



NUCLEAR WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION
DES DÉCHETS
NUCLÉAIRES

Engaging Youth

A Report on NWMO Youth Engagement Activities

November 2015

NWMO Youth Engagement

Introduction

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is responsible for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

Canadians have a comprehensive plan for the safe long-term management of the used nuclear fuel produced by our nuclear power plants. The plan includes a process to identify an informed and willing host for a deep geological repository that will contain and isolate Canada's used nuclear fuel.

Many more years of discussion and study are needed before a decision can be made about a location. Given the long timeframes associated with the implementation of Canada's plan, known as Adaptive Phased Management (APM), engaging people across multiple generations is an important consideration informing the NWMO's work.

The NWMO has consistently articulated a commitment to fairness and inclusiveness across generations. Youth must be provided adequate opportunity to become engaged and informed.

In 2015, the NWMO continued to involve youth in its engagement program in a variety of ways. For example, the NWMO:

- Provides presentations to elementary, secondary and post-secondary students upon request;
- Supports and promotes youth science education through the Corporate Social Responsibility Program (CSR);
- Supports local community initiatives focused on youth and education through the CSR;
- Involves Aboriginal youth in engagement initiatives and meetings, such as Council of Elders meetings;
- Provides presentations to Aboriginal youth at conferences and participates in workshops, career fairs, youth camps and cultural awareness activities on invitation; and
- Supports engagement opportunities for youth at the local level in interested siting communities.

For a comprehensive list of NWMO youth engagement activities to date, please [click here](#).

Looking ahead, the NWMO will continue to build upon its current youth engagement program, in alignment with the phased multi-year implementation of APM. As such, youth engagement will increasingly include individuals at the local and regional levels residing in communities involved in the siting process. As work proceeds, the NWMO will continue to work with communities to identify preferred approaches for youth engagement.

As the site selection process advances, the NWMO aims to work with communities to steadily build capacity amongst youth through multiple ages and stages of development, in part by engaging them via educational institutions and in professional environments. Engagement activities will aim to:

- Foster and promote a culture of science by supporting youth science organizations;
- Ensure involvement of youth in community reflection on the potential for the project to align with the long-term vision of the community and foster well-being;
- Engage youth through relevant post-secondary institutions, student and professional associations; and
- Engage First Nation and Métis youth in activities to understand the project and how to apply Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge to project activities.

Scope of NWMO Youth Engagement

Since its inception in 2002, the NWMO has undertaken extensive engagement with interested Canadians and Aboriginal Peoples, including youth, to seek their input into the development and implementation of Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. This engagement included a number of activities such as, multi-party dialogues, citizen panels, public attitude research, e-dialogues, focus groups and workshops, that all involved youth.

As the focus of engagement has become more community driven, NWMO activities have focused on working with communities to identify and implement activities to engage youth in community discussion and reflection. These activities are described in more detail below.

Aboriginal Youth Engagement

The NWMO has involved youth in its Aboriginal engagement program through work with Elders, facilitated dialogues and in siting community engagement activities.

NWMO's Council of Elders, like its predecessor - the Elders Forum and its working group "Niigani" - promotes intergenerational learning and encourages youth involvement. The Elders focus on teaching by example – taking pride in their culture while providing counsel on the application of Indigenous Knowledge in the implementation of Adaptive Phased Management.

The Council of Elders has encouraged youth to take a more active role in discussions. Last year, understanding the importance of youth in their proceedings, the Council modified their Terms of Reference to officially include youth participation. They created a youth subcommittee to interview and nominate youths to the Council.

In 2015, youth actively participated in Council of Elders meetings. They also participated in numerous engagement activities including: dry storage tours, career forums and fairs, conferences, workshops, cultural awareness events and youth camps.

Youth Outreach through Educational Institution and Student and Professional Organizations

As in past years, NWMO staff members in 2015 attended university seminars as guest lecturers to build understanding among students about the APM project and the work of the NWMO. These presentations allow the NWMO to reach out to, and raise awareness among youth pursuing studies in disciplines directly related to the APM project (such as engineering, earth sciences, public policy, environmental studies etc.). At the same time, this engagement has allowed the NWMO to strengthen relationships with existing networks of university faculty in key program areas.

The NWMO will continue to undertake outreach to post-secondary institutions to build a base of understanding about APM among young Canadians undertaking relevant disciplines of study. In addition, the NWMO seeks opportunities for engaging young Canadians through related youth chapters of professional associations.

