

Council of Elders

Record of Discussion #9

APM-REP-00676-0201

November 2014

Kathryn Shaver

Bob Watts

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nwmo

NUCLEAR WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

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DES DÉCHETS
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**Record of Discussion
NWMO Council of Elders
Kingbridge Conference Centre, King City, ON
November 11-12, 2014**

Attendees:

NWMO Council of Elders:

Chair: Donna Augustine

Members: Angus Gardiner, Diane Longboat, Grace Manitouwabi, George Morin, Leslie Perley, Joseph Poitras, Adolph Rasevych, Billie Schibler, Roland St.Germain, Billy Two Rivers, Gordon Williams, Shavonne Custer, Peshaanakwut Kinew, Brandon Petehtegoose, Rayanna Seymour, Norman Stagg, Rebekah Wilson

Advisors: Joanne Barnaby, Fred Kelly, Melanie Hadley

Community Guest:

Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic (Nishnawbe Aski Nation)

NWMO:

Board of Director: Ron Jamieson

Staff: Ken Nash, Kathryn Shaver, Bob Watts, Raymond Hatfield, Jamie Matear, Lawrence Joseph, Jessica Perritt, Ross Holden, Sara Neuert, Jake Linklater, Devi Shantilal

Tuesday, November 11th 2014

Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks

Elder Fred Kelly opened the Council of Elders Meeting with a ceremony and a song, participants shared in the offering of blueberries and tobacco. Elder Donna Augustine welcomed everyone and introduced herself.

Welcome remarks were then provided by Ken Nash followed by Bob Watts.

Ken Nash acknowledged the traditional territory of the First Nations and Métis community in which the meeting was held. He thanked Elder Fred Kelly for ceremonies. He welcomed Deputy Grand Chief Kakegamic and all the meeting participants. He noted that the joint meeting between the Council of Elders and the Grand Council Treaty #3 Elders had reinforced that Aboriginal peoples are interested in being involved in finding a solution for storage of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

He stated that the progress NWMO has made over the years is encouraging but there will be more challenges in the upcoming years. As focus narrows down and intensifies, more questions and scrutiny is anticipated. He noted that focus should not be lost and the principles of the final study that outlines what Canadians wanted needs to be upheld:

- Safety and security is top priority
- This generation must take action – we owe it to future generations

- Be consistent with best international standards and practices
- Approach must be adaptable – allow improvements based on new knowledge or societal priorities

He further noted that the topic of nuclear waste has divided people in other countries and that internationally Canada is recognized for its progress and for its ability to bring diverse peoples together. He acknowledged that incorporating the aboriginal worldview will enhance Canada's solution for the long term storage of used nuclear fuel.

Bob Watts thanked Elder Fred Kelly for the ceremonies and thanked Joanne Barnaby for her suggestion of bringing past Elders together and provide them a briefing to inform them that their advice was implemented and that the wisdom they shared was taken seriously by NWMO.

He thanked the staff of Aboriginal Relations department for their work during the past year noting that two-thirds of the work is done back at the office and that it is not always visible. He also acknowledged the work done by the Elders and the Youth and thanked them for sharing their wisdom and knowledge.

Elder Fred Kelly acknowledged the work of Elders, Youth and NWMO staff. He noted that Bob Watt's promotion to Associate Vice President heightened the profile of Aboriginal Relations within the NWMO and that he was grateful to have aboriginal persons in decision making positions within the NWMO.

Report from Elders – NWMO Council of Elders

The Elders noted that ceremonies were important; they are the vehicle through which Aboriginal peoples seek guidance from their ancestors. The Council of Elders would like to perform a ceremony at a site where uranium was mined to seek forgiveness from ancestors.

The Council of Elders' feel there is a need to have a "strategic committee" that comes together more often and that there should be a note-taker at those meetings.

One of the Elders from Saskatchewan invited the NWMO Council of Elders to Creighton to visit a uranium mine site next summer. The Council of Elders extended an invitation to the NWMO staff to participate in the ceremonies and to fast with them.

It was discussed that safety is a major concern amongst the Council of Elders and that they believe there may be another way than a DGR.

One Elder spoke about the importance of being on the land. This was followed by a discussion of having retreats for the Council of Elders. The Elders were thankful for the training over the years and acknowledged the mutual support and cohesiveness amongst the Council of Elders and noted that they are ready to strategize. The Elders noted that they are offering NWMO and by extension Canada their spiritual dimension and suggested hosting sweat lodges across Canada to seek answers to scientific questions.

