

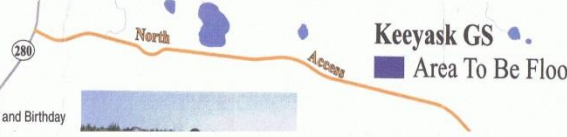
HYDRO EFFECTS MY LIVELIHOOD

MERCURY FISH POISONING

Presented by Selina Saunders

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- Keeyask dam will harm sturgeon from Creak Lake to Gull Lake because Gull Rapids will be destroyed.
- Mercury will decline more natural levels over the next 30 years.



Sturgeon
Canada is considering listing sturgeon as "endangered" under the Species at Risk Act. The Keeyask dam will be detrimental to sturgeon from Clark Lake to Gull Lake because Gull Rapids will be destroyed and Birthday

Keeyask GS
Area To Be Flooded

Mercury and Health

After forebay flooding has occurred, mercury levels in pickerel and jackfish in the forebay will rise quickly over the first few years, and then decline to more natural levels over the next 30 years. Members should get their fish from the offsetting lakes instead of the Keeyask forebay during this period, as planned in the Healthy Food Fish Program. Guidelines as to the safe amount of pickerel and jackfish to eat per week will be issued in advance of completion of the dam.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

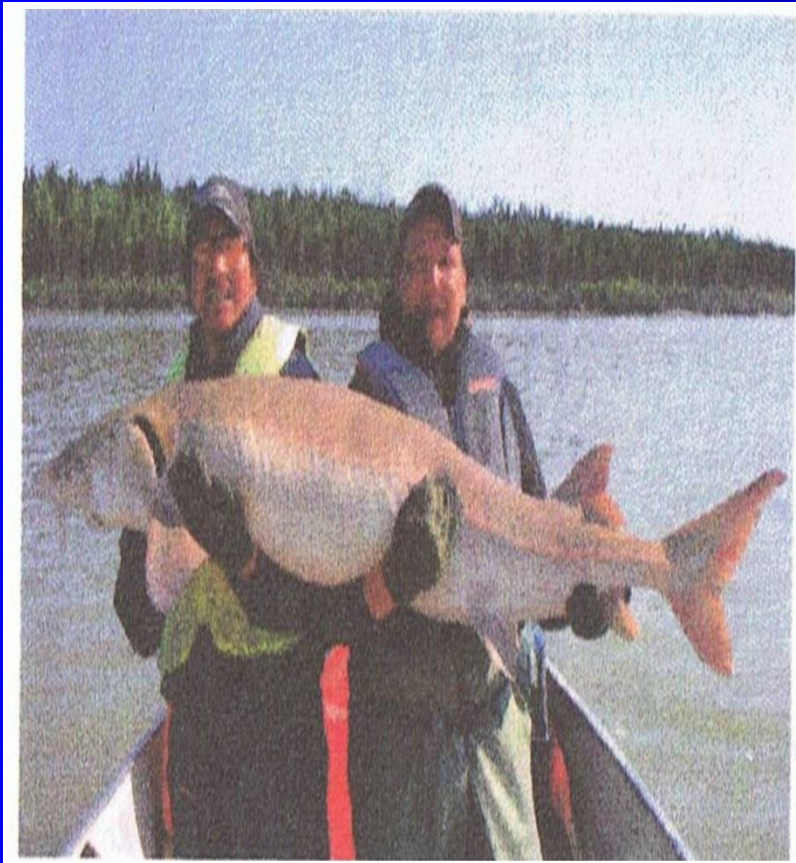
Mercury poisoning was also a problem. In 1984, tests on Chisasibi residents found high levels of mercury in 64 percent of the population. The land had not been cleared before flooding, and bacteria from the drowned, decomposing vegetation had transformed the insoluble mercury in the rocks into methylmercury. The methylmercury had then evaporated and returned to the waterways as rain, poisoning the food system. Elders in Chisasibi exhibited the symptoms of poisoning, including numbness, shakiness, and loss of peripheral vision. No one could eat river fish. Hydro Quebec initially said it would take six years for the methylmercury to dissipate, but now says it will take 30 years. More recent studies suggest that it will be 100 years.

Mercury poisoning is known as **nimass aksiwin**, “fish disease” in Cree. According to Cree fisherman George Lameboy:

Nimass aksiwin strikes at the very heart of our society. It's like being told that Armageddon has started, and people are scared as hell. The scientists come in here and tell us we're getting better [by eating less fish], but hey, you can't measure the effects of nimass aksiwin by taking hair samples. How can you measure a man's fear? How can you measure your way of life coming to an end? (Richardson 1991:xi)

- In 1984, Quebec Hydro effected residents and found high levels of mercury in 64% of the population.
- Exhibited the symptoms of poisoning of numbness, shakiness and loss of peripheral vision.
- Mercury poisoning is known as **nimass aksiwin**, fish disease in Cree.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood



- Hydro Quebec said it would take 30 years for the methylmercury to dissipate, study suggest it will be 100 years.
- Mercury poisoning was a problem.
- Methylmercury had evaporated and returned into the water poisoning the food system

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- Under the 1930 Constitution Act the Province secured Indians of supply of game and fish for their support and subsistence.
- Province assures of hunting, trapping and fishing for food on all unoccupied Crown lands to which the said Indians may have a right of access.

