



Keepers of the Water **II**
Keeping the Peace

WATERSHED PLAN · DRAFT

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.

- THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER II RESOLUTION, 2007 -

Keepers of the Water
Keeping the Peace **II**

WATERSHED PLAN › DRAFT



Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



KEEPERS OF THE WATER II RESOLUTION

FORT ST. JOHN, BC ▸ SEPTEMBER 29, 2007

We commit our support to work in solidarity to protect and restore the ecological integrity and environmental health of the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin watersheds.

As stewards of the many diverse and significant tributaries of our great Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin, we acknowledge that water is sacred.

WE RESOLVE THAT:

- Clean water is a fundamental human right, and is essential for environmental, community and human health.
- The Site C dam is an unacceptable proposal because it would:
 - Forever negatively impact First Nations residents in the region, and destroy their use of the Peace Valley,
 - Flood significant portions of the Peace Valley, including rare class 1 and class 2 lands, and threaten the area's ecological integrity,
 - Cause downstream impacts to water quality and flow, and
 - Fragment wildlife habitat, impede wildlife movement and sever a vital link in the Yellowstone to Yukon landscape.
- We are concerned about the state of water across our country and around the globe. We support the development of a grassroots watershed plan for the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin, bringing together First Nations, local citizens and community groups.
- Excessive misuse of the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin - tar sands, oil and gas development, deforestation/ unsustainable logging, nuclear plants, coal and hydroelectricity, etc., among other threats - is resulting in unsustainable industrial development with cumulative impacts. It is time to change this.
- We are committed to building a coalition of Keepers of the Water, and creating our own Keepers groups - Keepers of the Peace, Slave, Athabasca, Liard, Hay, and Mackenzie - all the tributaries of the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin. It is our hope that this will feed into a Canada-wide Keepers of the Water alliance.

Keepers of the Water II



Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
MAP: FRESH WATER DRAINAGE BASINS OF CANADA	8
THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN	9
ELDERS' RESOLUTION ON WATER TO LEADERSHIP	13
ELDERS' MEETING NOTES	15
CONTACT US	16
APPENDICES	
I THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER DECLARATION	17
II MANDATE TO FIRST NATION ABORIGINAL GOVERNMENTS	20
III ELDERS' RESOLUTIONS - PREAMBLE	21
IV ELDERS' MEETING	24

Keepers of the Water **II**



Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



INTRODUCTION

SAFE DRINKING WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT

- UNITED NATIONS, 2003

The Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin covers thirty-six percent of Canada's landmass, encompassing the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon. Once a wild and pristine watershed, this Basin is becoming an increasingly toxic, depleted fresh water resource.

In the Fall of 2006, a group of concerned citizens met in Liidlii Kui, Denendeh/Fort Simpson, NWT to discuss their growing fears about the fate of these waters. The gathering produced a water declaration that placed the needs of all that rely upon the Basin waters before the ambitions and activities of government and industry.

This Fall we gathered again, this time around the Basin's headwaters and lifeblood, the Peace River and its tributaries. We examined the current condition throughout the Basin, using this information and the first Keeper's water declaration to develop a grassroots watershed plan that values life more than remote government agendas or massive industrial exploitation geared towards short term, often foreign shareholder profits.

BC Premier Gordon Campbell announced the government's plans to go ahead with the proposed Site C hydroelectric megadam project on the Peace River while we were working on the grassroots watershed plan in Fort St. John this fall. Keepers of the Water II: Keeping the Peace delegates reacted strongly to this news, immediately generating a Keepers resolution in which it is asserted that there be a moratorium on any future industrial projects until all stakeholders can agree to the terms under which the proposed project is developed. Please sign this resolution if you agree with it.

The Keepers of the Water I Water Declaration, the Elders Resolution (Draft 1), the Keepers of the Water II: Keeping the Peace rough grassroots watershed plan and Keepers resolution are available online and in printable .pdf form.

