



NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

Water Statement

OCTOBER 2023



Acknowledgment of truths

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) understands the importance of relying on western science, Indigenous Knowledge and community input. We study water all the way from the surface down to core rock where water has remained for many generations. We study the chemistry, how water flows, how it moves in time and space, its transformative properties, where it is depleted and how it is replenished — all with the purpose of understanding how to respect, protect and be in relationship with water.

The NWMO respects the truth of the life-giving role water fulfils for all Creation. We have learned from Indigenous Knowledge Holders that there is a sacred relationship water holds with grandmother moon, grandfather sun and the grandfather rocks. The NWMO's work creates an opportunity to listen to water and learn how that relationship might inform our work.

The NWMO respects the truth that Indigenous women have a sacred and spiritual relationship with water — birth waters, fresh waters, sky waters and ocean waters — and because of that special role, their voice is integral to any work related to water protection.

The NWMO understands the unique long-term time scale of Canada's deep geological repository and the relationship it will have with water for generations.

The NWMO respects the truth that the protection of water is important to potential siting communities, Indigenous peoples and the general public. Communities need to be heard and involved with the protection of water and the NWMO's work. Within the organization, there is a need for people with a wide range of expertise to collaborate on work related to water to ensure that different views are being reflected and considered.

The NWMO acknowledges the special relationship water has with uranium as part of the fission process and in the creation of energy.

The NWMO respects the truth that far too many Indigenous peoples do not have access to clean drinking water, and we support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) [Calls for Justice](#) for equitable access to clean drinking water across Canada.

The NWMO understands that the Council of Elders and Youth has made significant contributions to the development of NWMO policies. The Council of Elders and Youth and Indigenous communities have identified the importance of water as a life source to all Creation and have identified water as a sacred being that needs to be acknowledged in the NWMO's Reconciliation journey and in the implementation of the NWMO's *Indigenous Knowledge Policy* (2020).

Water Statement

The primary purpose of the NWMO is to implement a plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel, to protect people and the environment for generations to come. The protection and safety of water is vital to this purpose.

The NWMO's work is connected to a holistic understanding of the agency of water. Western scientists and Indigenous Knowledge Holders share an understanding of the importance of the protection of water.

The NWMO is committed to contribute to water protection in all our work, including considering how the agency of water (from surface to at-depth movement) may be in relationship with Canada's deep geological repository and the surrounding area. In addition, the NWMO will establish a water implementation strategy that will be measured annually and publicly reported to contribute to broader community-led efforts to safeguard water for future generations.

Purpose

1. Nurturing strong relationships and defining the shared purpose and principles of water protection with people involved in the site selection process, a process that is rooted in reciprocity and respect;
2. Aligning western science and Indigenous Knowledge to listen to the agency of water in a meaningful way that is reflective of past, present and future; and
3. Sharing the NWMO's understanding of priorities for water protection measures that are guided by science and grounded in Indigenous Knowledge.

Principles

- » To include Indigenous Knowledge Holders, western scientists and community voice in project planning and implementation;
- » To ensure that our water protection work is done in an open, humble and inclusive manner;
- » To support the co-creation of programs and activities related to water with communities;
- » To continue to develop and identify resources to prioritize and amplify continuous learning about water and its connectedness to all life within the NWMO's work plans and decision-making milestones; and
- » To be guided in alignment with truth and humility in our work.

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