

Keeyask Generation Project

Water-up and Impoundment

Water-up of the intake and tailrace channels will begin on February 26, 2020

For the past year, Keeyask construction progress has focused on achieving two significant events in early 2020: water-up and impoundment. This will allow the generating station to start partially operating by summer 2020.

Manitoba Hydro, as the Project Manager, has now received provincial and federal agreement to start water-up.

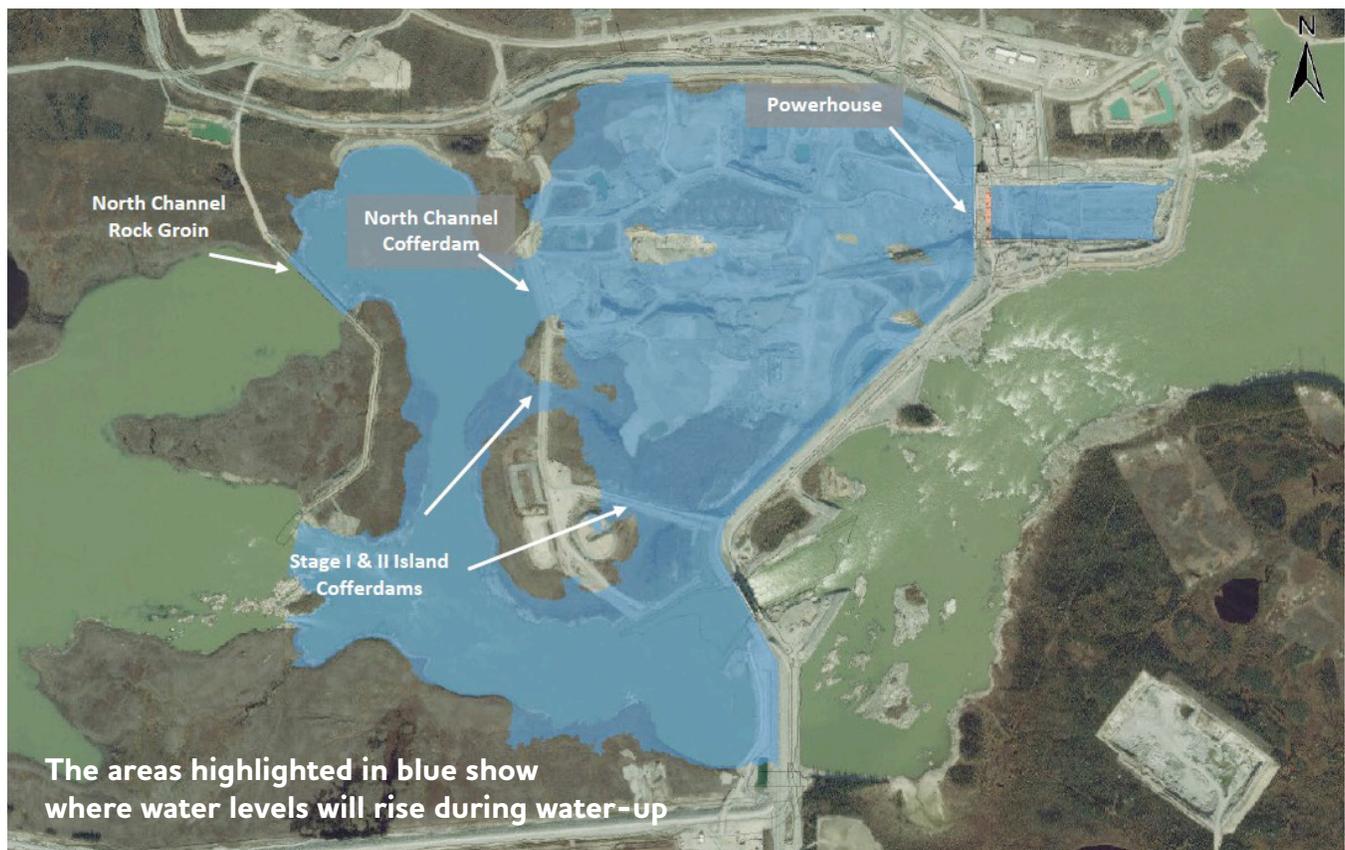
Communities will receive regular weekly updates during the water-up and impoundment process (if approved) to provide information on water flow, water levels, ice conditions and monitoring activities. Updates will be emailed and can be printed for distribution. They are available on *Keeyask.com*.

What is water-up and impoundment?

