



ROUND THREE of the Keeyask Public Involvement Program

NEWSLETTER

April - May 2013

Third Round of Keeyask Public Involvement Program

This is the third Public Involvement Program newsletter for the Keeyask Generation Project (the Project), proposed to be built in northern Manitoba. This newsletter provides information about the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the public review process. The Keeyask Public Involvement Program is intended to provide opportunities for people to receive Project information and to identify issues and potential effects about the proposed Project.

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Keyask Hydropower Limited Partnership

The Project Proponent is the Keyask Hydropower Limited Partnership (the Partnership), which is comprised of four limited partners and one general partner. The four limited partners are Manitoba Hydro and companies representing the Cree Nation Partners (Tataskweyak Cree Nation and War Lake First Nation), York Factory First Nation and Fox Lake Cree Nation. The general partner is a corporation wholly owned by Manitoba Hydro.



About the Proposed Keyask Generation Project

The Partnership is proposing to develop the Project, a 695-megawatt hydroelectric generating station. The renewable hydroelectric energy produced by the Project will be sold to Manitoba Hydro and integrated into its electrical system for use in Manitoba and for export. It will be the fifth generating station on the lower Nelson River and will be the fourth largest generating station in Manitoba.

The Project will be located about 725 kilometres (km) northeast of Winnipeg at Gull Rapids on the lower Nelson River immediately upstream of Stephens Lake in northern Manitoba.

The Project site is approximately 58 km east of Split Lake, home of Tataskweyak Cree Nation, and approximately 30 km west of the Fox Lake Cree Nation reserve at Gillam. If a decision is made to go ahead with the Project and all approvals are in place, the earliest construction could begin in 2014; the plant could begin producing power in 2019.



This rendering shows: the layout of principal structures at Gull Rapids looking north with the river flowing from left to right; how a portion of the south channel may look following construction dewatering and; the locations of the north and south access roads.

The Project will consist of principal structures and supporting infrastructure. The principal structures consist of the powerhouse complex, spillway, dams and dykes. Supporting infrastructure consists of permanent facilities used to construct and/or operate the Project and temporary facilities required only to construct the principal structures.

Status of the Public Involvement Program

Initiated in 2008, the Public Involvement Program is a key element of the Environmental Impact Assessment activities for the Project and involves three rounds of engagement.

The purpose of the public involvement process is to provide the public, particularly those who may potentially be affected by or are interested in the Project, with opportunities to receive information about the Project and provide input on its potential issues and effects.

The public includes residents of local First Nations and other northern communities; Aboriginal, community and environmental groups; the private sector; municipal governments; and the general public.

A variety of public involvement methods are available for each round including meetings, open houses, newsletters, information panels and a Project website at www.keeyask.com.

Round One of Public Involvement

Round One of the Public Involvement Program introduced the Project to the public in 2008. Specifically, Round One of the Public Involvement Program:

- Initiated dialogue about the Project;
- Provided information about the Project;
- Identified issues and public concerns;
- Informed the public about the process/ requirements and schedule for the Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Determined how potentially affected/ interested communities/organizations wanted to be involved in the Public Involvement Program; and
- Documented what was heard from participants.

Round Two of Public Involvement

In 2012, Round Two of the Public Involvement Program informed participants about any changes in the Project from Round One, provided

Round One Project Description and Issue Identification

Purpose & Scope

- Initiate dialogue about the proposed Project
- Provide a description of the Project
- Identify issues and concerns
- Inform the public about the process/requirements and schedule for EA
- Determine how interested/ affected parties would like to be involved in PIP
- Document what was heard

Round Two Preliminary Environmental Assessment Results

Purpose & Scope

- Describe Project features and changes since Round One
- Discuss initial findings (biophysical, socio-economic)
- Obtain input on possible mitigation measures
- Document what was heard

Round Three Final Environmental Impact Statement Review

Purpose & Scope

- Discuss format and content of EIS
- Discuss how the Round Two input was used in the EIS
- Communicate supplemental information
- Document what is heard

