



Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak • Fox Lake Cree Nation

A Participant Review of the Manitoba and Manitoba
Hydro Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment
(RCEA) Phase II Report

October 2, 2017



Executive Summary

On April 25, 2017, the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) approved funding in the amount of \$28,000.00 to prepare a written submission that addresses whether the cumulative effects of 50+ years of hydro development is accurately reflected in the RCEA documentation as it relates to the Fox Lake Cree Nation (FLCN) and to provide suggestions for future action.

This submission was prepared with input from the community of Fox Lake. It describes details of the process and context in which the review was conducted and provides recommendations for future actions.

The results of the review are presented as local cumulative effects and are divided into four categories:

- Nipi • Water;
- Nipi | Aski • Land and Water;
- Future Development and,
- Heritage and Mino Pimatisowin.

The Community Profile is also reviewed and recommendations are made throughout the document from the information collected for this submission.

The submission received feedback from Fox Lake Elders, resource users and members during a community meeting about the local cumulative effects of past, present and future hydroelectric and other developments contained in the RCEA Phase II Report. This approach was used to gain an understanding of how members have observed past effects and what information needs to be emphasized in a response to the CEC.

The following is a list of recommendations presented in the review:

- To enhance the information already presented by Manitoba Hydro. This can be achieved within the Community Profile by adding the outlined local cumulative effects from the following recent FLCN documentation that was not available for the RCEA Phase II Report:
 - Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study: The Land and People are One • Aski Ekwa Muskegowak Wahkomitowak December 2016 (FLCN)
 - Achieving Mino Pimatisowin 2016 (FLCN)
 - Assessing youth experiences of hydroelectric development in Fox Lake Cree Nation's traditional territory 2017 (Master's Thesis - Randi Thomas).



- To investigate a new recovery strategy on the Lower Nelson River for sturgeon separate from the Grand Rapids hatchery.
- Traditional Knowledge monitors undertake increased monitoring of illegal fishing.
- That leadership and Manitoba Hydro develop more effective methods to distribute water level forecasts to the community and active resource users.
- To investigate mitigative strategies for altered flight paths of migratory geese.
- Implement noise dampening for transmission lines, especially in areas that are habitat sensitive as well as near resource cabins and encampments.
- Conduct traditional knowledge studies on the impacts of development on caribou herds. This includes mitigating the drowning of coastal caribou because of the weak ice on the Nelson River.
- To move the provincial habitat use boundary of the mistikoskaw atikok • woodland caribou that would reflect an actual presence further north.
- The FLCN statement on Future Development presented in this submission on page 15 should be included within the RCEA FLCN Community Profile.
- Extend the conservation closure length for masamegosak • brook trout throughout the spawning season.
- Apply existing heritage programs to the community to reinforce its historical and cultural significance in the Gillam region
- Apply the Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin study, especially the History section, to enhance the Fox Lake Community Profile.
- A referencing error needs to be updated in the RCEA FLCN Community Profile (Section 3.5.6) and in Manitoba Hydro documentation.

Reference Error - Bibliography

In addition there is a referencing error that needs to be updated in the RCEA FLCN Community Profile (Section 3.5.6) and in Manitoba Hydro documentation. The reference reads erroneously in the Community Profile Bibliography as:

FLCN 2008. Fox Lake Creek (sic) Nation: Preliminary sturgeon TK Study. A report prepared for Fox Lake Cree Nation by L. Agger with contributions from Dr. T. Dick and L. Hanks.

Should be updated to:

- FLCN 2015. Land, Water and Environmental Knowledge: Sturgeon (updated final draft submitted to MB Hydro January 2015 by FLCN)



