

CLEAN WATER IS A FUNDAMENTAL  
**HUMAN RIGHT**  
AND IS ESSENTIAL FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL, COMMUNITY AND  
**HUMAN HEALTH.**  
AS STEWARDS OF THE MANY DIVERSE  
AND SIGNIFICANT TRIBUTARIES OF OUR  
GREAT ARCTIC OCEAN  
DRAINAGE BASIN,  
WE ACKNOWLEDGE WATER IS  
**SACRED.**

- THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER II RESOLUTION, 2007 -

# *Keepers of the Water*

# VI

· OUR WATERS ARE ONE ·

A WATERSHED GATHERING HOSTED BY FORT NELSON FIRST NATION  
FORT NELSON BC · SEPTEMBER 26-29, 2012

Our Voices are Many	2
Welcome	4
Schedule	5
Speakers	11
Backgrounders	25
Friends & Sponsors	32

## Our Voices are Many. . .

The Keepers of the Water movement was born during the first Keepers of the Water Gathering in Liidlii Kui, Denendeh/Fort Simpson, NWT, held on September 7, 2006. This Gathering was called because the people of the northern Mackenzie River Basin were becoming alarmed with reports of increased turbidity and toxicity, and decreased volume of water in their watershed. What was happening to the water and the ecosystems that relied upon it?

Meeting on the shores of the great Deh Cho (Mackenzie River), a gathering of Elders from the north created the Keepers of the Water Declaration:

Water is a sacred gift, an essential element that sustains and connects all life. It is not a commodity to be bought or sold. All people share an obligation to cooperate to ensure that water in all of its forms is protected and conserved with regard to the needs of all living things today and for future generations tomorrow.  
*- Keepers of the Water Declaration, September 7, 2006*

In August 2007, Elders gathered once again in Thebacha, Denendeh/Fort Smith, NWT, and drafted a series of resolutions to further support the Keepers of the Water.

We, the Indigenous peoples of the Mackenzie River Basin and all the peoples of the Basin, from south to north, have gathered in Thebacha, Denendeh (Ft. Smith, NWT) for Tu Beta Ts'ena, the "Water is Life" Conference, held from August 20th-23rd, 2007 to express our concerns about the quality and quantity of our waters: the lifeline of all beings.  
*- Elders Resolutions, "Tu beta Ts'ena" Conference, Fort Smith NWT, August 20-23, 2007*

These Elders' resolutions were further refined during the September 2007 Keepers of the Water II conference, to reflect the growing voice of Elders throughout the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin.

## ...Our Waters are One

At the Keepers of the Water II: Keeping the Peace, a second resolution supported by all attendees was drafted. It was resolved that a Keepers of the Water organization be formulated around the communities of each watershed within the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin:

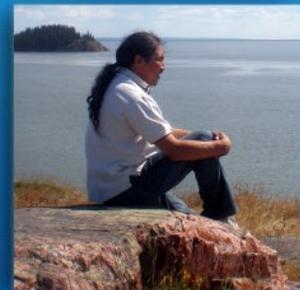
We are concerned about the state of water across our country and around the globe. We support the development of a grassroots watershed plan for the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin, bringing together First Nations, local citizens and community groups....

We are committed to building a coalition of Keepers of the Water, and creating our own Keepers groups: Keepers of the Peace, Slave, Athabasca, Liard, Hay, and Mackenzie... - all the tributaries of the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin. It is our hope that this will feed into a Canada-wide Keepers of the Water alliance.  
*- Keepers of the Water II Resolution, Fort St. John BC, September 27-29, 2007*

A third outcome of the Keepers of the Water II was the development of a rough watershed plan for the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin, a plan that will continue to be developed and revised as new concerns, goals and actions are identified by groups throughout the Basin over the years to come.

The Keepers of the Water continued to grow as we travelled through a series of powerful and moving Gatherings across our wide North - in Fort Chipewyan, Wollaston Lake and Lac Brochet - expanding our vision, strengthening our resolution, and deepening our sense of interconnection and unity.

As we now return to the Peace and to the waters of our host, Fort Nelson First Nation, we also return to our plan, wiser, unified, and prepared. Our voices have become many; our waters are one.



## Welcome from our host, Fort Nelson First Nation

The Fort Nelson First Nation welcomes our friends, neighbours and relatives from north, south, east and west, to our territory as we work toward responsible watershed management in the Liard-Horn River Basins and beyond. At Keepers of the Water VI, we will explore the challenges from various perspectives. We will then identify opportunities for collaboration in responsible watershed management and highlight the work that previous Keepers of the Water, the Fort Nelson First Nation and others have been doing in the drive to protect our waters and our ways of life.

