

nwmo

NUCLEAR WASTE SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION
MANAGEMENT DES DÉCHETS
ORGANIZATION NUCLÉAIRES

Nuclear Waste Management Organization

 Final Report

The Northwest Saskatchewan Site-Specific Dialogue

October 21 - 23, 2004

Amyot Lakefront Inn, Saskatchewan
Hosted by the Sakitawak Metis Nation

Facilitated by Allan Morin and Gillian Thiessen

Table of Contents

Preamble	2
Highlights.....	2
Impact on Health and Environment.....	2
Impact on Spirituality	2
Social Impact.....	2
Economic Impact.....	3
Preparation	4
Opening Plenary Session	4
Opening Session Highlights	5
Dialogue Sessions.....	6
Focus Group 1	7
Focus Group 2.....	7
Methodology.....	7
Impact on Health and Environment.....	8
Impact on Spirituality	13
Social Impact.....	15
Economic Impact.....	19
General Comments.....	24
Conclusion	25
Recommendations	25

Appendix A - Public Distribution of the Draft Report

Preamble

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is presently engaged in dialogue with Canadians following the release of Discussion Document 2 "Understanding the Choices". As Canadians from across the country gather to discuss the management choices, the Sakitawak Métis Nation has held a special dialogue session in the heart of Canada's uranium mining industry.

The Northwest Saskatchewan "Site-Specific" dialogue project has successfully tapped the experience and understanding of people living in close proximity to Canada's largest uranium mining operations, adding valuable insight to the NWMO consultation process. The northwest dialogue was held on October 21-23, 2004 and included representatives from 19 towns and villages (pre-dominantly Métis population), five First Nations communities (Cree and Dene, mining industry and the NWMO).

The format for the dialogue project was an intensive two day, two night retreat, with participants interviewed in person and in focus groups for more in-depth exploration of the issues. This format was thought to add value to the feedback expected from open public dialogue in other parts of the country.

Highlights

Impact on Health and Environment

- Now that spent nuclear fuel is there (in Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes) it has to be dealt with one way or another. Right now it is not very safe there, it is only stored temporarily. Maybe it's not in our back-yard but we still need to be concerned that it is properly taken care of.

Impact on Spirituality

- Spirituality to me is how we thank the environment for what it gives us, medicines, plants and animals. This is the connection with how we live off the land, so if SNF storage interrupts our harvesting or our access to the land, that is a lot of impact, a lot to give up.

Social Impact

- Real economic development is very difficult without social stability. What we often get is seasonal work, no long-term jobs to retire on. Also it can hurt self-esteem when employment ends. If we have someone struggling (with addictions, etc.), we need to discuss ways to solve this, in partnership with industry.

- "We are all responsible to future generations, it doesn't matter who said what 40 years ago or whether or not so-and-so lied. What matters is that it (SNF) is there and something has to be done about it. Everyone should have their opinion heard because if there's an accident it's going to affect people for hundreds of miles around and for hundreds of years after.

Economic Impact

- I find it interesting (and a good thing) that nobody here is even asking the question "how many jobs will this (DGD facility) create?" Aboriginal people have been promised a certain number of jobs (referring to Cameco surface lease agreement) and it has not happened. There are other considerations besides job creation.
- Ownership in industrial operations in the north is important for our communities to see any change, any positive growth. We should share in the benefits/recurring income from the natural resources coming out of the North beyond the wages. Who will talk seriously with us about a revenue sharing agreement?

The retreat turned out to be extremely successful and highly valuable in terms of the relationship building for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, in large part due to the personal attendance of Mr. Anthony Hodge.

■ ■ ■ Preparation

On October 2, 2004 a group headed up by Allan Morin of Ile-a-la-Crosse and contracted by the Sakitawak Métis Nation traveled to Buffalo Narrows for a meeting of the Northwest Métis Council. The Council, including representatives of 19 Métis communities in the northwest Saskatchewan region, invited Mr. Morin to introduce the work of the NWMO and the upcoming dialogue to be undertaken in the region. A number of very good questions were raised at this initial meeting and councilors received their invitations with sincere appreciation and interest. Invitations were delivered to the Chiefs of the Cree and Dene Nations in the area, with follow-up telephone contact to encourage attendance.

As the registrations began to pour in, Sakitawak Métis Nation President, Don Favel, began to field media calls. Interviews were given with Missinipe Broadcasting Corporation, Saskatoon StarPhoenix and even the Globe and Mail! Careful arrangements were made to accommodate dialogue participants, industry representatives and facilitators at the picturesque Amyot Lakefront Inn near Beauval, Saskatchewan.

■ ■ ■ Opening Plenary Session

October 21, 2004

Steady snowfall throughout most of the day contributed to treacherous driving conditions. When participants began to arrive at the Lakefront Inn late afternoon, we were greeted by breath-taking view of Little Amyot Lake, enrobed in a backdrop of heavy gray sky and framed by pines topped with six inches of fresh powder. The view was interrupted by an on-going comedy, with half a dozen Blue Jays battling a lone squirrel for control of the bird feeder. As guests arrived and settled in, the coffee mugs were filled and everyone had a chance to catch up on the latest news before the meetings started.

Over forty people braved the icy driving conditions to attend the Site-Specific Dialogue Retreat, a testimony to the level of interest in the subject matter. The opening session began with a warm welcome and opening remarks from Don Favel, Sakitawak Métis Nation President and host of the retreat. Elder Jim Favel prayed for the blessing of the meal, a delicious roast hip of beef dinner with all the fixings. During the meal, we were privileged to experience the high-energy and highly accomplished "Sakitawak Michif Dancers from Ile-a-la-Crosse, SK. The guests were invited to participate in the jigging, delighting the children while attempting some complicated steps.

When the time came for the Keynote address, the banquet room was completely quiet. The level of attention and appreciation that Mr.

Hodge immediately secured from his audience was no doubt influenced by his avid participation in the "Broom Dance", (see video). The mood among the participants eased further as Mr. Hodge related in his genuine and respectful manner the intention of the NWMO to truly listen and give consideration to participants' views.

