



Niigani

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Two Aboriginal Communities Complete Initial Screening

In March 2011, the English River First Nation and the Northern Village of Pinehouse both completed the Initial Screening or the preliminary assessment of potential suitability to determine if there are "...any obvious conditions" that would exclude these communities from further consideration in the NWMO site selection process. Both communities are involved in the NWMO's Learn More process, where communities that have expressed an interest learn more about Canada's plan for the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel. The Learn More expression of interest and Initial Screening are very preliminary steps in a multi-year process and do not commit a community to proceed to the next step. The detailed process is described in *Process for Selecting a Site for Canada's Deep Geological Repository for Used Nuclear Fuel (May 2010)*. The Initial Screening in Step 2 of the process uses "...readily available information" and five criteria to determine if the location is potentially suitable for hosting a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel. The five criteria include: (1) land availability (the site must have enough available land of sufficient size to accommodate the surface and underground facilities); (2) protected areas (available land must be out-

side of protected areas, heritage sites, provincial and national parks); (3) known groundwater resources at depth (available land must not contain known groundwater resources at repository depth, so that the repository site is unlikely to be disturbed by future generations); (4) known natural resources (available land must not contain economically exploitable natural resources, as known today, so that the repository site is unlikely to be disturbed by future generations); and (5) unsafe geological or hydrogeological features (available land must not be located in areas with known geological and hydrogeological characteristics that would prevent the site from being safe.) The five geoscientific safety-related factors include: the safe containment and isolation of used nuclear fuel; long-term resilience to future geological processes and climate change; safe construction, operation and closure of the repository; isolation of used fuel from future human activities; and amenable to site characterization and data interpretation activities. Completing the Learn More activities provide the community with additional information in their decision-making process to proceed. The Initial Screening Report indicates that both the Northern Village of Pinehouse and the English River First Nation conditions

"...Initial Screening Report indicates that both the Northern Village of Pinehouse and the English River First Nation conditions would not exclude them from being considered"

would **not** exclude them from being considered as a potential willing host community. The Reports are public documents and have been posted on the NWMO website. The communities are now reviewing the documents to determine if they wish to proceed to the next step. The NWMO siting process was initiated in May 2010. There are eight communities in Canada that are presently involved in the Siting Process. This includes three communities in Saskatchewan (English River First Nation, the Northern Village of Pinehouse and the Town of Creighton) and five communities in Ontario (Ear Falls, Ignace, Schreiber, Hornepayne and Wawa.) Other communities may decide to get involved in the Siting process before the expression of interest phase is closed.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Elders Forum Redevelopment Paper to be discussed at 2011 Elders Forum
- Eight communities are involved in the Learn More Program.

Message from Chairperson - Gordon Williams



The Elders Forum and Niigani Report 2005 - 2010, submitted to the NWMO Board of Directors in late 2010, was a significant undertaking for the Elders Forum as it out-

lined our advice to the NWMO over the past six years. The NWMO is now at a new stage in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management. The members of the Elders Forum are anx-

ious to represent in a caring and comprehensive way, the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The Elders recognize that the First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in areas neighbouring communities involved in learning about the NWMO's work want to be actively involved in understanding this project and providing advice to both the NWMO and their own communities. The Elders Forum is, therefore, looking forward to the upcoming Forum meeting in July to discuss how the Forum might be restructured in

order to provide the best possible advice to the NWMO over the next few years. We have all reflected on our role over that past six years and are confident that the advice given to date provides the foundation for going forward and will stand the test of time. It is anticipated that NWMO will continue to seek the advice of Elders in dealing with affected Aboriginal communities to ensure the best and safest site for the deep geological repository.

Introducing Dr. Mahrez Ben Belfadhel, NWMO



Dr. Mahrez Ben Belfadhel (Ben) is the Director of the Geoscience Department at the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO). The first thing you need to do when you meet him is throw away

any idea that all scientists are interested only in their subject of expertise. Ben is a scientist, but he has a wide variety of interests. He has a story to tell. He loves nature and believes that all of us have to do our part to protect the environment. Your first impression of him is a genuine interest in people and their ideas and concerns. He does not wave his credentials, although he has them. Ben has over 25 years of multidisciplinary experience working in academia, government and industry in areas related to geotechnical and geo-environmental engineering. His experience is in site evaluation and safety assessment of radioactive waste management facilities, including uranium mining and milling waste. He also has extensive international experience and a broad knowledge of Canadian policies and regulations for the management of radioactive waste. After the completion of his graduate studies, he

worked as a Research Associate and Lecturer at the Civil Engineering department of the Université de Sherbrooke, Quebec (1991 - 1996). During that period he also co-founded and was President of Genispec Technologies Inc., Geotechnical Engineering (1994 - 1996). He worked for 11 years as an Assessment Specialist with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) in Ottawa (1996 - 2007) where he also assumed the responsibility of Director of the Waste and Decommissioning Division. In April 2007, he joined the NWMO as Manager of Geoscience. When asked, why, he said "...The work of the NWMO is consistent with my values...I want to make a difference by contributing to the safe long-term management of used nuclear fuel. This is an important work that will have an impact for many generations to come."