13. In order to secure to the Indians of the Province the continuance of the supply of game and fish for their support and subsistence, Canada agrees that the laws respecting game in force in the Province from time to time shall apply to the Indians within the boundaries thereof, provided, however, that the said Indians shall have the right, which the Province hereby assures to them, of hunting, trapping and fishing game and fish for food at all seasons of the year on all unoccupied Crown lands and on any other lands to which the said Indians may have a right of access.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood



- The Cree and their Aboriginal Rights to the lands are based on traditional use and occupancy.
- Fish levels would decline and the Cree's resources for subsistence would be destroyed.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- The Cree had occupied the land and using to a full extent for hunting and fishing.
- Any interference would compromise and interfere with their culture and way of life.

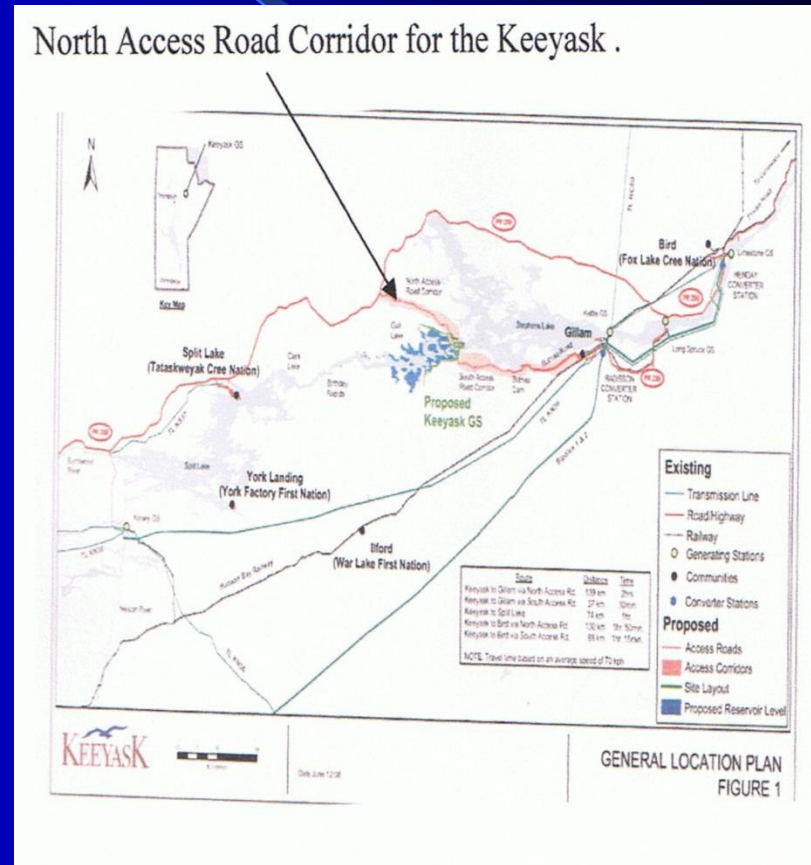
The Cree argued their case based on the concept of Aboriginal rights, the essence of which is rights to the land based on traditional use and occupancy. They contended that flooding would destroy much of the wildlife, including beaver and other furbearers and game. The variability in water levels would be particularly dangerous, as animals would not be able to predict their levels. Fish levels would decline, vegetation would be lost, and the Cree's resources for subsistence would be destroyed. In sum, their livelihood would be lost.

The government's response was predictable. It argued that the Cree lived in settlements, made use of modern technology, and did not take much from the land. It stated that employment or government assistance provided much of their income. Furthermore, any damage would be temporary and repairable.

