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KIPEKISKWAYWINAN

Our Voices



"When I'm sitting out there (on the land) I feel a connection to everything around me, at times I still feel lonely. I think that feeling comes from the destruction of Askiy that's happening around us."



June, 2012



York Factory First Nation

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June 13, 2012

Tansi!

As Chief and Council of York Factory First Nation, we would like to introduce Kipekiskwaywinan (Our Voices), our volume in the Keeyask Generation Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In Kipekiskwaywinan, we explain how our people were relocated in 1957 from our traditional territory on the Hudson Bay coast to the southeast corner of Split Lake, which has become our current home and community of York Landing (Kawechiwasik). Our history, culture, and relationship to the land both at the coast, and where our community is now located on Split Lake, are essential in understanding who we are as Cree people.

Since the late 1950's, our members have been observing, experiencing, and discussing the effects of hydro-electric development. With the Keeyask Project, however, we have become a co-proponent of a hydro-electric project for the first time – and, for the first time, have the responsibility of explaining our perspectives on this development in an environmental impact statement. We have taken this responsibility very seriously, and have written Kipekiskwaywinan as an honest account of our understanding and feelings about the Keeyask Project, our decision to become a partner in Keeyask, and our hopes, fears, and expectations for the future of the Partnership.

In preparing Kipekiskwaywinan, it has been important to us that the voices of our members come through – as honest, varied and conflicting as they are. Many voices express anger, hurt, sadness, uncertainty, and distrust with Manitoba Hydro and hydro-electric development, and demonstrate the difficulties we faced in deciding to become a partner in the Keeyask Project. The introductory chapter attempts to represent the full range of opinions and feelings of our members. The reader must understand that Kipekiskwaywinan has been the first time our members have been able to acknowledge our thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of hydro-electric development in writing. This has been an important process of healing and reconciliation for our members that we call minowechitahewaywin. For this reason, it is imperative to read our entire document to understand our history and experiences that led us to support and become a partner in the Keeyask Project.

In March 2009, our members voted in support of the Joint Keeyask Development Agreement (JKDA) and Adverse Effects Agreement (AEA). As a result, our Chief and Council signed the JKDA and AEA demonstrating YFFN's support for the Keeyask Project and becoming a co-proponent. While we support the Project, it is important to acknowledge we are impacted by this project in profound ways that concern our worldview, our culture, and our deep relationships with Askiy, which is our Cree word for the whole of the land,

water, plants, people, animals, and all the creatures. While there are YFFN members who believe becoming a partner in the Keeyask Project means we have become active participants in the inevitable damage to Askiy, we feel that it is very important that our First Nation has influence in the Keeyask Project and for our future generations to benefit from the training, employment, and revenues generated from the Keeyask Project.

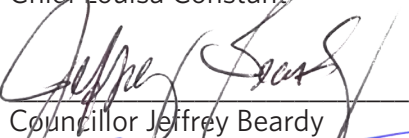
Over the past 10 years we have participated throughout the Keeyask Environmental Impact Assessment, including planning, research, working groups, negotiations, and reviewing the Keeyask EIS. The opportunity to participate in the Environmental Impact Assessment was one of the reasons behind our decision to become a partner in the Keeyask Project. We are also grateful to have the opportunity to write Kipekiskwaywinan and include it in the Keeyask EIS. Manitoba Hydro's present actions are promising, showing positive signs of efforts made by a company that, until recently, failed to even consult our membership.

As we look to the future, we want to work with our partners for the entire life of the Keeyask Project to sustain and achieve respect for our Cree culture and self-determination, produce sustainable, tangible benefits for our First Nation, and continue to build trust and a meaningful partnership with Manitoba Hydro and the other Keeyask Cree Nations. If we can achieve these objectives, then the Keeyask Project and Partnership will make a significant contribution to fulfilling our hopes and expectations for our current and future generations.


Ekosi!