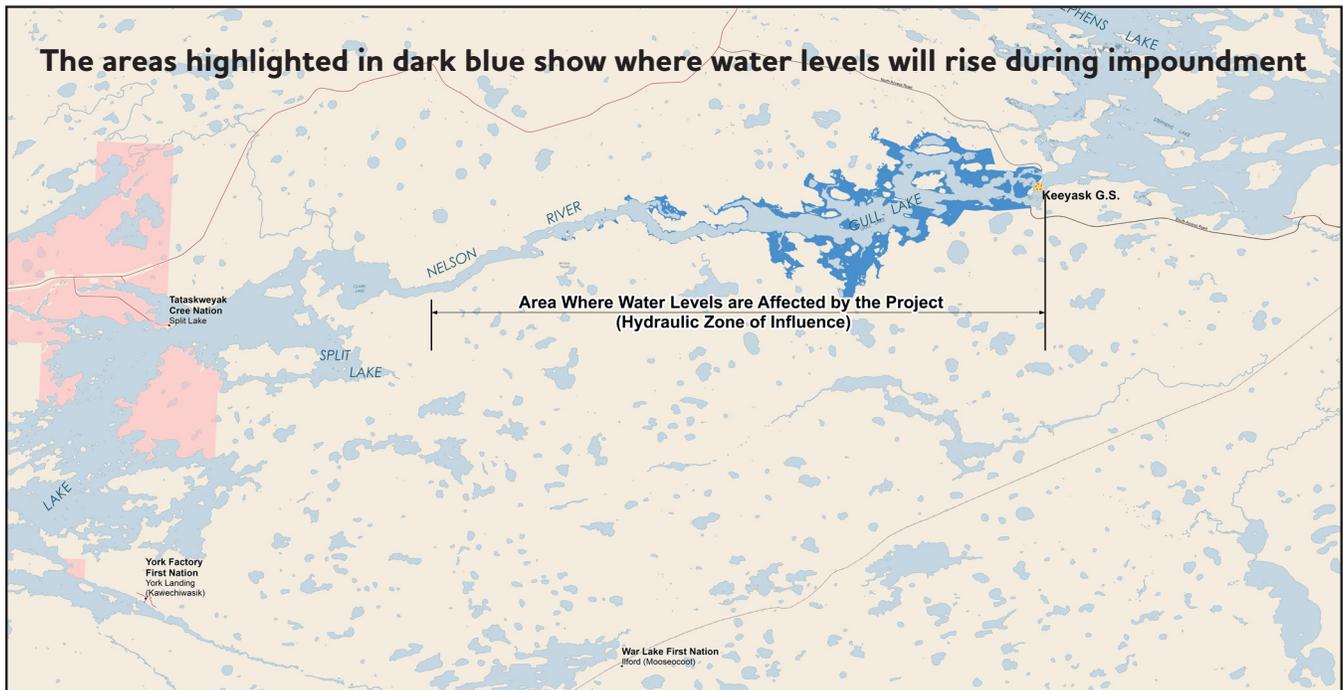
Water-up and impoundment is needed so the first of seven generators that use water to produce electricity can start working.

Water-up is the process of filling enclosed work areas kept dry during construction. Water levels in these work areas will be raised until they match the current water level of Gull Lake at the Keeyask site.

Cofferdams enclosing these work areas will be removed or lowered to improve water flow and allow safe travel for boats after impoundment.



Impoundment is the process of holding water behind the Keeyask Generating Station until it reaches the level needed to operate the generators. This will create a reservoir, flooding 45 square kilometers (28 square miles) of land upstream. Federal approval has not yet been received for impoundment.



Why does water-up and impoundment need to happen now?

The station structures are complete and the first generating unit will be ready for testing in April before going into service. Manitoba Hydro, as the Project Manager, is obligated under the Joint Keeyask Development Agreement to manage the project in a way that avoids unnecessary costs or delays, and follows regulatory approvals and environmental legislation.

What is the approval process for water-up and impoundment?

An extensive review process over the past several months determined a winter water-up start date will not result in any effects beyond those identified in the original environmental assessment for Keeyask. Federal approval has not yet been received for impoundment.

The original environmental approvals provided for water-up and impoundment processes starting in August. To change the start of water-up and impoundment to winter 2020, Manitoba Hydro was required to file applications with the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada for alterations to the Environment Act Licence and the Fisheries Act Authorization.

There are differing perspectives within the Keeyask Hydropower Limited Partnership about the timing of water-up and impoundment. Manitoba Hydro is committed to continue working with the communities to review and monitor the water-up and impoundment process, and to discuss any new or existing concerns.

How long will water-up and impoundment take?

The water-up process will take approximately five to seven weeks and impoundment will be less than two weeks.

Are the changes to the land, water and animals being acknowledged?

Employee Retention and Support Services (ERS) conducted a Prayer and Blessing prior to the start of water-up. ERS intends to hold an Impoundment Ceremony in the near future.

Cultural ceremonies are held at the Keeyask site at key milestones to honour the relationship people have with the land and water, and to acknowledge changes to the environment and surrounding ancestral lands. These ceremonies are led and conducted by ERS, a Joint Venture with York Factory First Nation and Fox Lake Cree Nation.

What are the main impacts of water-up and impoundment?

Water-up effects are contained to the work site and an area immediately upstream. Water level increases are not expected to occur upstream of Gull Lake.