Current Round

responses to questions raised in Round One and illustrated how the received input influenced the Project design and assessment. Public Involvement Program participants were also given opportunities to offer comments and provide input on preliminary results of the biophysical and socio-economic assessments of the Project and were encouraged to offer suggestions for avoiding or minimizing potential adverse effects. The comments and input received in Round Two were summarized into a report and incorporated into the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Issues identified in the first two rounds generally fell into seven categories: project planning; training, employment and business opportunities; physical environment; aquatic and terrestrial environment; socio-economic and heritage resources; resource use; and the consultation process. Please see Page 5 for a short discussion about some of the specific topics raised most often during first two rounds of the Public Involvement Program.

A complete summary of comments received during Rounds One and Two of public engagement is available on the Keeyask Generation Project website at www.keeyask.com.

Round Three of Public Involvement

In Round Three of the Public Involvement Program, the Partnership will:

- Discuss the format and content of the EIS;
- Discuss how input received to date influenced the Project assessment;
- Communicate supplemental information since the filing of the EIS with regulators in 2012; and
- Document what is heard from participants.

Round Three meetings will be held in communities and with organizations in northern Manitoba and with organizations in southern Manitoba. Public open houses will occur in Thompson and Winnipeg. Information about the public open houses can be found on the Keeyask website (www.keeyask.com) and Manitoba Hydro website (www.hydro.mb.ca). Results of Round Three will be summarized in a report and filed as supplemental information for the regulatory process. The report will also be made available on the Project website (www.keeyask.com).

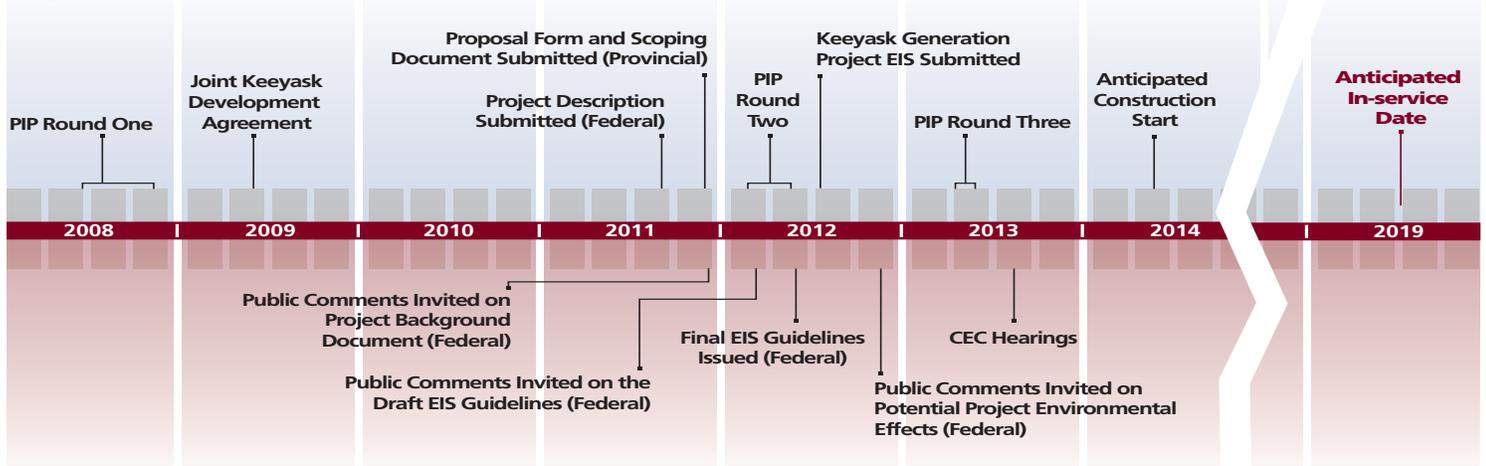
The Environmental Assessment Process

For over a decade, Manitoba Hydro and the Keeyask Cree Nations worked together to collect and analyze information that contributed to the Project's EIS. In addition, the KCNs developed and undertook their own independent, community-specific processes to review and approve the Project. Over this time period, the

