

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Website:

www.keepersofthewater.ca

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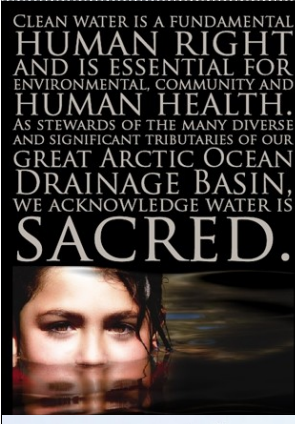
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charity, we cannot offer tax receipts.



Keepers Accomplishments

- co-sponsorship of an annual Healing Walk in "ground zero" of the tar sands between Fort McKay and Fort McMurray, Alberta, 2010-2014
- community meetings on groundwater protection, fracking, climate change, etc.
- conferences with Treaty 8 and the University of Alberta on the effects of open pit and in-situ tar sands mining on surface water, wetlands and groundwater
- press releases and advocacy on issues related to the adverse effects of industrial development in the watershed
- solar energy installation in partnership with Fort Chipewyan First Nation
- Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) training and water monitoring through Living Lakes Canada's Community-based Water Quality Monitoring program (<http://www.livinglakes.ca/community-based-water-quality-monitoring>)
- participation in Canada/Alberta Joint Oil Sands Monitoring program
- participation on boards of other organizations; the Athabasca Water Council, Alberta Environment Network
- participation in government policy consultations through the Alberta Environmental Network
- participation in Water Week events
- supporting petitions and actions focused on water, environment, Aboriginal justice and Treaty rights
- sponsorship and participation in annual Keepers of the Water gatherings

Keepers of the Water

KEEPING THE ARCTIC OCEAN BASIN

News from the Keepers:

Hay River Basin Pollution Investigation

Is there trouble in the Hay River Basin? At the Keepers IX Gathering at Bushe River, local leadership from Dene Tha First Nation and Beaver First Nation brought forward concerns about the possibility of residual contamination at the site of four different pipeline spills that have supposedly been cleaned up.

While clean up has taken place at spills on Apache, Spyglass, Nuvista, and Barnwell pipelines, Traditional Knowledge holders and those responsible for monitoring the land have concerns. These concerns relate to the state of the land and water at the locations of these spills, the timeliness of notification, and also about

some of the methods used to clean up. In one case, a 'burn order' was constructed by Apache and the Alberta Energy Regulator, and carried out without informing Dene Tha First Nation. How would you feel if you saw a huge planned fire on lands you are responsible for, and no one let you know? There has been a proposal for the use of micro-



Apache spill 2013 on Dene Tha Traditional lands

organisms for spill clean up that must a t t a i n p r o p e r c o n s u l t a -

tion before implementation.

Keepers of the Water will undertake an investigation of these four pipeline spills, to see if western science can recognize ongoing contamination on the land. Developed by Dr. Kevin Timoney, our project protocols will include vegetation monitoring and sampling at a control site near each, and on these four pipeline spill sites.

We will test for hydrocarbons and salinity potentially remaining at the spills sites. Working with partners Dene Tha First Nation, Beaver First Nation, North Peace Tribal Council and Treaty 8, we plan to produce an interview of those concerned, and provide local community water monitoring training as well.

Dehcho community based water quality monitoring program

The Dehcho "Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Ocean Management." (AAROM) program has an agreement with Government of the North West Territories to be involved in Community Based Water Monitoring. Dehcho AAROM works with our member First Nations in eight communities to deploy, maintain and retrieve water quality and contaminant monitoring equipment. First Nations involved are Pehdzeh Ki, Liidlii Kue, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Deh Gah Gotie, Katlodeeche, Sambaa K'e and Ka'a'gee Tu. Study locations and sampling are based on addressing community concerns. Monitoring stations are located on the

Mackenzie River near Fort Providence, Fort Simpson and Wrigley as well as in Trout Lake, Kakisa Lake and the Liard, South Nahanni and Hay rivers. We continually measure Temperature, pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Conductivity, Turbidity, Ox/redox potential and Chlorophyll during the open water season. Dissolved hydrocarbons are also measured along with dissolved metals. In addition water grab samples, ana-



lyzed by Taiga Labs in Yellowknife, measure 70 substances. Dehcho AAROM is a natural partner for this long-term baseline study since we already contract member First Nations to hire boat patrol monitors who observe and record activities on their waters, including fishing activity, wildlife sightings, and other Dehcho AAROM studies. This agreement has greatly strengthened our Aquatic Monitoring Program; it provides state of the art equipment as well as scientific analysis, recording of the collected data and training. Results for the previous year are reported back to the communities each year.