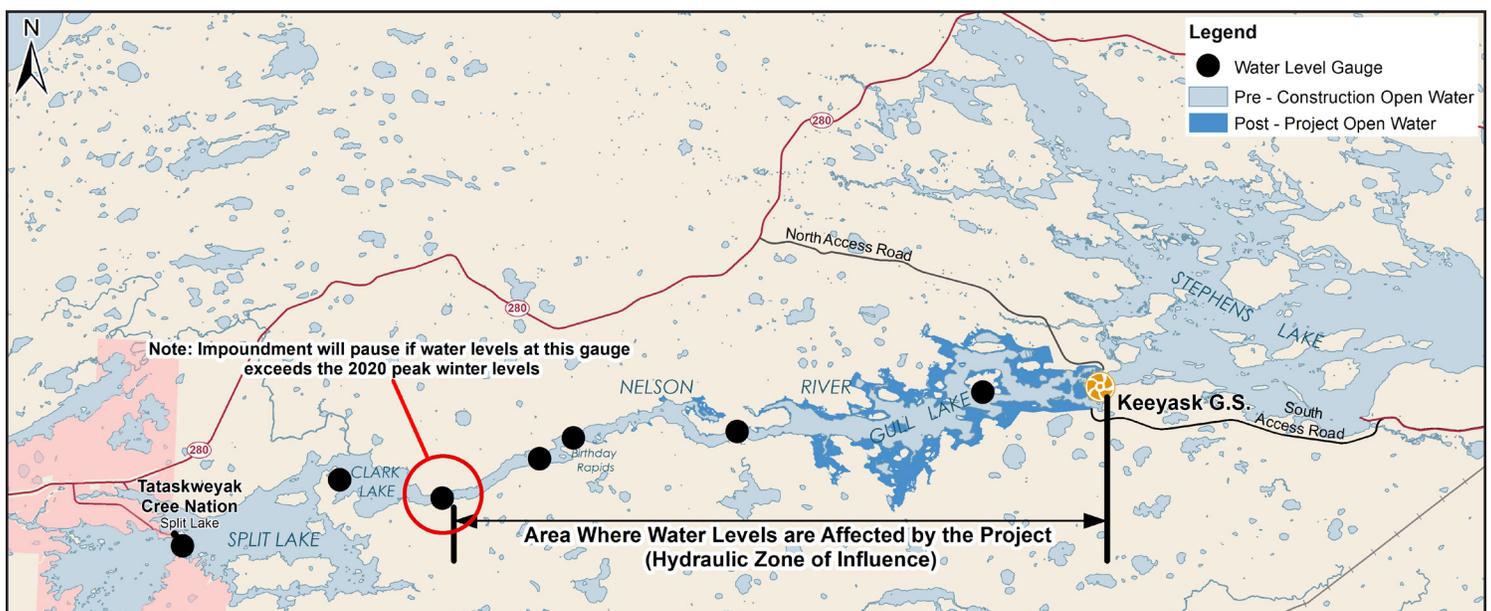
Impoundment will change shorelines and habitats in the area. Changes to water levels and flows are anticipated from the Keeyask site to about three kilometres downstream of the outlet of Clark Lake. Keeyask impoundment will not impact water levels and flows on Clark Lake, Split Lake or Stephens Lake.

What is being done to ensure impoundment activities do not affect Clark Lake or Split Lake?

A commitment was made to pause impoundment if the water level observed at the water level gauge downstream of Clark Lake exceeds the 2020 winter maximum water level observed prior to impoundment.

Although water levels are not expected to change on Clark Lake or Split Lake, water level information is transmitted hourly from gauges upstream of the Keeyask site and reviewed regularly by Manitoba Hydro staff and partner First Nations monitoring staff. If the monitoring indicates that water level effects are outside of expectations, the impoundment process will pause.

Impoundment can be paused quickly (i.e. within a couple of hours) which will halt the effects of impoundment on upstream water levels.



What is being done to ensure impoundment activities do not affect the ice road on Split Lake?

A commitment was made to start the impoundment process after March 21, when the ice road season is typically over.

Water levels will not change on Clark Lake or Split Lake. The current schedule indicates that impoundment will likely take place closer to April.

What is being done to ensure impoundment activities do not affect migratory caribou?

A commitment was made to delay impoundment if migratory caribou are in the Keeyask Project area and could be affected by impoundment.

The Keeyask Caribou Coordination Committee's caribou monitoring network is working collaboratively to share observations from partner First Nation's members out on the land, ATK monitoring staff, Provincial Wildlife Branch staff, Keeyask site staff, and aerial surveys under the Keeyask Terrestrial Effects Monitoring Plan. The Committee will meet the week prior to when impoundment is planned, to review their findings and discuss if it is safe to proceed without affecting migratory caribou. Based on the outcome of this discussion, Manitoba Hydro will make a decision about whether to delay impoundment.

What does impoundment mean for personal safety?

Ice travel downstream of Clark Lake is not recommended in March and April 2020 during Keeyask impoundment. A land-based trail providing a safe, alternate travel route is being installed from Clark Lake to Gull Lake on the north side of the Nelson River.

The Keeyask Generation Project is in the Split Lake Resource Management Area, and within the ancestral homeland of the four partner First Nations: Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation, and Fox Lake Cree Nation. When completed, it will be a reliable source of renewable energy providing 695 megawatts of power.

If you have questions about the Keeyask water-up and impoundment process, please call your KCN Site Representative or e-mail Diana Mager at dmager@hydro.mb.ca