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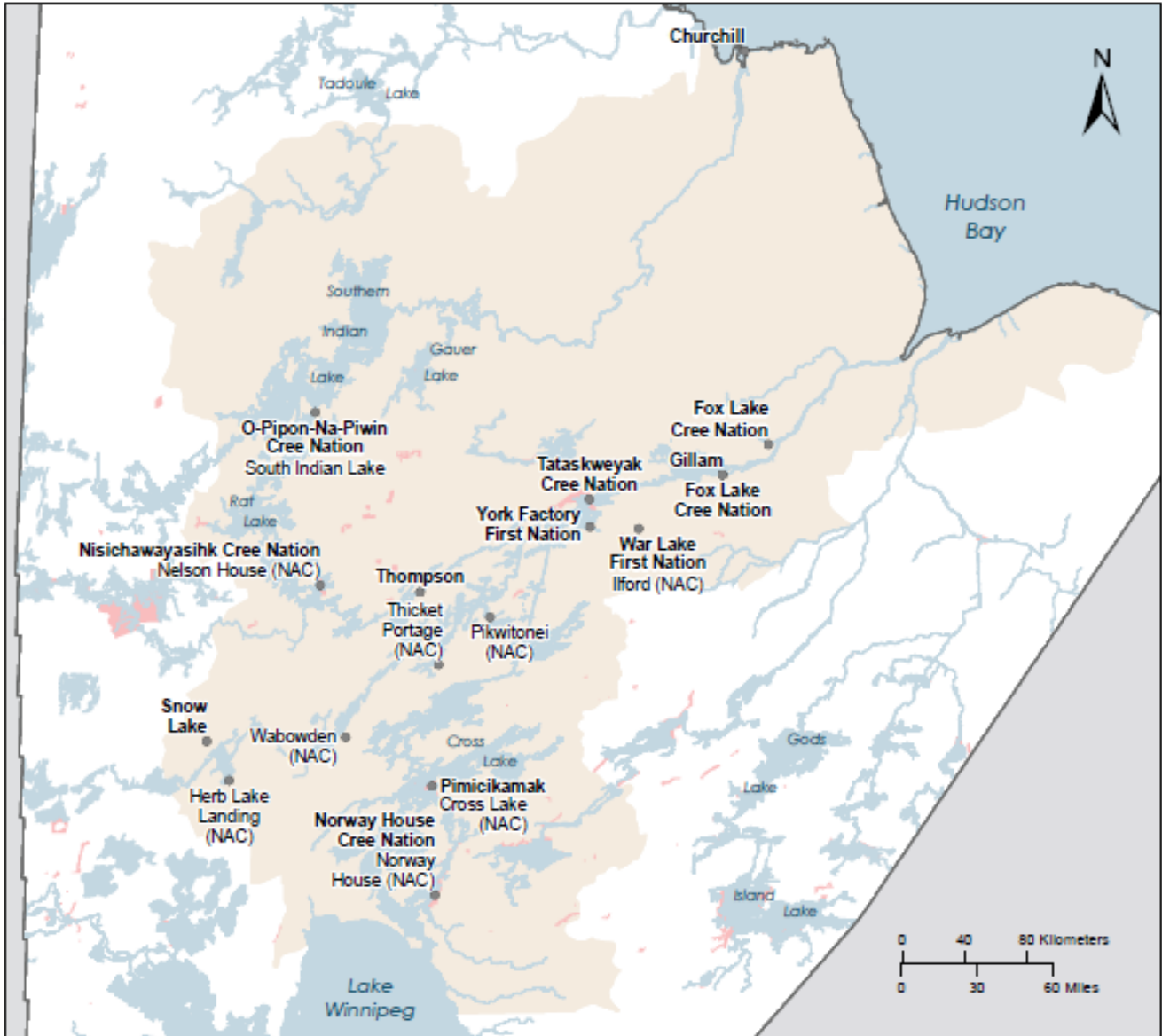
Introduction

The approval of funding from the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) through its public outreach program for the Fox Lake Cree Nation (FLCN) initiated a participant review of the 2016 Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro *Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment for Hydroelectric Development on the Churchill, Burntwood and Nelson River Systems: Phase II Report* (RCEA Phase II Report).

The participant review funding was used to prepare a written submission, with advisor and community input, that addresses whether the cumulative effects of 50+ years of hydro development is accurately reflected in the RCEA documentations as it relates to FLCN and provides recommendations for future action. It is important for the CEC to note that the amount of funding provided constrained significantly the depth of the review.

An advisor was selected by FLCN to research gaps between the information provided by the RCEA and the FLCN documentation provided by the community to prepare a written response, referred to in this document as an advisory review.

FLCN documents provided for the advisory review were derived from development projects, academic theses, CEC and related community studies and statements. FLCN reports and recommendations were collated and summarized for comparison to details in RCEA reports to determine and confirm gaps and comments. Due to the voluminous size of the Phase II Report, the Integrated Summary was relied upon for the participant review process and the Phase II Report cross-referenced for detail where needed.



Communities in the RCEA Region of Interest

Results of the advisory review were prepared and shared first with the FLCN staff followed by a community meeting in Gillam, Manitoba. The advisory review was presented to Fox Lake Core Kitayatisuk•Elders¹ and Harvester Group members as well as key Kitayatisuk•Elders as gaps and recommendations. The RCEA Phase II Report was characterized in a presentation as a comprehensive and detailed acknowledgement of Manitoba Hydro's role in the impacts on the physical and socio-cultural environments within a Region of Interest (ROI), as well as

¹ Cree terms throughout the document may be presented with its corresponding English term using the format [Cree•English].



being comprehensive and detailed with regards to partnership and the 2004 Impact Settlement Agreement (ISA).

Feedback from the members attending indicated that some details with regards to *local cumulative effects* and worldview details were not fully captured in the RCEA Phase II Report and FLCN should respond with some statements from the numerous community aski keskentamowin • traditional knowledge studies that had been completed.

The comments and recommendations are presented as **local cumulative effects** from a Fox Lake Cree Nation worldview and Fox Lake's response to the RCEA Phase II Report and the FLCN Community Profile.



Community Comments

The community meeting for the RCEA participant review response was held on September 20, 2017 in Gillam, Manitoba on the community's urban reserve. The demographic of the members that attended focused on Kitayatisuk • Elders who had cumulative experiences on the cumulative effect of hydroelectric development on their homelands within their lifetimes.

