

2019

# WORLD WATER DAY

PROVINCIAL DAY OF ACTION  
SUMMARY REPORT



## WANISKATAN

AN ALLIANCE OF HYDRO IMPACTED COMMUNITIES





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# WORLD WATER DAY 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro Impacted Communities accomplished the second annual World Water Day event organized as a Provincial Day of Action held on March 22nd 2019. Wa Ni Ska Tan partnered with the Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition (MEJC) in organizing the Winnipeg rally by sharing information through their contacts in gathering supporting organizations focusing on water related justice in Manitoba. Wa Ni Ska Tan developed resources including a toolkit, staff supports, media tools and event promotional materials in an effort to encourage and support hydro impacted communities to host their own events within their traditional territories with a central focus on the importance of respecting water, as well including the social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts caused by hydropower in our province.

Manitoba is fortunate to have so many amazing rivers and lakes, including its border to the Hudson Bay. However, our territory is also home to a hydropower system that produces electricity at high social and environmental costs that include dying lakes, polluted waterways, contaminated fish, and eroded shorelines by unnatural water level fluctuations.

There were various events that were held across the province including Swan Lake First Nation, Pimicikamak (Cross Lake) First Nation, York Factory First Nation, and Hollow Water First Nation. There were a few potential hosts that didn't work out last minute due to the community hosts' unavailability to attend due to work related scheduling. All events were successful in bringing forth awareness to water issues within their communities. Not all events were centered around protesting, therefore the toolkit gave communities the opportunity to frame the events based on their own priorities and community based solutions that respected their community's diverse perspectives on hydropower development, while still addressing the social, economic, and environmental impacts linked to disrespecting water.





# **“THAT’S MY FUTURE GOING DOWN THE RIVER”- LES DYSART, SOUTH INDIAN LAKE**

## **WINNIPEG RALLY**

Wa Ni Ska Tan and Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition co-hosted the Winnipeg Rally and March where an estimated 150 people attended, starting with a rally at the Manitoba Hydro Place Building followed with a march to the Manitoba Legislature Building where we heard from a range of speakers.

This year we not only focused on Hydro issues, but water issues in general. This was important for the intent of the Provincial Day of Action as a way of broadening our outreach across Manitoba, as well as highlighting the importance of respecting water for all communities directly affected by major water issues, such as social, environmental, cultural and economic impacts of hydropower, agriculture, pollution, oil spills, and the lack of political will on government to fully address these water issues. The event also brought forward awareness to boil water advisories, the health of Lake Winnipeg, and injustices faced by Shoal Lake 40.

Council of Canadians, Human Rights Hub, and Lake Winnipeg Foundation were some of our supporting organizations who helped us with social media promo and coverage during the event.

Wa Ni Ska Tan community coordinator Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie, and Laura Tyler from MEJC co-MC'd the event. They shared what other hosts were doing in their communities for World Water Day, and held a moment of silence for loved ones who had recently passed away. Bear Clan Patrol marshalled the people along the march and ensured our safety as we walked on Portage Ave to Memorial St, chanting phrases such as “Hydro Justice Cannot Wait” or “Water is Life” or “Respect Water Now”.

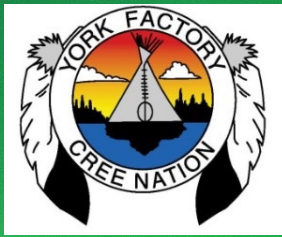


Sadie-Phoenix

At the Manitoba Legislature, we heard from speakers from South Indian Lake, including Steering Committee member Les Dysart, as well Councillor Brian Wood, who shared the history of hydro and the impacts of Augmented Flow has had within their community. Followed by them, we listened to two-spirit Cree youth activist Brielle Beardy-Linklater currently residing in Winnipeg, originally from Nelson House, with kinship ties in Thompson, Fox Lake and York Factory. Brielle shared the impact hydro has had on her growing up on-reserve and the impacts it has had on the youth's connection to the land and waters. Rita Monias from Pimicikamak Cree Nation also spoke sharing her experiences resisting hydro at JenPeg, and the importance of being connected with the lands and waters for the betterment of future generations. We had a woman elder from Pimicikamak who give the opening prayer and some women hand drummers do the closing with a song.

The event overall was a huge success and we got some media coverage with CKUW radio, CBC-French Radio and APTN News.