Opening Session Highlights

The highlight of the opening plenary session was thankfulness to the NWMO for making the effort to come and consult and appreciation for the honesty and transparency in Mr. Hodge's address. As Tony admitted openly that nuclear fuel waste is "dangerous stuff", he gained immediate respect for the NWMO and really initiated the cooperation of the group to constructively discuss management solutions.

Dialogue Sessions

The NWMO provided twenty descriptive panels to explain the dialogue and decision process followed by the NWMO in consultation with Canadians. The panels were displayed throughout the main conference room and visited by all the participants prior to the start of the second day sessions. In total, twenty-three individuals representing as many communities (Métis, Cree and Dene Nations) picked up their retreat packages. The retreat kit contained background information on the NWMO dialogue process, NWMO pamphlet entitled "Understanding the Choices" and Principles of Participation.

The second day began with a prayer, followed by Opening Remarks from Mr. Allan Morin, the communications team leader facilitating the retreat. The communications team gave a Power-Point presentation, briefly introducing Mr. Morin, a Northern resident who had personally prepared and presented a report to the Seabourne Commission on the nuclear waste management issue over a decade earlier. Facilitators encouraged the participants that their opinions will make a difference, that their choice to participate in dialogue will make for a better recommendation to Parliament in 2005.

The opening presentation introduced participants to the three management approaches for Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) currently under consideration by the NWMO. The participants were encouraged to consider the three approaches as to their potential impacts on Health and the Environment, Social Issues, Economics and Spirituality. The group was also introduced to the Seven Questions of Sustainability and Principles of Participation to guide their personal assessments. The following pages summarize the feedback offered by focus group participants, organized in the four categories previously mentioned.

Focus Group 1

Ernest Sylvestre, Michel Village
Emile Desjarlais, St. George's Hill
Paul Montgrand, Turnor Lake
Peter Catarat, Buffalo River Dene Nation
Julia Ewing, Cameco Corporation
Brian Ratt, Canoe Lake Cree Nation, Off-reserve
Morris Onyskevitch, Areva Resources
George Smith, Pinehouse (MN-S Area Director, NRIII)
Jim Favel, Ile a la Crosse
Pierre Chartier, Buffalo Narrows
Jules Petit, Buffalo Narrows
Russel Iron, Canoe Lake Cree Nation
Facilitator: Gillian Thiessen
Recorder: Cory Bailey

Focus Group 2

Norman Wolverine, English River First Nation
Jules Roy, Beauval
Don Favel, Ile a la Crosse
Duane Favel, Ile a la Crosse
Darwin Roy, Cameco
Jamie McIntyre, Cameco
Jean Montgrand, Descharme Lake
Phillip Tinker, Pinehouse
Ambrose Maurice, Sapwagamik
Leonard Raymond, Sled Lake/Dore Lake
Don Montgrand, La Loche
Facilitator: Allan Morin
Recorder: Melanie Wildman

Parts of Focus Group 2 were recorded in Dene, Cree and Michif languages, along with the translations.

Methodology

The focus group format was selected to bring the size of the group down to a more effective level for detailed and in depth interaction in the subject matter. Each person in the group was encouraged to make remarks on each subject. The following statements were recorded on large format flipchart pages in view of the entire group. The report authors have paraphrased from summary notes recorded during the discussions. Each group reviewed the notes and agreed to their accuracy.

Impact on Health and Environment

Rapid changes in community and environmental health have been taking place in the north. The utmost concern was expressed in all sessions for maintaining the health of the global environment. Discussion of nuclear energy in consideration of alternative sources of energy was brought up more than once. The intimate relationship between the health of the local people and the health of the local environment was clearly pointed to as essential for sustainable communities in the north.

- Considering the long-term health effects on employees of uranium mines – what do we know about this? Would a SNF storage facility not have an even greater impact on health than the mines?
- We need to be able to assess the potential environmental effects and potential hazards to (deep geologic) stored waste from natural disasters or geological/climate changes.
- I have seen the weather patterns in the north completely change in the last 30-50 years (one generation) and I think it's related to the industrial operations.
- I have seen a positive example from the Fisheries Department, where a problem was identified by local people and Fisheries responded immediately to resolve it. If it is possible for Fisheries to have a positive response to local concerns, then it has to be possible for other departments to also listen to us. We are out on the land and we see the impacts of different developments on the wildlife, plants, migration, water quality and all kinds of things. Also, we have been around long enough to know if something has changed over time – we know from the old people what it was like over the years. This is valuable information.
- We need more information about the specifics of deep geological storage before we can really assess the impact on our health or the environment.
- There is a lot of traditional knowledge about environment, about animals and climate changes.
- I have also noticed changes over one generation, in the animal and fish populations and some changes in weather patterns.
- Whatever it is that causes a drop in the animal population or in the fish population, it means loss of our cultural/traditional practices, and restricts our traditional diet. These changes can result in health declines. More people have disease now, because they don't eat off the land.
- When we can't hunt enough to feed ourselves from the land, we start to eat more off the store shelves and this has affected health. If the SNF storage happens out here and it further reduces our animal populations, this will have a negative effect on our health.
- I know more people with diabetes now and I also hear about more thyroid problems – we did not have these before industry came into the north. Some of the health effects of industry are

indirect, just from the change in lifestyle when we take jobs in the mines. We work and then eat "fast food" and so our health condition has really changed.