The meeting was attended by a community councilor, Fox Lake Future Development staff and was facilitated by a local Cree translator. The opportunity was embraced by leadership and the younger generation FLCN staff who were present as an opportunity to receive traditional knowledge and wisdom from the Kitayatisuk • Elders going forward in collaborative efforts with Manitoba Hydro.

Advisory review comments on the Phase II Report were distributed prior to the meeting to allow for a more meaningful conversation. The Kitayatisuk • Elders agreed that the community's tradition was to allow all present to have a chance to have their voice heard. The following are paraphrased responses from the community members who spoke:

Fish don't taste like they used to. Water quality has changed. A fish was given to me and the guts were all black.

A namao • sturgeon that was given to me still tasted poorly even after cooking it.

With regards to water level changes and water regime changes I can see the low water and high water effects all my life. All the erosion that goes along with it. It can be seen at Kettle Beach, the water, the rocks are black. Not like it used to be.

I appreciate the knowledge of the Kitayatisuk • Elders. The food off the land and water has changed enough that sometimes they don't even recognize the food that has been prepared for them.

I am saddened by the fact that the community can't harvest the same foods as the past. This includes grouse and rabbits that were commonly hunted and snared in the Gillam area.

As I witnessed the water regime changes, especially the diversion of Cache Lake, I have witnessed the loss of species around here.

Many of the middle aged members of the community enjoy hearing the Kitayatisuk • Elders since they were not able to learn growing up. Like details of meat sharing practices.



Being involved in traditional knowledge programs has given local researchers the ability to learn about their own community, especially where that opportunity may not have been followed.

I have noticed the disappearance of some species like ptarmigan and snowbirds. There also used to be lots of caribou migrating from the north. Now they don't come from the north anymore and are slowly disappearing because they are being disrespected.

We need to show the youth how to utilize the land.

Traditional methods are being lost. Guts need to be piled together. Skins need to be utilized. The youth need to be taught. I had a former mayor of Gillam tell me that there will never be a reserve in Gillam as long as he was mayor. Even the current Harmonized Gillam Development seems to be lopsided with the development of non-reserve areas first.

People are not utilizing the products of animals anymore. Younger generations have lost the ability and store bought foods are preferred. Community activities have dwindled. No one can take our land away.

I want to talk about the caribou and small animals. I remember around Long Spruce Dam, Manitoba Hydro said they were going to make a crossing for them. I said it wouldn't work because they would cross anywhere along the system. For the sturgeon, it was very good before the dams. It changed because of the dams and changes to the water system. They (Hydro) destroyed fish in the system. Caribou don't come around Gillam anymore, they are scared away.



Local Cumulative Effects

The comments and recommendations presented in this review are discussed as **local cumulative effects** from a Fox Lake Cree Nation worldview. Even though the principal documents acknowledged aspects of environmental and social impacts discussed below, a FLCN response is required with regard to a worldview that is not fully captured in places. These require emphasis to enhance the information already presented by Manitoba Hydro. This can be best achieved within the Community Profile by including the local cumulative effects outlined below.

The response is presented under Cree headings that represent nipi • water; nipi | aski • water and land; future development; and heritage and mino pimatisowin. Where possible, response comments are placed within context of the location within the RCEA Integrated Summary.

Nipi • Water

Introduction

With regards to changes to water and shorelines as discussed in the RCEA Integrated Summary report introduction, water quality needs to be further emphasized in the RCEA Phase II Report from an FLCN perspective.

Concerns and issues in the FLCN Land, Water and Environmental Knowledge: Sturgeon report (2015) state that poor water quality resulted in a direct loss of potable water sources, specifically the Kischi Sipi • Nelson River, Askiko Sipi • Kettle River, and smaller creeks and streams. In addition the report outlines the mobilization of sediments and pollutants affecting spawning success and fish quality as well as an increased danger and difficulty when travelling on the Kischi Sipi • Nelson River due to unpredictable water fluctuations and limited shoreline access.

The FLCN Environmental Evaluation report (2012) also indicated that water quality changed. A loss of clean drinking water was attributed to changes in the color, smell, increased turbidity and murkiness of the water and mercury levels within fish. In addition to this was the aesthetic loss on shorelines and pristine habitats.

In the Fox Lake First Nation (Bird Reserve) Environmental Issues Inventory report (1995) it was noted that within the local area, Fox Lake members were no longer engaged in fishing activities. A decline in fishing success rates was linked to hydroelectric development. At that time the community noted that the brook trout population in the Mahti Sipi • Limestone River



had virtually collapsed. Members believed that the impact of hydroelectric development on habitat was significant and were extremely concerned.

In the recent Lower Nelson River Aski Kescentamowin Report (2016) Fox Lake Kitayatisuk • Elders and fishers observed a drastic decline in local namao • sturgeon populations after the hydroelectric dams were built. In the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River (LNR) they attribute this decline to a number of related factors. The first is loss of the Askiko Powistik • Kettle rapids, Kischi Machidou Powistik • Long Spruce rapids and Mahti Powistikos • Limestone rapids, which provided critical spawning and nursery habitats for namao • sturgeon until dams were constructed at these sites. Elders also assert that namao • sturgeon were able to pass upstream through these rapids, which meant that construction fragmented the population and limited movement between important habitats up and down stream. Impoundment above each dam mobilized sediment, causing water in the Nelson to change from clear to very turbid, altering fish habitat and reducing fish quality. It also altered large areas of river habitat from shallow, swift flowing, and relatively clear water to deep, slower flowing, and turbid. Water level fluctuations, particularly below the dams altered conditions at the mouths of the spawning tributaries. The flooding and fluctuations also changed the ecology and productivity of the system and thereby feeding and rearing opportunities in the mainstem and at tributary mouths. Debris mobilized by the flooding and fluctuating water levels has made fishing more difficult by tangling nets, and risky due to abrupt and unpredictable variations in depth and current.

