



Presentation on Fox Lake Inninuwak  
Aski Keskentamowin BiPole III and Keewatinoow  
Converter Station Findings Report

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# Fox Lake Inninuwak Goal

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- ▶ To live mino pimatisiwn, maintain autonomy and to build a future where new generations of Fox Lake Inninuwak can assert their identity and self-determination and live free, healthy and joyful lives in their homeland.

Robert Beardy sharing his experiences of Aski October 2010

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# Theoretical Framework

## Mino Pimatisiwin

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- ▶ Mino pimatisiwin constitutes this balance of human relationships with the ability to interact with Aski through harvest, consumption and regeneration of foods from Aski.



Fox Lake Youth Goose  
Camp



# Theoretical Framework

## Mino Pimatisiwin

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- ▶ The intergenerational time-honoured knowledge obtained through our relationships with Aski contributes to Fox Lake people's ability to live and sustain healthy and vibrant lives.



Fox Lake Core Kitayatisuk and Harvester Group June 2011



# Research Methods

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- ▶ Individual Map Biographies
- ▶ Group Mapping Sessions
- ▶ Ground truthing and Kitayatisuk and Harvester led fieldwork

Core Kitayatisuk and Harvesters June 2011  
Ground truthing





# Fox Lake Kitayatisuk and Harvesters Group

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▶ Spring Ground truthing (2011)



# Caribou

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# Caribou Migration

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# Fishing

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▶ Fox Lake Youth (2009)

# Gathering: Medicinal and Berry

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▶ Kitayatis Jessie Andeson (2011)