Build Understanding of, and Foster Opportunities for, Youth in a Potential Host Community and Region

Since the initiation of the siting process in May 2010, the NWMO has worked with communities learning more about the APM project to identify opportunities for engaging youth in their community. The NWMO has provided presentations to school children about the project and underlying science, and has hosted school groups at community open houses to view the APM exhibit. For example, in April 2015 NWMO staff had the opportunity to present to four classrooms at Ignace School – reaching more than 60 students. Also in 2015, student groups attended NWMO Open Houses held in Elliot Lake, Blind River, White River, Manitouwadge and Hornepayne. Of note, at the March 26/27, 2015 Open House in Elliot Lake, NWMO staff had an opportunity to present to more than 225 students from seven elementary and high school classes. In total, between 2010 and 2015, presentations were made to approximately 1,400 elementary and high school students in areas participating in the site selection process.

Communities in Step 3 of the siting process have established Community Liaison Committees (CLCs) to assist the community in learning more about the project. Several communities have included youth representatives on their CLC in order to bring forward a youth perspective and identify opportunities for local youth engagement. One of the CLCs this year appointed a youth subcommittee to facilitate engagement of community youth in learning more about the program and to plan activities and events to involve youth in the process and answer questions and concerns that they might have. The youth subcommittee held a number of meetings and hosted special events, such as a youth BBQ. They also participated in local events, such as fairs, where NWMO had an information table set up. For the second year running, one CLC had summer students – a university and a high school student – working at their Learn More Centre. The university student also had the opportunity to visit NWMO offices and facilities in Toronto and Oakville to learn more about NWMO's work.

The Advisory Council has suggested that the NWMO could increase local technical and social capacity by providing internships and scholarships to young people so that they could obtain necessary skills to assist their communities to participate in the APM process. Moving forward, the NWMO will continue to identify, collaboratively with communities, youth opportunities related to implementation of the project and the planning required to ensure future education, workforce and related career opportunities for youth.

Support for Youth Science Organizations - NWMO Corporate Social Responsibility Program

Through its Corporate Social Responsibility Program (CSRP) the NWMO provides support to a range of youth organizations focused on encouraging science learning amongst youth at the local, provincial and national levels. For the school year ending in 2015, the program provided funding for four youth science programs: Shad; Science North; Scientists in School; and the Science Ambassador Program.

- **Shad** – NWMO support for Shad began in 2009. Held on different Canadian university campuses each summer, the program focuses on science, engineering, technology, leadership, and entrepreneurship. The NWMO supports the program by providing bursaries to students and delivering interactive presentations by NWMO technical staff. Close to 300 Shad students attended NWMO presentations in 2015.
- **Science North** – NWMO support for the Science North School Outreach Program began in 2012. This classroom-based program helps schools augment their existing science curriculum through

hands-on interactive programs. In the school year 2014-2015, funds from the CSRP program enabled Science North to deliver 209 programs to 43 schools in 14 Northern Ontario communities.

- **Scientists in School** – NWMO support for Scientists in School began in 2013. The program helps kindergarten to Grade 8 students develop a lifelong interest in science, technology, math, environmental stewardship, and engineering. In the school year 2014-2015, funds from the CSRP enabled Scientists in School to deliver 65 workshops in 49 schools across four school districts in Ontario's Bruce and Huron Counties. In total, over 1700 students attended the workshops.
- **Science Ambassador Program** – NWMO support for the Science Ambassador Program began in 2013. Based in Saskatchewan, the program enables senior undergraduate and graduate students in the sciences to spend extended periods of time in schools with a high proportion of students of Aboriginal ancestry. In 2015, 20 University of Saskatchewan Science Ambassadors worked in nine Northern Saskatchewan and two Northern Manitoba communities, reaching a total of 160 teachers and educational assistants, and 2100 students (92% of whom are First Nation or Métis).

NWMO Sponsorship of Local Initiatives - NWMO Corporate Social Responsibility Program

As the NWMO's site selection process began to narrow down, in 2014 the Corporate Social Responsibility Program was broadened to support local initiatives in Phase 2 communities, along with neighbouring First Nation and Métis communities, and communities in the surrounding area. Priority in 2015 was given to opportunities that support community well-being, with an emphasis on education and youth initiatives in the community. In 2015 the CSRP supported approximately one hundred local initiatives. Examples of youth initiatives sponsored this year include: hockey programs, skating programs, playground improvements, swimming programs, a photography program, girl's rugby, school athletic programs, summer camps, cultural/fun days, powwows, student conferences, science competitions and Christmas Cheer funds and parades.

For more information on the NWMO's CSRP, please visit: www.nwmo.ca/corporatesocialresponsibility