Partnership continued to identify ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential negative effects and enhance potential positive effects. Aboriginal traditional knowledge provided important perspectives on both the ecological and socio-economic implications of the Project. The Project is subject to an environmental

assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and *The Environment Act* (Manitoba) and must meet combined federal and provincial regulatory requirements before it can be built. Provincial and federal regulators are working together in the environmental review process.

Key Environmental Assessment Milestones



Environmental Impact Assessment

The Partnership undertook an environmental assessment using both technical science and Aboriginal traditional knowledge, along with information gained through extensive public and government consultation and involvement. The purpose of the environmental assessment process was to identify potential effects of the Project and to develop measures to avoid and mitigate adverse effects and to enhance Project benefits. The results of the environmental assessment are documented in the EIS.

The EIS consists of:

- A Partnership video, *Keeyask: Our Story*, which presents the Keeyask Cree Nations' history and perspectives related to hydroelectric development. Presented through the lens of their holistic Cree worldview, it explains the difficult journey undertaken by the KCNs as they evaluated their concerns about the Project, the nature of their participation as Partners, and the independent decisions they each ultimately made to support the Project;

- An executive summary, highlighting findings and conclusions from the EIS submission to regulatory authorities;
- The Response to the EIS Guidelines, which provides information required in guidelines issued by Canada on March 30, 2012, in response to an application by the Partnership for environmental approvals under the government regulatory environmental assessment process;
- The Keeyask Cree Nations Environmental Evaluation Reports providing each of the Keeyask Cree Nations' own evaluation of the effects of the Project on their community and Members and including Aboriginal traditional knowledge relevant to the Partnership's response to the EIS Guidelines;
- Supporting volumes developed by the Manitoba Hydro environmental team in consultation with the KCNs and their Members.

The EIS included a cumulative environmental effects assessment of effects that are likely to



result from the Project in combination with other projects or activities that have been or will be carried out. The EIS is a primary source of information for the regulatory review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and *The Environment Act* (Manitoba).

Monitoring and follow-up activities will take place within an overall Environmental Protection Program prepared for the Project. The monitoring programs will use both technical science and Aboriginal traditional knowledge to determine actual effects of the Project, including: whether they are consistent with the predictions in the environmental impact assessment; the effectiveness of mitigation measures; and whether further measures are required to address Project effects.

Environmental Effects Identified in the Public Involvement Program

The following outlines the findings of the Environmental Assessment based on the issues that were most prominently raised in Rounds One and Two of the Public Involvement Program:



- **Caribou:** Noise, blasting, vehicle traffic and the presence of humans have the potential to disturb caribou during construction. In addition, flooding of the reservoir and clearing for infrastructure such as the camp and access roads will result in habitat loss, alteration and fragmentation. Potential effects to some areas of caribou calving habitat were avoided by modifying Project areas. Impacts will be further minimized by limiting clearing and blasting activity during calving season. Overall effects to caribou are expected to be adverse but regionally acceptable because habitat loss is small compared to its widespread regional availability, and there is a negligible change to intactness and mortality.
- **Employment and Training:** More than 4,000 person-years* of Project employment over eight-and-a-half years will help build skills, capacity, job experience and economic benefits for Manitobans, but will especially help northern workers to sustain employment once the Project is complete. Preference measures are included in the Burntwood-Nelson Agreement for employing qualified KCNs Members, other Aboriginal and other northern residents. Measures to retain workers at the site will include cultural training, counselling services, on-site KCNs liaison workers and an Aboriginal union representative; and over 180 long-term operational jobs are targeted for KCNs Members over the next 20 years.

