



# Niigani

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## Community Sustainability Visioning: An Aboriginal Perspective

The concept of long-term visioning is a well-understood concept of Indigenous culture. The Constitution of the Iroquois Nation describes this as the Great Binding Law - in every deliberation all leaders must consider the impact of their actions and planning on the next seven generations. Oren Lyons, Chief of the Onondaga Nation, writes: "We are looking ahead, as is one of the first mandates given us as chiefs, to make sure and to make every decision that we make relate to the welfare and well-being of the seventh generation to come..." "What about the seventh generation? Where are you taking them? What will they have?" Adopting this principle in what we do today helps us acknowledge our ancestors and allows us to express our gratitude for their sacrifice in what they did for us, today, in their decision making. If we consider this counsel in our planning and actions today, it may provide us with the motivation and a practical guide on how we can in a practical way make difficult decisions. We speak of the importance of our unborn children; this seven generation principle can be a great tool to evaluate our motivation and as Oren Lyons (1995) states "...it is a practical guide to specific moral decision-making, the seven generation principle may be without equal." As part of the Learn More Program for communities interested in Adaptive Phased Management, the NWMO backgrounder Community Sustainability Visioning is one of the

tools available as a starting point. The following highlights a number of ideas from this document. "...If a community is interested in potentially becoming a host community for the deep geological repository for containing and isolating used nuclear fuel in Canada and associated facilities, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is prepared to provide financial support to assist the community sustainability visioning process. Participation in this process is entirely voluntary and in no way obligates a community to commit to participating in subsequent steps of the siting process." By undertaking the community sustainability visioning, a community is taking its first step to considering the seven generation principle, through organizing the community's priorities and setting out a plan of action for achieving its desired future. After the community creates its vision, it can begin to assess whether the Adaptive Phased Management project, or perhaps other projects, will help achieve the vision. If the project does not support the vision, the community has the option of removing itself as a potential candidate for the Deep Geological Repository and associated facilities "...at any point in the site investigation process." Community Visioning is a community initiated planning process which allows a community to identify 'where they are now, where they want to

go and how they will get there' in their long-term development. In the Aboriginal community, we talk about making decisions where we always consider the potential impacts on seven generations. Seven generation sustainability is an ecological concept that urges the current generation of people to live and work for the benefit of the seventh generation. Thinking seven generations ahead in planning and taking action for the future ensures the decisions taken today will have a profound positive impact on our children's, children's, children. If leadership decision-making would "...look towards the welfare of the whole people, not looking only to the present, but also the coming generations." As Oren Lyons reminds us "... even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground - the unborn of the future Nation." Remember the teachings that "...the faces of the coming generations are looking up from the earth. So when you put your feet down, you put them down very carefully because there are generations coming one after the other...If you think in these terms, you'll walk a lot more carefully, be more respectful of this earth." Our challenge is to consider how a community sustainability visioning process can be influenced by this one principle. It is not so much a change to the processes used, but it is an attitude that could be considered in community sustainability visioning. Visioning is an important process, to which everyone can make an important contribution.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

- Elders Forum 7 Report available on the NWMO Website
- The Report of the Elders Forum and Niigani 2005-2010 submitted as part of the NWMO Triennial Report to the Minister of Natural Resources

## Message from Chairperson—Gordon Williams



Gordon Williams, Chairman of Niigani Season's Greetings

It's that time of year when we are captured by the glow of lights, the music, the hustle and bustle of shopping.

Some- where in all of this, we look for that special gift that will make everything worthwhile. As I reflect on the work of the Elders Forum, Niigani and the

NWMO, there is much we accomplished in 2010. The Report of the advice of the Elders Forum to the NWMO from 2005-2010 as part of the NWMO Triennial Report in 2011, the Youth Project on understanding the long-term management of used nuclear fuel and the Community Involvement Project. The NWMO is now directly involved with a number of communities that may be willing to be potential hosts of the repository. The NWMO and Niigani continues to work with Aboriginal organizations providing information to their members to support and

assist communities interested in the site selection process. In December Niigani met with the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council. These achievements are a direct result of the commitment of all parties to work together. In closing, I am very happy with what we have done collectively and that you see me with that warm glow of satisfaction from work well done. Best wishes to everyone for a happy holiday season and we look forward to our continued relationship in 2011.