## Welcome from the Planning Committee

On behalf of the Keepers of the Water VI Planning Committee, we welcome you, our honoured guests and friends, to this historic gathering of Keepers in Fort Nelson BC.

This year, we have chosen to gather around two goals: to determine our response to the effects of hydraulic fracturing on the land and waters of our host, Fort Nelson First Nation; and to forge a deeper bond between our communities through a shared vision, plan and accord to protect our Great Arctic Ocean Basin.

To this end, we have called upon the widest possible representation of voices, from our Elders and founders who hold the Keepers' spirit deep in their hearts, to the young pursuing new knowledge and solutions. We are pleased and grateful for the generosity of all our speakers, supporters and volunteers who have responded without hesitation, giving so much time and coming so far. Our voices are many; our waters are one.

A special thank you goes out to our planning committee members and volunteers: Marilyn Norby, Jasmine Netsena, Sonja Leverkus, Moira Biddlecombe, Laurelle Dettieh, Cathy Hooper, Trina Harrold, Madeline Burke and our moderator, David Marshall.

While the next three days promise to test our minds and wills as we work on the present and discuss our future, we encourage you to enjoy Fort Nelson and share in the cultural experiences brought to you by our host Nation. We hope to live up to our previous gatherings and continue to make the Keepers of the Water a transformative, moving event for all. *Mussi cho!*

Lana Lowe • Fort Nelson First Nation  
Norine Wark • Keepers of the Water  
Dan Wilton • Keepers of the Water



### *"Rivers are our means of life -*

*where we hunt, fish, trap and travel. The river is not just the water; it's the vegetation, the fish, the medicines, the moose that come down to drink, the beaver that swim by, the muskrat. It has more value than all the parts of the land. It needs to be protected."*

FNFN Elder



# SCHEDULE

## HIGHLIGHTS

Opening Ceremony • Dinner	Wed 5:30pm
Welcoming	Thu 8:45am
Moose Camp • Hand Games	Thu 6:00pm
Keynote: Wade Davis	Thu 10:45am
Keynote: Jon Waterhouse	Fri 9:00am
Keynote: Maude Barlow	Sat 9:15am
Dinner • Closing Ceremonies	Sat 6:30pm

## Wednesday, September 26: WELCOMING

We gather once again, with thanks to our gracious hosts, Fort Nelson First Nation, to honour the sacred gift of life, our waters. As our waters flow together, so shall our hearts, heads and hands over these next few precious and exhilarating days.

Tonight we will celebrate the spiritual nature of our gathering, and the fellowship of all Keepers. We will pray, we will recognize, we will eat, we will reminisce, we will sing and we will dance. Let us rejoice, for we are together!

2:00- 4:00pm	<i>* Woodlands Inn *</i> <b>SOCIAL HOUR</b> Complimentary snacks and beverages offered by Woodlands Inn to conference guests registered at the Inn
5:30pm	<i>* Art Fraser Park *</i> <b>OPENING CEREMONY</b> Tthekeheneh Kue Dene and Kutlodeeche Drummers
6:30pm	<i>* Northern Rockies Regional Recreation Centre *</i> <b>WELCOMING DINNER</b>
8:00pm	<i>* Art Fraser Park *</i> <b>DRUM DANCE</b> Tthekeheneh Kue Dene and Kutlodeeche Drummers

## Thursday, September 27: BUILDING AWARENESS

Today will open with some formal ceremonies and introductions, and will provide a thematic overview of our three action-packed days. We will be introduced to Fort Nelson First Nation's waters through the voices of the people from this community. We will also receive updates on other watersheds throughout the Arctic Ocean Basin (AOB).

In the afternoon, we will brush up our skills by reviewing the basic science of water and will discuss its many attributes. Panelists will help us wrestle with water issues, sharing their stories and experiences, presenting dilemmas to ponder, and offering solutions to consider in the days to come.

\* Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at the Northern Rockies Regional Recreation Centre (NRRRC).