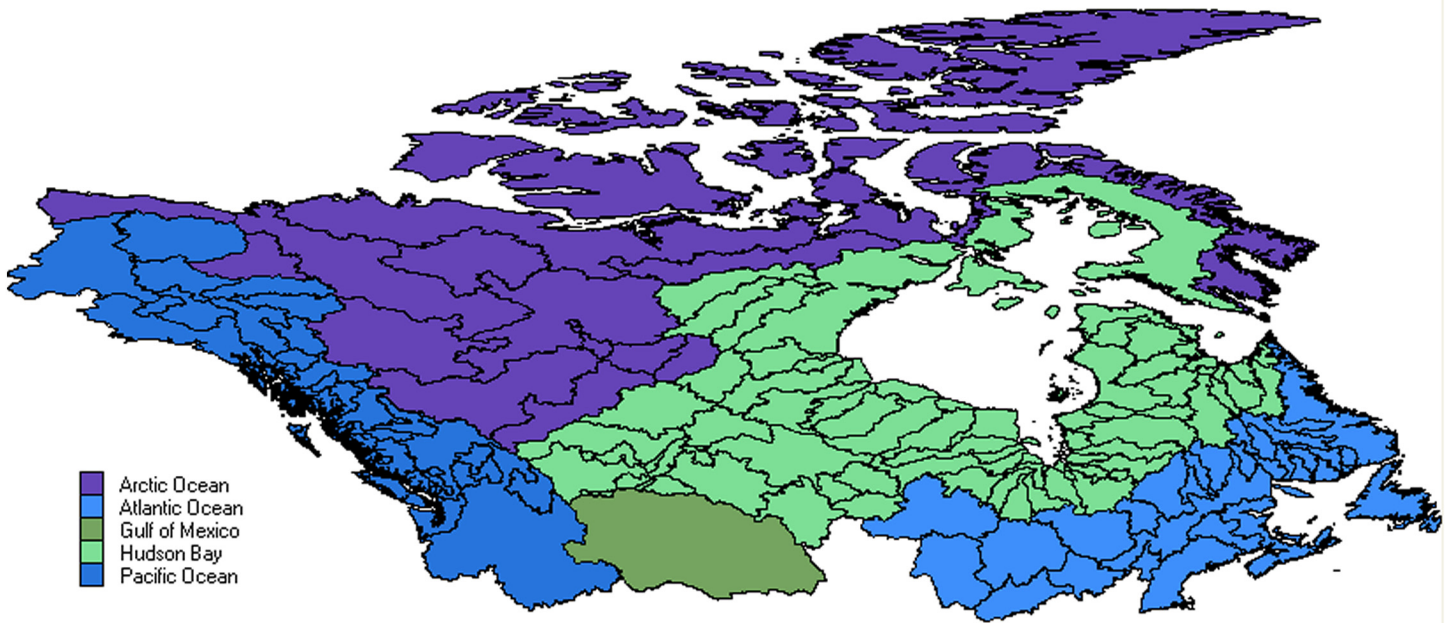
Plans are now in the works for next year's Keepers conference. We will post news of this conference on our website when more information becomes available.

- *Keepers of the Water II Planning Committee*

Keepers of the Water II



MAP: FRESH WATER DRAINAGE BASINS OF CANADA



Keepers of the Water II

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA • SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007

THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER

ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN

KEY ELEMENTS OF A DRAFT WATERSHED PLAN FOR THE ARCTIC OCEAN DRAINAGE BASIN

LAND AND WATER USE DECISION MAKERS

1. This plan must recognize First Nation and Treaty Right implementation, and government to government relationship between Aboriginal people and governments
2. Environmental groups and local citizens need to support First Nation and Treaty Rights as a means to ensure plan implementation.
3. We must consider the impacts of activities in our watershed on peoples and wildlife beyond our watershed and political jurisdictions
4. Cumulative impact assessments must be done by independent scientists, not self regulating industries
5. Moratorium on large scale developments such as tar sands and Site C dam until sustainable environmental management plan approved by consensus by true multi-stakeholder group (like us!)