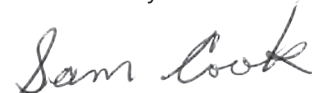
Chief Louisa Constant



Councillor Jeffrey Beardy



Councillor Phyllis Contois



Councillor Sam Cook



Councillor Gordon Wastesicoot

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Ininimowin is the Cree term we use to refer to the Cree language. There are a variety of ways and traditions to write out *Ininimowin*. While some individuals use the standard roman orthography system, others use the syllabics system. Throughout Northern Manitoba, many other individuals phonetically spell out the Cree language based on personalized styles. The Cree terms used in this report have been written based on the personalized styles of our community translators along with Cree syllabics.

PANANAGV·A·Q

KIPEKISKWAYWINAN

Our Voices

York Factory First Nation

Speaks About the

Keyask Generation Project

Prepared by York Factory First Nation

With support from:

Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram

Landscape Architecture and Planning

500 - 115 Bannatyne Avenue East

Winnipeg, MB R3B 0R3

Coordination, facilitation and writing.

Northern Lights Heritage Services

Assistance with historical account.

June, 2012



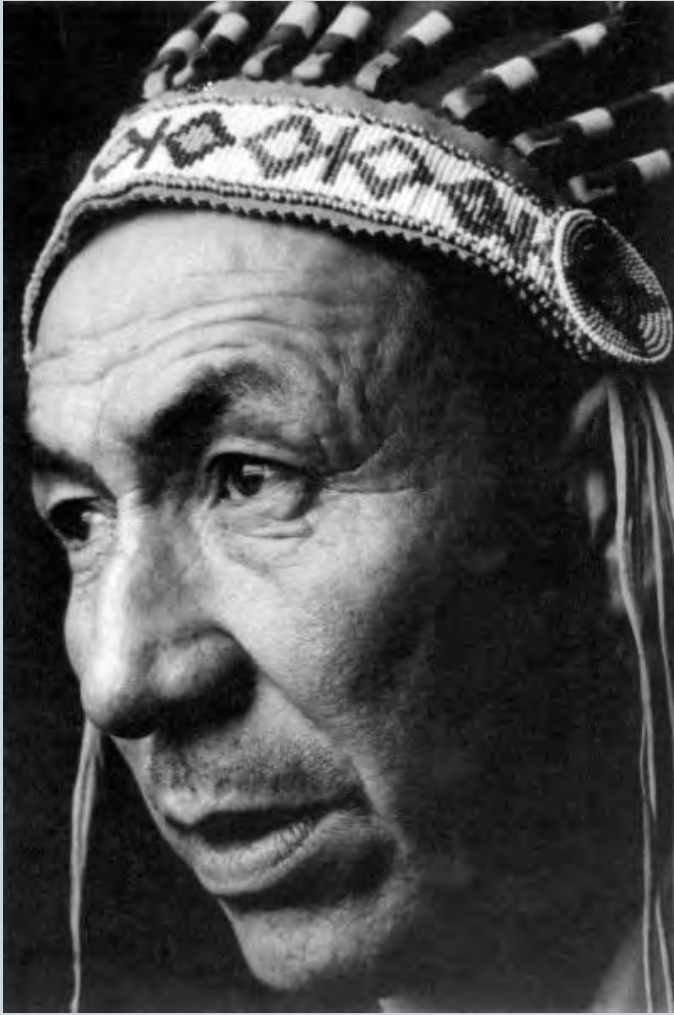
Clockwise from left: Elizabeth Ouskan (Nee Anderson), Mary Spence (Nee Thomas), Maryann McPherson (Nee Gray), Alice Ouskan (Nee Wastesicoot), Eliza Spence (Nee McPherson), Simeon Spence, Dinah Dick (Nee Ouskan) and Flora Beardy (Nee Spence).



York Factory Cree would freight goods from York Factory to Upper Fort Garry.



Amaziah Neepin, Sarah Beardy, Dorothy Redhead and Ruthia Beardy.