- With Eldorado, the mine shafts were covered up with screens, dirt, more dirt and we were told this was going to work and be safe. Well now the dirt has all settled and the shafts are open! The environmental impact study at the time wasn't done right – its costing more now to fix what was not done properly in the first place – the contamination and problems resulting are what we now have to live with – no matter who comes in to take responsibility for it, ultimately we residents of the north have to live with the consequences.
- So for SNF, how can we be sure that what we are being told is right? How can we make sure everything is done right and that there are no mistakes?
- We have come a long way since the 1940's and 50's. We see now that industry has been held accountable for their actions.
- The stream has changed just from the mining activity. We don't really know what (DGD) of spent nuclear fuel would do. It could bring in a lot of money and little impact, or if there was an accident, it could be devastating.
- Now that spent nuclear fuel is there (in Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes) it has to be dealt with one way or another. Right now it's not very safe there, it's only stored temporarily. Maybe it's not in our back-yard but we still need to be concerned that it is properly taken care of.
- How is the power going to be generated to meet the increased demand all over the world? China, Japan, Korea, Russia all need more electricity, that's going to take a lot of coal and destroy the environment, maybe more dangerous to the environment than storing spent nuclear fuel.
- Right now the #1 source of energy is coal – Over 50%, nuclear is 16% and hydro is 15%.
- But coal is one of the largest emitters of carbon emissions that really damages the environment and affects health – global warming.
- Right now there are 430 nuclear power plants. 30-40 in planning and 30-40 in construction. There are 22 in Canada. 17 are operational and the others are being refurbished. (Industry rep. comment in response to a question).
- The coal industry has paid money to Greenpeace to spread word that uranium is bad.
- Uranium city is still not cleaned up – it's a mess – governments (provincial and federal) are fighting over who should pay for the clean-up. In the mean time, we live with the contamination and the effects of the environment. I think more people are sick in the north because of the acid lakes, I know the fish have disease there.
- What do we do with our tailings in Saskatchewan? Are they dangerous? Where can we put them? Safety of animals is important to me in this.

- It doesn't make sense to send the waste back to Saskatchewan (DGD), it is too dangerous to transport it so far, what if there is an accident and it spills? The impacts would be devastating to the environment.
- We are a global economy now, all family members in one living room. We have to think differently - we have to consider how our actions and decisions affect everyone in our global community.
- Our discussions here have global implications for sure.
- Everyone should be concerned about safety, there are some safety issues with temporary storage, serious issues with moving the spent nuclear fuel waste to a central site, even though there has been testing done, how will we ever be sure that this won't leak?
- Even though things are puzzling we have to keep going, we have to be able to look at these things and try to make our comments without knowing what will happen. We have to be as careful as possible to consider all possibilities and think it through.
- I am concerned about safety. How can we be sure, is there some guarantee that this spent nuclear fuel won't leak for some reason? They are talking about very long term storage. What's to say the DGD won't be hit by a quake? I was 9 and-a-half years at the Cluff Lake mine handling high grade and low grade uranium ore. As a result of breathing that ore dust, I have bad asthma now; I believe it is from inhaling the ore dust.
- Health and economic impacts of the mines are negative - we have more sickness now that there are developments than the old people had before the mines.
- The impacts on the Dene Nation - Our natural resources are most important to us - for example - whoever built this hotel, the Amyot, meant to use it to their benefit. What if, in the future the government wants to sell the water from the lake to the United States? They could do it without consulting the Amyot, and they people who built the Amyot would not have the benefit of the lake. That's how it will be for us if some DGD storage facility goes up - there will be impacts in many ways that are important to us.
- Environmental conditions are changing - the weather in the north has changed, there is not as much snow anymore and we have even had tornado warnings! That never used to happen in Ile a la Crosse that you would have a tornado warning.
- Canadian Shield is not solid rock - there are fractures and water flowing through. I drilled 10 years at Great Bear Lake, I had experience in the 50's and wore a Geiger counter.
- The bird population is way down, muskrats are down, rabbits are down.
- People are eating less from the bush - people are not out trapping.
- There are no white ptarmigans anymore - the bush used to be full of them.

- The frogs are all gone – we used to see the big bullfrogs dead on the road all the time – Ile a la Crosse has lake on one side and muskeg on the other side – there used to be many frogs crossing the road – we don't see those frogs anymore.
- I think the frogs have died out because of the acid rain, because of the industry (forestry and mining). Can we expect more of the same if we take on DGD in the north?
- All the smaller animals are disappearing.
- I caught a fish and the gut was cancerous – comes from the contamination from industry, gets into the water and then to the wildlife.
- It's ironic that the radon levels in Regina are higher than in Uranium City.
- Yes, my son wears a gauge to determine radioactivity levels. It has never gone off in the mine, but at his friend's father's garage in Saskatoon the gauge went off.
- I suffer with asthma now since I worked in the mines.
- Pollutants from industry have increased the number of people with asthma in the north.
- Diabetes is a huge health problem in the North.
- Obesity is a health problem now too, now the people drive everywhere, they are not in shape, they drive even just to go downtown. Not a good impact for our health.
- Most health problems that occur in Uranium mining occur because of safety issues. I haven't heard of too many people dying of cancer really.
- But spent nuclear fuel is a different story. Must ensure standards that are currently used in Uranium mining are also used in spent nuclear fuel to reduce risk to workers and community.
- We can detect radiation easily. There are reports monthly, annually to monitor radiation levels that we get. (Industry report comment)
- What are the long term effects of high radiation exposure? Elevated cancer, thyroid problems, and congenital defects. If close enough to high level radiation, death in a fraction of a second.
- There are things you can't control. In France – some communities have higher cancer rates – there is a possibility that people bring radiation in from the mines (boots, gloves, clothing).
- There are policies against this (wearing clothing from the mine out into the community). There shouldn't be transfer of radiation to communities.
- I have seen people coming home from the mine in Cluff Lake in overalls. In Buffalo and la Loche airport in coveralls and rubber boots. There they are in their dirty coveralls and rubber boots – it's not supposed to happen, but I have seen it myself. How much risk is there of spreading contaminants in the community?
- A DGD facility must use the same safety measures used in the North by the uranium mining sector.