Article and picture by George Low, Dehcho AAROM Coordinator

Peace/Athabasca Delta Environmental Monitoring Program



KEEPERS OF THE WATER

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Annual General Meeting – August 30, 2015

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thewater.ca](http://www.keepersofthewater.ca)

On February 23 and 24, 2016, the 4th Annual forum of PADEMP was held at the Mamawi Community Hall in Fort Chipewyan. Twenty partners participated, representing Katl'Odeeché First Nation, Deninu-kui First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, Little Red River Cree Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Métis Association, NWT Métis Nation, Fort Resolution Métis Association and Hay River Métis Association. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Alberta Environment and Parks, the Government of the North West Territories, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Wood Buffalo National Park were also present as members of PADEMP. Special guests to this forum numbered 42, including distinguished Elders of Mikisew Cree Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Researchers from the University of Saskatchewan, University of Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University, University of Ottawa, Keyano College, and Stanford University (California) reported on the results of their research to the forum. Environment and Climate Change Canada also presented results of their research supported by the Joint Oil Sands Monitoring Program. A presentation by the community based monitors from Fort Chipewyan was a highlight of this event. These monitors, who work on behalf of Mikisew Cree Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, demonstrated programs that can track field work electronically; these programs record GPS locations and observations directly from the field, eliminated the need for filing and uploading documents. Throughout all of the presentations, researchers and presenters acknowledged the support of the local communities in conducting their research. The scientists reported back to the community on results that they have gathered in the community, a missing link in scientific efforts that has long needed to be filled. Topics of research presentations ranged from water quality and quantity, fish health monitoring, and muskrat populations and their response to water level fluctuations. A Community supper was held, along with an open house and science fair for Grades 7-8 and 9-12.

Report from Keepers IX: Carbon Lake and Bushe River 2015



At Carbon Lake Water Bush Camp: Keepers of the Water Co-chair Sam Gargan spoke about Traditional Ecological Knowledge and how it is intellectual property to which property rights pertain. TEK is always project specific as each circumstance and location is different. TEK is best used separate from environmental assessments in order to maintain balance as integration equals assimilation.

Karen Bakker spoke about the federal Social Sciences and Hu-

manities Research Council grant pertaining to insight that was applied to this Gathering in the sense that scientists, First Nations, media, and artists have a great deal to share with Canada for the protection of water. The basis of a new SHRCC grant will be to hold annual Water Bush Camps and also possibly create a lab or a roving lab.

A company called Environmental Bio-detection Products Incorporated offers products to assess environment for toxicity in community monitoring

Executive Director Caleb Behn and participants at the Keepers of the Water IX Water Bush Camp 2015 in Carbon Lake B.C.

situations. These are kits community monitors can deploy to immediately evaluate toxicity. The visual signal in each kit allows community water monitors confirm toxicity to know if they need to send further samples to a lab. Kits cost an average of \$20/sample; much less expensive than laboratory testing.

At Bushe River: Welcome, cultural events including a Round Dance and Handgames, and Presentations from Dene Tha and Beaver First Nation leadership and technicians set the tone for Keepers IX. 14 different speakers gave The Simulated Oil from Water Clean-up workshop tested commercial oil booms, booms made from traditional materials such as marsh grass, cat tail tops, peat moss, sawdust,

and Human Hair booms created by Green Circles salons. Representatives from Green Circles were present to demonstrate their product which is made from hair contributed by over 1,000 hair salons in Canada and the United States.

Thanks to all who attended!



Jule Asterisk for Keepers of the Water and Mandy Dumanski from the Alberta Energy Regulator set up the Simulated Oil/Water clean up workshop at KOTW IX