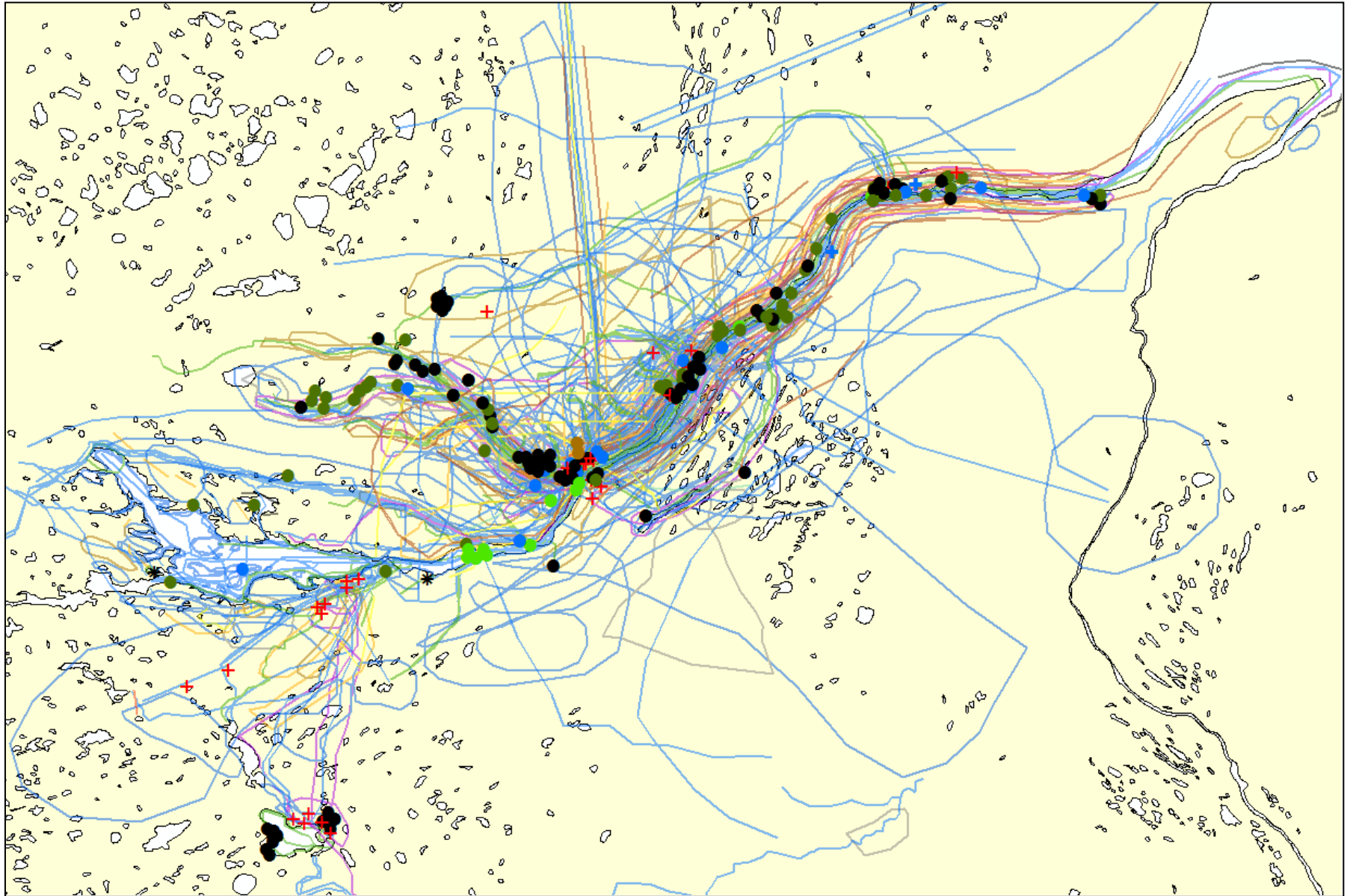
# FLCN Traditional Land-Use Summary

Table 1

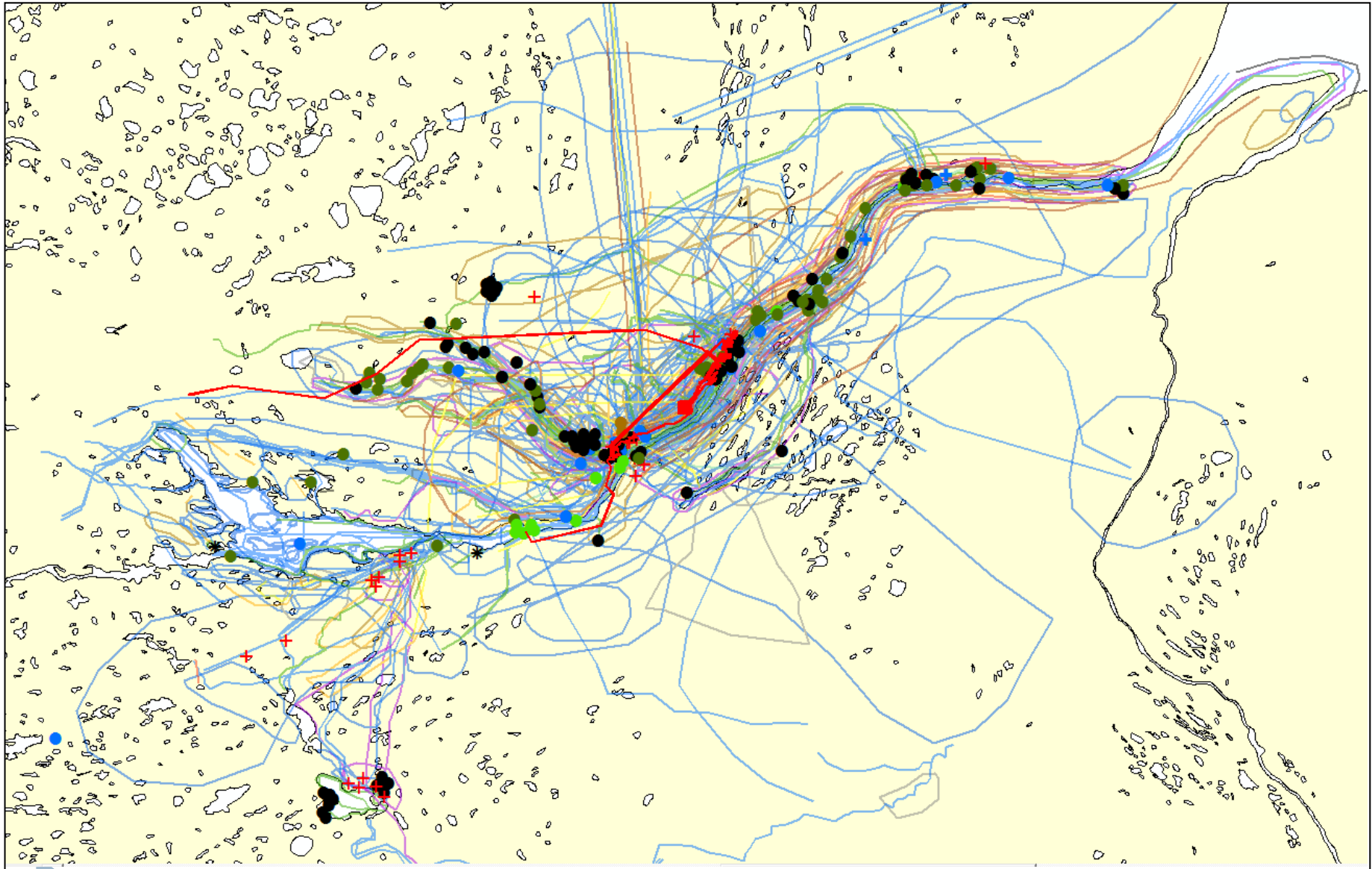
<b>Traditional Land-Use Type</b>	<b>Point Features Count</b>	<b>Line Features Count</b>	<b>Area Features Count</b>
Hunting	23	232	131
Fishing	16	151	7
Trapping	0	30	10
Berry Picking	0	45	48
Medicinal Picking	0	37	15
Timber Harvesting	0	8	21
Burial Site	43	0	0
Cabin	107	0	0
Camping	55	0	0
Community Recreation	2	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>232</b>