- What would a leak of spent nuclear fuel do to our environment? If there was radiation from storage site – what would that mean to the ecosystem?
- What's to say that underground water is not affected by deep geological disposal? Or also if it was airborne?
- When I was a kid, I knew of people who died after suffering a long time with cancer. But now people die, who used to work out there in the mines – they go really fast. There are no animals around the (Cluff Lake) acid spill. There was no compensation paid there. How many trap lines are gone as a result? The animals still have not come back there.
- I am overall satisfied with the risk to personal health from industry, haven't seen elevated levels of cancer in the area.
- Uranium City is an environmental disaster! Acid, arsenic lakes, flow into other bodies of water. We made deals 20–30 years ago and we have to live with it now, nobody is taking this on to clean it up and here we live with the impact.
- As for health, my health is not as good as my father's was at my age – he was a traditional resource user – took an aspirin a day and lived to be 80 in good health – me I have a suitcase full of pills to take and I am only 68.
- Alcoholism used to be killing our people – now we have sobered up but have become sick with different things.
- DGD deals more with long term solutions. In Finland, they have permanently stored their waste in DGD. They have virtually eliminated the long term options.
- In Yucca Mountain, one of the issues is leakage in 1000 or 2000 years. How do we know for sure that can't happen? Also we have only used 20% of the energy [in the waste], so why dispose of that 80% remaining energy. It's not possible to use today, maybe it will be in the future. It would be good to have the option.
- What are other countries using for nuclear waste disposal? Finland, France, Sweden, The U.S. (Yucca Mountain), Russia?
- There are 20 – 30 nuclear states, each country has committed to finding their own solution to spent nuclear fuel.
- Have there been computer simulations done of spent nuclear fuel in terms of safety over 100,000 to 150,000 years?
- The U.S. has spent over 6 billion dollars studying long-term waste disposal. They have looked at the risk.
- It's just not sensible to transport the SNF out here for DGD or for CSS.
- I think Deep River will likely be the site of a nuclear reactor in the north – it's a channel, not actually a river – the water flows both directions – this has been discussed as a potential site for a nuclear reactor – lots of water.
- Our concern is of the impact on the environment – hunting, trapping. For example, when we had the acid spill on the Cluff Lake road, everything went pale and yellow, there was no plant growth on the other side and it was covered up 20 years ago.

Impact on Spirituality

The effects on Aboriginal spirituality were tied very closely to perceived and potential environmental dangers. Indeed, there was a large amount of overlap across all topics, but it was the fundamental belief that we are part of the environment and will ultimately be accountable in all aspects of our lives for its misuse that underpinned the discussions.

- Our spirituality is not "religion", it occurs when we are in touch with the land, when we are out on the land, we feel good about ourselves, we know who we are.
- Everything starts with family. We teach our children but, you know, they make their own decisions. Family is the main thing when you come to the north.
- We make a practice of consider traditional knowledge passed down from our elders, this is still an important part of how we do things, how we make decisions.
- Spirituality for me means a "Sound mind in a sound body". We need contact with the land to keep a sound mind and to be able to hunt and fish to have sound bodies.
- When people come to the north and see the land they think is not being used. In the south they use food banks to feed the hungry, but in the north, the land is our food bank – we use it and care for it and it sustains us.
- Dollars (economics) are not the way we look at hunting, fishing and trapping. We do these things because this is what we know and love – who would we be without our traditional practices? Even if it doesn't pay much, some of the old people still trap because it's their life and their spirituality is included in that trap line.
- The only God we're really accountable to is Mother Earth. If the SNF strategy disturbs Mother Earth then it will impact our spirituality in a negative way.
- Will our traditional knowledge be useful in terms of the environmental problems the world is now faced with?
- "We can pray for the dead, but we must fight for the living".
- It is important to have access to the land, even if supplemented from other sources. If we don't have our traditional foods then there days we can go hungry.
- We need moose, caribou, beaver. Has the government (SERM) given consideration in the 20 km firefighting radius around communities? Our traditional hunting routes are valuable to us too.
- The residential school impacted my spirituality, I was told I was not good enough. I couldn't speak Dene. I was punished for that. Today I am proud to speak Dene. My mother was a medicine woman. I use the traditional medicines now. These are things we need to pass on. If SNF disposal in the north changes my access to traditional medicines I will have lost all over again. These things are valuable to us.

- We say we are oppressed. People don't believe it because they don't realize it. We need our traditional knowledge. Non-Aboriginals don't realize the impacts on our food, spirituality, family ties being broken.
- It is up to us to fix the problems that result from our loss of identity and traditional ways. How can we get industry to slow down? We all must consider our way of life and centuries of beliefs. We must express to industry because they don't really know how this has impacted us.
- We set a limit of fishing traditionally. So, if we (northerners) don't use a lake for a while, then the government thinks it is not being used, and gives it to anglers. It's our way of conservation, but the government doesn't respect that we are stewards of the land.
- We are making some headway, slowly – so we can educate industry/non-aboriginals, as stewards of the land one of our responsibilities is to educate government, industry and the general public.
- Love of the land = Love of your mother. She provides for you. Without that you are nothing.
- For example, My Dad was a resource manager. He patrolled on foot, knew all the trappers and fisherman. He loved and respected the land. If you respect the land, it will respect you back. It will provide for you. I broke a tree branch. My father was very angry. Why was he so angry? Because it wasn't necessary. It was wasteful.
- Someone left two moose on the lake. We don't know who did it – white, Métis, Cree, The issue is that we use up resources for fear they will be taken away.
- One thing taught to us by observation was to take pride in what you have – to be able to use it now and in the future.
- Now we have outfitters who get approved from the south, and we have no say. This impacts our spirituality.
- Seventy years ago, the lifestyle of the people was hunting, fishing, trapping. Now it is reversed totally from how we used to live – we used to teach our children the way of life, but now we don't teach it.
- Now our ecosystem has changed because of climate change, and climate change has happened because of industry. As a result it affects our spirituality and lifestyle. There has been no compensation to us. We are struggling because of government policy.
- You can pray all you want but you have to be willing to stand up and act for yourself and for future generations.
- Our traditional routes and waterways are adversely affected by Primrose (Air Weapons Range) – so what could happen if there was Deep Geological Disposal in the North?
- Getting out on the land is getting close to God (away from the devil) it's the smell of the fresh air, the peace, the mind settles out there, no stress, no bills to pay out there – bills we have to pay in town create stress and then we end up with medication for our hearts bills=pills.