... continued

## Thursday, September 27: BUILDING AWARENESS

7:30am	<b>REGISTRATION &amp; COLLECTION OF CONFERENCE MATERIALS</b>
8:00am	<b>BREAKFAST:</b> Complimentary coffee, tea and continental breakfast
8:45am	<p><b>WELCOMING and INTRODUCTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INTRODUCTION OF MODERATOR Kathi Dickie, Councilor and Former Chief, Fort Nelson First Nation David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council</li> <li>• WELCOMING REMARKS Chief Sharleen Wildeman, Fort Nelson First Nation Danny Soles, Acting Mayor, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality</li> <li>• OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE THEMES AND AGENDA</li> </ul>
9:45am	<p><b>FNFN VIDEO: Tú ni tthé: We Need the Water</b></p> <p>Lana Lowe, Lands Director, Fort Nelson First Nation Jasmine Netsena, Lands Researcher, Fort Nelson First Nation</p>
10:15am	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
10:45am	<p><b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World</b></p> <p>Wade Davis, Ethnographer, Author, Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic Society</p>
11:40am	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p> <p>David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council</p>
12:00pm	<b>LUNCH:</b> Complimentary lunch
1:00pm	<p><b>PRESENTATION: Keepers of the Water • State of the Arctic Ocean Basin (AOB)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEACE RIVER Bob Cameron, South Peace Environment Association</li> <li>• ATHABASCA RIVER Helene Walsh, Board member, Keepers of the Athabasca</li> <li>• SASKATCHEWAN WATERSHED Vice Grand Chief Don Deranger, Prince Albert Grand Council</li> <li>• MACKENZIE RIVER Grand Chief Sam Gargan, Dehcho First Nation</li> </ul>
2:00pm	<p><b>PRESENTATION: Hydrology 101</b></p> <p>Gilles Wendling, Hydrogeologist, GW Solutions</p>
2:45pm	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
3:15pm	<p><b>PANEL DISCUSSION: Key Issues and Solutions</b></p> <p>Ben Parfitt, Resource Policy Analyst, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Chief Bernie Elkins, ?Esdilagh First Nation Ken Paulson, Chief Operating Officer, BC Oil and Gas Commission</p>
4:00pm	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p> <p>David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council</p>
4:15pm	<b>CLOSING REMARKS</b>
6:00pm	<p><i>* FNFN Moose Camp • Triple G Hideaway Campground *</i></p> <p><b>DENE HAND GAMES</b></p> <p>Tthekekeh Kue Dene, Kutlodeeche and Fort Providence Dene Drummers</p>

## Friday, September 28: COLLABORATION

Equipped with our own lived experiences and talents, we will begin the collaboration process today. We will be introduced to the world's largest indigenous water network, the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council. We will learn of their trials and tribulations, and discover why their water accord is the glue that binds them as a single entity. Other water governance options will also be presented. We shall learn about the Fraser Basin Council Charter for Sustainability, the BC Water Sustainability Act, and the proposed Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord. We will consider our own governance, reflect on the resolutions and declarations that define us as Keepers of the Water, and then begin to contemplate our own water accord. \*Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at the NRRRC.

7:45am	<b>BREAKFAST:</b> Complimentary coffee, tea and continental breakfast
8:30am	<b>OPENING REMARKS and SUMMARY OF DAY 1</b> David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council
9:00am	<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council</b> Jon Waterhouse, Executive Director, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
10:00am	<b>PRESENTATION: Thinking Like a Watershed</b> Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council
10:30am	<b>Q&amp;A</b> Norine Wark, Acting Executive, Keepers of the Water
10:40am	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
11:00am	<b>SESSION A: BC Water Sustainability Act Renewal: Opportunities for Collaborative Management?</b> Ted White, Manager, Water Strategies & Conservation, BC Ministry of Environment
11:30am	<b>SESSION B: Recovering Community: Water Governance, Leadership and Ethics</b> Jeremy Schmidt, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Advisor, Water Ethics Network
12:00pm	<b>LUNCH:</b> Complimentary lunch
1:00pm	<b>SESSION C: Completing the Water Accord for Keepers of the Water</b> Grand Chief Sam Gargan, Dehcho First Nation Jon Waterhouse, Executive Director, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council Norine Wark, Acting Executive, Keepers of the Water
1:30pm	<b>SESSION D: Environmental Monitoring</b> Findlay MacDermid, GIS and Environmental Consultant, Amahoe Services
2:00pm	<b>SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS</b> Room 1: WORKSHOP A: BC Water Sustainability Act Room 2: WORKSHOP B: Water Governance, Leadership and Ethics Room 3: WORKSHOP C: Completing the Water Accord Room 4: WORKSHOP D: Environmental Monitoring
3:00pm	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
3:30pm	<b>PLENARY SESSION: Summary Discussion of Afternoon Small Group Interactions</b>
4:15pm	<b>CLOSING REMARKS</b>
6:00- 6:45pm	<b>JIGGING WORKSHOP</b> Bev Lambert
6:45- 7:30pm	<b>LIVE MUSIC</b> Eric Ashdown and Against the Grain, Fort Nelson BC
7:45- 8:30pm	<b>LIVE MUSIC</b> Johnny Landry Band, Fort Providence NWT
8:30pm	<b>DRUM DANCE</b>

## Saturday, September 29: ACTION

Over the past two and a half days, we will have celebrated our spiritual connection to our waters, and gained awareness of the issues and concerns that we face within our Basin. We will have listened to each other, and begun contemplating a water accord for the Keepers of the Water. Today we will boldly surge ahead, discussing and debating our thoughts and ideas, determining priorities, formulating some ideas for the water accord, and adding action items to our watershed plan. By the end of today, we will be exhausted - and exhilarated, for we will have achieved no small feat in these few precious days. \*Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at the NRRRC.