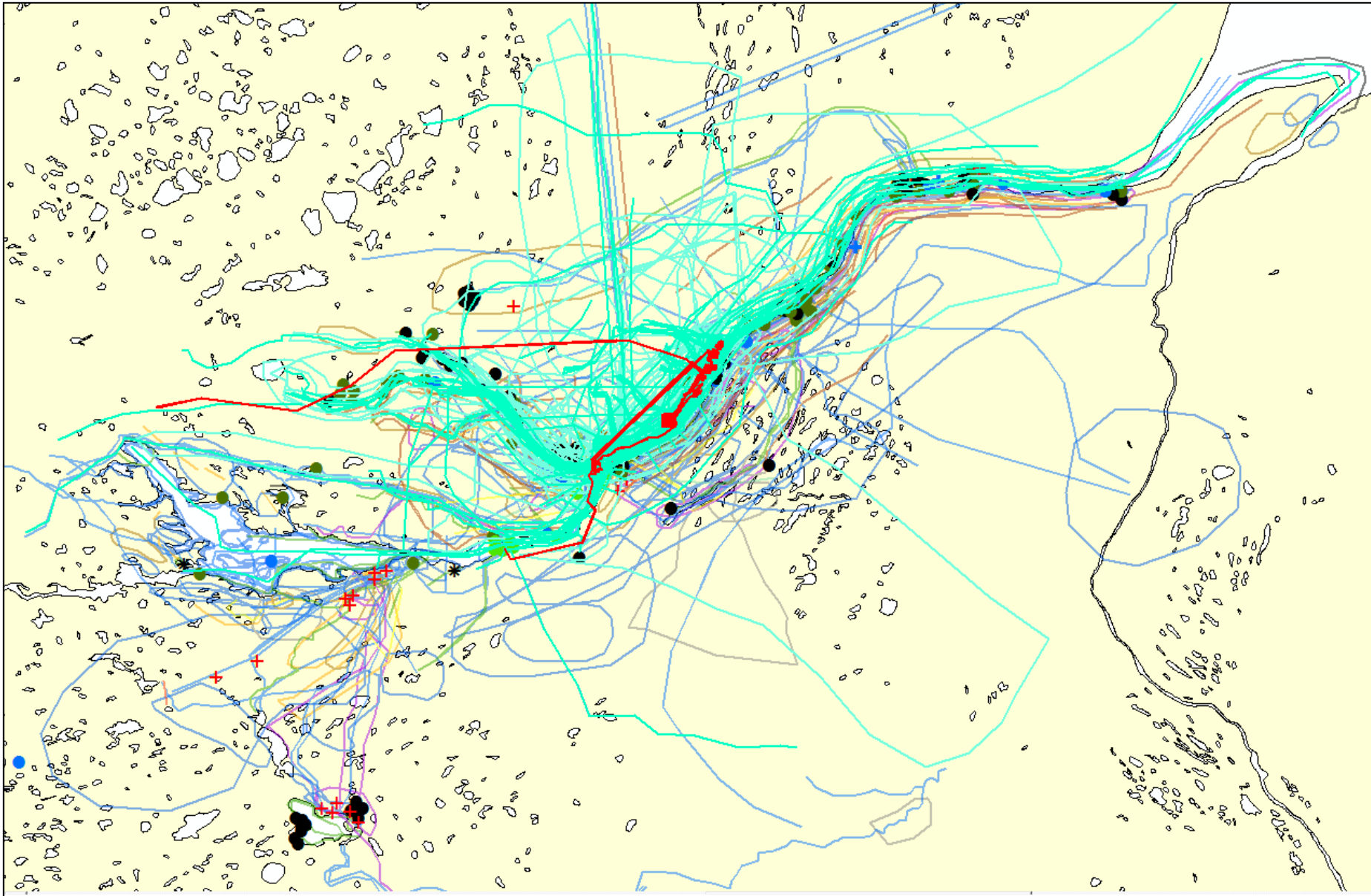
# FLCN Traditional Land-Use



# FLCN Land-Use – Keewatinooow C.S. & BPIII



# FLCN Traditional Land-Use Impacted





# Summary of Findings

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## Aquatic:

- ▶ Fishing is an important Fox Lake cultural activity. The construction of BiPole III and Keewatinoow Converter Station will increase the local population thus leading to an influx of transient workers extracting already strained resources such as brook trout and sturgeon.

## Terrestrial:

- ▶ BiPole III and Keewatinoow Converter Station will continue to wreak havoc on the local landscape. Many Fox Lake people harvest plants, roots and berries where the proposed Keewatinoow Converter Station will be situated.



# Terrestrial Findings Continued:

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- ▶ Fox Lake led research, reaffirms that this area is vital to caribou, moose and other fur bearing animals, the surrounding habitat provides local animals a rich assortment of nourishing food.
- ▶ As well, the destruction of this area will hinder Fox Lake people's ability to acquire high quality Inninu food.
- ▶ Construction of BiPole III and Keewatinoow Converter Station including material extraction will disturb animals and it uncertain these animals will return to the vicinity upon completion of construction.
- ▶ Caribou and moose are a major source of food for Fox Lake there is considerable interest by the Fox Lake community about past and future populations.



# Terrestrial Findings Continued:

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- ▶ AK shows that there are up to three subspecies of caribou in the local area, one of which is woodland. The identification of woodland and other caribou is based on the people's long-term experience of harvesting caribou, namely each sub-specie's behaviour and morphology (what this subspecies looks like).
  - ▶ AK revealed that the local population of woodland caribou utilizes the forests and bogs of the area, and is made up of a migratory woodland ecotype. Environment Canada currently does not recognize the presence boreal woodland caribou as far north as Fox Lake traditional resource area. Fox Lake recommends that the 'accepted distribution' be extended.
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# Terrestrial Findings Continued:

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- ▶ The loss of local habitat in areas of dam construction and operation has resulted in a significant decline in caribou numbers and a gradual replacement of caribou by moose as the primary source of red meat.
- ▶ Critical rutting habitat was destroyed, and woodland caribou disappeared from the Bird and Mile 346 area.
- ▶ The CKHG recognizes that weather patterns play an important role in caribou movements and may modify the migration path of caribou. Subsistence hunting can be drastically affected when adverse weather conditions are combined with generating station operations; the latter creates unsafe ice conditions and caribou mortality. This applies to all caribou subspecies and ecotypes.



# Terrestrial Findings Continued

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- ▶ AK revealed that some of the local woodland caribou are similar in appearance to Pen Island caribou. Woodland caribou continue to live in the local area and throughout the Fox Lake traditional resource use area, including the Angling and Hayes River areas.
- ▶ AK asserts that caribou populations have declined significantly as a result of Hydro development. Historically, woodland caribou were abundant year round in the local area and caribou meat constituted the primary source of red meat.
- ▶ Past development activities from construction, noise, outside hunting pressure, flooding of traditional migration routes and Generation Station operations which create unsafe ice conditions for caribou have contributed to its decline in the local area.



# Terrestrial Findings Continued:

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- ▶ The CKHG considers, at present, there are sufficient numbers of caribou to support a Fox Lake subsistence harvest in Fox Lakes traditional resource use area, but these populations are threatened by outside hunting pressure, current and future disturbances associated with dam construction and human activities, and further fragmentation of the local environment.
- ▶ The CKHG expects a significant increase in the mortality of caribou as a result of increased hunting pressure (due to the doubling of the human population in Gillam and the increased accessibility of hunting grounds by additional cutlines, etc.).
- ▶ The CKHG expects a further decline of caribou due to developments in the local area that will result in more effort by the community (time and cost) to obtain this important food source.



# Heritage and Aski Keskentamowin

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## Heritage:

- ▶ The construction of the Keewatinoow Converter Station and BiPole III will disturb Fox Lake peoples ancient ancestors cultural and spiritual places. ('first kills')

## Aski Keskentamowin

- ▶ Fox Lake Aski Keskentamowin teaches people the essential skills to live vibrant lives. This knowledge is intergenerational. Foundations of the Fox Lake community identity are within Aski. When a young person is taught to hunt, the knowledge holders transfer essential skills, and fundamental wisdoms are learned such as respect for animals, rhythm of the seasons and patience.





# Core Group Estimations

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- ▶ Over 100,000 acres of their local resource use area (defined as the region between the Keeyask and Conawapa Rapids) has been lost or disturbed as a result of past hydroelectric development.
- ▶ 75% of the local resource areas used for berry picking and the harvesting of medicinal plants has been destroyed within a 3 hour walking distance for Fox Lake people in both Gillam and Bird. A similar amount of trapping and hunting area has been lost. For example, the CKHG predicts an 80% reduction in the current local population of caribou as a result of new developments.