- We live in faith – life is chance.
- We are a global family, we all need to care for each other.
- I think its good that we are not concerning ourselves here with jobs that might be created by the waste storage, we're glad to be talking about the social impacts, the environmental cost, the spiritual impact.
- As people of the land, to lose the land means we lose part of ourselves. If we wind up unable to go out on the land because of the spent nuclear fuel storage – this would affect us very deeply – more than just a simple matter of moving us or telling us to stay away from the place.
- How does SNF issue affect our spirituality? We will pray more it doesn't leak!

Social Impact

Discussions of society led directly to children and future generations. Aboriginal elders feel an obligation to provide their youth with a northern community in which they can practice their traditional ways and still earn competitive salaries. Sustaining successful communities in the north begins with education, throughout this session the elders repeatedly expressed the desire for educational opportunities based on factual information and full transparency.

- "We are all responsible to future generations, it doesn't matter who said what 40 years ago or whether or not so-and-so lied. What matters is, that it (SNF) is there and something has to be done about it. Everyone should have their opinion heard because if there's an accident it's going to affect people for hundreds of miles around and for hundreds of years after. We need to make a decision that can be changed in 100 years or whenever we learn a way of getting rid of these bundles. If we can repair some of the damage done then great, but we have to make sure we don't do any more damage. And it doesn't matter whose fault it is because it's everyone's responsibility."
- When I think about the future, it's the population growth in the north that scares me. We have a housing shortage – we never thought we would be dealing with homelessness in the north, but that's what's going on in our communities.
- It is up to us to give thought to inform the next generations, based on our knowledge and experience.
- The impact on our communities from industrial development on our children and our territory must be carefully considered.
- Our elders are worried about future generations. Spent Nuclear Fuel will impact us all, no matter where or how it is stored. We don't have enough knowledge.
- It's not right that some people make the money (from the sale of the uranium) and then others get stuck with the waste.
- We have choices to make – choices about power.

- It all comes down to this: we have to have power.
- There will only be more demand for power in the future, our communities are dependent on power – we have been having a lot of power outages and everyone just goes crazy – there is chaos in the streets when the power goes out
- Maybe we could try to use less power.
- Technologically we might be prepared – but socially we are not.
- As a younger person, we take our parents and elders beliefs and then we add other ideas, and our children will do that too. From my beliefs to my children's beliefs. What are our alternatives? There has to be a building of bridges for young people to develop their own views, to carry on traditional ways in new and different ways. They have new respect for both traditional and non-aboriginal ways. They think in both worlds.
- Even if the SNF is stored elsewhere, it will impact us from the unknown aspects.
- We need to inform young people – this is what is happening. It is up to you to decide.
- Even my father who is more than seventy years old, impacts their family and community.
- Economic development is very difficult without social stability. Seasonal work, no long-term jobs to retire on. The result is that people don't do budgeting or spending on their homes. Also it can hurt self-esteem when employment ends.
- Look at the role models in our communities. Parents, grandparents, elders, teachers all say different things, some have negative impacts. Who do the youth listen to?
- Along with economic development has to be social development. If someone is struggling with addictions etc, need to discuss ways to solve this, so communities are aware in partnership with industry.
- Industry often sees only the positive, but it is learning that they can have a profoundly negative impact too. For example, how extended families work when only one person gets employment. This problem happens all around the world with globalization. We need to learn how to deal with negative effects.
- I remember when Cameco promised 70 jobs in Pinehouse and told us that "yellowcake" is safe enough to eat. Now we know that neither was true.
- There must be dialogue between communities and industry to determine and discuss social impacts and to build trusts.
- We need to consider how we make decisions. Individually, communally, holistically, by everyone? All impacts and possibilities must be considered. Regional verses community. It can't be the single community affected by SNF, but everyone.
- Needs to be discussed as Northern people because it affects all of us as players. Most of our values are similar – Dene, Cree, Métis. We need to work together.
- Opportunities for advancement provide self-esteem and activity. There will be less social problems in our communities with increased activity and work related responsibilities. This is

some of the potential positive impacts of new jobs because of SNF storage in the north.

- There is a fear of the unknown – and rightly so – consider how nuclear technology was used in the 50s and 60s. I have a fear that new knowledge will show that our current beliefs about the safety of nuclear waste will prove to be wrong in the future. Just like what was believed to be fact in the 50's is considered grossly inaccurate now.
- I would like to see more consulting sessions with communities, to give us more information.
- The timelines of SNF are so great – 100,000 to 150,000 years – which is longer than the time of humans on earth – older than the time of the Neanderthals. Longer than the time of human civilization.
- Whatever decision is made now, may mean that future generations don't have the opportunity to think about the issue. It may make SNF out of sight, out of mind.
- In our communities, we need to have youth services. Education/physical activity/training facilities are lacking in northern communities.
- We have a responsibility to Canadians and the rest of the world, to world youth, Canadian youth that we help make the decision about SNF.
- The welfare trap is something we struggle with in the north, we have a hard time with this – it is spoiling our people to be dependent on government.
- We want jobs, we want to work – our people are good workers, hard workers.
- Traditional land use does have an economic value, we just don't often calculate the dollar value or think of it that way. Mainstream decision making is all about the dollar value – we just don't think about our land that way – its something we can't put a price on.
- Unless Aboriginal Canadians speak up with our values (in contrast with the values of the mainstream) we can't expect to see things change in the decisions and choices that are made.
- We have to be willing to stand up and take direct action.
- I am concerned for the future of our children – our young population here in the north. We have a growing population to think about. Any issue that affects our young people and future generations in the north is important for us to have information. We need to be involved in the decision making.
- When new industrial developments come in, we have to be able to ensure that there are benefits to more of the people.
- We are taking education more seriously in our communities – we want to make sure we get the better jobs.
- We need more training in the schools in the north to prepare students for higher level jobs – we need to increase the math and science skill levels.
- Training should take place earlier than it does for new jobs that come up in the North.