WATER RESOURCES, INVENTORY, AND MONITORING

1. Monitoring has to start immediately, even at a small scale
2. Sampling representative of the watershed and the hazards must meet the test of local and traditional knowledge as well as statistical and scientific rigor
3. The flow and water temperature of rivers and tributaries has to be monitored, year round (even in the winter when ecosystems are very sensitive and the industries very active)
4. For every 10 wells drilled, the industry has to install one monitoring well
5. The monitoring information has to be made readily available, in a timely manner

Keepers of the Water II



ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN

PRESSURE OF INDUSTRY ON WATERSHEDS

1. Active and meaningful local involvement in decision-making with full recognition of Treaty/Aboriginal rights, responsibilities and interests
 - We need to be involved as local people in enforcing limits on environmentally damaging activities
 - Greater level of coordination and cooperation between all groups and first nations in the watershed
 - Public education regarding existing guidelines and publicly affirming the good practices and guidelines that are in place can give companies incentive to do well
2. Full analysis of situations and options (as it relates to industrial developments in the basin)
 - Use of wind power
 - We need an honest and full analysis of our situation and options in relation to energy needs
 - Conservation of energy
3. Identify and set limits of acceptable impact/development
 - Identify and set limits of acceptable change
4. Implement systems for full-cost accounting for Industrial Development
 - Triple bottom-line
 - A full account of benefit that includes environmental, social and economic impacts
 - We need to be clear in pointing out the true cost of industrial projects and activities
5. Need for Government Direction, adequate and enforceable regulations
 - Regulatory structures need resources for enforcement
 - A willingness to pay more to provide resources for management and enforcement, and an informing of government regarding a willingness to pay for effective accomplishing of environmental objectives
 - We need to hold the government accountable to commitments and promises they have already made
 - We need to pressure or influence government to enforce existing guidelines
 - A tax regime that rewards conservation of energy and other resources
 - Carbon taxes
 - The government needs to be given clear directives that demonstrate financial outcomes of proposed solutions

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN

SENSITIVITY AND VULNERABILITY OF ECOSYSTEMS

1. People used to be able to drink the water from any lake or river; now they can't trust the health of the water or the fish in many water bodies.
 - For the entire Arctic Drainage Basin the goal must be to be able to drink the water anywhere without harm to health (subject to natural parameters).
 - Government, industry and people must establish standards, make decisions and behave in ways that achieve this goal.
2. The Arctic Basin contains numerous landscapes with unique variability and vulnerability to change (e.g., muskeg and permafrost).
 - Important and sensitive ecosystems unique to the north need special recognition within the development regulatory framework.
3. Communities are seeing changes in fish (not spawning, flesh sticky, infected, deformities), beavers and trees disappearing, etc.
 - Lakes and Rivers are the heart and veins of the Earth.
 - Whatever impacts ecosystems upstream also impacts communities (people, animals and fish) downstream. Fish are especially sensitive and vulnerable.
4. Elders remember the land the way it was; young people think it's always been this way (e.g., Pingos melting)
 - Local knowledge (aboriginal and non-aboriginal) is an important source of information and should be included in watershed planning and monitoring.
 - It is important to take a long-term view in monitoring and recording changes in water systems.

Keepers of the Water II



ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN

PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS, AND INVOLVEMENT

1. Early consultation and awareness of the Plan dispels misunderstanding, is open and transparent to all watershed citizens, groups, governments, business and is specific to community/region
2. One-on-one communication is important and having local/regional person(s) to communicate vision and plan (i.e. Elders to communities/spokesperson to industry/government)
3. Positive message of renewable energy; extinguish fossil fuel reliance as viable alternative for truly democratic energy system
4. Respect equally two streams of knowledge in our awareness/education/involvement (local, traditional, indigenous and science) and bring knowledge forward through experiential learning (hands, head, heart)
5. Youth involvement is essential, needs to be engaged through experiential education/awareness involvement

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



KEEPERS OF THE WATER II: ELDERS' RESOLUTIONS
SEPTEMBER 29, 2007 · FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA

ELDERS' RESOLUTION ON WATER TO LEADERSHIP

As stewards, we the Elders at the Keepers of the Water II: Keeping the Peace conference, recognize and affirm the resolutions from the Elders at Thebacha (August 20, 2007; see Appendices 2-4). We acknowledge that the United Nations (2003) has recognized that water is sacred and there is a human right to safe drinking water. We are convinced that our Leadership has heard our words in the past, that we are saying again that water is important, and that our resolutions are to be taken seriously. We are going to the people to carry our message about the water, about our rights to clean and safe water.

