

HENRY GARRICK

Presentation to the Clean Environment Commission on Trapline 18
Tuesday March 23, 2004 in Thompson

Introduction

My name is Henry Garrick. I am 75 years old and a member of the Cross Lake First Nation. I was born and was raised in Wabowden and I now live in Wabowden. I am the President of the Trappers' Association for the area of Wabowden.

I am here to give a presentation about some of the statements being made about Trapline 18.

Background

I learned about some of the statements being made about Trapline 18 when I attended a Public Information Meeting on the Wuskwatim project. I have reviewed some of the statements made by the Trapline 18 witnesses. I do not believe some of the statements are accurate and they give people the wrong impression about hunters, trappers and fishermen in the Wabowden area. I met with Marcel Moody and he and NCN representatives asked if I would be willing to speak at the Clean Environment Commission.

Trapline 18 Knowledge

I currently trap on Trapline 16. Trapline 16 is just West of Trapline 18 and Ferguson Creek. I have trapped in this area for almost 60 years since 1944.

My father is Roddy Garrick and my uncle is Wellington Beebe. They are two of the people

mentioned in the Trapline 18 witness statements. My uncle used to have the rights to Trapline 18 in the 1940's and 1950's and I trapped there with him and my father when I was a teenager. I trapped on the area now called Trapline 18 from about 1944 to 1951. I also trapped on Trapline 16 and 17 when I was a teenager.

I have seen the statements of Trapline 18 witnesses saying that hydro caused the changing water levels and dangerous conditions. This is not true. These conditions are natural. They were there 60 years ago before hydro came.

The land in and around Trapline 18 is forested area, creeks, lakes, rocky areas and swamp/muskeg. The land in Trapline 18 slopes down from the tip of Trapline 18 in the North to the Southern end. The water generally drains from North to South. If you go further North past the Northern tip of Trapline 18, then the land slopes down to the North and the water drains in the opposite direction (to the North).

The Northern tip of Trapline 18 is mostly swamp and muskeg. In years with a lot of snow or rain then creeks like Ferguson Creek will flood and the water will be moving very quickly.

In drought years, Ferguson Creek will be very low. The last couple of years have been drought years and much of the area is currently overgrown with wild rice because there has been very little water flow coming from the upper areas.

The water levels and conditions in the area change on a regular basis. The area has always been like this. The conditions change with the weather. Hydro has nothing to do with the changing water levels in that area.

I have witnessed some of the conditions described in the Trapline 18 statements but these conditions are not caused by the hydro project. For example, I have seen hanging ice that occurs from changing water levels. This has always occurred. Hanging ice is a natural occurrence and is not necessarily caused by hydro.

Hanging ice can be caused when water levels are raised due to higher precipitation levels in the Summer and Fall. In the late Fall and early Winter, the water then freezes on the surface and continues to drain away in the creek below the ice. This causes an air space between the ice and the water which can be very dangerous.

Slush ice is also a natural occurrence. Sometimes slush ice occurs because water levels drop and hanging ice occurs causing ice to slope in the centre of the creek and crack. Water then comes up and forms on top of the ice and forms slush with the snow. Slush ice also occurs when water levels drop and the ice drops along the edge of the creek and water comes over the top of the ice and forms slush. Slush ice has also always occurred in the area long before Hydro came.

These conditions have always occurred naturally in areas where there is running water such as Trapline 18. They can make trapping and hunting dangerous, but it has always been dangerous.

Waterways

I have never seen underground waterways or rivers in the Trapline 18 area in 60 years that I have been trapping.

I have never seen rivers that connected the Trapline 18 area to Nelson House. You can canoe from Nelson House to Setting Lake, but you have to take many portages. This is the way people used to go many years ago and you can still go that way today. Hydro has done nothing to change this. Some of the portages might be grown in with bush now.

Animal Population

I have not seen a drastic decline in the animal populations in the Trapline 18 area. There

are many beaver in the area. In fact, Conservation Officers are always asking us to trap beaver because there are too many of them. The beaver numbers are high because nobody wants to trap them anymore because the price of their pelts is too low.

The number of animal in the area is always changing due to natural conditions. This has always happened for the last 60 years.