# Core Group Estimations

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- ▶ Lake sturgeon and brook trout fishing sites within 3-4 hour walk of Gillam and Bird has been destroyed and populations are reduced to well below subsistence levels of the past. Indeed lake sturgeon and brook trout have disappeared from some areas in the local resource use area and reduced to remnant populations in other areas. The exception is Limestone River where there is a modest recovery of brook trout but the Fox Lake community predicts, based on past experiences, that numbers will decline catastrophically as construction workers enter the area, unless restrictions are placed on their fishing activities in Fox Lake traditional resource use area.
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# Core Group Perspectives

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The CKHG considers Manitoba Hydro and their consultant's efforts to estimate caribou and fish populations and predict impacts are unsound for a variety of reasons, including:

- ▶ Fox Lake Kitayatisuk and Harvesters were not involved in the design of the scientific studies for the BiPole III and Keewatinoow Converter Station Environmental Impact Statement.
  - ▶ Fieldwork was inadequate in terms of duration and season.
  - ▶ Studies did not properly document and adjust for disturbances created by on-going construction activities.
  - ▶ Studies did not properly document and adjust for human interference (e.g., people deliberately removing fish from study nets).
  - ▶ Baseline data generally does not include historical animal population levels.
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# Core Group Perspectives Continued:

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- ▶ Studies disturb and in some instances cause mortality to individual animals (e.g., helicopters disturb caribou and moose, and song birds have become entwined in string leftover from large mammal studies).
- ▶ Confidential information about animal locations and movements has been disclosed to outside hunters thus resulting in instances of overhunting and overfishing.
- ▶ Communications and collaboration between the people of Fox Lake and Manitoba Hydro consultants is inadequate and thus Elders and Harvesters have had limited opportunities to provide proper input to the studies. For example, Burbot.





# Core Group - Recommendations



Core Group June 2011

# Core Group - Recommendations

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- ▶ A comprehensive recovery strategy for the local landscape
- ▶ Develop hunting protocols that apply to the local area and throughout Fox Lake people's traditional resource use area. These protocols will prohibit hunting by outsiders and restrict access to hunting areas.
- ▶ Develop a big-game monitoring program led by Fox Lake and based on Kitayatisuk and Harvester's extensive knowledge of the resources.



# Core Group - Recommendations

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- ▶ All Manitoba Hydro consultants to continue to respect Fox Lake research protocols
- ▶ All future sampling protocols in Fox Lake people's traditional use are must be vetted by the CKHG prior to the start of the study
- ▶ Manitoba Hydro consultants to present findings to CKGH



## Final words:

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- ▶ We would like to thank the Commission for giving us the opportunity to share our work.





# Ekosi

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▶ Spider Island (June 2011)

**ATTACHMENT 3: FOX LAKE CREE NATION POSITION PAPER**

**Fox Lake Cree Nation Position on  
Manitoba Hydro's Proposal to Construct BiPole III and  
Keewatinoow Converter Station on Fox Lake Cree Homeland  
August, 2012**

**Proviso**

Manitoba Hydro has requested that Fox Lake accommodate Manitoba Hydro's timelines for submission of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Bipole III/Keewatinoow Converter Station project (the "Project") by providing information regarding Fox Lake's main concerns with the Project. Although the initial request was made without Manitoba Hydro having provided Fox Lake Cree Nation ("FLCN") with all the pertinent information, regarding the Project, a number of issues have changed since the initial letter was drafted in December 2011. Fox Lake's position continues to be valid as of Summer 2012 when Fox Lake Cree Nation Negotiations Office received the BiPole III Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Although the EIS was received in May 2012, Fox Lake was never part of the process, and as a result, has identified major concerns and knowledge gaps in the EIS. These major problems require further need for scientific study and inclusion of our *aski keskentamowin* studies into the final report. These concerns will be outlined below. Nonetheless, Fox Lake continues to negotiate with Manitoba Hydro on this Project.

However, FLCN's agreement to provide the preliminary information in this document shall *not* be interpreted as support for the Project. Nor shall it be interpreted as agreement that the concerns identified herein are exhaustive. As such, it is agreed between FLCN and Manitoba Hydro that the information provided in this document is entirely without prejudice to FLCN's rights with respect to the Project. FLCN only recently received and reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement, which may reference information in this document and does not endorse any of the provisions thereof.

The ability of FLCN to comment meaningfully on the Project is further hampered by delays in the negotiation of the terms of FLCN's role and rights as the leading First Nation proponent in the proposed Conawapa Hydro-Electric Generating Station. The Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro have long since promised these negotiations. The role of FLCN in the Conawapa project has important implications for the Bipole III/Keewatinoow Converter Station, as well all as all other Manitoba Hydro projects in FLCN's homeland and traditional territory. No discussion or consultation in relation to any project can be considered to be complete until FLCN's rights in Conawapa have been addressed.

**Purpose**

FLCN will outline its preliminary views and position on Manitoba Hydro's proposal to construct BiPole III and the Keewatinoow Converter Station on our homeland and traditional territory. It was the original intent of Manitoba Hydro to present and include FLCN position in its document the *Socio-Economic Technical Report Component*. However, FLCN's position and views cannot be adequately represented in a joint document and therefore we will set out our position on the proposed construction within this document.

It is important that both Manitoba Hydro and the Regulators understand FLCN's worldview and our understanding of the interrelationship between humans and the environment and

of our responsibility to protect *Aski*, which is a Cree word for the land, water, resources, animals and their interrelationships for future generations. The timeframe surrounding the submission of this document prevents any significant level of detail with respect to the adverse effects that Fox Lake Cree Nation will experience and any specific mitigation efforts required as a result of the Project. However, we endeavor to describe how we foresee the effects of further destruction and damage of the Project on *Aski* and how the effects of previous constructions will be compounded to have even further effects on the people of FLCN.

