

Hydro Research Alliance

June 2015 Report



List of Communities in Attendance

- Brokenhead Ojibway Nation
- Fox Lake Cree Nation
- Garden Hill First Nation
- Grand Rapids (Misipawistik Cree Nation)
- Black River First Nation
- Mosakahiken Cree Nation (Moose Lake)
- Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Nelson House)
- Norway House Cree Nation
- Opaskwayak Cree Nation
- O-Pipon-Na-Piwin (South Indian Lake)
- Pickerel Narrows Cree Nation (Granville Lake)
- Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Cross Lake)
- Pipestone
- Tastaskweyak Cree Nation (Split Lake)
- The Pas
- Thompson
- Wabowden
- Wasagamack First Nation
- Winnipeg

Event Summary

Over the course of three days 60 community members, researchers and NGO representatives met in The Pas to discuss the impacts of hydro development in Manitoba. A total of 19 communities were represented. This was the second meeting held in the North to facilitate a Research Alliance around issues related to hydro development and it built on the work of the first meeting held in Thompson in December 2014.

Since the Thompson Gathering we have learned that the SSHRC Partnership Grant Letter of Intent (LOI) was successful and the Research Alliance has been invited to submit a full partnership grant application. The success of the LOI allowed the Research Alliance to start prioritizing community projects and research outcomes, and also brought new communities to the table.

The Gathering kicked off on Wednesday night with a fish fry, hosted by Drs. Stan and Peggy Wilson and Dr. Alex Wilson of Opaskwayak Cree Nation. The evening provided some informal networking – and dancing thanks to local and award-winning talent, Caitlyn Armstrong's fine fiddling – before getting down to business Thursday morning.

During Thursday's full-day session participants provided community updates on hydro impacts, negotiations, grassroots organizing, and other events. Gerald McKay and Viola McKay gave a moving presentation on the personal trauma they



experienced growing up in the middle of a hydro development project in Grand Rapids and urged those present to think deeply about a truth and reconciliation process related to hydro development. Thursday ended with a formal dinner and hoop dance performance by Jackson Beardy III, with drumming by his father Byron Beardy, both of Ojibwe ancestry from Wasagamack First Nation. Niki Ashton, MP for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, also attended the dinner.

The final day of the Gathering provided time for the Research

Alliance to start brainstorming community projects and research priorities. These ideas were recorded and will inform the full Partnership Grant application (see pages 2 & 3). The final discussion of the Research Alliance revolved around the name. Elder David Lathlin from Moose Lake suggested a temporary name that was accepted by those present. The name, Wa Ni Ska Tan – to rise up in mind, body, and spirit - will be used for reporting purposes until the next gathering when a proper ceremony will be held to choose the name for the Alliance.

Community Project Priorities

Priorities identified during small group work on June 26th, 2015

PRIORITY:

Youth

LAND-BASED CAMPS

➔ Re-engage traditional land-use

- Gardening
- Trapping
- Hunting
- Sweats
- Horses
- Cooking
- Berry picking
- Traditional medicines

➔ Teach culture

➔ Knowledge mobilization

➔ Healing, training, environmental surveys, and teachings

➔ Ceremonies (healing)

➔ Elders facilitate camp workshops

➔ Historical markers/interpretation

➔ Thunder Ground Healing Lodge

➔ Teach impacts to the land, food, and medicine due to hydro development

EDUCATION (SCHOOLS)

➔ Curriculum development

Create mandatory curriculum

➔ Frontier School Division education package

Package on Hydro history and effects

Age-specific package

Teacher-training / land-based education

Work with UCN regional centres

Using education to educate students in South (outreach/advocacy)

➔ Three-stage education

Educate on the past

Educate on the present

Educate on the Future

➔ Hire part-time instructor

Research to gather what will be part of the curriculum

Work in partnership with school

➔ Historical tool-kit / knowledge kits for schools

➔ Create visual documentaries

ENGAGEMENT

➔ Exchange programs

Inner-city → North

North → South

➔ Visits to communities

Students to learn about Hydro devastation

Learn about what community members are doing to reduce effects

Photo Voice project

➔ Research Alliance gatherings and meetings

Invite and engage youth in gatherings

Provide them with a teaching role

Giving the reins to the youth to direct their own activities

Important Deadlines

First Draft of Proposal:

September 21st, 2015

Letters of Support: September 28th, 2015

University of Manitoba

Internal Submission: October 1st, 2015

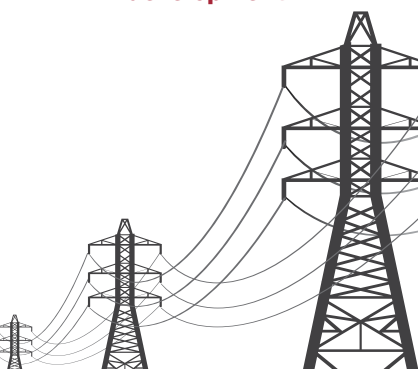
SSHRC PG Application Submission

to Ottawa: October 30th, 2015

Results Announced: Spring 2016

“Our innocence was taken away by that dam.”