The Elders concluded that Indigenous knowledge is equal to western science. Indigenous peoples have a responsibility to bring a spiritual dimension and that together with western science will help to find a solution.

Ken Nash thanked the Elders for sharing their Report from the circle the previous day.

One Elder reiterated the need for a strategy that lays out how often the Council of Elders will meet and what will they focus their efforts on. He stated that the strategy should be all-encompassing and should include well-being. With respect to ceremonies, he noted that it should not be led by any one person but rather a committee should be established. He concluded that every person on the Council of Elders should be involved and provided opportunity to participate.

Another Elder noted that the Council of Elders is still following the mandate that was established in the past and that it needs to be changed to something futuristic. He proposed that the Council of Elders should go on a retreat to evaluate their mandate.

One of the Elders reiterated that the Council of Elders is not for, or against NWMO and further noted that Council of Elders' members are not employees, they are independent. They provide advice. They have a gift (spiritual) that when interwoven with gifts from other races will enhance the solution.

A moment of silence was observed in commemoration for the more than 100,000 Canadians who have died in military service.

One Youth member noted that the strategy should also include long term and short term objectives to move towards the overall goal and suggested asset-mapping.

Elder Fred Kelly acknowledged the Youth's contributions and wisdom and noted that structures such as agenda and timing are constraints and that is why he had suggested retreats for the Council of Elders next meeting.

Review Draft Indigenous Knowledge Policy – Joanne Barnaby

Joanne Barnaby reviewed NWMO's draft Indigenous Knowledge Policy. Participants provided their comments and feedback. Bob Watts suggested that we find an appropriate balance between ensuring we get language right and having an effective policy document. A participant noted that the evolution of the document is difficult to see since there wasn't a document that showed the first draft with all the changes made thereafter. Jessica Perritt offered to send it to the group noting that it may be tough to read as the document has undergone multiple revisions. It was discussed that feedback provided during the meeting will be incorporated and the draft will be sent to First Nation communities and Aboriginal organizations that NWMO works with to get their feedback. A revised draft with the comments received will be made available to the Council of Elders for the next meeting.

Ken Nash noted that the discussion was valuable for policy development and also enhanced NWMO's understand of issues/aboriginal world view.

Observing General Geological Features – Sara Neuert and Alec Blythe

Sara Neuert provided an overview of the planning and coordination efforts that were involved in the successful completion of the observing geological features activities. She noted the value and knowledge of the local guides. She spoke about how they worked together as a team and learned about each other. Alec Blyth spoke about the knowledge he carried as a geoscientist. He shared his experience

in learning from the local Elders and knowledge holders during the field activities undertaken to observe geological features.

Questions raised by participants were addressed by NWMO staff:

- Are topographic maps used during walking the land?
- What happens if a site is found to be rich in some mineral deposits? Would NWMO notify the local aboriginal community or would it notify the government?
- Do geological maps indicate existing mining and exploration activities?
- Is this science 100% accurate?
- Why is it important for deep water to not communicate with surface water?
- Which way did glaciers move?
- Are you planning on drilling in the area?

Composition of Fuel Bundles – Chris Hatton

Chris Hatton provided an overview of composition of used nuclear fuel. He discussed the composition of CANDU fuel bundles. He explained the process of Fission, Neutron Capture and elaborated on fission products, actinides and depleted uranium. He discussed difference between CANDU reactors and light water reactors used by other countries. Ken Nash noted that per kilogram of uranium dug out of earth, a CANDU reactor gives 35% more energy. The presentation was concluded with discussion of radioactivity and used fuel decay time length of the different products.

Participants asked a number of questions which were addressed by Chris Hatton and Ken Nash.

Comments:

- Participant expressed concerns over the ensuring possibility of United States wanting to send their nuclear waste to Canada for storage
- Request for the difference between the negative effects of a nuclear meltdown vs. the negative effects of the contamination of used nuclear fuel store be shared with the Council.
- A participant was unclear about potential dangers of low and intermediate level radioactive waste relative to high level radioactive waste

Questions:

- Is Candu fuel bundle the only one used in Canada?
- What is the lifespan of a Candu fuel bundle?
- Why is the Canadian fuel bundle different from US fuel bundle?
- How much of the used fuel from reactors is used in Canada's military?
- When did scientists realize that uranium could be used to create energy?
- How many reactors are there in the USA?
- How many DRG's are there in the USA?
- What is the difference in terms of hazard level for low, intermediate and high level waste?