### **Manitoba Hydro's Current Proposal**

Manitoba Hydro is proposing the construction of BiPole III high voltage direct current (HVDC) and Keewatinoow Converter Station on FLCN homeland and traditional territory, Resource Management Area under the 2004 Impact Settlement Agreement, and Community Interest Zone under the 1997 Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement. The proposed constructions would follow the construction of Manitoba's hydroelectric generating stations situated on and around FLCN homeland and traditional territory. These are: Kelsey, built on the Kischi Sipi (Nelson River) in 1960; Kettle (1971); Long Spruce (1977), Jenpeg (1977) and Limestone (1990) Generating Stations as well as two converter stations, Heday and Radisson, and two sets of transmission lines, BiPole I and II, which are all additional constructions built to transport electricity to southern Manitoba and elsewhere in North America.

The proposed project infrastructure and development includes:

1. Final preferred route of the BiPole III HVDC transmission line
2. Keewatinoow Converter Station
3. The AC collector line
4. Ground Electrode line
5. Ground Electrode site (NES6)
6. Construction power line (KN36)
7. Construction power station site (at the end of the KN 36)
8. Keewatinoow Construction Camp Site
9. Keewatinoow Start-up Camp Site
10. Manitoba Hydro and Contractor Work Area Site
11. Keewatinoow lagoon (under a separate license –Approved as of June 2012)
12. Access roads
13. Deposit sites (burrow deposits and quarry stockpiles)
14. Excavation sites (rock quarries and wells)

The proposed line would begin south of the present day Conawapa Camp (approximately 25 km north of the Bird Reserve) at the Keewatinoow Converter Station. The Project would include the HVDC transmission line, energy conversion facilities, and system connections. Although Manitoba Hydro indicates the construction is for reliability purposes, Manitoba Hydro's forecast loads, including export to the United States and Ontario, necessitate a new transmission infrastructure to transport electricity from the Keeyask and proposed Conawapa constructions.

### **Working Definition of Wellness**



Wellness or *mino pimatisiwin* is a concept that refers to the overall health of a people and Aski. Human health is dependent upon the health of Aski including our perceptions of the health of Aski; therefore, it is our responsibility to care for and nurture Aski so that it can provide for future generations. *Mino pimatisiwin* constitutes a balance of human relationships with the ability to harvest, keep warm and consume foods from Aski.

*Mino pimatisiwin*, as our right and responsibility, and knowing that our survival as a community has been compromised as a result of previous Manitoba Hydro projects, forms the basis of our position on the proposed constructions. The ultimate goal of FLCN's position is that *mino pimatisiwin* must be restored and maintained. FLCN must be able to again find balance within itself as a community but also with Aski.

Specifically, a focus on *mino pimatisiwin* will include:

- Human health and social wellbeing
- Socio-economic prosperity
- Integrity of culture and language
- Integrity of governance and autonomy
- Protection of Aski
- Protection of FLCN Aski

Meaningful involvement in processes that affect FLCN as a community and its relationship with Aski are significant in our efforts to live *mino pimatisiwin*. FLCN must have active involvement in all aspects of the Project. These include,

1. FLCN's active involvement in defining terms utilized in the negotiations, e.g., what constitutes "partnership", "baseline" and "cumulative impacts" and "shared responsibility" for aspects of the constructions.
2. The consultation process *must* provide adequate time for FLCN to absorb all of the necessary information on each specific negotiated topic, its relationship to other topics being negotiated, its possible adverse effects and potential benefits to FLCN, to, in turn, consult with the larger FLCN community, and to properly participate in informed decision-making.
3. Timely, detailed, relevant and appropriate information and personnel on proposed constructions including constructions plans.
4. FLCN-driven research and studies on the potential impacts of the proposed constructions on human and Aski health and wellness, from a FLCN theoretical and methodological perspective.
5. Consideration of potential impacts in terms of FLCN history and in terms of an accumulation of risk hypothesis.
6. Participate in the timing and scheduling of events and the opportunity to act as opposed to "react" in negotiations, signifying that equal weight is given to community interests and development plans as Manitoba Hydro construction interests and development plans.
7. Adequate resources and expertise to ensure proper engagement in decision-making processes.

8. Adequate time for meaningful community-level engagement, information sharing, and decision-making. This may include meetings, workshops, weekly activities, newsletters and more.

The relationship between Fox Lake and Manitoba Hydro extend back to the early 1960's when Manitoba Hydro first arrived in our territory. Therefore, given the historical relationship between FLCN and Manitoba Hydro, it is critical that FLCN be given the time and opportunity to ensure the involvement of our community and in particular our Elders and their *Aski Keskentamowin* (knowledge of Aski). Involvement must occur in conceptualizing, planning, and monitoring activities, including infrastructural development; ensuring that the knowledge of both genders and diverse generations are included in the activities that will allow for such meaningful engagement and discussions to transpire. FLCN is rebuilding itself as a community and a people. Manitoba Hydro, as a major protagonist in the destruction of *Aski* and our people, must take a proactive role in FLCN's rebuilding process and therefore, must include FLCN and its people.

The management and development of resources to improve the quality of life of people, nationally and internationally, must not be to the detriment of the integrity of FLCN and *Aski*. A process must be established for effectively dealing with conflict and for addressing the diverse views and opinions of FLCN so that safety is assured and issues may be resolved meaningfully and to the satisfaction of FLCN. The consultation process must respect and incorporate FLCN cultural differences and overall wellness and community development interests.

#### **FLCN Position on Manitoba Hydro Constructions**

As a Nation, we do not see Manitoba Hydro constructions as a series of disconnected activities, rather, we see all of the constructions as one big construction project, which began on FLCN homeland and traditional territory more than 50 years ago and which has intensified considerably in recent years. Although we have lived our lives consistently in the shadow of these constructions and we continue to raise our families here, we have been excluded from community development activities previously and are now only peripherally involved. Manitoba Hydro has not treated FLCN as equal partners sharing in governance and economic prosperity, but rather as a problem to be solved, compensated and mitigated. This must change so that we are partners in growth in all aspects of a unified community that benefits from the constructions.

The sheer magnitude of the constructions and the fact that every generation is seeing continual construction and further destruction on *Aski* limits community development other than those that take into consideration that the territory is now fundamentally a Manitoba Hydro project. The Manitoba Hydro settlement of Gillam was specifically set up to meet the operational needs of Manitoba Hydro. Significant amounts of resources continue to be dedicated to the interests and needs of the town of Gillam resulting in the systemic exclusion of FLCN. With this reality, our position focuses on FLCN *mino pimatisiwin* within the context of an ongoing Manitoba Hydro project.