In some places in our traditional lands, we see animals and fish that are sick. We see this, we report this and the government does not listen to us. The Pine Beetles are killing our forests and there are problems from that (more wind, water runs out without growing forests).

In our communities, there is hardship. When our younger people are not taught our traditions, we are becoming dependent and becoming spoiled, we are no longer disciplined in our lives. Money is taking over our lives, changing our values and undermining our values toward one another.

Chemical water treatment is not the answer. Safe and secure drinking water is an essential human right, and we have the right to ensure treatment measures are natural and meet First Nations standards for being healthy. All water is sacred and has a spirit. We as First Nations know that we share that with all of life and we know how to respect and care for this spirit.

Together we are strong. Chiefs should be chosen with care and work with us as Elders. We stress that our leadership must lead by example. Accountability is to our peoples; to our traditional lands and waters.

Talk to youth about what is going on today, what we see here today. We as elders know that our children and grandchildren are interested and we must talk to them now as we know it is the way we learned as children. We know as Elders that we set examples for our youth, that we must guide our Chiefs to be effective and caring leaders. We need our youth to learn and be well educated in our traditions and in many things for the future to ensure our inherent rights as nations.

Keepers of the Water II



ELDERS' RESOLUTION ON WATER TO LEADERSHIP

First Nations must ensure effective discussions with the governments for the respectful implementation of Treaties, in protection of water. All Provincial governments (Ministers) must be made aware of inherent Treaty and Aboriginal rights. Water was never negotiable. We never gave up those things that we are as a people, including our lands and waters. We will never forget this nor will we abrogate these rights. The Honour of the Crown must be upheld when it comes to water.

Working in unity, we hereby inform our First Nations leadership of Treaty 8 and other treaties working together as Indigenous peoples that we are working for the collective good on water.

We commit here today to go back to our communities and start the process to work on protecting our water as an Elders group, to put this process into action including at our communities. We will commit to ensure BCRs and Tribal Council resolutions are put in place. That these actions will be brought into operations by the Dene Tha Keepers Gathering in 2008.

This resolution was drafted by the Elders on September 27, 2007 in Fort St. John, as gathered at the Keepers of the Water II, accepted by the Elders gathered at the Bear Flats (September 28, 2007) and read to the Conference of the Whole (September 29, 2007).

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



ELDERS' MEETING NOTES

KEEPERS OF THE WATER II, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

- Aboriginal lands and title need to be enforced
- enclosure of Aboriginal lands have to stop.
- relationship of Aboriginal peoples to government is by working together, all of Treaty 8, 33 Nations, Treaty 11 is about 14 Nations.
- draft two resolutions today, we present them to the conference tomorrow, direction to Chiefs and leadership, in a year we will meet in August in Dene Tha country, last leg of the Keepers, all our work is being done this winter, to send something to the United Nations (First Nations).
- Meeting in New York, why was Canada's position like that? Because Canada read the clause about all Indigenous Peoples are entitled to lands to survive on, not governments say, our lands, if we lived only on reserve you wouldn't have enough land, you go out on the traditional lands and Canada would then have to guarantee that, and this government in Canada went against it now (they drafted it for four years, past Canadian governments).
- Elders participation at meetings, how far did that go? For Treaty 8 meetings one goes, but meeting with Ministers there should always be an Elder there. How things are now, concerns are brought up in what is going on in different organizations (social and health issues), concerns are represented as OK, but what comes back to the grassroots? Where is Treaty 8 coming into our communities with services? On-going discussions but what is being done? Medical/health care, education.... Meetings go on and resolutions go on the shelf and collect dust.
- Recently, Chiefs' meeting in Kelowna? We are coming to ATC consultations with AB govt. because of development. The AB govt. wants to consult but they don't know anything about Treaty rights (they play dumb), 5 Chiefs and IRCs in Kelowna about consultation, we are not done, at a stage when AB Justice is willing to make changes, it is written and we are making changes. Chiefs are thinking about funding for another year.
- We signed no Treaty, and we are paying no taxes, it is our land.
- Education with the general public about Aboriginal and Treaty rights to correct misunderstanding and lies. Live by the Treaties
- Thebacha resolutions, there is a preamble as well