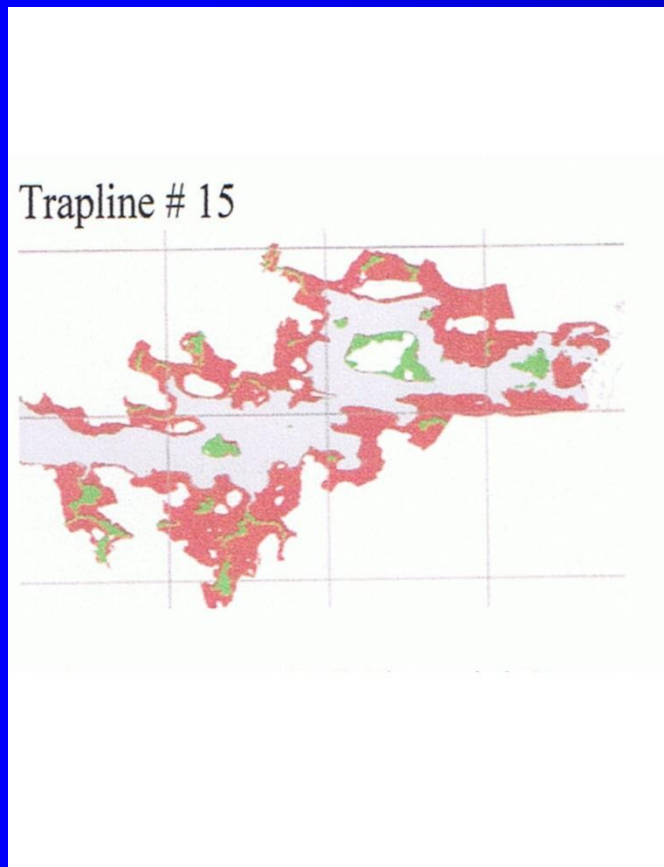
Justice Malouf agreed with the Cree and Inuit. In November 1973, he ruled that the government was trespassing, since the Cree and Inuit had title to the land. They had been occupying and using it to a full extent, hunting was of fundamental cultural and economic importance, and they had demonstrated their interest in pursuing their way of life. Any interference would compromise and interfere with their culture and way of life. He accorded the interlocutory injunction based on the evidence.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- Manitoba Hydro submitted a Compensation proposal to TRAPLINE 15 regarding personal loss and damage associated with Keeyask Project.
- Hydro is damaging Treaty Rights by denying to hunt, trap and fish due to the flooding on land.



Hydro Effects My Livelihood

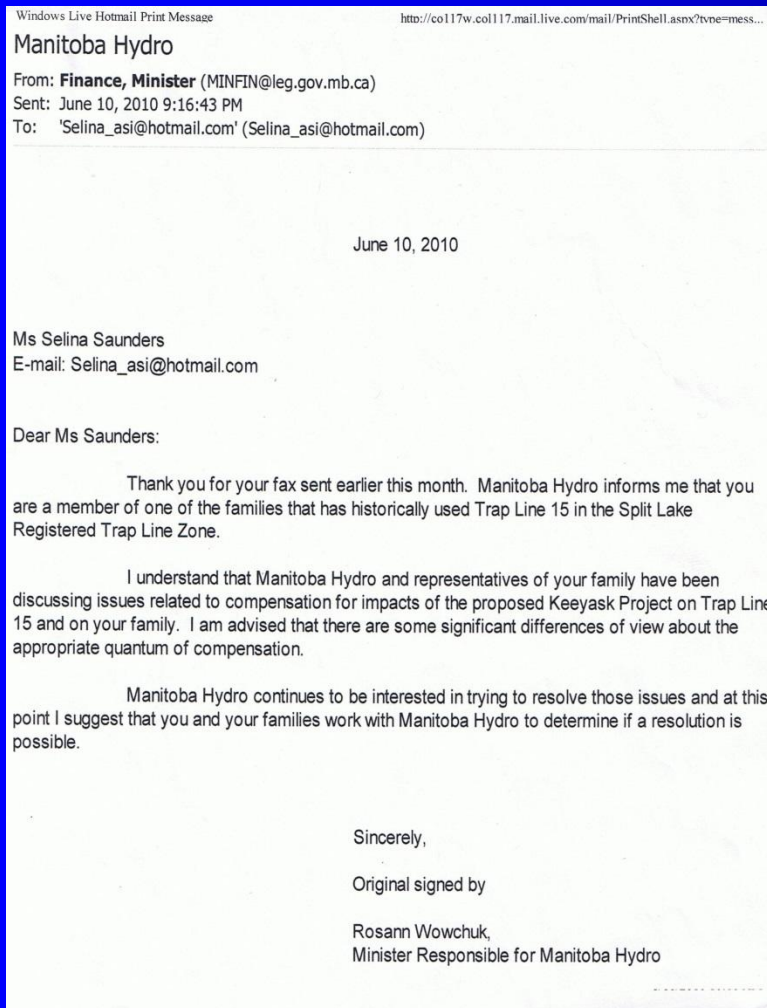


- Initial flooding is 45 square kilometers and increase due to erosion.
- Reservoir clearing prior to flooding.
- Construction period is 7 / 8 years, however damages have already occurred on Trapline 15 by the north access route of project.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- Mercury in Split Lake and Gull Lake.
- By Wilson Scientific and North-South Consultants. Inc.
- Dr. Laurie Chan states Mercury is in form of methylmercury the type that causes health concerns(TCN journal Feb 2010).
- Source of food most higher concern in certain types of fish, like Sturgeons.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood



- Manitoba Hydro still discussing issues relating compensation for impacts of the proposed Keeyask Project on Trapline 15.
- MB hydro continues to be interested in trying to resolve this issue, without all family members present.

Hydro Effects My Livelihood

- EKOSI / Thank You for your time.
- For Allison & Charlotte Saunders
 - of Trapline 15 (Gull Lake)