Fifty years of Manitoba Hydro constructions on *Aski* has left devastating effects on *mino pimatisiwin*. With each construction came new development to enhance the power generating potential of the Province of Manitoba. However, with each new project, our people have become progressively weaker and *Aski* has become increasingly depleted. Historically, we have been excluded from meaningful engagement in the constructions and

from potential benefits of the structures. Manitoba Hydro's focus has been on mitigation and compensation activities and not on partnership and prosperity. The focus of discussions must change so that the latter are goals for discussions between FLCN and Manitoba Hydro. Clarity regarding what partnership means and what it will entail in terms of FLCN wellness and overall prosperity in face of continual constructions on Aski is of crucial importance, particularly considering past experiences and unresolved traumatic stresses associated with these for members of the Nation and their families.

FLCN must reclaim the power and wellbeing that has been lost in the long history of Manitoba Hydro constructions and initiate a strategy for increased wellness, thriving community development, social, cultural, and economic prosperity. For such reclamation and development to occur, the current model of offsetting programs is insufficient. The process will require better evolution mechanisms.

### **The Adverse Effects of Hydro Developments**

Fox Lake members are promised numerous potential benefits from the hydro-electric development projects initiated by Manitoba Hydro. Some of the benefits that Fox Lake has indeed received included short-term employment, specialized training opportunities, a re-installation of self-worth and a renewed work ethic that comes from employment and the pride to support own families. Some form of community involvement can also be empowering, if done adequately, but this has not been the case with the BiPole III EIS where community input into the drafting process was clearly absent. Fox Lake Cree Nation members are hesitant or doubtful about the potential benefits stemming from any future Manitoba Hydro projects because Aski is compromised and long-term job security as well as sustainable economic business opportunities based on reclamation are not part of the proposed items. In spite of this, Fox Lake has entered into discussions with Manitoba Hydro on an Agreement that will compensate FLCN for the Adverse Effects of this project. The position of the people of Fox Lake is the acknowledgment that they have minimal impact on future developments in their homeland – and with each project, the community hopes that equal power at the negotiating table will one day affect change. The turmoil, the social disruption and the disconnect that divide many of our community members, are direct consequences of Manitoba Hydro's handling of each project. Hydro-electric development projects are seen by FLCN members as giving a false sense of opportunities because members believe that their only future is with Manitoba Hydro. Therefore, how will the new constructions reflect, further impact or deviate from a history of non-inclusion and lack of real choice in developing a FLCN controlled future?

Each successive generation since the initial constructions of the early 1960s has seen a further demise of natural lands and resources and alongside this, a forced transformation of culture, language, ways of life – knowing and trusting in the ways of the world. All of these losses have become embodied in personal health and interpersonal relationships. Impact assessment has been the subject of intense study over the past several years, although the true extent of the damage is not yet determined scientifically, nor is it clearly understood even by the people themselves.

Manitoba Hydro constructions have caused severe trauma to FLCN with symptoms ranging in severity between individual members. Trauma has resulted from:

- Construction of dams

- Destruction of Aski,
- Forced adaptation to drastic changes to the surrounding environment way of life
- Change of lifestyle
- Blatant disregard of Inniniwak morals and values
- Mass influx of workers into the Fox Lake area
- Discrimination policies and practices at institutional as well as individual levels
- Lack of meaningful inclusion of the community into matters that concern our livelihood, our lives, the lives of our children
- Multiple levels of violence
- Sexual and physical exploitation of our women as well as children and youth
- Appropriation of our cultural and intellectual knowledge, including knowledge of the land and resources

Trauma has immediate negative effects to health processes including appraisal processes, coping mechanisms, neuronal activity, lifestyles, parenting and family behaviors, and physical, psychological and spiritual health.

As a consequence of Manitoba Hydro and the governments' failure to acknowledge and include FLCN in the discussions, planning and mitigation of impacts, FLCN's spiritual and epistemological systems were seriously compromised and fractured. The impacts of Manitoba Hydro and governments' actions on our people will be felt for generations. Therefore, FLCN's right to examine all actions affecting community, individuals and Aski must be thought through on the potential effects the actions will have for the next seven generations. That FLCN continues to struggle with its identity is a testament to the severity of the implications of exclusion. The ramifications of identity loss include emotional scarring, social and cultural breakdown, increased violence, alcohol and substance addictions and unacceptable standards of living. Our health, social and cultural standards, once balanced are now diminished, making it extremely difficult to recover to the thriving community we once were.

In Fox Lake, traumas continue to occur at every level of personal and collective wellbeing including: vehicle and hit-and-run incidents, drownings, house fires, violence, rape; imposed poverty, marginalization, prejudice and discrimination, disorganization, exclusion from employment and other economic activities and governance, respectively. There is a legacy of immediate and intergenerational impacts of traumatic events in FLCN history with Manitoba Hydro constructions.

For us, collective trauma has been relived with each successive Manitoba Hydro project, a condition that will be relived again with the proposed constructions. Our collective trauma is more than post-memory, it is layers of trauma existing within living memory. Within the psyches of our people, we see the unresolved trauma generation after generation. The culmination of all of this exacts a heavy toll on FLCN health and wellbeing – this must be resolved and wellness must be reclaimed.

The Adverse Effects Agreement that Fox Lake signed with Manitoba Hydro on the Keeyask construction can offer a number of insightful lessons for addressing the adverse effects of the Project. The Keeyask AEA provided for programming meant to target aspects of the mental, cultural, and environmental health of Fox Lake. The current implementation of



these programs is revealing the limitation of those programs, both in scope and resourcing. A cultural awareness workshop to workers at the start of employment does little to address ingrained biases and perspectives. A sincere effort must be made to not only enhance those programs but to go beyond social programming and focus on rebuilding a community and a people and ultimately building a unified community that consists of both Gillam and Fox Lake. These efforts cannot be done by FLCN alone; it requires the redirection of current resources as well as additional resources.