Hydroelectric Development – Operation of the Northern Hydroelectric System

Daily operation with high and low flows in the operation of the northern hydroelectric system is discussed in the Integrated Summary within the heading of Hydroelectric Developments. A key aspect of FLCN concerns that is not fully captured, either in the RCEA Integrated Summary or Community Profile, is what the true effect of high volume water fluctuations due to hydroelectric development on the lower Nelson River is on resource users from Fox Lake.

The FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Kescentamowin Report identifies water levels that no longer follow the natural seasonal patterns and instead follow cycles in response to energy demand contributing to shoreline damage, erosion and ice scour all affecting water clarity. Frequent water fluctuations affect boating safety and the safety of travel on ice.

Kitayatisuk • Elders have observed that these “hydro tides” change from day to day and year to year. This has practical and safety implications for everyone boating or snowmobiling on



the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River. The marine tides from Kichikame • Hudson Bay only affect the Nelson River upstream to Long Island.

During travels on the Nelson River in 2014 and 2015 the maximum daily range of vertical fluctuation observed was about 1 meter. In June 2016, daily range of vertical fluctuations approached 3 meters at both the confluences of the Angling and Weir Rivers. These fluctuations limit travel windows and access. Most travel occurs during “slack tides” when the water level is high and the current is stable, but it depends upon the travel route. Timing of optimal travel does not necessarily correspond to optimal conditions for obtaining game, leading to a match/mismatch problem whereby hunters have access but no game and vice versa.

The water level variations alternately strand and float boats, risking damage or loss unless they are watched continuously. Re-launching stranded boats can be arduous. Floating them in the strong current increases the risk of human stranding. Strong currents limit travel during periods of high flow and hidden reefs limit travel during periods of low flow. These reefs change annually as ice scour moves material from the shores and bottom and piles it elsewhere. The high turbidity of the water obscures even very shallow reefs.

The inconvenience and hazardous conditions created by the combination of high turbidity and unpredictable water level fluctuations are greater in the Kischi Sipi • Nelson River than in many marine environments, where reliable depth and tide tables are readily available, the water is seldom as turbid, and bottom topography is less changeable.

Physical and Biological Effects – Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines

One mitigative/management measure outlined in the RCEA Integrated Summary report regarding effects on water and shoreline is the low effect of turbines to fish. From the FLCN worldview this diminishes the local cumulative effect that fish mortality still exists. Masamegosak • brook trout and namao • sturgeon among many other species remain fragmented and disrespected by one way movement through turbines which previously resulted in the permanent loss of spawning areas.

Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines – Lower Nelson River Generation

In the RCEA Integrated Summary MB Hydro suggests that sedimentation levels have been stable since the 1970's however downstream of the Limestone GS high turbidity and increased erosion rates continue to affect resource users.



FLCN members have discussed not eating fish from the Nelson River or drawing water despite hydro suggesting that water quality changes are negligible. Sturgeon • namao in the Nelson River • Kischi Sipi no longer taste good. The Elders describe the taste and texture of sturgeon • namao harvested from the Nelson River • Kischi Sipi after hydroelectric development as 'bitter', 'watery' and 'soggy' relative to those caught prior to development. Consequently, most sturgeon • namao are taken from tributaries such as the Angling • Picohaskan and Weir • Kishemichikani Rivers, where the fish taste better and sturgeon • namao caught in the past were typically larger than those caught today.

Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines - Lake Sturgeon

The RCEA Integrated Summary states that sufficient habitat remains on the Nelson for Lake Sturgeon; however no quantitative data exists to determine historic effects on the population due to hydroelectric development. Instead, the FLCN worldview, their shared traditional knowledge and their oral history offer a baseline for comparison that scientific studies currently lack.

The FLCN Land, Water and Environmental Knowledge: Sturgeon report outlines rehabilitation of local fish stocks that involves Fox Lake youth and Kitayatisuk • Elders with historical and current information. The areas identified by Fox Lake for stocking include Stephens Reservoir and the Long Spruce and Limestone Generating Station forebays. Stocking of namao • sturgeon in particular needs to be conducted in accordance with Fox Lake values and relationships with sturgeon. This involves a non-invasive method of spawn (egg) collection and the avoidance of hormone treatment and confinement of females outside their natural environment for extended periods.

The FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report indicates changes in namao • sturgeon. The importance and ecology of namao • sturgeon makes hydroelectric development a particular concern for FLCN. To maintain their abundance, these fish require uninterrupted seasonal access between the rapids spawning habitat and suitable feeding, rearing, and wintering habitat. The artificial creation of barriers to migration has created a one way fish movement path that is a great concern for these species upstream especially a heritage species like masamegosak • brook trout which may not remain viable upstream over the long term. Dams, reservoir impoundment that floods spawning and feeding habitat, water level fluctuations that increase erosion and thereby turbidity, affecting feeding; and improved access by harvesters are some of the most important stressors that can result from hydroelectric development. Holders of aski keskentamowin • traditional knowledge have



observed changes to various aspects of the sturgeon population in the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River, particularly related to availability and quality.

Commercial fishing that reduced namao • sturgeon populations in the upper Nelson River was limited in the Lower Nelson River • Kischi Sipi by logistics and cost. Some sturgeon were caught but there is little evidence that the lower Nelson River population were depleted beyond their capacity to recover naturally. In contrast, the lasting impacts of hydroelectric development on sturgeon habitat do limit population recovery, both up and downstream from the Limestone GS.

Prior to construction of the Kettle GS, sturgeon • namao in the Nelson River • Kischi Sipi were whiter in colour, especially their underbellies, which made them easier to spot from the surface. After the Kettle GS was constructed and turbidity increased dramatically the Nelson River • Kischi Sipi sturgeon • namao lost their distinctive white colour. Those from the mainstem are now typically grey and those from its tributaries are black or brown. Elders have observed that the fish's skin colour changes when sturgeon • namao move between systems with different water quality. Generally, only black or brown sturgeon • namao are considered fit to eat.

As an additional emphasis to domestic and commercial fisheries regarding namao • sturgeon in the RCEA Integrated Summary within People - Culture, Way of Life and Heritage Resources - Resource use, a concern still exists and has been expressed by FLCN regarding the fragmentation and division of namao • sturgeon populations in the upper and lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River mainstem due to hydroelectric development. This includes the need to investigate a new recovery strategy separate from the Grand Rapids hatchery which the community has voiced as not being a viable source. The FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report recommends that Traditional Knowledge monitors undertake increased monitoring of illegal fishing.



Nipi | Aski • Water and Land

Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines

Regarding increases and decreases in water regime flows discussed in the RCEA Integrated Summary report, FLCN would like to stress the local cumulative effect felt by resource users from these regime regulations. The FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report notes that boats can only leave the Conawapa boat launch when more water is flowing out of the Limestone Generating Station (GS). Since the Limestone GS and the upstream Long Spruce GS are both run of river plants that have very little storage capacity, they need to be run in series with the Kettle GS, receiving and passing through the water that comes from this station. The Kettle Generating Station stores water in the Stephens Reservoir.

At the Conawapa boat launch, boats travel across the Kischi Sipi • Nelson River into Kashibagittahoneneewak • Horseshoe Bay and follow the south shoreline traveling either downstream or upstream. This is following the old river channel where the water is deeper. Resource users typically do not launch their boats until after 10:00 AM until the Limestone GS is running at a higher capacity and passing more water through the dam into the river.

The water regime downstream on the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River changes every year and each night the water levels drop along the river while water is stored in the Stephens Reservoir (this can be done when there is less demand for energy at night resulting in running fewer turbines in each generating station allowing Manitoba Hydro to reduce the amount of water flowing through each generating station). The extreme water level fluctuations can cause resource users to be unsure about where they can safely travel on the river and result in damage to boats and motors. The cycling of water also results in resource users needing to plan their travels for hunting, fishing, and gathering to match higher flow levels through the Limestone GS to ensure safe travels. This does not always coincide with when a resource user would prefer to travel for maximum access to a resource. Added to the flow level variation, the width and depth of the river channel can exaggerate or reduce the water levels.

These altered regimes are currently felt by FLCN resource users at major tributary junctions in addition to commonly used streams. Extreme fluctuations during peak and low flows can seem to emulate flooding daily. Downstream of the Limestone GS it is the operation of the Churchill River Diversion and Lake Winnipeg Regulation and 3 generating stations that affect water levels and the rate of fluctuation. Elders and resource users and harvesters have described the effects over their lifetimes and continued frequent misunderstanding regarding daily level changes continues to have an effect. It is recommended that leadership and



Manitoba Hydro develop more effective methods to distribute water level forecasts to the community and active resource users.

Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines - Lower Nelson River Generation

The FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report indicates a general shift eastward towards the Hudson Bay Lowland area in regards to an increase in resource use areas being utilized. FLCN members state this is mainly due to shifting patterns of large game and availability of aquatic species. For FLCN, the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River represents the most pristine environment with least effects of development and are concerned about an unforeseen increased stress on harvest species.

Summary of Effects on Land-Overview

In the RCEA Integrated Summary report bird-wire collision mitigation is described as using diverters to increase wire visibility and allow migratory species to access breeding and brooding areas. In response, FLCN would like to note regarding local cumulative effects that although breeding and brood areas for migratory species are important, migrating patterns are critical for harvesters. This does not adequately address migratory bird flight alteration due to wire and other structures in areas that are traditionally used for hunting.

The Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report states that it is by mid-spring when niska • geese arrive in the region and an annual goose camp is held. The Fox Lake goose camp is held at the Limestone Quarry and facilities adjacent to the mouth of the Machidou Sipi • Limestone River •. This area was used during previous development as a quarry and is currently inundated by the Nelson River. The Limestone Quarry is an ideal location for waterfowl hunting, due to the shelter of the high banks and that the geese have to fly in low to land. Community members are not only concerned about the future use of the goose camp due to development, but also the health of the geese if they are forced to other areas by development.

Construction of the BiPole III Transmission Project in the area has already altered flight paths and the ability of Fox Lake members to hunt at goose camp. The advisory review recommends investigation of mitigative strategies for altered flight paths of migratory geese,, and that this FLCN local cumulative effect is addressed within the Community Profile.

In addition the Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report makes a recommendation to implement noise dampening for transmission lines, especially in areas that are habitat sensitive as well near resource cabins and encampments. Sound dampening strategies within a



radius of cabins near a transmission lines must involve resource users that utilize areas that are near transmission lines in addition to being consulted to determine the effects of line noise on animal populations and resource use.

Summary of Effects on Land-Overview

The RCEA Integrated Summary draws into question the mistikoskaw atikok • woodland caribou range. Scientific data (collaring and other measurements) and Sustainable Development do not seem to validate or address FLCN traditional knowledge regarding ranges especially in the Keeyask area. In addition, the Community Profile also does not adequately capture the local cumulative effect felt by Fox Lake regarding Caribou.

The Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report outlines the community's perspective prior to development projects in the region. Harvesters recount that the area was abundant with atik • caribou, especially during their migrations. Historically, atik • caribou were abundant year round along the Kischi Sipi • lower Nelson River however introduction of the railway in the 1930's, the construction of a radar station in the 1950's and the initiation of Manitoba Hydro development in the 1960's directly impacted critical rutting habitat and altered the established knowledge of migratory and calving behaviour around the community of Fox Lake.

These historic disturbances and current development projects have reduced the frequency with which the Barren-ground and Woodland caribou herds migrate through the community of Fox Lake. The population has declined over the past fifty years. Current resource users continue to utilize the ancient knowledge passed on to them through the teachings Elders offer through Mino Pimatisowin despite the introduction of snowmobiles, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and trail cameras. For many resource users, nothing can replace on the land experiences and learning through observation and inquisitiveness.

Past construction development activities, noise, outside hunting pressures, flooding of traditional migration routes, the Shamattawa winter road as a linear feature and generating station operations have created unsafe conditions for atik • caribou and has contributed to decline in the Fox Lake traditional land use areas. Fox Lake Harvesters continue to be concerned that non-community hunting pressure will increase and continue to add to the decline of the species. A number of non-Aboriginal people are harvesting in Fox Lake Cree Nation traditional territory and issues of illegal hunting and wasting are prevalent. Community members stressed that it is not about who is hunting, but that the overhunting and waste occurring is what is unacceptable.



The ongoing development of the Keewatinohk Converter Station and Bipole III Transmission Project are situated within well-known migration routes for namowin atikok • Pen Island • and askimao atikosisak • Barren-ground caribou and habitat for mistikoskaw atikok • woodland caribou.

Recommendations from the Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Report indicate that further traditional knowledge is required on the impacts of development on caribou herd movements especially since Caribou are more easily followed by predatory wolves along developed linear features. The report also recommends mitigating the drowning of coastal caribou because of the weak ice on the Nelson River and requesting that a move of the provincial habitat use boundary of the mistikoskaw • woodland caribou reflect an actual presence further north.



Future Development

Hydroelectric Developments - Operation of Northern Hydroelectric System

In the RCEA Integrated Summary report the operation of the northern hydroelectric systems are listed and discussed, however contextualizing Fox Lake people's history and lived experiences in regards to envisioning future development in their traditional lands was not fully captured.

The following FLCN response on the planning of the northern hydro system regarding future developments has been collated from previous report statements through the advisory review process and should be included as an enhancement within the RCEA FLCN Community Profile:

The Kischi Sipi • Nelson River is one of Canada's largest rivers with a drainage basin that extends from the British Columbia and Alberta border to the west, the Lake of the Woods to the east, and the North and South Dakota border to the south. For generations, Inninuwak • Cree people have lived, travelled, and derived their livelihoods and wellbeing from the river, its tributaries and surrounding land base. As one of the major highways connecting people throughout the region, it facilitated a variety of social and political relationships including trade, marriages, and alliances between Inninuwak • Cree people.

The interconnectedness between people who lived along the river continued throughout the European-*Inninuwak* fur trade, Treaty 5 negotiations and the subsequent creation of reserves, railway expansion to Churchill, and a wave of Euro-Canadian settlement in the 20th century (*i.e.* the establishment of Gillam). It continued until the mid-1960s, after which dam building blocked this ancient route of travel. For the first time, people were prevented from reaching one another through regular means, which greatly impacted the nature and frequency of social gatherings. This contributed to the emergence of distinctive First Nation identities among people of the region.