Ken Nash and Chris Hatton responded to all questions

Low & Intermediate Level Waste DGR Update – Derek Wilson

Derek Wilson delivered a presentation about the low and intermediate level waste deep geological repository proposed by Ontario Power Generation. A participant expressed concern regarding the proximity to water noting that even foolproof plans can fail when something goes wrong. Questions were responded to by NWMO.

Questions:

- Why is the project undertaken at such an expense?
- How many interveners were there at the hearings?
- How many of the interveners were first nations?
- Who did NWMO represent at hearings? Why did NWMO not engage with the aboriginal groups in the area? Is low and intermediate level waste retrievable?
- What is the criteria for exposure?
- Is there international monitoring for low and intermediate level waste?

The meeting was then adjourned for the day.

Wednesday, November 12th 2014

Opening Ceremony and Comments

Elder Fred Kelly performed opening ceremony.

Kathryn Shaver thanked the Council of Elders for their guidance, welcomed everyone and thanked Deputy Grand Chief Kakegamic for his attendance. Deputy Grand Chief Kakegamic expressed his gratitude for being invited to Council of Elders meeting and thanked the meeting participants for raising their questions and sharing their insight.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation Overview – Deputy grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic

Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic provided a presentation that included an overview of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), NAN's nuclear waste perspectives and NAN social issues. He spoke about the importance of working collaboratively with other First Nations, Métis and municipalities noting that everyone wants a better life for their future generations.

He has thought a lot about the question: "What Indians want?" *He thinks what we want as aboriginal peoples is safe and secure future for our children. We want access to education and to maintain our language, culture and our link to our past. We want agreements made in the past to be honored and Aboriginal rights to be respected.* He said, regardless of who we represent, different cultures or governments everyone wants a better future for their people. To achieve that everyone has to acknowledge and respect each other. He mentioned that Aboriginal peoples have a special connection to the land and noted that they are affected by whatever happens to Mother Earth.

He acknowledged the engagement efforts of NWMO and noted that he appreciates the same. He expressed concerns about safety and security of the DGR. He stated that NWMO needs to deal with indirectly impacted communities and spoke about the need for social/cultural impact assessments in addition to the economic/environmental impact assessments. He shared his concerns as a community leader about the suicide rates in his community and noted that working together would help overcome such social issues that plague Aboriginal communities across Canada.

He concluded by thanking everyone for the opportunity to share his thoughts. All participants at the meeting thanked Deputy Grand Chief for his remarks and the group further discussed social issues that plague Aboriginal communities.

Report from the Youth – Youth

The Youth reported on their activities. They noted that they are in the process of defining their objectives in a statement and hope to meet on their own prior to the next Council of Elders meeting. This will give them some time to prepare something to present to the Elders at the next meeting.

The Youth had participated in various events and provided their feedback.

- Grand Council Treaty #3 meeting in Kenora, ON
- Community Well Being Workshop in King City, ON
- Participation in Observing General Geological Features in Creighton, SK

Community Well-Being – Bob Watts

Bob Watts provided an overview of the Community Well-Being workshop held by NWMO to ensure that NWMO's community framework model is inclusive of Aboriginal worldview. He noted that NWMO wants the framework to be holistic so that people from different all backgrounds can relate to it.

He mentioned that safety is a priority but community well-being is equally important. Meeting participants who had attended the community well-being workshop provided their feedback, noting the difference in the Aboriginal and non-aboriginal perspectives but how both groups shared their desire for NWMO the community framework to reflect a more Aboriginal worldview focus. Advisor Joanne Barnaby noted that the workshop was inspired by the well-being for future generations.

Closing Ceremony and Comments

Due to time constraints Bob Watts requested everyone to review the records of discussion for the 2015 July and 2015 September meetings and provide their input by November 25th to Jessica Perritt. Bob Watts, Ken Nash and Kathryn Shaver thanked everyone for their participation.

Elder Donna Augustine sang a song in commemoration of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Elder Fred Kelly sang a traveling song.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Next Steps:

- NWMO should find methods to protect Council of Elders from public criticism and comments.
- Next Council of Elders meeting should be structured to provide two days for Council of Elders to meet without NWMO staff.

- Review draft Indigenous Knowledge Policy and get feedback from First Nation communities and Aboriginal organizations
- Consider taking Youth members to a dry storage tour
- Consider taking Council of Elders to Elliot Lake Uranium mine (closed) and a uranium processing facility.

Date notes taken: November 11-12, 2014

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