## YORK LANDING

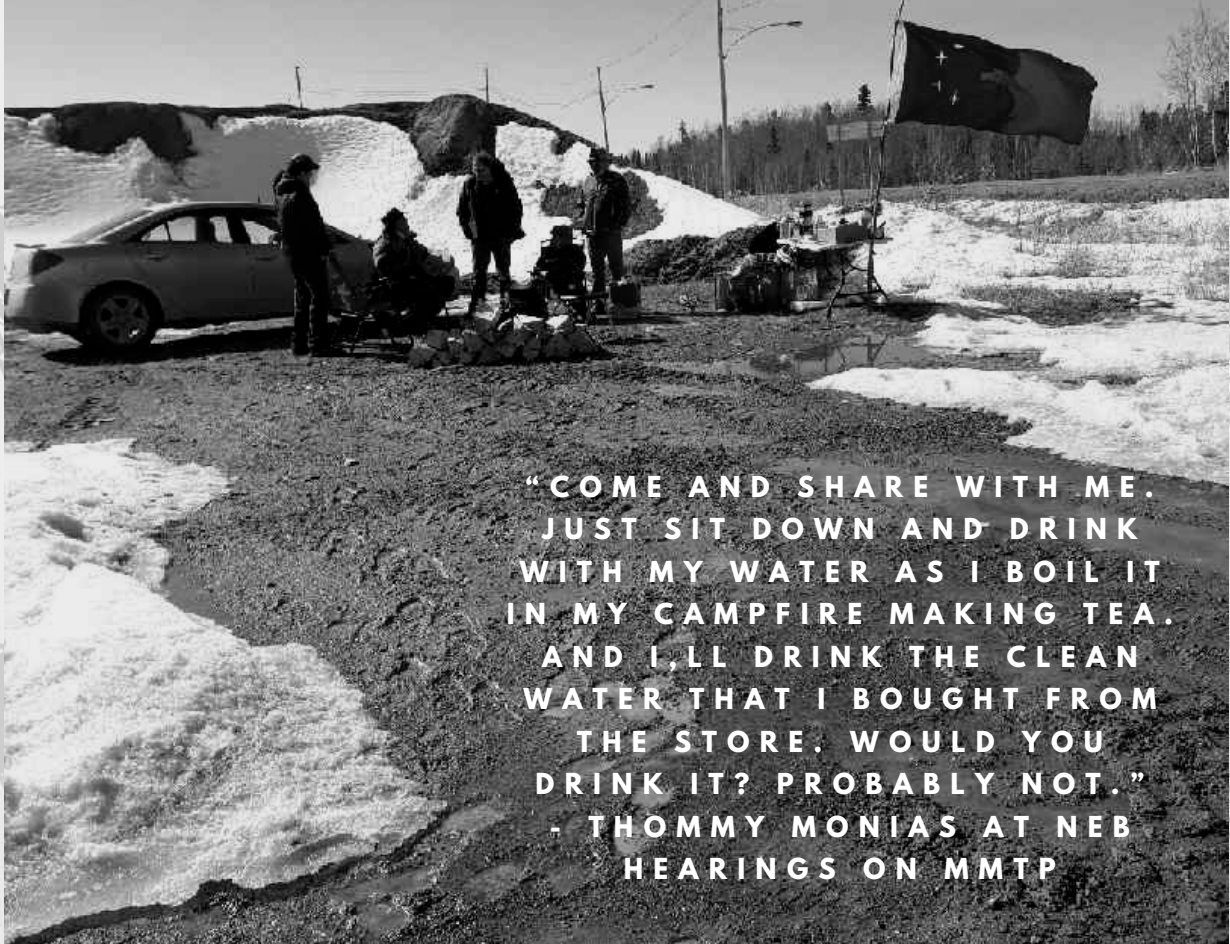
York Landing is located along the eastern bank of the Nelson River, and located 116 kilometers from Thompson. Louisa Constant from York Factory First Nation was the community host for World Water Day. They showed a documentary film called Water Warriors in community for members to come together and watch. York Factory is a hydro impacted community located near the Kelsey Generating Station, and downstream of the Keeyask Dam along the Nelson River.

Last year the Clean Environment Commission released a report called the Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment, commissioned by the Manitoba Government in 2015, that revealed discrimination and sexual abuse by Manitoba Hydro workers during the 1960s-70s around communities of Fox Lake, Gillam and York Factory are neighbouring communities and have also expressed a history of racial discrimination and sexual violence by Manitoba Hydro workers. There are several Hydro dams that were being constructed around this time, such as the Long Spruce Generating Station, Kettle Generating Station, Radisson Converter Station, and then Henday Converter Station, and then latter the Limestone generating station in the 90s and recently the Keeyask Generating Station still in construction along the Nelson River near Gillam. The report also outlined the tensions in the community brought by racism, as well as the degradation of the environmental leading to the end of traditional life for some community members.

York Factory Chief, Leroy Constant had reached out to Amnesty International in regards to concerns from people that have also come forward to talk about the violence and racism they experienced linked to these hydro projects and to request a Senate Committee that is studying federal legislation that would change how resource development projects are reviewed, to ensure community members of York Factory are also heard. Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak (MKO), which represents Northern First Nations, has called for a public inquiry into the historical and current allegations of sexual violence, discrimination, and racism for the past and present hydro projects, however Manitoba Hydro has only since 2012 been documenting these types of incidents.