In addition to the adverse effects of Manitoba Hydro constructions, there are obstacles associated with the current system of support provided by Manitoba Hydro to FLCN. The employment, training and business opportunities provided to FLCN do not include the necessary resources required in order for FLCN to be able to take advantage of these opportunities. The supports as they are currently structured, assume a level of readiness in FLCN, which simply do not currently exist. Substantive issues limiting employment, training and business opportunities must be addressed in order to ensure that actual benefits are provided to FLCN. All employment, training and business opportunities must not be limited to construction phases of the projects, but also in the operation phases and into the long-term future. Further, a diversity of opportunities must also be considered, with FLCN actively engaged in the process of determining what are the necessary, appropriate and desirable opportunities for community social, cultural, business, and economic development.

### **Transformation of Cree Homeland Territory**

The onslaught of Manitoba Hydro constructions has brutally transformed FLCN homeland and traditional territory. The transformation was evident following the initial constructions of the 1960s as revealed in FLCN historical interviews by members describing returns to the community after years in residential school, not being able to recognize any sense of the 'home' they left behind. Researchers have studied an effect that corporate mining has had on Indigenous nations worldwide known as "solastalgia." Solastalgia is a term coined by Albrecht (2003) describing a form of psychic or existential distress caused by environmental damage, such as that which occurs through mining. As opposed to nostalgia, which is the melancholia or homesickness experienced by individuals when separated from home, solastalgia is the distress produced by environmental change impacting on people while they are directly connected to their home environment; i.e. it is the feeling of homesickness that occurs when one is already at home.

Previous Manitoba Hydro constructions have left gaping wounds on Aski. Consistent with the cumulative impacts theory noted above, each subsequent construction further aggravates already vulnerable environments. "Side-effects" to environmental health have been detected. Environmental impacts range from being permanent to semi-permanent and requiring remedial measures in order to reverse the damage or, at least, stop further progression of the damage.

With the constructions, come various additional permanent and transitory constructions. These are the converter stations, electrode sites, worker camps, sewage lagoons, transmission lines, roads and highways, excavation sites (including rock quarries and wells), and deposit sites (i.e., burrow deposits and quarry stockpiles). Each of these constructions poses its own list of nuisances and the damage they leave on Aski remaining long after they have served their original purpose. The immediate and long-term implications of the

proposed activities must be carefully considered based on complete access to appropriate technological information.

Significant environmental impacts of the proposed constructions are predicted based on the findings from FLCN impacts studies and historical knowledge such as: cumulative habitat alteration, fragmentation and loss, which translate into animal displacements and mortality, and by extension, long-term population declines. Noise, road and human construction activities will magnify the negative effects. Species of greatest concern, whose habitat constitute the entire area to be transformed include: lake sturgeon, brook trout, which currently spawn and live out various periods of their life stages in the Limestone River, and Goose, Tiny, McMillan and Swift Creeks; migratory birds, which utilize the proposed construction area during spring and fall migrations; as well as woodland caribou, currently listed under SARA but not acknowledged by Manitoba Hydro as woodland, Pen Island and barren ground caribou, which calf, reside and seasonally migrate through the proposed construction area. The area is home, as well, to a variety of plant species including wild ginger, blueberries, cloudberry, raspberries and Labrador tea, all of which are highly valued by FLCN. In addition, our burial grounds are located within the BiPole III project area as our culturally-relevant stories, sacred sites and places of our oral histories. As these pieces of our being are part of our intangible cultural heritage (as defined by UNESCO), they require respect and protection by Fox Lake and Manitoba Hydro. Our advisors are also re-examining the BiPole III EIS to incorporate the data gathered in the Fox Lake Final Traditional Knowledge Report.

Prior to Manitoba Hydro constructions, the territory was abundant with plants and animal species that included multiple types of berries and other edible and medicinal plants, moose, fur-bearing animals, brook trout, sturgeon, migratory birds and animals. The constructions have extirpated species from some areas and endangered others. An example is the once plentiful brown trout that no longer exists anywhere in the Kettle, Limestone and Butneau Rivers nor the Sky Pilot, Brook, Wilson, Leslie or Mile 328 Creeks. Although modest recovery of some species is evident, it cannot be assured that recovery with future developments will occur. As well, insufficient studies have been made to determine the effects of direct currents on a cellular and/or biological level and how these high voltage direct currents may affect wildlife and migration patterns.

No one can be certain of the point at which cumulative species displacement and loss coupled with habitat transformation and loss will result in irreversible ecosystem damage, and after a half-century of non-stop construction it can be hypothesized that that time is fast approaching or has already been reached. The maintenance of intact and functioning ecosystems has immense value to FLCN, which if lost or diminished is incommensurable with monetary compensation. Thus far, the current methods of environmental impact assessment have fallen short in terms of adequately documenting, predicting, mitigating, and monitoring the extent of the cumulative impacts.

### **Loss of Aski-based Activities**

The proposed construction area is one of intense Aski-based activity for members of FLCN. Relevant activities include but are not limited to: trapping, hunting, fishing, harvesting, travelling, camping, recreation, social and spiritual gatherings, and living in general. As our Fox Lake Final Traditional Knowledge Report shows, the land is not devoid of human presence: Fox Lake Inniniwak have used the spaces and places of their homeland extensively. This fact however, was not mentioned in the EIS at all.

Constructions, including the “side-effects” of constructions have and will continue to greatly impact our traditional Aski-based activities. Beyond the impacts of the physical constructions, increased accessibility to pristine areas resulting from the construction of roads, transmission lines, and other linear features may also lead to destruction caused by over-harvesting by outsiders. The economic implications of these impacts and compromises to Cree food consumption are predicted to be substantial, based again on experiences with the previous constructions. This increased access to our lands and resources has motivated us to develop our own Aski Management Plan where our own people will work as Aski Officers ensuring that no abuses against Aski are made. This community-led conservation team will function according to Fox Lake Aski Protocols to safeguard our resources for our people and our future generations. Details of our plan are part of our Access Management Plan, however, funding for this initiative should be largely contributions from Manitoba Hydro.

General living and governance activities are also considered within this section on Aski-based activities. FLCN treaty settlements have been seriously impacted as a result of Manitoba Hydro constructions, historically. The proposed area is identified as potential treaty land. Therefore, the extent to which Aski will be impacted by further constructions poses a major threat to FLCN security.