## Introducing Pat Patton, Aboriginal Relations, NWMO



Pat Patton is the Director of Aboriginal Relations, NWMO. She was born in Edmonton, Alberta, and grew up in the Peace River area of British Columbia in

Fort St. John where her father was a doctor. "...It was a wonderful place to grow up. The people are very open and friendly." Pat's parents raised eight children in this northern community and worked to improve the community through advocating for better health care and education in the north, and they had a profound impact on her. She learned very early that we can all make a difference on the quality of life in our community. "... I am sure that I would not have my deep conviction to building communities through people who live in communities if it was not for their example and that of my grandparents who were also active community volunteers...Through their influence I know people have a strong desire to make a difference...They want to improve their lives and improve their communities."

If there is something new and challenging, Pat is always prepared to step out and meet that challenge.

Pat graduated from the University of British Columbia with a degree in rec-

reation and education with an interest in therapeutics. Her early work focused on helping people being discharged from hospitals to re-integrate back into their community. "...People leaving a hospital or institution have a desire to be part of the family and community life; however, it is often difficult to find ways to be connected to others. Part of my work in hospitals and as a community volunteer was to advocate, to inform, to teach and to introduce better ways to provide opportunities for these people." Pat worked in hospitals and social service organizations in Edmonton, AB, and Victoria and Nanaimo, BC, to bring about changes for the benefit of the mentally and physically challenged. In Nanaimo, she co-chaired a task force to develop a delivery model in mental health services that better integrated the efforts of workers and volunteers. That was her day job; in the evening she and her husband were active in the arts. They did everything, including helping to raise money and build an 800-seat performing arts centre that opened in 1998. The Port Theatre has won a number of awards. Ask her about her accomplishments and her response is "... what a great experience it was to work with dedicated and committed people on a project that responds to what a community wants and helps to build opportunities for youth to be active in community life." In 2004, she was

...people care deeply and want to be involved in their future.

invited to join the NWMO in public engagement and in 2007 took over Aboriginal engagement. When she was asked why the NWMO? "...I know the importance of involving communities...people care deeply and want to be involved in their future...People want to live in communities where children are safe and families know one another and work together...I am continually impressed with the passion of Aboriginal peoples for their communities, their rich cultures and traditions...Aboriginal people share a deep connection to the land and their hopes regarding the future...I know that NWMO shares and supports these values." Pat's other passion is her children and 3 grandchildren, and she is always happy to share stories about each one of them.

## Message from the President of NWMO—Ken Nash



Ken Nash,  
President, NWMO

In 2010 the NWMO initiated the process for selecting a site for a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel, and over the past several

months, has attended meetings and conferences to tell people about this process and invite communities to learn more as they explore their interest as a potential host

community. The Elders Forum meetings in 2010 highlighted the importance of Elders involvement in our work. Significant work was accomplished by the Elders Forum and Niigani, most notably the work on a Report of the Elders Forum advice 2005-2010, which will be part of our Triennial Report in 2011, and discussion on the best ways to continue the advice from Elders in our work. We translated the updated NWMO DVD on NWMO's work and the overview of the site selection process into nine Aboriginal languages. In 2011 we will build on the advice and good work with Niigani

and the Elders Forum and on the agreements we developed in 2010 with Aboriginal organizations in order that they are able to keep their members informed and updated through 2011. We appreciate the many meetings we have had with Aboriginal organizations and leaders that indicate their commitment to learning more about our work and finding ways to work together. Once again I wish to highlight our appreciation for the thoughtful advice and support of the Elders Forum and our commitment to continue to explore innovative ways of working together with Aboriginal peoples.