PARTICIPANTS

Chief Rolland Willson, Councilor Clarence Willson, Elders Pat Marcel, Charlie Voyageur, Alec Bruno, Shane Adam, Lionel Lepine, Therease Tuccaro, Fort Mckay Celina Harpe, Harriet Janvier, Jack Askoty, Violet Clarke, Betty Willson, Patricia Chaingee, Jesse Stanyer, Howard D Cardinal, Cathy Dokkie, Julie Dallaire, Keith Cooper, Max Desjarlais, Tommy Attachie, Rosie Field, Margaret Attachie, Art Napoleon, Chris Paci.

Keepers of the Water II



CONTACT US

Norine Wark, conference planning committee co-chair
RR 1, S 6, C 5
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4E7

Phone: (250) 843-7310
Email: info@keepersofthewater.ca
Website: <http://www.keepersofthewater.ca>

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



APPENDIX ONE:
THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER
DECLARATION
SEPTEMBER 7, 2006

We the peoples gathered in Liidlii Kue, Denendeh, from September 5-8th, 2006, having come together as Keepers of the Water, connected as peoples residing in the vast basin including Lake Athabasca, Nsededha (Slave river), Tucho/Tu'neda (Great Slave Lake), and Dehcho.

RECALLING THAT the Creator sent Zhambáhdézhá as a messenger to the Indigenous peoples who live on Mother Earth, bringing us sacred laws to live by. We have been taught that the land is our Mother, and the waters are her blood that sustain life for all peoples, lands and creation. We are born from our Mother Earth and we are inseparable from her.

AFFIRMING THAT water is essential to life, and the right to life constitutes a fundamental human right, recognized by all countries of the world.

FURTHER AFFIRMING that as Indigenous peoples, since time immemorial, have fundamental rights to live on our own lands and to survive as peoples. As a sacred trust we have been given responsibility from the Creator to ensure the integrity of all waters in our lands in all its many forms – from the aquifers deep underground, to the rich marshlands, rivers and lakes that connect and sustain our communities, to the glaciers on the high mountains, to the rains and snow that restore and replenish our Mother Earth in an unending cycle of renewal.

RESPECTING that our sacred laws have not been honoured and that our Mother Earth is being abused out of ignorance and greed.

CONVINCED that our fundamental human rights with respect to water must be acknowledged and respected by all others.

CONVINCED that climate change, together with the unprecedented impacts of oil and gas extraction, oil sands developments, land conversion, deforestation, hydroelectric development, mining activities, industrial discharges, atmospheric pollution and water withdrawals on our waters, are diminishing the quantity and quality of water in our basin, other present and any future activities that change our land.

Keepers of the Water II



APPENDIX ONE: DECLARATION

BEARING WITNESS THAT we are seeing the impacts of these changes before our eyes. When we travel our lands and waterways we see receding shorelines and depleted populations of fish and wildlife. Exotic species of plants and animals are encroaching, while indigenous species are disappearing as conditions change too quickly for them to adapt. The land and wildlife are being poisoned by pollution and contaminants. The very rhythms of the seasons are no longer familiar to us.

RECOGNIZING that causes of these changes are many and complex, but they are all caused by human action, government and industry, and we as the peoples of the Basin all share a common fate.