- We need to seek the management positions in the mines and we will look for better positions in any new industry that comes in.
- Cigar Lake is a good example of moving Aboriginal people into the better jobs – there is a process in place and this is happening.
- I am concerned about the elderly. What do they have to live on? We have to maintain access to traditional resources for the Elderly and industry needs to know about this.
- It is fine for industry to ensure health and safety in the mines, but we must ensure health and safety in the community as well.
- How is this spent nuclear fuel going to be transported? Is that possible?
- It is technically possible, but is it socially acceptable?
- Safety for environment and people is more important than having a place to dump this stuff. It has to be safe, we are not a people and a place to be experimented on.
- It is good that we are having this discussion – but we are not educating the public. How can we ensure that this information we are talking about gets to the community?
- What mechanisms do we use in respect to communication of safety, etc?
- I know the community gets monthly updates from Areva, but not Cameco.
- We need to have the time to talk to people – to communication in an open dialogue. We should do this again to share what we have learned.
- We need to get the message from NWMO about the choices of SNF management into schools.
- I favor the idea of Reactor Site Storage, but I am concerned about the people in Ontario having to live with it. It's not okay for us just to say we don't want it (SNF) here (in the north). It's important to think about the other people that will be affected by spent nuclear fuel waste.
- We need to hear the truth about it and tell the truth – industry has not been telling us the truth.
- We have to look out for the whole global community.
- We need to look for the values behind the choices, opinions and actions and seek to influence those values through visiting each other and talking – we need more dialogue – need to bring more decision makers here to the north to see the land and to meet the people, so that they will begin to value the things we value.
- The idea that you should not bite the hand that feeds you means we don't speak out about the concerns we have with industry or we will lose the jobs.

Economic Impact

A sustainable and thriving community must have a basic level of infrastructure and opportunity for expansion. A major concern during economic discussion was the lack of funds remaining in the north from the billions taken out in the natural resource industries. The inability to acquire necessary goods as well as a lack of access to services was also highlighted. There is a lack of trust between industry and northern residents that must be addressed before equitable economic solutions can be realized. The willingness of northern people to work with industry and their belief that success can be achieved in northern communities through this partnership was clear.

- Since the mines are in our backyard, then maybe we should consider taking the SNF.
- If we had a nuclear reactor we would be self-sufficient into the future.
- There are industries operating in the north, forestry is going on in the north, mining has been going on for years but the benefits to the north are questionable. It's hard to get the things we need for our communities in spite of all the industries operating around us, even if the corporations make billions. If we need a school or a hospital it's hard for us to get these things.
- They want us to get into spraying herbicides on our wild rice – I won't do it – this is all coming from the big chemical companies that want to sell their product. (This is part of the influence of industry on our traditional ways, it is hard to resist the pressure of industry, including the nuclear industry if it were to come into the north. How might this industry put pressure on the way we live and work?)
- We need to talk about revenue sharing with industry, so that our communities can grow and support the needs of the people (housing, schools, health care).
- I've got nothing against the mines – people are making a living, but the Aboriginal people are the losers...the communities in the northwest are the same way they were ages ago. The benefits of industry are hard to see.
- The international community is a system everyone's in. It's a global economy now and we have to move forward within it.
- If impacted, by SNF, Northerners should be consulted and negotiated directly, not through third parties, as has happened often in the past. For example, we were not a part of the [uranium industry] dialogue on the revenue side. Miscommunications occur because communication often goes through the government. The impacts are very real, with money flowing south, instead of staying in the local community.
- A nuclear storage site and a reactor would be a tremendous economic impact and would have to be prepared and consider what it will do in terms of impact.

- Aboriginal people are laid-back people, we are not aggressive – if you are not aggressive you won't get anything in this world.
- Or do we continue in the north with 80% unemployment? Would that mean we take away opportunity for our youth for the future?
- The social and economic development has to work side by side, or neither works.
- The impact of uranium on our economy has been fairly good in terms of employment, sourcing and land use.
- Responsibility in Canadian/Aboriginal governments; mutual investment financially, including consultation.
- If spent nuclear fuel comes in, we must ensure that we obtain employment opportunity – But we must become the owners of such a facility.
- Our children are not being trained in the scientific careers – engineers, managers – we get the blue collar jobs, the grunt work and the lower paying jobs.
- We must have ownership or a bigger share in the economic activity.
- For example, Forestry gave out resources, then we had to pay to buy in for only 10% - not enough. If the government can give Millar Western \$50 million dollars to come in, they can give the communities money. We need bigger shares – not give away resources and then be forced by the government to buy them back! We need revenue sharing that's equitable.
- Procurement for the mines – security, catering, etc. There is no procurement in the technical services, such as canisters (for storage of high level waste). High tech – if we open industry to the north, we need to increase the technical capability to supply to industry to ensure employment opportunities are greater in the north.
- The government comes in, takes our tax dollars, forces northern people to beg for resources for economic development.
- Revenue should be direct from the mining corporation to the communities – not laundered through the government.
- Nuclear industry already has planned polluter pays policy. So spent nuclear fuel is already funded. The government does not need to pay out. So maybe communities can be more directly impacted economically.
- I can see positives from a deep geological disposal site in the north. A Joint venture. Long term jobs for the north. We are going to have engineers and doctors. Our youth are employable.
- Work in the north is hard to find. It is time to look at a joint venture regarding spent nuclear fuel.
- Northern Saskatchewan has 53 impacted communities from uranium mining.
- How do you include all these communities in a joint venture?
- What would the politics be? A Compensation deal for land users? So land users can benefit as well.
- When industry comes in, it comes in fast and hard, and there is no time to adjust. No time for training our people, so

southerners are brought in and northerners are shut out over the long-term.

