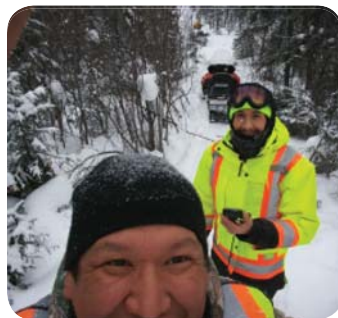




Keeyask Generation Project  
Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Plan

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Report

ATK-2019-TCN



# **ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING REPORT**

**TATASKWEYAK CREE NATION**

REPORT #ATK-2019-TCN

**KEEYASK GENERATION PROJECT**

**2018/2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	STURGEON RELEASE .....	1
1.2	ELDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS.....	2
1.3	AQUATIC MONITORING STUDIES.....	2
1.4	CARIBOU MONITORING .....	4
1.5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING .....	6
<b>2.0</b>	<b>MERCURY AND HUMAN HEALTH .....</b>	<b>9</b>

# LIST OF PHOTOS

Photo 1:	Sturgeon Release.....	1
Photo 2:	Elders sharing knowledge at a community meeting .....	2
Photo 3:	Split Lake.....	3
Photo 4:	Shoreline bird monitoring at Gull Lake .....	4
Photo 5:	Winter Caribou Survey .....	5
Photo 6:	Winter Caribou Survey .....	5
Photo 7:	Heritage monitoring at 171A Split Lake .....	7
Photo 8:	Late Woodland Pottery 350-1000 years old found at 171A Split Lake .....	8

# 1.0 ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING PROGRAM

ATK is described in the Cree Nation Partners' Environmental Evaluation report for Keeyask as "knowledge that reflects our experience, understanding, wisdom, values and duties of everyday life and priorities governing our relationship with Mother Earth and all her beings, derived and developed through living in our Homeland ecosystem since time immemorial. ATK is inextricably linked to our culture and our worldview."

The Tataskweyak Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge monitoring program was put together to monitor the effects of the Project.

Some of the key activities carried out from the monitoring program include the following.

## 1.1 STURGEON RELEASE

Students and Elders participated in the spring sturgeon fingerling release on May 31 at the Orr Creek on the Burntwood River. Grand Rapids Fish Hatchery staff explained the timing of the spawn, how eggs are collected and fertilized and how the hatchery operates. Elders observed and shared their own knowledge and stories with students during the release.



**Photo 1: Sturgeon Release**

## 1.2 ELDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

ATK monitors held community workshops with Elders to learn traditional knowledge and teachings to help identify what activities to include in the ATK program. These meetings/workshops also helped to develop a greater understanding of the Project effects on both the physical and spiritual aspects of our traditional knowledge and lifestyle and to educate and strengthen the connection we have with both. It is important for youth to learn about ATK. Elders participate in school cultural activities to help children learn about traditional lifestyles (e.g., they learned the process required to develop a hide). Preserving and transferring the Cree language through traditional activities to community members and youth is a priority.



Photo 2: Elders sharing knowledge at a community meeting

## 1.3 AQUATIC MONITORING STUDIES

TCN is monitoring beyond the Project footprint to look at the whole Resource Management Area (7 per cent of Manitoba) using traditional methods. TCN members have observed a lack of migratory birds in the immediate vicinity of Split Lake. Shoreline birds are gone and migration

patterns have changed. Staff will continue to monitor and observe the continuing changes. Aquatic water monitoring studies looking at off-setting lakes are being planned.



**Photo 3: Split Lake**





Photo 4: Shoreline bird monitoring at Gull Lake

## 1.4 CARIBOU MONITORING

Caribou are migratory and return to this area in winter. Small groups move across the lake and we observe their tracks to estimate herd numbers and the direction of travel. For First Nations people caribou are a vital source of traditional food, clothing, and other uses related to living in the northern climate.

Caribou movement through the Project area was closely monitored in the Tataskweyak area. Caribou numbers show an increase of hunters and resource users coming in from different communities. This raised concern for hunter's safety as well as ensuring they carried out respectful harvest.



**Photo 5: Winter Caribou Survey**



**Photo 6: Winter Caribou Survey**

## 1.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Water levels were low in 2018 and provided excellent opportunities for the ATK staff and others to examine the exposed shorelines for cultural materials. During the surveys, human remains of a child were found eroding from a bank at Split Lake 1A. At the request of TCN, these remains were radiocarbon dated to be approximate 300 years old. In addition, evidence of an early fur trade post was recovered including beads, HBC tools, and hand wrought nails. ATK staff coordinated the collection of artifacts, which are now housed in the TCN Stewardship Centre.

ATK staff accompanied the Project archaeologists on the monitoring and mitigation of sites in June to July. During the six-day trip, ATK staff visited ten previously recorded sites and discovered a new one. During the investigations at a known site, human remains were discovered. These skeletal elements were consistent with the Gull Lake Ancestor, whose partial remains were found in 2010. ATK staff and members of FLCN's environmental team assisted the Project archaeologists and a representative of Manitoba's Historic Resource Branch with the recovery of ~4000-year-old Ancestor. During the investigation, ATK learned the importance of recording archaeological evidence and preserving the past.



**Photo 7: Heritage monitoring at 171A Split Lake**



**Photo 8: Late Woodland Pottery 350-1000 years old found at 171A Split Lake**

## 2.0 MERCURY AND HUMAN HEALTH

The Mercury and Human Health Implementation Group is involved with developing and delivering mercury and human health related activities such as information sessions and hair sampling and food survey events in partner First Nation communities. The community of TCN offered information sessions and a hair sampling/ food survey event. These sessions helped to inform the community about the Project and mercury with respect to the consumption of fish and other wild foods. The hair sampling/ food survey event promoted a “Know Your Number” campaign to encourage members to get their hair tested for mercury. This will help members make informed decisions about the size, amount and type of fish they eat on a regular basis.

Future community based mercury-related activities include information sessions, voluntary hair sampling and food survey, and voluntary sampling for mercury in traditional foods (wildlife and plants). The TCN team is also working on a fish-sampling program for the Offsetting lakes. Voluntary sampling is designed to collect samples from wildlife, fish or plants that are intended for consumption purposes and not for the sake of obtaining mercury samples.