ASSERTING our rights to defend and protect the body and blood of our Mother Earth according to our sacred laws. Demanding that immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the spirit of the water, which sustains all life within the Basin, be protected today for our ancestors and future generations.

WE PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Water is a sacred gift, an essential element that sustains and connects all life. It is not a commodity to be bought or sold. All people share an obligation to cooperate to ensure that water in all of its forms is protected and conserved with regard to the needs of all living things today and for future generations tomorrow.

All peoples in the Basin have a fundamental human right to water that must be recognized nationally and internationally, and incorporated into domestic law and policy. Progress towards the realization of the right to water must be monitored, and appropriate institutional mechanisms developed to ensure that these rights are implemented.

These rights require water undiminished in quality, quantity or natural rate of flow, to access waterbodies for purposes of harvesting, travel and navigation, and to prevent or seek redress for any action that may affect these rights. These rights extend to water as part of a healthy environment, and recognize spiritual and cultural values, taking into consideration the needs of the most disadvantaged and of future generations.

The use of water for industrial and commercial purposes is fundamentally limited by the requirement to not substantially alter the quantity, quality or natural rate of flow of the water within the Basin. The full costs of such water use decisions must be internalized and assumed according to the principle that polluters must be held accountable. This principle includes environmental bonds that would be great enough to ensure full remediation and reclamation from potential damages.

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



APPENDIX ONE: DECLARATION

All governments and industry have common responsibilities to protect and conserve water, and must sustain commitments to implement these responsibilities.

The precautionary approach must be widely applied in all decisions or actions that may affect the quality, quantity or natural rate of flow of water within the Basin.

Comprehensive watershed management and land use planning to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the Basin must be implemented in advance of industrial allocations or development decisions.

The health and integrity of the Basin as a whole will only be achieved through integration and cooperation at all levels. Measures to protect and conserve water must be enacted and implemented by all levels of government.

Local communities have obligations to act decisively to protect the health and integrity of their water sources. All governments share responsibilities to take proactive steps to fund and sustain local capacity, training and infrastructure to improve and maintain the health and integrity of water and waterbodies throughout the Basin.

Indigenous and local communities play a vital role in water management because of their knowledge, traditional practices and relationships to the land. Formal mechanisms to improve scientific and traditional knowledge and understanding and to advance the effectiveness of measures to monitor, protect and conserve water must be undertaken by governments, industry, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Information about the state of water within the Basin must be collected and be disseminated to communities in a timely and accessible way. This will be sustained by a network of Indigenous and local communities who will gather to share experiences, knowledge about how to sustainably develop, protect and conserve their watersheds.

Keepers of the Water II



APPENDIX TWO:

ELDERS' MANDATE TO FIRST NATION ABORIGINAL GOVERNMENTS

“TU BETA TS'ENA” CONFERENCE, AUGUST 20-23, 2007

A conference was held in Fort Smith, NWT, on the important topic of water. They engaged in discussion and made recommendations through conference workshops. In addition, a petition from conference participants “asked the elected leadership to take action now, to protect our water... follow up on our recommendations, and report back to us about your work”.

Participants strongly encourage leadership from First Nation communities along the Slave, Mackenzie, Peace, and Athabasca Rivers to begin working together to implement the conference recommendations. Their ancestors traditionally used these water bodies as well as the lakes and streams flowing into and out of these rivers.

The Dene Nation National Chief has been tasked with leading this implementation and will report through a First Nation summit consisting of First Nations along these rivers.

This conference utilizes the following principles to start the process of engaging others:

- To discuss water, both in a historical-traditional use and modern context.
- Identification of and discussions of individual and common concerns regarding current and future uses
- Development of a working group that will formulate cohesive views and recommendations for Governments and Industry
- Establishment of a Technical Working Group to access data and/or develop and implement strategies to monitor water use and its effects
- To utilize the recommendations from the “Tu beta Ts'ena” Conference

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



APPENDIX THREE:
ELDERS' RESOLUTIONS - PREAMBLE
"TU BETA TS'ENA" WATER IS LIFE, AUGUST 20-24, 2007
THEBACHA (FT. SMITH), DENENDEH (NWT)

Water is sacred, water is life; we are the water.