- There will be a divide for and against. Some people will see SNF storage elsewhere as an economic loss to Northern Saskatchewan.
- Deep Geological Disposal where the uranium comes out would have the greatest social and economic impact on Northern Communities.
- 5 uranium mines here hire 1300 people, 780 are northerners. Aréva is 300 people and 170 are northerners.
- Also, what would we pay for electricity? Would we pay less?
- At Bruce, 3500 people operate the 6 reactors. As new technology comes on board, Westinghouse, etc., Capital costs are getting low enough that it is economically viable to build new reactors. They are viable for 50+ years, whereas coal plants have a much shorter life.
- Hydro needs dams which are not good for the environment.
- How acceptable is a nuclear reactor and spent nuclear fuel to our traditional ways?
- The McArthur River mine cost 450 million dollars. 1 reactor costs about a billion dollars.
- Cameco spends about 130 million dollars a year in operations. About 70 million goes to northerner companies.
- Most communities are our partners. We need to create more opportunities. Trust, acceptance are important.
- Certain industries need to be developed for the maximum number of people to benefit.
- Cameco has 15 areas of services – underground mining, aviation, trucking, catering (8 million), security, environmental services, construction, labor services.
- There are other opportunities, like limestone, diamond drilling, hydro electricity.
- We need to develop the networks. We need to base things on facts. So more people will be ok with it.
- We need to generate some home based opportunities.
- The big companies could assist the northern communities to have a future – to give us something to look forward to.
- Shouldn't have to fight for equity regarding financial benefits/employment opportunities.
- Breach of trust in the past causing concern for potential benefits; how long will they last?
- Spin-off benefits: food supply services, laundry services, hospital/health care should provide more wages and opportunities in our communities.
- No more resource mining leaving the Northern people without tangible benefit.
- Can't change what's been done, but can change the way Aboriginal people are involved/affected.
- I would like to see some economic benefits for Northern communities, not only the cities (Prince Albert or Meadow Lake), but Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche.

- Money is not returning to communities because there is nowhere to spend it. The wage earners go to larger centers to spend their pay-cheques.
- There has been a general lack of attention to Northern infrastructure.
- Who are we economically developing? The wages are spent in the south. We are not seeing the benefits in the north as much as we should.
- We have to keep a balanced focus, maintaining priorities of environment/health/economic. Not just economic. It's not good to harm the environment simply to create jobs for people.
- Aboriginals should start pushing back and defending our needs for our cultural practices before the promise of jobs.
- We should build up the local community to support the needs (everyday/entrepreneurial) of the people whose land is being affected.
- I am concerned less about job creation than about the achievement of mutual respect between community and industry, sustainability of our communities, and to secure recurring income through revenue sharing.
- 600 of 700 people hired from Northern Saskatchewan are Aboriginal (Cameco).
- 67% of workforce to be from the north by 2013. Currently at 58% (Cameco).
- Environmental mismanagement in the beginning has caused irreparable damage around some of the mine sites.
- New policy must be upheld according to publicly presented policy, and adhered to, with independent observers to make sure.
- Improvement on mine accountability must continue.
- Mining companies' financial responsibility to the communities of the north must be ensured.
- We need to know what is going on in the board rooms, transparency of policy and the risks and rewards for each industry or development.
- Increased interest in education among Northern youth, more drive for the careers.
- Provide opportunities through education in schools; school system programs for northerners to be employed in the good jobs in the north.
- Higher level of education must be provided to open mining industry for Aboriginal youth.
- Belief in Aboriginal skills/potential.
- Cluff Lake providing educational programs for future generations.
- Northern training centers have been promised. This is important so our young people don't have to go so far from home for training.
- The reward of new jobs in the north does not make up for harm to the environment.
- Business is good – okay for people to be employed, for industry to expect a profit.

- I want to see a real commitment to revenue sharing; independent body to monitor.
- Ownership in the companies is important for our communities to see any change, any positive growth. We should share in the benefits coming out of the resources in the North more directly than just to have some people earning wages. The workers spend their wages in the cities, in the south anyway – it doesn't have the direct benefit to the community.
- Environmental Quality Control (EQC) people are put in place to monitor the mines, but since we are appointed by government, we really can't speak up – if there is a spill or some kind of issue, we really can't talk about it openly – we have to state the company line. If these people were independent it would be more effective, then the public could feel more confident in the reports, if it is monitored by an independent agency.
- Mitchell report (Cluff Lake Inquiry) says industry should be revenue sharing and have technical schools in the North.
- Services procurement for industry should result in more income for northerners wherever we can obtain the contracts.
- "Northern Suppliers receive 60 million per year from Cameco". Including (joint ventures): Mudjatik, NRT, Athabasca Catering.
- I find it interesting (and a good thing) that nobody here is even asking the question "how many jobs will this create?" Aboriginal people have been promised a certain number of jobs (referring to Cameco surface lease agreement).
- Cameco submits employment stats quarterly to SaskLearning in La Ronge.
- Jobs increase, money increases.
- Self esteem increases as long as the employment lasts.
- But then we eat differently and diabetes goes up.
- We start to drive everywhere and won't walk at all any more, inactivity makes the diabetes problem worse.
- We have our housing and our cable T.V.
- Our expectations have changed since we have had more cash – we expect to drive everywhere and people are getting sick.
- We used to place more value on exercise and physical fitness.
- We need money to have meetings – conferences.
- We need capacity to participate in decision making in Canada – need to be informed at conferences like this and need to have a chance to give our input – this all takes resources – who will pay this cost?
- We need more northern participation – there is regional disparity in the input and decision making we have a lot to contribute and believe our input will result in better choices being made at the end of the day.
- Where does the money go? The employees of the mines take their wages and go to the cities in the south.

General Comments

- It is important for First Nations, Métis and non-Aboriginals to get together in one meeting because what we are talking about affects us all, not just one person or group in a community. We all live next door to each other – we need to be able to discuss together. This is good.
- It is good to have dialogue with northern residents, because we have the relevant experience, but then there needs to be follow-up; implement our advice!
- It makes it easier to discuss nuclear fuel and uranium when we can trust that we are given accurate, honest information. It is good that Mr. Hodge was honest with us, because we know that uranium is unsafe – we have been told lies about the safety of (yellow-cake) by the mining companies.
- Our environmental "advisory committees" (co-management boards) have no power – we give recommendations and then government goes ahead and does what they want anyway – we are not being listened to.
- It is important to establish mutual respect between industry and Aboriginal peoples, that when our co-management boards give input, or the Environment Quality Commissions give input, this is respected.
- Uranium mines are in our back-yards, so yes, we have something to say about spent nuclear fuel.
- I recall debates in the past on this topic and others – Canadians have an advantage over other countries, we try to be open to debate, discussion. For example, Russia is dumping their SNF waste in the ocean and there is no public discussion of it.
- I have a lot of concerns, we have to act now or we will have more problems in the future, its good that we have come together to discuss these things.
- We have got to be serious about these issues, there are dangers and there are things we need to be aware of for ourselves. It's good that we were asked to give our comments.