Fred Beardy



George Beardy



Rachel and Roderick Ouskan



From left to right: Moses Neepin, Sam Saunders, George Spence, Alex Chapman and Harold (Kayo) Bignell



Albert Beardy and Reggie Ponask



Mike Beardy and John George Spence



Joseph Saunders



Dorothy Redhead, Johnson Saunders, Eric Saunders, Johnny Saunders and Ken Saunders (back row)
Freddy Friesen (front row).



Jemima Spence and Mary Ann Saunders



Clarence Wastesicoot (Bluecoat)



From left: Maryann McPherson, James McPherson and Family



Marie Beardy (Cook), Marion Beardy and Thompson Beardy



David Massan



Obediah and Sarah Wastesicoot



Isaiah Saunders and Amos Beardy



Raymond Beardy



Jessie Massan, Elizabeth Ouskan and Salome Beardy with Gertie Beardy (front). Four Generations.

A Note on Sources:

The photographs that appear in this report have been provided by various sources.

The Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society provided photos taken by Rev. Faries (Faries Photo Collection) at York Factory. Library and Archives Canada also provided many of the historic York Factory photos. We are enormously grateful to Mr. Bert Brown for sharing copies of the many photos he took while living in York Factory from 1952 - 1957. Thank you to Helen Friesen who agreed to share copies of several photos taken in York Factory in the 1950s by her late-husband Dave Friesen. Thank you to Helen Pope who also agreed to share copies of several photos she took while living in York Factory in the 1950s. Various community members provided numerous photos of the people of York Factory First Nation and places around York Landing (Kawechiwasik) and York Factory.

Text in some sections of "Our History and Values" is based on a community history developed by Virginia Petch of Northern Lights Heritage Services (Pre-Contact and Colonization; Colonization; Homeguard Cree, Coasters and Inlanders; Traditional Uses and Activities; and Places of Use and Occupancy in the York Factory Area).

The section, The Manitoba Trapline System, is informed by R.G. Carmichael's 1973 unpublished report "Innovation and Enterprise: A History of Fur Conservation in Northern Manitoba, 1935-1948."

The discussion of Treaty 5 draws from the website:
<http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/documents/Native/docs-treatyfive.htm>

Traditional Uses and Activities
Places of Use and Occupancy in the York Factory Area
Treaty 5
The Manitoba Trapline System
Relocation to York Landing (Kawechiwasik)
The Residential Schools
Hydro-Electric Development and the Northern Flood Agreement (NFA)
Reflections on Colonialism and Neocolonialism

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Petosissekiskaynitakona Mena Nisowanaton Nipe,
Askiy Mena Inninew Pima Che Win

Change & Damage to the Water, Land & People

Change and Damage to the Water, Land and People

Water - The Quality of Water Affects Everything

Fish and Fishing

Birds, Animals and Plants

Travel (Pimotayhowin) - Ice and Water

Shoreline Erosion, Access and Community Places

Keeyask Effects: Predictions, Skepticism and Uncertainty

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Kaytesipimotatanwuk Oma Wechaywakantowin

The Way Forward

The Keeyask Partnership

A Partnership to be Proven

The Story of our Adverse Effects Agreement

Trust, Respect, Reconciliation

Making the Partnership Work - Reconciliation

Following our Values - Stewardship

Preparing our Young People - Identity

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Kipakosaynimowinana

Our Hopes & Expectations

Our Hopes and Expectations

Reconciling Our Effects on the Land

Ensuring a Role for Cree Language, Values, and Knowledge

Ensuring Roles for Our Elders, Youth, and Community Members






Moving Forward in Partnership



Nanaskomowina

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people shared their voices and contributed to the development of this environmental impact statement. We owe great thanks to all who helped to bring YFFN voices to the Keeyask EIS:

-  To Members of the Kipekiskwaywinan Steering Group, and others who provided a vision for this document, coordinated sharing sessions and workshops, and offered thoughtful feedback on successive drafts of the document. Members included: Wayne Redhead, Flora Beardy, Eric Saunders, Obediah Wastesicoot, Ted Bland, Roy Redhead, Martina Saunders, Evelyn Beardy, Jimmy A. Beardy, Tamara Beardy, Georgina Redhead, Edwin Beardy, Donald Saunders, Amelia Saunders, Nellie Redhead, Joseph Sinclair, Marie Ryle-Beardy and Isaac Beardy;
-  To all of the YFFN members who shared their words with us, and agreed to be quoted in this report;
-  To 28 youth, who shared their vision, comments and drawings about York Landing (Kawechiwasi) & the Keeyask Project;
-  To others who helped in preparing translations, sharing photos and reviewing the quotes that appear in these pages: Bert Brown, Johnson Saunders, Donna Saunders, Darcy Saunders, Marie Cook, Johnny Saunders, Lisa Ryle, Daryl Beardy, Georgina Redhead, Dorothy Redhead, Arthur Beardy and Darcy Wastesicoot;
-  To all of the Chiefs, Councillors and Elders who have led our people in responding to the cultural, personal and political challenges brought by hydro-electric development in our lands.

Ekosi!



This report is presented

IN MEMORY OF SAMUEL GEORGE SAUNDERS

February 26, 1950 - December 28, 2008



Sam was born in York Factory on February 26th, 1950, to Joseph and Amelia Saunders. He was the youngest of eight children. He spent his first seven years with his parents and grandparents before attending school in Dauphin, Manitoba. He attended the Dauphin Collegiate Technical Institute from Grades 1 to 12. Sam was an athlete at heart, with his passions being hockey and long distance running. Sam was a family man, he cared dearly for his children: Craig, Ryan, Dustin, Georgina, Samantha, and Shauna. Sam loved his community so much that he and his partner Madeline relocated their family to York Landing (Kawechiwasiwak). There he was able to contribute to the community at different levels throughout the years. Sam was Chief of York Factory, he played a fundamental role in the creation of York Landing Minor Hockey, the establishment of the local School Committee, and the Recreation Committee. He was the Northern Flood Agreement Implementation Officer for York Factory First Nation, and served for nine years as the Financial Officer on the Board of Directors of North Central Development. Sam was one of many negotiators for York Factory First Nation over the years and was involved in many other community projects. Sam was a very humble man and will be dearly missed.

To his community he would have said:

"Thank you. It was an honour to have worked for my people."

IN MEMORY OF DONALD RICHARD SAUNDERS

February 10, 1948 - December 24, 2010



Donald was born in Pennycutaway River near York Factory on February 10th, 1948. His parents were Isaiah and Mary Saunders. Donald was the oldest of twelve children. He went to residential school in Dauphin at a young age and continued his education at the University of Manitoba as a certified counselor after completing his grade twelve.

Donald had his first job as a Band Manager in the late 1970's. He worked as a Key Communicator with the Northern Flood Committee, Home School Coordinator, Store Manager, and Truck Driver. He also completed his training as a Treaty Land Entitlement facilitator. Donald was a very spiritual person and he strongly believed in the importance of his language and culture. He loved to sing and played many musical instruments. He also loved being on the land, fishing, and respecting Askiy.

He missed his homeland of York Factory so much that he decided to assist Helen Fast with a land use study of York Factory, which led to the publication of *From Kihciwaskahikanihk to York Landing: A Land Use History of York Factory First Nation* (1996).

He was also a Board Member of Seepastik Development Corporation, Wapusk National Park, and Housing Committee member for several years. He was a role model for his daughters and grandchildren. Even though he struggled with his illness in the early 1990's, he remained active and dedicated to his community and family.

He had a dream, a vision that our document Kipekiskwaywinan (Our Voices) would be completed and placed in libraries and archives.

To his community he would have said:

"Thank you for putting my comments in our special document, and thank you to my wife Amelia for her support."