The rains and snow bless the land.

We give thanks for water in all its forms - ice, snow, rain and lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and bogs.

The water in the wombs of our mothers connects us with all the water of Mother Earth.

We think of our children and our future generations. We think of our responsibility to them and to the plants and animals.

This gives us strength. We must work together to protect our grandchildren and the environment they live in. To do this, we must form a coalition and work together in unity. We know it is important to get the facts out now. We must also ensure that in this time of rapid development the duty to consult and accommodate is upheld. We must take this issue further and not let what we say die. To make sure this happens we are developing our options/strategies and identifying current challenges and opportunities.

We all have Inherent Indigenous and Treaty Rights for our lands and waters for "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow."

We, the Indigenous peoples of the Mackenzie River Basin and all the peoples of the basin, from south to north, have gathered in Thebacha, Denendeh (Ft. Smith, NWT) for Tu Betá Ts'ena, the "Water is Life" conference, held from August 20th-23rd, 2007 to express our concerns about the quality and quantity of our waters: the lifeline of all beings.

Keepers of the Water II



APPENDIX THREE: RESOLUTIONS PREAMBLE

The peoples, both here and others outside the basin, rely on the gifts from the Creator, which are the resources the Mackenzie River Basin provides. Our traditional land and water users tell us that the environment they know is changing. In the 1990's we fought the pulp and paper mills; we also faced the use of 2-4,5,D along the Mackenzie River. Today we also face large scale tar sands development. We know there are other developments in our basin: mining, agriculture, forestry, hydro development, municipal water and waste, long-range air contaminants, and climate change impacts. The increasing development in the Mackenzie River Basin is a growing threat not only here but to all who live on the lower reaches of the river. The basin habitat and its biological diversity are of central importance to the livelihood and socio-cultural integrity of the peoples of the Basin who use the area for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, transportation, teaching youth, and spiritual purposes.

Throughout the conference, people are saying that youth and Elders are talking to one another, and this must be encouraged.

In their meeting the Elders resolved:

- 1) To work together to protect the waters across our differences and to work with groups who have the same aims (i.e. environmental groups, NGOs).
- 2) That youth must be involved in all aspects of this effort.
- 3) That, before any future development occurs, governments (federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal) uphold their accountability and that our own leadership ensures that proper consultation and accommodation occurs.
- 4) That the Creator put us on this land as independent peoples, as our own nations, to use the land in a good way, and to carry out our responsibilities to each other and to the environment; that we work to ensure that our current and traditional knowledge is acknowledged and respected. Education of the public, industry, and government as well as our younger generation about our special Treaty and Aboriginal rights to water is essential.

We, as the Peoples of the Mackenzie River Basin, direct the Crown to conduct a Royal Commission on Water for the entire basin (which is known as the Mackenzie River Basin, and it includes the sub-basins of the Athabasca, Peace, Liard, Peel, Slave, Mackenzie, and Bear Rivers).

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



APPENDIX THREE: RESOLUTIONS PREAMBLE

Regardless of jurisdiction and authority, including inherent rights, we are sovereign peoples with our own treaties, both traditional and modern, united in agreeing that the water is of the utmost importance. Along with youth, women must be involved in all of our activities and decisions in protecting the water. We have the tools and ability to develop community based monitoring, which will assist us in having local control over the resources and authority to make decisions and assess impacts. We will control our own monitoring and research.

We recommend a UN Reporter be invited to take this matter to the UN working group on Indigenous matters, the Arctic Athabaskan International Council, and the IUCN (International Union of Conservation of Nature) and other international Indigenous forums. We recommend inviting them to the next Keepers of the Water gathering and the next Water Conference. We recommend our women take this responsibility and further take this to the British Crown.

We propose a Constitutional challenge in order to have the human right, Aboriginal right, and Treaty right to water recognized and implemented.