- **Flooding, Erosion, Sedimentation and Debris:** The construction of the reservoir will flood an area of about 45 km², comprising mostly boreal forest and peatlands. During the first 30 years of operation the reservoir will expand in area by 7-8 km² because of shoreline erosion and peatland disintegration. The following plans and measures will be implemented to mitigate the effects of sediment and debris: the Reservoir Clearing Plan to remove inundated trees and woody vegetation, the Waterways Management Program to manage reservoir debris, and the Sediment Management Plan to manage suspended sediment concentrations during construction.

- **Lake Sturgeon:** Construction and operation of the Project will affect lake sturgeon and their habitat. Due to historic population declines caused by commercial over-harvest and past hydroelectric developments, and concerns about a continuing decline in numbers, the Partnership has focused considerable effort on finding ways to mitigate effects of the Project on lake sturgeon. Mitigation measures include the construction of new spawning habitat downstream of the generating station and a long-term conservation-stocking program that will increase sturgeon numbers in the region.

- **Mercury, Fish and Human Health:** Increased mercury levels, especially in jackfish and pickerel in Gull Lake and to a lesser extent in Stephens Lake, are expected during the period after impoundment. Efforts have been made to develop mitigation measures so that KCNs Members can continue to safely eat nutritious country foods from the land and waters over the 30 years it is expected to take until mercury levels return to current levels. Mitigation measures also include developing a risk-communications strategy for the KCNs, Gillam and other users of Gull and Stephens lakes.

- **Water Quality:** During construction, effects to water quality will be managed to avoid harmful effects to aquatic life in the Nelson River and Stephens Lake. The largest effects to water quality in the newly formed reservoir will occur in the first years after the station is constructed, particularly in shallow flooded areas. There will be little or no detectable change in water quality in the main flow of the Nelson River and downstream due to the large volume of water flowing in the river. Overall, water quality will always be suitable for aquatic life in the main part of the reservoir, and it will be suitable at most locations and at most times in the flooded area.

More detailed information on potential effects, mitigation/enhancement and residual effects, including those identified during the Public Involvement Program, are included in the Keeyask Generation Project Executive Summary and EIS (notably in The Response to EIS Guidelines).

*A measure of the amount of work that could be available during a specific time period or for a specific type of work. One person year approximates the amount of work that one worker could complete during twelve months of full-time employment.

How to Get Involved in the Process

Next Steps

The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission (CEC) public hearings are expected to take place in the latter part of 2013. The terms of reference which specify the scope of the CEC review were provided to the CEC in November 2012 by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (see CEC website at www.cecmanitoba.ca).



Gull Rapids on the Nelson River.



Do You Have Questions, Concerns or Issues About the Proposed Project?

We invite you to contact us at the address below with any questions, concerns or issues you may have about the proposed Project.

Mailing Address

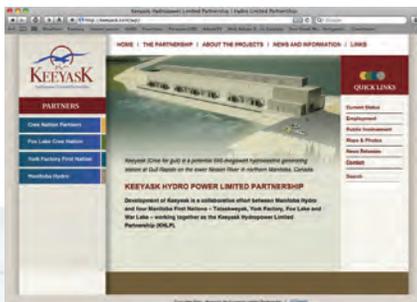
Keeyask Project
Public Involvement Program
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Website Address

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Project documents are also available at the Manitoba Conservation Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch Public Registry website (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eal/registries/index.html>) or at Manitoba Conservation's Public Registries listed below:

- Millennium Public Library, 3rd Floor, 251 Donald St., Winnipeg
- Manitoba Eco-Network, 3rd Floor, 303 Portage Ave., Winnipeg
- Thompson Public Library, 81 Thompson Dr., Thompson
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, 701 Thompson Dr., Thompson
- Tataskweyak Cree Nation Band Office, Split Lake
- War Lake First Nation Band Office, Ilford
- York Factory Future Development Office, York Landing
- Town Office of Gillam, 323 Railway Ave., Gillam