Ben is a family man who is very proud of his wife and 4 children. You bring up the topic of family and his eyes beam. You can see the love and pride. As with most parents, he and his wife work hard to provide them every opportunity. "...My family is everything, my life...All I do, or will do, is for them." He is more than eager that each of his children is successful. "...Parents have a responsibility to teach...don't worry about cleaning

"...all of us have to do our part to protect the environment."

over the fence. Clean your own yard first." Education is very important to Ben. He has a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from École Polytechnique of Algiers, and a master's degree and Ph.D. in Geotechnical Engineering from Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec. He is also a registered Professional Engineer. He is active in the international nuclear waste community, mainly through his work with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). His international contribution includes participating in the development of international safety guides related to nuclear waste management, participating in expert evaluation missions, providing training, and participating in international joint research projects. He acted as the Chair of the IAEA Application of Safety Assessment Methodologies (ASAM) working group for the development of safety assessment methodologies for the long-term management of radioactive waste. His life's work has prepared him for this present responsibility. His legacy will be that he has a heart; and he always does his best.

Message from the President of NWMO - Ken Nash



The NWMO has embarked on a new stage in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management with eight communities presently involved with the NWMO to learn about APM and the process to select a

site for a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel. All these communities have requested that an Initial Screening be conducted to assess whether there is any known information to suggest that their area would be un-

suitable. Each community is at a different stage in their understanding; however, the NWMO is actively reaching out to citizens in these communities through public engagement activities, open houses and "Meet the NWMO" opportunities to provide them with information. The NWMO also seeks opportunities to speak to people in the area neighbouring these interested communities and has begun the process of involving Aboriginal communities. I would like to make special mention of the Elders Forum and Niigani Report 2005 - 2010 written by the Elders Forum in 2010 to capture the advice of the Forum to the NWMO. This report was gratefully

received by the NWMO Board of Directors and was included in the *Triennial Report 2008 - 2010*, which was submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources Canada in accordance with the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. As a result of suggestions made at the Elders Forum last year, the NWMO with the advice of Elders Forum members will take some time this year to reflect upon the terms of reference of the Elders Forum and consider the redevelopment of the Forum to continue to bring the perspective that Elders can bring to our work. The next Elders Forum meeting in July will focus on this discussion, which we anticipate will lead to important changes.

Redevelopment of the Elders Forum

The Elders Forum will meet July 18 - 20, 2011, at the Kingbridge Conference Centre near Toronto, Ontario. There are a number of agenda items, but the focus of the meeting will be the redevelopment of the Elders Forum. Redevelopment will address a number of key issues that have been identified by the Elders, staff and Board of the NWMO. The NWMO is committed to an ongoing role for the Elders Forum, but they want to work with the Elders to strengthen the Forum as the Site Selection process proceeds and a deep geological repository is selected. The Elders Forum was formed in 2005 and in-

cludes First Nation, Métis and Inuit members from across Canada. During the first 5 years, the Elders advised the NWMO on a number of topics related to the design of the site selection process, including, but not limited to, policy regarding Aboriginal people, integration of traditional knowledge, cross-cultural training and engagement of communities. The Elders have become an integral part of the design work, but as this phase is now complete and selection is now underway, both the NWMO and Elders know that their role will change. A draft paper that identifies a number of

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suggestions has been written, and it will be the basis for the discussion of potential future roles. Once the Elders and other groups are consulted, options on a changed role will be made to the NWMO Board.

Learn More is an opportunity to make an informed decision

The NWMO Learn More Program provides communities with funding to support their work in the early steps of the siting process. Funding and resources are provided for activities such as:

- Attending NWMO briefings about Adaptive Phased Management and the project.
- Hiring an expert to provide independent advice and to answer the community's questions about the safety of Adaptive Phased Management.
- Hiring an expert to provide independent review of the initial screening of the

community's suitability prepared by the NWMO or its contractors.

- Visiting an interim waste storage facility for used nuclear fuel by a small delegation from the community.
- Developing or augmenting an existing strategic plan or long-term vision for community sustainability.
- Engaging citizens in the community.
- Learning more about the regulatory framework governing the long-term management of used nuclear fuel by meeting with the Canadian Nuclear

Safety Commission (CNSC) in Ottawa.