Long before Manitoba Hydro development came to Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak • Fox Lake People's territory, long before the construction of the dams, the parents and grandparents of today's Kitayatisuk • Elders foresaw the changes that were coming, including the destruction of the land, the animals and water, the destruction of aski. In their lifetimes, Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak has seen these predictions come true. Manitoba Hydro built three hydroelectric projects along the Nelson River • Kischi Sipi within 50- kilometres of Kakwiskimahka • Gillam over the brief space of twenty-five years. These projects have had a profound impact on Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak relationships with aski, with the land, the waterways, with each



other and with the Town of Gillam. Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak has experienced increased government intervention since the mid- 20th century, and the loss of power and control that has escalated since hydroelectric development began. Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak have found themselves distanced from mino pimatisowin.

Settlement agreements address the effects of hydroelectric development in the region however the rapid cultural changes witnessed during the period of hydroelectric development is not reversible and communities must continue to adapt quickly or feel a greater magnitude of negative impacts.

Compounding the fragmented landscape and ecosystems does not foster an environment where Fox Lake people can live mino pimatisowin. The intergenerational time honoured knowledge obtained through relationships with aski contributes to Fox Lake people's ability to live and sustain healthy and vibrant lives

Summary of Effects on Water and Shorelines - Lower Nelson River Generation

The RCEA Integrated Summary report indicates that there has been a dramatic increase in value of masamegosak • brook trout in recent years to FLCN members. This has coincided with an increase in illegal harvest and recreational fishing especially during spawning season.

The masamegosak • brook trout spawning population along the Limestone River has probably benefitted from a forest burn that occurred about 25 years ago and still limits fishing access because of heavy density of deadfall. Traditional knowledge has been showing resource users that brook trout are remaining on the spawning grounds after the conservation closure has ended, leaving them vulnerable to harvest by licensed anglers. If access to these fish improves, the number of trout removed from this population and others may increase affecting population size and composition. Future consideration should be given to extending the conservation closure length throughout the spawning season.



Heritage and Mino Pimatisowin

People - Culture, way of life and heritage resources - Archaeological Programming

The FLCN advisory review indicates that the programs that are in place for heritage resources were put there by a solid process involving all parties to some extent. Some recent examples that illustrates this positive process has been the involvement of FLCN monitoring staff in a Keeyask heritage program dig site at Gull Rapids as well as heritage work conducted on the lower Kischi Sipi • Nelson River for the FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study.

A major gap remains however in heritage work that has not been completed for the town of Gillam and the direct surrounding region that has been heavily impacted historically first by the Hudson Bay Railway development to Port Nelson, then to the Port of Churchill and followed by subsequent hydroelectric developments. Recommendations from existing Fox Lake community studies address this gap.

In the FLFN Grievance Statement, the research conducted indicated that documents were found with respect to the history and characteristics of the Fox Lake Cree in the vicinity of Gillam before the Project, and the recognized existence of the “Gillam Band” from the early 1930’s. These lend important weight to the claim for recognition of Fox Lake Cree Nation rights and interests, and implicitly, the extent of associated Hydro impacts. The recommendation within the grievance statement regarding this is that Fox Lake should pursue such research in the future, since it would further broaden and strengthen the Members’ knowledge of the history and experiences of the “Forgotten Nation”.

The Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study provides a comprehensive in depth history and pre-contact history of Fox Lake (which will be addressed further in the comments below regarding the Community Profile). The presence of Fox Lake in the Gillam region remains a gap in the heritage work that has been undertaken. The above study brings focus to Fox Lake and notes that as the rail line construction moved closer to the Nelson River • *Kischi Sipi*, many *Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwak* were drawn to it by the employment opportunities created by the line itself and by the construction of a bridge at mile 330 near Askiko Powistik • Kettle Rapids. Along with good access to fishing and hunting places, this location allowed Fox Lake People to take advantage of employment opportunities related to the development of the Hudson Bay Railway. Prior to this time the area was and continues to be a traditional gathering place for Fox Lake families. The first settlement in the Gillam area was



four miles east of the present town on a high ridge at mile 330, sometime around 1912-1913. Fox Lake records have identified these sites.

In the 2016 FLCN Achieving Mino Pimatisowin report, the urgency in broadening and strengthening members' knowledge of their own heritage is echoed many years later. The mino pimatisowin report recommendations seek to improve members' wellness by increasing members' historical knowledge of Fox Lake. The Achieving Mino Pimatisowin report also seeks to improve FLCN members' wellness in the areas of culture and language by working with Manitoba Hydro, the Town of Gillam and Federal and Provincial governments to increase Cree cultural pride through sharing success stories, historic figures and learning about other indigenous cultures.

The recommendations in the Achieving Mino Pimatisowin report should be applied to existing heritage programs for the community to reinforce its historical and cultural significance in the Gillam region.



Community Profile

The advisory review of principal documents included a community profile. The Community Profile for FLCN was withheld from public scrutiny until Fox Lake was able to provide commentary. In this regard a review was also conducted in conjunction with the RCEA Phase II Report to provide comments on the accuracy. Because of the overlap in the objective of the review process, comments and recommendations presented in the advisory review are also discussed as **local cumulative effects** from a Fox Lake Cree Nation worldview and are part of the response.

