

Behind the Greenwashing



MANITOBA EDITION

Greenwashing

The Facts

Manitoba Hydro told Indigenous communities, including the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation of South Indian Lake, that **fish populations would increase** after major dams were built.

Communities saw declines in the number and health of fish.

“
Elder Eleanor Scott

“We used to have sturgeon in Sipiwesk, everything, but **now, there is nothing there.** You put a net in the water, and it comes out green.”

The harvest on South Indian Lake fell by almost 90%. Fish became “mushy” and tasteless (Steve Ducharme, Interview).



“We really want to be an **environmental steward** to the lake sturgeon...”

Keeyask floods critical sturgeon spawning sites. To compensate, Manitoba Hydro is building replacement habitats.

“
Darwin Paupanikas

“Hydro tells us [the sturgeon] are going to decide to move to another habitat. We are going to destroy their habitat at Keeyask and they are going to decide to move to a new habitat that we are going to build for

them. This is the story that I tell the Elders, and, they laugh at me. I know what is running through their minds and then they say, well, **who is the scientist that spoke to a sturgeon?** Which sturgeon told these scientists that they are going to decide to move to another habitat?”

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The Facts

“We believe that sturgeon in the Keeyask region **will be better off** with the Keeyask project than without it.”

Manitoba Hydro has promised that fish populations would increase after many of their major projects. Every time, sturgeon populations have fallen.

Gull Rapids, flooded by the Keeyask dam, was one of the last sturgeon spawning habitats on the lower Nelson River and the only spawning habitat in Stephens Lake.

“
Noah
Massan

“How can they say that something is going to be different about [Keeyask]? I don't understand that. Because I worked in all of those dams to see what is going on. They are all the same. I can't see it any different.”

“This organization today is different from the organizations of the past. The organizations of the past did not consult with the First Nations. This organization today has made an attempt to reach out to the First Nations, and approach the project **differently than what's been done in the past.**”

Rita Monias
(Interview)

“
George
Wastesicoot

“The past and the present, **there is absolutely no difference.**”

“They want Conawapa open, Keeyask open, they haven't even dealt with 1995 agreement. We are still in limbo, poor, struggling, while these Hydro people are living off, living rich off our land.”

“We continue to strengthen our relationships with Indigenous peoples, develop employment and business opportunities, and **consult and negotiate with communities...**”

“
Carol
Kobliski

ON THE KEEYASK PROJECT:
“There wasn't proper consultation. It was rushed. Everything is always rushed all the time. **There's never any proper consultation.** Yes, they can put a meeting together real quick and call that a consultation and have the little presentations up to show well we're consulting. That's not consultation.”

Greenwashing

The Facts

“...we are committed to respecting and supporting Indigenous peoples in all aspects of our business.”

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Manitoba
Clean
Environment
Commission

“...aside from studies in which the community was directly involved, the main goal of the [Churchill River Diversion] studies has been simply to **leave the impression that Manitoba Hydro and the government actually cared about the impact of development.**”

Manitoba Hydro Annual Report



On-Site Magazine



Manitoba Hydro has been working with the people of South Indian Lake since 2003. The South Indian Lake Environmental Steering Committee works with the community to deliver environmental monitoring and pickerel stocking programs.

Through the South Indian Lake Environmental Steering Committee, the community had a relatively good relationship with Manitoba Hydro for about ten years. But when they presented data that showed that their fishery's collapse may be related to Manitoba Hydro's Augmented Flow Program, the crown corporation pulled all funding from the Steering Committee. The community was forced to abandon several social and environmental programs.

The Steering Committee is now **a shell of its former self:**

“
Steve
Ducharme
(Interview)

“...it's just whitewash, it's just PR. All those things are just PR for them. It makes them look good, that they're picking up sticks so nobody hits them with their boat, and that there are also safe ice trails, which aren't safe at all.”

Greenwashing

The Facts

“We strive to **understand and respect** the social and economic views, values, traditions and aspirations of **Indigenous peoples** when deciding upon or taking action.”

“
Carol Kobliski

“They're not looking out for the future of my community or every other community or every surrounding area that they're trying to put up a project; **they're only looking out for themselves.** And that's wrong.”

Manitoba Hydro



Manitoba Hydro raises the Survivors' Flag to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



Briarpatch

Cree advocates stage a demonstration to raise awareness of Manitoba Hydro's impacts on their traditional territory.



WANISKATAN
An Alliance of Hydro Impacted Communities