This program will continue to evolve as communities proceed through the site selection process. During the Learn More Program, community members are not asked to make a decision to become a willing host community. All these activities are designed to help communities understand APM, the project, their vision for the future; so they can determine at a future time if they want to become a willing host community. This future decision needs to be a willing and informed choice.

NWMO Elders Forum

How to have your voice heard. Send an email.

Website www.nwmo.ca
Webmaster info@nwmo.ca

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

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Understanding different perspectives is critical to being informed

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NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES



“...Understanding different perspectives is critical to being informed.”

We live in a world where there is so much information that it is difficult for the casual observer to keep informed. With the proliferation of information available through the TV and Internet, how do you make a judgment regarding conflicting information on the same topic? There are Elders teachings that can help us learn; how to know and make educated judgments regarding the value of information on different topics and events. Wisdom combines knowledge, understanding and the ability to apply them effectively. Elders encourage youth to learn first, then teach by your example, learn to think straight and trust your instincts. This article will focus on what Elders do to honour the seven universal teachings.

1. Learn first the teachings given by the Creator, especially the seven grandfather teachings. Seeking knowledge and understanding is a personal responsibility. One key to understanding is recognizing that our perspective is not the only perspective. There are other perspectives regarding topics and events. The following analogy was used by one Elder to explain this opportunity to learn first. Imagine for a moment that you are in a group, and they are sitting in a circle. In the middle of the circle is a small rock. All the people are asked to describe the rock. As you listen to those describing the rock, you begin to notice that people's descriptions of the rock are different. Not big differences at first, but some describe the characteristics of the rock differently - colour, shape, texture. You begin to hear different perspectives on what the rock represents. You know all the people in the circle are good people, but from their perspective, what they see is quite different. You learn that all people have their truth, and it is theirs. You learn that teaching comes from everywhere; and our perspective is only one perspective. Once we learn, then we have a responsibility to teach others by example.
2. Teach by example. It is obvious that there is more than one way. The seven grandfather teachings (love, humility, honesty, bravery, wisdom, truth and respect) are gifts for the learning of values and the living of these values. Teaching by your example means practicing what you teach. We are taught that these teachings are to be used together. To practice one without the other would amount to practicing the opposite to the teaching. Instead of love, we would be fearful; not to be humble is to be egotistical; not to be honest is to be dishonest; not to be brave is to be cowardly. As one Elder taught, “...watch their feet, not their mouth.” Watch to see if those teaching are teaching by example.
3. Learn to think straight. Seek to understand your perspective, and then learn the other person's perspective. Elders remind us that knowledge is information, but wisdom is applying the knowledge and understanding to everyday life. It is problem solving. Are you able to use this information to articulate a problem? As you listen to the reports of what happened on the news channel or search the Internet, how do you use the information to understand and solve problems in your life and your community? We need to seek information from both sides of an issue - analyze the many perspectives before you draw conclusions. Wisdom is the guide to apply in our lives. Unfortunately, most of us don't put forward any effort and simply adopt someone else's perspective. We have not learned to think straight. Elders have a unique ability to help us understand our own perspective or introduce other perspectives into the discussion. Our people have always been encouraged to seek after and learn first the wisdom of the Elders. We know that if you take the time to discuss the issues thoroughly, you will get your answer. Elders teach that “...the solutions to your problems are within yourself.” We know what to do, but often do not have the courage to do it. Often the help Elders give is simply to assist us to see more clearly. It is through self-discovery that you learn to trust yourself because everyone has an important contribution to make. Anishnabek Elders teach that to understand another person, we need to understand their personal motivation or vision. To help everyone understand the motivation of the Elders Forum, one of the first activities that the group completed was to state their vision...*Protect and preserve all creation: air, land, fire, water, plants, medicines, animals and human kind - guided by the seven universal teachings of love, trust, sharing, honesty, humility, respect and wisdom.* Elders Forum members understand that the vision answers important questions: Who benefits as you work towards the vision? What needs will be met if you implement the vision? What will be the impact of the work - the end result. The vision is a guide to identify the work that you should do to plan as you move ahead. It helps you to think straight.
4. Trust yourself, especially your instinct. Instinct is your feeling regarding something which helps you to think through what is the best thing to do. Once you feel that it is right, then act upon it. There is no shortage of people trying to convince you to do this or that; however, it is not important what they think - it is important to determine what you think. What are you accepting as correct information?

The casual observer needs to seek (seek means work) after information to make an informed decision. The Elders' wisdom is their example of how this can be done.