**“WATER IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR ININEW CULTURE. WE RESPECT AND HONOUR THE WATER AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN TAKING CARE OF THE WATER AND LAND. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH HOW WATER HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE TREATED IN OUR TERRITORIES AND THE IMPACTS THAT HYDROELECTRIC DAMS ARE HAVING ON THE LAND, WATER, AND ON OUR BODIES.” - LOUISA CONSTANT, YORK FACTORY**





**"COME AND SHARE WITH ME.  
JUST SIT DOWN AND DRINK  
WITH MY WATER AS I BOIL IT  
IN MY CAMPFIRE MAKING TEA.  
AND I,LL DRINK THE CLEAN  
WATER THAT I BOUGHT FROM  
THE STORE. WOULD YOU  
DRINK IT? PROBABLY NOT."  
- THOMMY MONIAS AT NEB  
HEARINGS ON MMTP**

JASON COOK

## PIMICIKAMAK

Elder Raymond Robinson was the community host from Pimicikamak First Nation and set up a meeting place at JenPeg Generating Station to discuss the effects the hydro electric dam had done towards the community and their traditional territory. Elder Raymond Robinson was at JenPeg all day from early morning to midnight waiting for community members to stop by and visit with him. He received visitors from the Cross Lake school, and Manitoba Hydro field technicians. At this event it was explained to those in attendance, the purpose of the day event in relation to water and the importance to respect water within their traditional territory for their community to benefit from.

The Northern Flood Agreement was signed on December 16th 1977, however the Crown corporation Manitoba Hydro and the provincial government of Manitoba have not fulfilled their promise to eradicate the massive poverty and unemployment, among other issues pertaining to the health of the water, and the risks associated to the high and low influx of water levels that has impacted traditional hunters, fishers and trappers. There were 5 bands that originally signed the NFA, Pimicikamak being the remaining original signatory that did not sign any implementation benefit packages or partnership agreements since, and therefore continue to demand for the implementation of the conditions set out in the original Northern Flood Agreement. Manitoba Hydro uses Jenpeg Generating Station, built in 1979 and located about 20 kilometres from Pimicikamak, to control outflows from Lake Winnipeg into the Nelson River.





# SWAN LAKE

Swan Lake is an Anishinaabe First Nation located 161 kilometers southwest of Winnipeg, better known as “gaubiskiigamaug,” meaning curve in the lake.

Rhonda Cameron was the community host for World Water Day. Rhonda works at the band office with a portfolio on Sustainable Development and Conservation. Rhonda coordinated with the Swan Lake school in getting 100 students to watch a documentary screening of 4 Ocean, discussion on water usage and conservation. Following the documentary screening, Water walk within the community live streamed on their facebook page.

## HOLLOW WATER



Several Hollow Water First Nation band members with the construction of a teepee and the lighting of a sacred fire established Camp Morning Star on February 16, 2019. The sacred fire is tended to 24/7 by fire keepers and has been burning since the camp's establishment.

Hollow Water First Nation is located 190 kilometers northeast of Winnipeg. The name originates from the anishinaabemowin word “wanipigow” meaning “hole in the water” as the water at the mouth of the wanipigow river circles into a whirlpool before eventually flowing into Lake Winnipeg. Hollow Water is located above numerous spring water wells that are some of the few remaining unpolluted springs in the province.

Camp Morning Star was established in Hollow Water First Nation Traditional Territory in response to the Wanipigow Silica Sand Extraction Project. Wanipigow Silica Sand Extraction project is an open pit quarry that extracts silica sand for use in hydraulic fracturing of shale oil and gas. Canadian Premium Sand is the main proponent of the project. The project was approved without a provincial or a federal environmental assessment. The Silica sand project is adjacent to three water bodies, Lake Winnipeg, Wanipigow River and the Manigotogan River.

The site is host to several spring water cells, which feeds the local water table with crisp clean water. Traditionally the sand is acts as a filtering and purification process for all the ground water.

On March 22, 2019 in response to World Water Day, the members of Camp Morning Star gathered to offer prayers and conducted a water ceremony to honor Nibi (water) and the sacredness of it. We held a pipe ceremony, offered medicine and prayers in the sacred fire, and we feasted the water spirits. Meegwetch





# WANI SKA TAN

AN ALLIANCE OF HYDRO IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

WATER CONNECTS  
US ALL ON PLANET  
EARTH THROUGH  
NUTRITION,  
RECREATION AND  
TRADITION.  
HOWEVER, THAT  
SAME WATER IS  
BEING  
DISRESPECTED,  
THREATENING THE  
LIVES OF ALL THAT  
RELY ON IT TO  
SURVIVE.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