## Niigani meets the NWMO Board of Directors

Each year Niigani meets with the NWMO Board of Directors and NWMO Advisory Council to discuss the work of the Elders Forum. The meeting is an opportunity to reflect on the work of the past year and table ideas for future work. The meeting is also an opportunity to share cultural perspectives. This year the meeting was held on December 1 and 2, 2010, in Toronto. The main topic of discussion was the *Report of the Elders Forum and Niigani 2005-2010*. The Elders Forum report was finalized at the 8th Elders Forum meeting on October 21-22, 2010. As reported in the last newsletter, the Elders Forum requested a report be written to clearly identify the work of the Elders Forum and Niigani over the past

five years as they provided advice on the development and implementation of the siting process. The Report was submitted to the NWMO's Board of Directors as an addendum to the NWMO's Triennial Report to the Minister of Natural Resources Canada. The Report is an important contribution to the work of the NWMO. The Report will not be made public until it is presented and received by the Federal Minister of Natural Resources and Government of Canada. At that time, it will be available on the NWMO website. This meeting was an opportunity to begin the discussions regarding the future role of the

..Report of the Elders Forum and Niigani 2005-

2010 ... submitted to the NWMO's Board of

Directors as an addendum to the NWMO's Triennial

Report to the Minister

Elders Forum, as the NWMO begins the process of identifying a willing host community. As potential host communities come forward, there will be an ongoing need for Aboriginal engagement; however, the best means and structure to accomplish this work is yet to be determined by all those involved. Over the next few months, the Elders Forum and the NWMO will need to consider all options as they embark into site selection.

## Regulatory Oversight of Adaptive Phased Management

Implementation of a repository under Adaptive Phased Management falls within federal jurisdiction and will be regulated under the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act (NSCA)* and its associated regulations. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), as Canada's regulatory authority, regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect the health and safety of persons, the environment and national security, and to respect Canada's international commitments on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

CNSC also works in collaboration with other government departments and agencies such as Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Transport Canada, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to effectively regulate nuclear operations

and activities.

The Adaptive Phased Management repository will be subject to the CNSC's comprehensive licensing system, which covers the entire life cycle of the repository.

A licensing decision by the CNSC on a repository can only be taken after the environmental assessment has been completed under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. The transportation of used nuclear fuel is regulated by the CNSC and Transport Canada. Some aspects of siting or construction of the project may be governed by provincial legislation:

- Most provinces and territories include nuclear substances in legislation and regulations addressing the transportation

of dangerous goods within that province or territory.

- Provincial governments are responsible for protecting public health and safety, property and the environment within their borders, which often includes provincial emergency preparedness legislation.

- Provincial governments are responsible for the regulation of resource exploration and/or extraction (e.g. drilling and underground mining) and crown land management (e.g. disposition of provincial lands).

- Provincial legislation requiring the assessment of potential environmental effects of an activity, plan or program may apply to some aspects of this work. Municipalities, which derive their authority from provincial legislation, may have requirements that also need to be addressed.

## NWMO Elders Forum

How to have your voice heard. Send an email.

Website [www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca)  
Webmaster [info@nwmo.ca](mailto:info@nwmo.ca)

Call us Toll Free 1.866.249.6966  
(within Canada) or send a letter or fax

Tel 416.934.9814

Fax 416.934.9526

## Nuclear Waste Management Organization

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Toronto Ontario Canada M4T 2S3

[www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca)

## The Importance of Visioning:

“...If you want to know how the moccasin fits, ask the person who is wearing it, not the one who made it.”

**nwmo**

NUCLEAR WASTE  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION  
DES DÉCHETS  
NUCLÉAIRES



## International Highlights ([www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca) or [www.world-nuclear.org](http://www.world-nuclear.org))

Many countries are developing plans for, or proceeding with, long-term management of used nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste. Several countries have selected the deep geological repository (DGR) as their preferred method of long-term storage, and for most countries, the preferred rock formation is either crystalline or sedimentary rock formation although Germany is researching salt rock and the United States is under review. Agencies responsible for waste management in the particular countries have set target dates to complete all their research, do environmental assessments and prepare applications for licensing to regulatory bodies to proceed with the building of the geological repository. The following is a list of countries that will be using the DGR, with preferred rock formation and target date for operation:

- Canada (DGR in crystalline or sedimentary rock);
- China (DGR in crystalline rock operational in 2050);
- Finland (DGR in crystalline rock operational in 2020);
- France (DGR in sedimentary rock operational in 2025);
- Germany (DGR in salt, crystalline, and sedimentary rock operational date to be determined);
- India (DGR in crystalline rock operational date not known);
- Japan (DGR in crystalline or sedimentary rock operational in 2040);
- Sweden (DGR in crystalline rock operational in 2025);
- Switzerland (DGR in sedimentary rock operational in 2040);and
- United Kingdom (DGR in crystalline rock operational in 2040)

The advanced programs regarding the siting of long-term management facilities also include intensive research programs including technical, economic and social research. The following information is taken from NWMO Backgrounder *Status of National Used Fuel/High-level Radioactive Waste Management Programs* updated 2010. For the complete text of this document contact the NWMO or download from the NWMO website.

**Canada** - In Canada, there are 20 operational nuclear power plants that produces approximately 16% of its electricity. The waste agency is the NWMO. The siting process was completed in 2009 and initiated in 2010. Earliest possible date for a deep geological repository is the late 2030s.

**United States of America** - In the United States, there are 104 operational nuclear power plants that produce approximately 19% of its electricity. The waste agency is the Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE focuses its research on disposal research and development. Their reprocessing of used fuel ended in 1977 (civilian) and 1992 (defense). The siting process included a national screening of 9 candidate sites from 1983 to 1986. Congress directed the DOE to study only one site - Yucca Mountain in 1987. Yucca Mountain is located near the US nuclear weapons test site in Nevada, about 160 km north of Las Vegas. The Secretary of Energy recommended Yucca Mountain to the President in 2002 - although the State of Nevada strongly opposed the Yucca Mountain Project. In June 2008, DOE submitted the DGR licence application to NRC. In February 2009, the US Administration indicated that Yucca Mountain is no longer an option - a Blue Ribbon Commission on US nuclear was formed to provide a recommendation for developing safe, long-term method to manage nuclear waste.

**United Kingdom** - In the United Kingdom, there are 19 operational nuclear power plants that produce approximately 20% of its electricity. The waste agency is the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). In 2007, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued the framework document for implementing geological disposal in 5 stages for broad public consultation and dialogue: Stage 1: invitation issued and expression of interest for communities; Stage 2: Consistently applied “sub-surface unsuitability” test (identify potential suitable/unsuitable sites); Stage 3: Desk-based studies on remaining candidates; Stage 4: Surface investigation on remaining candidates; Stage 5: Underground investigations and construction at preferred site. In June 2008, NDA issued a Research and Development strategy on radioactive waste management for public comment. In June 2008, UK government invited communities for “no commitment” discussions of hosting a DGR.

**Finland** - In Finland, there are 4 operational nuclear power plants and approximately 25% of its electricity comes from nuclear power. The waste agency is Posiva. The siting process started in the 1980s. Site identification from 1983 to 1985. Preliminary site characteristics and feasibility studies were conducted at 5 potential sites from 1986 to 1992. Detailed site characterization and feasibility studies at 2 nuclear sites (Olkiluoto and Loviisa) from 1993 to 2000. Posiva proposed Olkiluoto site in 1999. The host municipality approved Olkiluoto site in Jan 2000. The Finnish Government approved siting decision-in-principle in Dec 2000. Finnish Parliament ratified siting decision-in-principle in May 2001. DGR construction licence by 2012. DGR operation by 2020.

**France** - France has 59 operational nuclear power plants and approximately 78% of its electricity comes from nuclear power. The waste agency is Andra and expects its application for DGR construction licence by 2015 and DGR operational by 2025.

**China, Germany, India, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland** are also considering deep geological repositories for their used fuel and high-level waste. To learn more about what other countries are doing, see:

[www.nwmo.ca/backgrounders](http://www.nwmo.ca/backgrounders)