~ Gerald McKay, Grand Rapids



“We need a Truth and Reconciliation look at Manitoba Hydro and what they did. It goes good with what is happening right now with the residential schools.”

~ Viola McKay, Grand Rapids

PRIORITY:

Elders History

COLLECTION & DOCUMENTATION

➔ **Fund the coordination of collecting Elder’s stories**

- Lifestyles
- Benefits from the land
- Elder histories

➔ **Oral histories**

- Elders
- Community narratives
- Community histories told by/from community

➔ **Library/Museum**

- To house collected histories and stories
- To bring the research back to the community

PRIORITY:

Environment & Legal Research

ENVIRONMENT

➔ **Ecosystem research**

➔ **Independent environmental research**

- Traditional knowledge & Western science
- Environmental protection
- Documentaries

➔ **Record the changes**

- Library of pictures/documentation
- Collect past research studies
- Library/Museum

LEGAL

➔ **Title**

➔ **Treaties**

➔ **Jurisdiction**

PRIORITY:

Communication

NORTHERN

➔ **Facilitate communication**

- Inter-North
- North-South
- Use information technology via tv (ex: MBTelehealth), website, and social media
- Regular meetings
- Fund a feast
- Regular gatherings

➔ **Fund a resource person**

- Seek out grants
- Research and track available resources
- Seek out partnerships

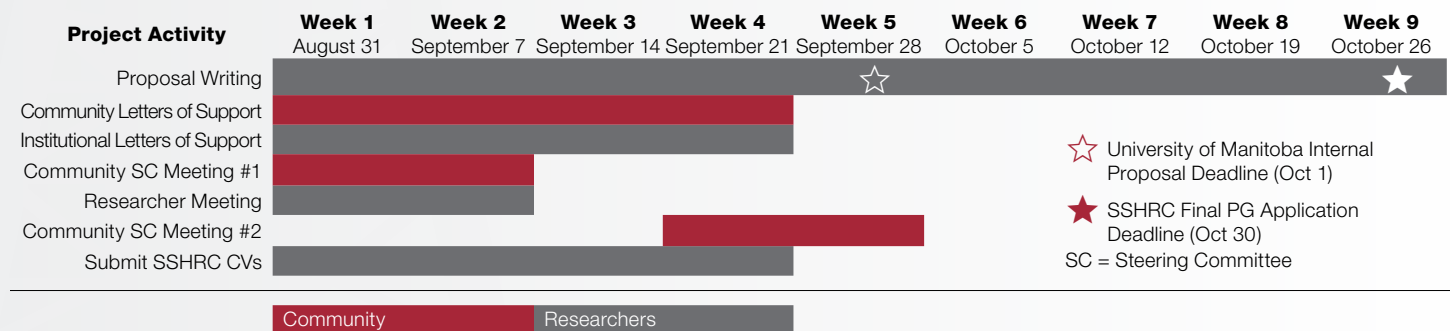
➔ **Community**

- Educate the people about what really happened – dispel the myths

GENERAL

➔ **Create public awareness about the issues and ways of moving forward**

SSHRC Partnership Grant Time Line



Evaluation Feedback

“We all have the same cause. It’s not about what you can get personally but what we can do together to work together as an Alliance.”

~ Carol Kobliski, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

About the Research Meeting...

“It’s great to see so many **communities brought together** and communicating together.”

“These meetings are **very important to the future of communities** and hopefully have government officials and project officials understand the destruction of our land is not okay!”

“Too much ‘talking’ **not enough time spent on working** – Identifying strategic plans / Go forward action plans.”



About Research Ideas, Questions, & Themes...

“**Utilizing community-based research tools** - OCAP [Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession] - so that communities have ownership of their research and it’s not owned by an institution.”

“Has there been any study/research on **the direct impact on the fish population** – change for time?”

“I’ve often imagined an **international comparative study** that is written into a simple language. The book would be for all Indigenous Peoples that have also shared similar stories. It would be a tool to create a grassroots tool for a communication tool.”

“What is the **long-range impact anticipated** on the affected areas?”

“**Provincial hot sheet** published monthly for media – issues with background.”

About the Research Alliance...

“**Grassroots initiatives** – allow their story to be heard. Community-based, give them ownership.”

“Perhaps an **annual recognition or awards evening** to give appreciation to folks, contributors who deserve recognition. Not enough celebration.”

“To continue discussions in the interim (the Skype meeting or telehealth model is great). Could we **declare specific areas of interest and be connected to keep working**. We need a clearing house of info – meeting dates, hearing dates, maps, contact info – maybe this is a website and printed newsletter.”

“An **advocacy group** would be great to be prepared to work with people when they are being ‘consulted’ to help explain the requirements on the crown and proponents and to mobilize grassroots support on the ground – a way to check-in and take care of each other.”

“Reach out more. **Engage more youth participation** from these communities in such gatherings.”



We are always interested in your ideas and feedback!

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