

Please see our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/KeepersOfTheAthabasca for upcoming events.

Yes! I want to be a Keeper.

name: _____

address: _____

email: _____

optional: Donation amount (circle one):

\$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Please send to: Treasurer, Keepers of the Athabasca
PO Box 2503, Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0
As Keepers of the Athabasca is not a registered charity, we cannot offer tax receipts.

CLEAN WATER IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT AND IS ESSENTIAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, COMMUNITY AND HUMAN HEALTH. AS STEWARDS OF THE MANY DIVERSE AND SIGNIFICANT TRIBUTARIES OF OUR GREAT ARCTIC OCEAN DRAINAGE BASIN, WE ACKNOWLEDGE WATER IS SACRED.



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 Athabasca

Indigenous Climate Action

In January 2016, Keepers of the Athabasca hosts 150 Indigenous leaders from across the country in Amiskwaciwāskahikan (Edmonton) Treaty 6 Territory, to discuss climate change, the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples and how we as Indigenous peoples can organize to build our own climate action plan.

In December 2015, world leaders met in Paris at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties 21 and signed the historic Paris Accord. This agreement included the recognition of Indigenous peoples in the preamble and traditional indigenous knowledge within the operative text. Significantly, this highlights the tireless work of Indigenous

rights activists and advocates that have been pushing for recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

Following the UN meeting, provincial and federal leaders of Canada are now looking at developing climate change policy to ensure that Canada meets its commitments to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. These policies have great potential to either negatively or positively impact Indigenous peoples rights. We see an urgent need to engage our communities, our leaders and our people to stand up and take this opportunity to lead the way to solutions that adequately recognize, address and include our rights

In recognition of this need, Eriel Deranger from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation,



Panel: Reuben George, Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Jessie Cardinal, Crystal Lameman, Clayton Thomas-Mueller, Eriel Deranger

Crystal Lamemen from Beaver Lake Cree First Nation, Jesse Cardinal with the Kikino Metis Settlement, and Melina Laboucan-Massimo from Lubicon Lake Band (all Indigenous women from tar sands impacted communities) proposed a series of gatherings of key Indigenous peoples, organizations and groups impacted by climate change, resource extraction and proposed policies. These meetings act as educational, networking, and planning resources to encourage development of an Indigenous Climate Change Action Plan.

To ensure our communities, our rights, our culture and our knowledge systems are fully recognized, protected and implemented into any and all climate change policies in Canada.

The indigenous action on climate

Summary Report:
www.indigenousclimateaction.com

coalition, including Keepers of the Athabasca, is now engaging indigenous people for their input into national and provincial climate plans.

By Jesse Cardinal, Coordinator, Keepers of the Athabasca

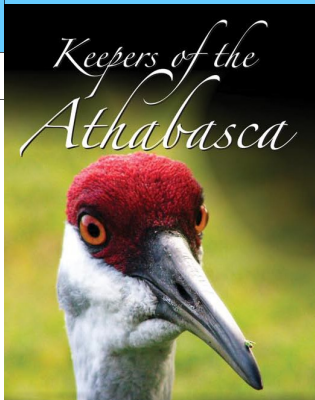
Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre: FYI #1

Established 1986, the Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre (SHTC), specializing in PCB destruction, has an Alberta Environment approval that comes up for review every ten years. The first time the approval came up in 1996, there were near riots in Kinuso as locals wanted the plant shut down. Detailed submissions from the Regional Elders Environment Commission (1992), representing Sucker Creek First Nation, Swan River First Nation, and Driftpile Cree Nation, as well as a strong presentation by Grand Chief Jim Badger (1996) representing Lesser

Slave Indian Regional Council (at that time 8 local FN's), regarding abrogation of Treaty Rights when pollution prevents people from engaging in traditional activities, speak to some very long standing objections to SHTC. Keepers of the Athabasca put out a call for those interested in challenging the approval in 2016. We received a strong response, especially from First Nations communities, and in our challenge to the approval, we have resubmitted the previous statements, as we were assured the original responders and their families still maintain the same concerns.

In our challenge to the SHTC, we also included the 2015 'State of the Watershed' report, commissioned by the Lesser Slave Watershed Council, in which PCB's are found in Lesser Slave Lake sediment core samples, increasing in the years SHTC had accidents, explosions and fires. While the SHTC contractor maintains this is a 'coincidence', Keepers continues to follow up.





KEEPERS OF THE ATHABASCA

PO Box 2503
LacLaBiche, Alberta
TOA 2C0

Contact Coordinator regarding the
UNDRIP CONFERENCE

To be held in Edmonton in Fall 2016

Coordinator: Jesse Cardinal
email: keeperathabasca@gmail.com
Communications: Jule Asterisk
email: keepers.communications@gmail.com



Welcoming our new Directors

Keepers of the Athabasca new Co-chairs, Cleo Reece (Fort McMurray First Nation) and Harvey Scott (Athabasca) welcome all of our new Directors and thank all Directors for their service. Cleo: I continue to believe in all the good works we have done over the past nine years and in what we continue to do. To all of you who have volunteered to be part of the board this year, a hearty welcome and appreciation for your willingness and thoughtfulness in what looks to be an exciting and rewarding Keepers year. Together we are strong, together we will persevere. Harvey: We have elected an amazing team of talented Keepers with a great diversity of cultural and community experiences, skills and leadership gifts. We welcome back returning directors with their experience. We are delighted to see new directors from widespread Indigenous communities, ENGOS and individual environmental citizenship. With the election of our very first Wisdom Council we are formally recognizing the importance of both traditional indigenous knowledge and contemporary science. We welcome our first Wisdom Council and look forward to drawing on their wisdom as we move forward.

One of our first challenges is to find out what our directors would like the Keepers to accomplish this next year and how they would like to contribute to organizing, hosting and leading that work. Keepers of the Athabasca files include annual Oil Trains 'Blast Zone' campaign, water quality monitoring, UNDRIP conference, Indigenous Climate Action, Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre Approval block, Teck (Frontier) mine intervener, status solar projects, Obed mine court case, communications, and fundraising. We will be holding our Fall Planning Meeting to get together and meet face to face in order to move our plans and board development ahead.

Keepers of the Athabasca: Solar and Food Partnerships

In 2016, Keepers of the Athabasca will accomplish two new solar installations with our partners, **Fort McMurray First Nation** and **Beaver Lake Cree Nation**.

Each community has produced a poster contest by youth to advertise our 'Save the Future' meetings, where, after starting our project in a good way with prayers by a local Elder, the poster prizes are given out, and planning decisions are made by local community members toward each \$30,000 installation.

Project teams are formed at the 'Save the Future' meeting, including a Building or siting team for decisions on where the solar installation will be located.

A Training Team will consult in the community on how many people want training in the solar field, which will help determine how the solar project will be installed. The Contract team will help draw up the request for proposals and the contract for installation, which will go to bid with over sixty different Alberta

companies, and at least two from the U.S.

Finally, the Garden Team will explore possibilities for sustainable food production in the community, including assessing community interest, capacity, and experience, along with local soil types, favourite foods, and marketing preferences. As we explored in our **We are the Land** conference last year, diversifying the economy can start at home!



Team Leaders after the 1st 'Safe the Future' Meeting at Beaver Lake Cree Nation:
Building: Marilyn Gladue, **Contract:** Crystal Lame-man, **Training:** Coleen Anderson, **Project Manager:** Jule Asterisk, and **Garden:** Shona Lameman