### **The Health and Social Consequences of Environmental Change**

The continued practice of Aski-based activities is critical for our overall wellness. Physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, health and healing benefits are derived from a people’s connection to Aski. Lands and water are associated with the creation and sustainability of our values, the forging and reinforcing of kinship relations, passing on of place-specific knowledge, and the maintenance of personal and group identity. Wellness is intrinsically connected to Aski and the health of its resources. Availability, quality and diversity of natural flora and fauna are of critical importance to human wellness, and yet have been so readily dismissed in the race towards technological and other political/economic developments.

The developments have also negatively impacted on our safety and on the aesthetics of both natural (outdoor) and built (indoor) environments. Predictability of the environments has been compromised, leading, over the decades, to significant injury and death tolls. Elders often refer to aspects of the natural environment as “spoiled.” In our view, much has already been lost, and must be re-established, in terms of aesthetics, safety and nourishment.

A lack of predictability of the environment, caused by Manitoba Hydro construction negatively affects the relationship between humans and Aski. This lack of predictability has negative health and social effects by nature of distancing people from the knowledge they have traditionally held regarding what to expect from Aski. Manitoba Hydro constructions have thus impacted language, human-land interactions, the behaviour of Aski and its implications to ways of living off the land.

That ecosystems experience “flips” comes from basic ecology theory. Humans can alter ecosystems and they will continue to provide us with the “services” we need to survive (e.g., clean water) but often only to a certain point. Once a threshold has been surpassed the ecosystem may transform into something else that may or may not be desirable to us, and it

is very difficult to predict when and how it will be transformed. For us, a relevant question is how much destruction can Aski tolerate before mino pimatisiwin is no longer attainable?

#### **Fox Lake's Critiques of the BiPole III EIS:**

- Lack of inclusion of the community in the entire research, writing and presentation process prior to filing to the Clean Environmental Commission (CEC)
- Lack of references to Fox Lake Traditional Knowledge Studies in their local resources use area. In fact, ignorance of the entire document is evident.
- No mention of how the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge was used and presented in the document. Indeed, it is difficult to see how Fox Lake's interests are reflected in any way
- Since the concentration of construction activities and the long-term impacts are in Fox Lake's homeland, there is little effort to identify these issues and how they differ from other areas affected by the transmission lines only
- Most maps in the EIS do not show Fox Lake uses on the land nor the First Nations itself. For example, maps appear as devoid of humans because neither Bird nor Fox Lake are part of the landscape and the maps
- Much of the information appears to be guesses or "armchair biology" and very little data actually gathered from the site
- Manitoba Hydro describes how First Nations will be impacted by the BiPole III Project but no voices from Fox Lake are incorporated.
- Little focus is made on important species such as brook trout and lake sturgeon
- The name Keewatinoow is inappropriate and should be changed
- No mention of past rehabilitation
- No discussion ensued in regards to leasing Fox Lake's land to Manitoba Hydro for the transmission line
- Manitoba Hydro is not respecting the boundaries of traplines, rather, only relying on the RMAs. Fox example, J.Massan's trapline #18 is located in Split Lake's RMA
- Inappropriately calling the Fox Lake Keewatinow Converter Station and BiPole III – Aski Keskentamowin Report as "Additional Information in Support of the BiPole III Transmission Project. The views in this report may contradict this title and only show that our report was not read by Manitoba Hydro.

#### **Conclusion**

To address adverse effects of the proposed Project, funding and benefits must be provided to achieve the following objectives:

1. Community and individual health and wellness
2. Health of Aski
3. Aesthetically beautiful and functional landscapes and natural surroundings
4. Richness of language and culture
5. Rebuilding of intergenerational relationships, communication and trust
6. Housing, public meeting places and other building infrastructures supportive of thriving social, economic, political, spiritual and cultural spheres of community life
7. Information and communication systems technology

8. Community safety
9. Excellent and diverse education, training, and employment
10. Food security and culturally-relevant foods sovereignty
11. Freedom, equity of human rights; respect for diversity of individual expression regarding gender, religion or spiritual expression
12. Community expansion and the right to define inclusion into community with ever widening criteria
13. Diversity in entrepreneurship, social and sustainable community economic development
14. FLCN-driven Aski planning and implementation including Project affected environmental reclamation and rehabilitation
15. Meaningful collaboration in regional and national cultural, scientific, economic and political programs
16. FLCN-driven reclamation of Cree heritage beyond reserve boundaries
17. Rebuilding and establishment of our government and autonomy
18. Implementation of FLCN's 9-point step plan for sturgeon recovery strategy for the lower Nelson River below Keeyask
19. Acknowledgement, respect and inclusion of our traditional knowledges and intellectual property without appropriation or encumbrance

FLCN must be given meaningful opportunities to benefit economically from the Project. The opportunities must be in those areas where Fox Lake and its members have targeted the expertise and training to maximize advantage and benefit from such opportunities. For example, in the context of the Converter Station, FLCN has strategic partnerships that give it expertise to be an active participant in the realization of the project. FLCN views participation as key in assisting in the prevention of imbalances in benefits experienced by FLCN in relation to past projects. It would also give FLCN a legacy of expertise, personnel and resources that it can carry forward into future projects for both Manitoba Hydro and others. FLCN acknowledges that the relationship between itself and Manitoba Hydro through projects such as Keeyask have improved, but FLCN continues to believe and therefore insists that improvements can be made and Keewatinow Converter Station presents as an excellent opportunity for such improvements. While FLCN values continued adverse effects compensation, FLCN believes that business opportunities provide a similar value and impetus for FLCN in attaining *mino pimatisiwin*.

FLCN has survived, despite years of exclusion and marginalization from hydro development in our territory. Hydro development has brought and will continue to bring both temporary and long term disruption to our lives. The impact will remain with FLCN, long after the construction.

FLCN will continue to survive after the hydro structures are once again built in our territory. Regardless of compensation, we will be left with the daily reminder that our landscape will forever be altered and we will be left with to their own devices to again live *mino pimatisiwin*.

It is our hope that by providing our preliminary views, position, goals and objectives for future Manitoba Hydro constructions, that Manitoba Hydro and the Province of Manitoba will have an understanding for the need for sufficient adverse effects measures and the business and employment opportunities to assist FLCN to regain its health as a community but also for the health of Aski and *mino pimatisiwin*.