The Community Profile document was published in 2015, which places the context of the research to approximately two years old. As such, the profile may not fully capture, in much the same manner as the Integrated Summary report, the community's current views on local cumulative effects of hydroelectric development.

Background

The Background section of the Community Profile discusses Fox Lake occupation of the Gillam area and surrounding region. This background does not capture the unique Fox Lake historic worldview that is extensively presented in the FLCN Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study (December 2016). The advisory review recommends that this study be included, especially for its History section, to enhance what Manitoba Hydro has already provided within the Fox Lake Community Profile.

The advisory review also recommends that three new FLCN community-based documents that contain important updated recommendations that were not available for the RCEA Phase II Report be included to enhance what Manitoba Hydro has provided within the Community Profile. These are:

- Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study: The Land and People are One • Aski Ekwa Muskegowak Wahkomitowak December 2016 (FLCN)
- Achieving Mino Pimatisowin 2016 (FLCN)
- Assessing youth experiences of hydroelectric development in Fox Lake Cree Nation's traditional territory 2017 (Master's Thesis - Randi Thomas)



Home Relocation

The history of the home relocation for the community of Fox Lake to the Gillam area is cursory in the Community Profile. The history of home relocation is part of the community's heritage and links directly to the mino pimatisowin recommendations to strengthen historic knowledge of members through existing heritage programs. Including heritage investigations in the Gillam area, especially along the tracks to the Kettle Bridge would facilitate reconnecting members' to their heritage.

Home relocation also presents the ongoing struggle for the Fox Lake Cree Nation to secure adequate reserve land in Gillam since the 1950's. The Community Profile does not provide the community perspective that the creation of a reserve in Gillam in the 1950's may have mitigated many of the negative impacts on the Fox Lake people and community in Gillam. The advisory review recommends that the facts and Fox Lake perspective be included in the Community Profile.

Reference Error - Bibliography

In addition there is a referencing error that needs to be updated in the RCEA FLCN Community Profile (Section 3.5.6) and in Manitoba Hydro documentation. The reference reads erroneously in the Community Profile Bibliography as:

FLCN 2008. Fox Lake Creek (sic) Nation: Preliminary sturgeon TK Study. A report prepared for Fox Lake Cree Nation by L. Agger with contributions from Dr. T. Dick and L. Hanks.

Should be updated to:

FLCN 2015. Land, Water and Environmental Knowledge: Sturgeon (updated final draft submitted to MB Hydro January 2015 by FLCN)



Concluding Remarks

The Fox Lake Inninuwak • Cree peoples' relationships between aski • land, nipi • water and Inninuwak • Cree people are constantly changing and evolving. The rate of change has sped up exponentially since hydroelectric development began. Changes are occurring faster than people and the environment can adapt.

Moving forward, Fox Lake will carefully contemplate any potential future development within FLCN's traditional territory and the impacts of that development by reflecting on what has been lived and learned about cumulative effects from hydroelectric and other developments.



Sources

The following is a compilation of sources utilized for the Participant Review process that the community of Fox Lake Cree Nation has put forth in a series of environmental, socio-economic and traditional knowledge documents regarding the impacts of hydroelectric development in their traditional territories and within the Region of Interest that has been identified in the RCEA Phase II Report.

- Assessing youth experiences of hydroelectric development in Fox Lake Cree Nation’s traditional territory 2017 (Master’s Thesis - Randi Thomas)
- Lower Nelson River Aski Keskentamowin Study: The Land and People are One • Aski Ekwa Muskegowak Wahkomitowak December 2016 (FLCN)
- Achieving Mino Pimatisowin 2016 (FLCN)
- Land, Water and Environmental Knowledge: Sturgeon January 2015 (FLCN)
- Keeyask Transmission Project Aski Keskentamowin Report July 2014 (FLCN)
- A review of recommendations put forth by the CEC from the Report on Public Hearing: Bipole III Transmission Project June 2013.
- A review of recommendations put forth by the CEC from the Report on Public Hearing: Keeyask GS Project June 2013.
- Ninan “Our Story” October 2013 (FLCN)
- Fox Lake Cree Nation Position on Manitoba Hydro’s Proposal to Construct BiPole III and Keewatinoow (sic) Converter Station on Fox Lake Cree Homeland August 2012 (FLCN)
- Fox Lake Cree Nation-Environment Evaluation-Report September 2012 (FLCN)
- Keewatinoow (sic) Converter Station and BiPole III Aski Keskentamowin Report December 2011 (FLCN)
- Fox Lake Core Kitayatisuk • Elders and Harvester Group (2011-2016) – Meeting notes and recommendations.
- Keeyask Traditional Knowledge Report October 2010 (FLCN)
- Forgotten Nation in the Shadow of the Dams: Grievance Statement April 1997 (FLCN)
- Fox Lake First Nation (Bird Reserve) Environmental Issues Inventory December 1995 (MKO)
- Fox Lake First Nation Land Use and Occupancy: Living Memory of the Fox Lake Cree April 1993 (Master’s Thesis - Stewart Hill)