We call all peoples to come together, to bridge our differences, to build unity and to be strong stewards of the land and water. While we will begin our work now, we will meet in Treaty 8 territory, Ft. St. John (B.C.) in September for the second Keepers of the Water gathering and again in Dene Thá territory in the summer of 2008.

Keepers of the Water II



APPENDIX FOUR:

ELDERS' MEETING

"TU BETA TS'ENA" WATER IS LIFE, AUGUST 20, 2007

FT. SMITH, NWT

RESOLUTION 1

Whereas:

The Elders resolve that we need to work together, the Elders call for unity among all First Nations and other Aboriginal peoples from throughout the Peace, Athabasca, Slave, and Mackenzie River systems.

And whereas:

Other environmental groups are also working to protect the river systems, we resolve that we work together with them to protect our waters.

And whereas:

The water is sacred to us - it is what we need to survive and what mother earth needs to survive - we need to wake up and work together as one to protect the water for our children, grandchildren, and future generations.

Be it resolved that:

We work together in unity with First Nations, Aboriginal peoples, and environmental groups to protect our waters.

Be it further resolved that:

The Elders from this conference support this resolution for unity and ask the leadership to support our resolution.

RESOLUTION 2

Whereas:

Youth are the future of our people and will be the leaders of tomorrow with responsibility for future generations, and Elders have teachings and values to pass on to youth.

And whereas:

Environmental issues related to the land, waters, animals, and plants need to be addressed both today and in the future.

Keepers of the Water II

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



APPENDIX FOUR: ELDERS' MEETING

And whereas:

While we say we want youth involvement, it doesn't always happen, and youth and Elders no longer talk as much together as they once did.

Be it resolved that;

Youth must participate in conferences and other activities related to the environment, youth must learn the teachings from Elders, and youth must begin to take leadership in all efforts to protect our lands and waters.

And be it further resolved:

That the Elders from this conference support this resolution on the involvement of youth. Action must be taken today to ensure our future is protected and that youth are involved in all activities, conferences, and decisions regarding our environment. We ask the leadership to support this resolution.

RESOLUTION 3

Whereas:

Treaty 8 & 11 ensure the right to hunt and fish as long as the river flows, the sun shines, and the grass grows. The Supreme Court of Canada in the Mikisew Cree case confirmed the requirement, based in Treaty, of the duty to consult with First Nations about impacts on our lands and waters.

Whereas:

Consultation has not always been conducted in a complete and meaningful way, and currently large projects including the oil sands development and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline are being approved by governments. The health of our water, lands, animals, and plants is essential to the health of our people.

Be it resolved that:

Before any future development occurs we call for accountability from government, and for our leadership to ensure that proper consultation occurs in order to protect the environment and to ensure that no de facto extinguishment of our rights is caused.

And be it further resolved that:

The Elders from this conference support this resolution and duty to consult with First Nations and other Aboriginal peoples and ask the leadership to support this resolution.

Keepers of the Water II



APPENDIX FOUR: ELDERS' MEETING

RESOLUTION 4

Whereas:

The Creator put us on this land as independent people with our own nations to use this land in a good way and to carry out our responsibilities to each other and to the environment.

And Whereas:

The numbered Treaties between the Crown of England and various First Nations must be acknowledged as binding agreements negotiated on a self-governing Nation to Nation basis. We agreed to share the land in friendship with non-Aboriginal newcomers: we did not agree to give up our lands, waters and rights.

And Whereas:

There is widespread misunderstanding within governments, industry, and the general public about our rights as enshrined first in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, then in the Treaties, and fully protected in 1982 in the constitution. These misunderstandings often lead to stereotypes about our receiving unfair benefits, and may keep us from getting greater support for our rights.

Be it resolved that:

The Elders from this conference support this resolution to ensure that the current insufficient knowledge of our rights is corrected, and call on leadership to support this resolution.

Keepers of the Water **II**

FORT ST. JOHN, BRITISH COLUMBIA · SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2007



NOTES

Keepers of the Water II



NOTES

