories and the answers are in the stories.

Elders hold influence in the community: Elders hold influence and will ensure that those who should be involved will be.

*Be **VERY** clear on what you can and cannot do; be clear on who you are and who you represent or work for; be sure to follow through if you say you will do something.*

Elders have an important relationship with the land: Aboriginal people have a unique relationship with the land and Elders play a significant role in passing this relationship on to future generations.

Elders will want to make sure that the land around them is protected and that they are totally confident in what the NWMO is going to do. They want to ensure that the land will be there for their children as they grow up.

The problem of determining true leadership: Aboriginal communities use the electoral process to elect their Chief and Council but this is not the traditional governance structure. This structure was imposed on communities by the federal government but the historical means of leadership in Aboriginal communities is through heritage. In effect there is a parallel structure of leadership in most communities – the elected hierarchy and the hereditary, traditional, structure.

The only way to determine the true leadership in a community is to become involved and get to know the community.

Practical Suggestions

1. **Be clear on your intentions:** Be clear on the project scope and intentions.
2. **Build hope for the future:** Include the elders in building hope for the future in the community so that they will be comfortable with the decisions made and have confidence in the future.
3. **Meet with Elders separately:** Information sessions specifically directed at Elders are helpful; they will share information with their communities.
4. **Meet face-to-face:** Face-to-face communication is best; electronic communications do not work.
5. **Be patient:** Be patient and respectful and listen carefully. In communicating with Elders, attend, observe, sit and listen.
6. **Dress appropriately:** Dress respectfully and appropriately for the weather and the situation.

The message will be received differently depending on how the messenger is perceived.

6. Other comments

Any other comments about effectively communicating with Aboriginal people?

Need for community agreement: Impact Benefit Agreements must have the whole community's agreement. In order to overcome the distrust many outsiders find, all elements of the community need to be encouraged to participate in the dialogue and must be familiar with the agreement.

What outsiders have to do: Corporations like the NWMO will always be outside observers. Success in communications with Aboriginal people takes time. Once a trusting relationship has been developed then people from outside of a community can ask questions.

Any agreement must benefit both sides of the question.

If something is not right or doesn't benefit both sides it should not be pursued.

Transparency is very important. Always be transparent, even one incident can derail a relationship. Aboriginal people feel they have been betrayed in the past and are very sensitive to any signs of lack of integrity or distrust or disrespect.

An individual or company's character is important to the community. Non-verbal as well as verbal behaviour is observed and taken into consideration.

Practical Suggestions

1. **Language barriers may be a problem:** Documents, presentations, written material, should be translated into Aboriginal languages.
2. **Need for a dedicated team of people over a long time:** Due to the long-term nature of the NWMO's work it will be necessary to have a dedicated and possibly large team of people to concentrate on communities and to keep in touch with people in local communities over time.
3. **Aboriginal media must be used with integrity:** Aboriginal media will want to ensure that they are delivering a message that they believe in and support.
4. **Prepare appropriately and speak in plain language:** Speak clearly and factually in simple terms. Avoid overly technical language. Visual components are more useful than a lot of text.
5. **Treat young people with respect:** Speak to young people as adults; they will rise to the challenge.
6. **Be prepared to deal with the past:** In many communities, issues from the past or current concerns unrelated to the project being proposed will arise. These must be acknowledged

and a commitment made to pass on information or concerns to the appropriate people whenever this is possible. Following this, explaining how industry has moved beyond the past can then be discussed.

Aboriginal people want to know your values and know that you have a genuine understanding of why they feel the way they do.

7. In Summary

The themes of trust, relationship-building, respect, long-term commitment and transparency and honesty in communication arose many times in the interviews conducted. Described in different ways and illustrated with different examples, these themes are the components for the development of positive communications with Canada's Aboriginal people and communities.

Many people offered practical suggestions for action that speak to these themes. Lessons of the past have taught people on both sides of this issue that new approaches are needed. Consequently, Aboriginal communities and government, industry and organizations are interested in and committed to finding new ways of communicating.

This Interview Summary Report presents the initial thoughts of participants on the subject of developing effective two-way communication and will serve as the starting point for the dialogue of the NWMO Issue Table. The NWMO will draw from this summary and the Issue Table the key elements and criteria for effective two-way communication with Canada's Aboriginal community as it develops its communication strategy and plan for the future implementation of the selected approach to the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel following a federal government decision.

Appendix 1. Participants and Interviewers.

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEWER
Chief Hugh Akagi St. Croix/Skoodic Band of Passamaquoddy Indians, New Brunswick	Pat Patton
Deputy Chief Eno Anderson Kasabonika Lake First Nation	Michael Krizanc
Heather Creech Director of Knowledge Communications International Institute for Sustainable Development	Pat Patton
Linda English Marketing Manager (Acting) Aboriginal Peoples Television Network	Pat Patton
Andy Fyon Director, Ontario Geological Survey Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Mines and Minerals Division	Pat Patton
Dr. John Gammon Direct, Mining Initiatives Centre for Excellence for Mining Innovation Laurentian University	Pat Patton
Norville Getty Advisor Union of New Brunswick Indians	Michael Krizanc
Keven Kanten Communications and Marketing Consultant Aboriginal Multi Media Society (AMMSA)	Michael Krizanc
Robert McDonald Director of Public & Media Relations Métis National Council	Pat Patton
Frank Palmater Advisor Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association	Michael Krizanc
Alan Penn Science Advisor Cree Regional Authority Grand Council of the Cree (Eeyou Istchee)	Pat Patton
Michael Pierre Research Associate Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources	Pat Patton
Colin Seeley Retired; Former Manager Aboriginal Affairs and Corporate Relations Placer Dome	Michael Krizanc
Don Sharp Director of Environment/Nuclear Coordinator Métis National Council	Michael Krizanc
Gillian Thiessen Consultant Askiy Consulting	Pat Patton
Billy Two-Rivers Mohawk Council of Kahnawake	Pat Patton
Andy Yesno Capital Projects Manager, Senior Advisor to Chief and Council, Eabametoong First Nation	Michael Krizanc

NOT INTERVIEWED	
Paul Wilkinson President Paul F. Wilkinson and Associates Inc.	
Pia Wilkinson Chapman Aboriginal Relations Advisor Aboriginal Relations, Corporate Relations EnCana on 7th	
NWMO	
Tony Hodge	
Pat Patton	
Michael Krizanc	
Cynthia Jourdain	
Helen Cooper NWMO Advisory Council	
Donald Obonsawin NWMO Advisory Council	
Facilitator	
Margaret Wanlin	
Recorder	
Susan Tiura	