Conclusion

The overriding mood of the dialogue sessions was of appreciation for the opportunity to learn and discuss the proposed management approaches and to lend an experienced perspective to the NWMO decision making process. The remarks herein have been paraphrased from the recorded session notes. Though they reflect the opinions of the participants, they do not capture the sincerity and emotion expressed by everyone involved. Atoning for past mistakes was not as important as providing a secure environment for future generations. Discussion always slipped back to social and environmental health and concern for whomever was burdened with the spent nuclear fuel (SNF). Overall, transparency and equal consideration of Traditional Knowledge were paramount issues.

Recommendations

Throughout the sessions several personal recommendations were made. These were not offered as final solutions, rather, they were suggestions to be considered for further discussion.

- Environmental Quality Control (EQC) people are put in place to monitor (the mines), but since we are appointed by government, we really can't speak up – if there is a spill or some kind of issue, we really can't talk about it openly – we have to state the company line. If these EQC's were independent it would be more effective, then the public could feel more confident in the reports.
- Dispose/store used fuel in the region where it was used (RSS).
- If the French (Areva/Cogema) owns the uranium mines in Canada, maybe they [France] should take the waste. People won't feel comfortable if they (the French) have no stake in it. The French should be responsible for dealing with the waste.
- There should be no more uranium mines until we know how to safely dispose of the waste.
- Why don't we use our own northern uranium and have our own reactor to produce our own power in Northern Saskatchewan. Then we generate electricity all over Saskatchewan.
- Relocation of the waste is not a solution for past mistakes in dealing with the nuclear material.
- Always take the time to talk to people, to communicate. Open dialogue is respected.
- We should do this retreat again with one student from each community.
- I would personally like to see that the SNF be left in Ontario.
- We should look at having another session to continue this dialogue. This was very good.
- Yes, and bring in traditional resource users.

Minister upbeat about Sask. mining future

Saskatchewan's minister of Industry and Resources is upbeat about the prospects for mineral development in Saskatchewan. There's a lot of enthusiasm, and the junior companies are having a lot of success attracting investment capital," Hon. Eric Cline told Opportunity North at the recent SIR Geological Survey Open House in Saskatoon.

"It's been 20 years since we've seen this level of activity," he said. "Uranium prices are up and the long-term outlook for the industry is very strong, so I feel it's a sustainable industry," he said.

"Gold and potash are also recovering from a period of lower prices".

However, Cline says we must not forget about other metals like copper and zinc, for which exploration is still in a slump. "We must be careful not to put all our eggs in one basket," he says.

There's also good potential for Saskatchewan diamonds, and companies have spent \$100 million to date developing diamond properties," said Cline. Kensington and Shore Gold have each spent about \$20 million this year. However, it costs about \$700 million to bring a diamond mine to production, and Cline cautions that we're not there yet.

He stressed the province's commitment to geoscience, in partnership with



Cline (left) with Shore Gold's Ken MacNeill and diamonds from Shore's Star kimberlite. More page 22

the Geological Survey of Canada.

Nuclear waste storage

With public consultations going on into long-term storage of post-reactor

nuclear waste, Cline was asked for his views on the topic. He said it's a very emotional topic, and so far none of Saskatchewan's three political parties has embraced the idea. "Any such development would have to be community-driven – it's not something the government could impose on anyone," he said. "It would have long-term implications." Cline suggested we should also investigate more reprocessing of reactor waste.

He suggested perhaps uranium could be leased rather than sold, with the responsibility for eventual waste storage remaining with the originator. This would all need a great deal of discussion.

As for a reactor in Saskatchewan: "Given the size of current reactor designs, there's not much call for nuclear power in Saskatchewan," he said. "They would generate more power than we need, and there's still the costly question of distribution".

Oil in Saskatchewan

The news that Oilsands Quest will drill for oil on the Saskatchewan side of the border does not mean the Fort McMurray boom will be expanding to Saskatchewan any time soon, says Cline. "In Alberta the oil-bearing strata are 200 feet deep and 500 feet thick. In Saskatchewan they are 500 feet deep and 60 feet thick. So far they have not proved to be economically mineable".

Public consultation on nuclear waste disposal

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN), on contract to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, is holding public consultations across the country into the disposal of post-reactor nuclear waste.

They were in Prince Albert Nov. 30. The NWMO also visited Beauval in October for a two-day workshop with west side Métis groups.

Nuclear waste is the material that is left behind after most of the reactor fuel has been burned to produce heat. The heat turns water into steam, which turns turbines to produce electricity.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization was formed after 10 years of 10 years of panel hearings in the 1990s. It is funded by the nuclear power

producers.

The power is generated at nuclear power plants in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. The waste is stored under water in special pools for up to 10 years, allowing the radioactivity to "cool" somewhat. Then it is transferred into concrete and reinforced steel containers, designed to last for 50 years. No decision has been made about what to do with it after that. The material remains radioactive for a very long time.

NWMO is looking at three options: storage deep in stable rock formations; extended storage at the reactor sites; or centralize storage, which could be above or below ground. The group will consider ethical, social, economic and environmental factors as well a technical ones.

In the meantime, Cameco President and CEO Jerry Grandey has indicated that Cameco would be happy to do the studies and the education, and work with the public, provided the government would be comfortable with it. He said there are potential economic benefits, and the money would be shared with communities.

The issue of permanent storage for nuclear waste was discussed in the early 1990s by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. Some member bands opposed it, and it was not pursued.

Canada has 1.5 million used fuel bundles in short-term storage from 35 years of nuclear power generation. This material would fill a soccer field to the height of a four-drawer filing cabinet.