8:00am	<b>BREAKFAST:</b> Complimentary coffee, tea and continental breakfast
8:45am	<b>OPENING REMARKS and SUMMARY OF DAY 2</b> David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council
9:15am	<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: A Call for Local Action</b> Maude Barlow, Social Justice Advocate, Author, National Chairperson, Council of Canadians
10:15am	<b>Q&amp;A</b> David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council
10:30am	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
11:00am	<b>SESSION E: Enhanced Wetland Classification of the Fort Nelson Area</b> Senior Remote Sensing Analyst, Ducks Unlimited Canada
11:30am	<b>SESSION F: Lifeblood Consultation: An Alternative Vision for Water Management</b> Caleb Behn, Eh-Cho Dene/Dunne-Za, JD Concentration in Environmental Law and Sustainability
12:00pm	<b>LUNCH:</b> Complimentary lunch
1:00pm	<b>SESSION G: Inclusion of Other Arctic Ocean Basin Action Plans in Keepers' Watershed Plan</b> Norine Wark, Acting Executive, Keepers of the Water
1:30pm	<b>SESSION H: Collaborative Watershed Management: A Possibility for Northeast BC?</b> David Marshall, Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council
2:00pm	<b>SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS</b> Room 1: WORKSHOP E: FNFN Draft Water Management Plan Room 2: WORKSHOP F: Legal Aspects of Water Management Room 3: WORKSHOP G: Inclusion of Other Arctic Ocean Basin Action Plans in Watershed Plan Room 4: WORKSHOP H: Collaborative Watershed Management: A Possibility for Northeast BC?
3:00pm	<b>BREAK:</b> Complimentary coffee and tea
3:30pm	<b>PLENARY SESSION: Summary Discussion of Afternoon Small Group Activities</b>
4:00pm	<b>CLOSING REMARKS and PRAYER SONG</b>
5:00pm	<b>FAREWELL DINNER</b>
6:30pm	* FNFN Moose Camp • Triple G Hideaway Campground * <b>CLOSING CEREMONY</b>

*“Whereas:*

***The Elders resolve that we need to work together,***

*the Elders call for unity among all First Nations and other Aboriginal peoples from throughout the Peace, Athabasca, Slave, and Mackenzie River systems.*

*And whereas:*

*Other environmental groups are also working to protect the river systems, we resolve that we work together with them to protect our waters.*

*And whereas:*

*The water is sacred to us - it is what we need to survive and what mother earth needs to survive - we need to wake up and work together as one to protect the water for our children, grandchildren, and future generations.*

*Be it resolved that:*

*We work together in unity with First Nations, Aboriginal peoples, and environmental groups to protect our waters.*

*Be it further resolved that:*

*The Elders from this conference support this resolution for unity and ask the leadership to support our resolution.”*

Elders' Meeting • “Tu beta Ts'ena” Water is Life,  
August 20-24, 2007 • Thebacha, Denendeh (Fort Smith, NWT)

***“Before we take anything, we give something back.***

*So with the spirit of the water and the Keepers of the Water - we all have got to have spirit in order for people to grow, for us to have that connection so that we can work with the environment, so we can connect with all those seasons that we were given here on earth.*

*If we have a spirit, if we have a soul, so does the water.”*

Jimmy Ochiese • Foothills Ojjiway Shaman

***“There’s something living in that water.***

*It’s a spirit. The spirit of the people. . . every one of our great people that’s gone, that’s where their spirits travel, that’s their highway. . . That’s where you feel them, you talk to them. . . it’s there.”*

FNFN Elder

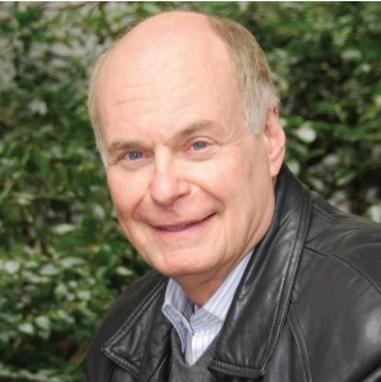




# SPEAKERS

FACILITATION TEAM  
KEYNOTE ADDRESSES  
SPEAKERS

## Facilitation Team



### **Moderator: DAVID MARSHALL**

Executive Director, Fraser Basin Council

David Marshall, a professional engineer, is the founding Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Council. The Fraser Basin Council is a non-government organization focusing on collaborative management and sustainability of a large watershed. It involves public, private and non-governmental sectors and First Nations into a new mode of collaborative governance.

In May 1998 he received the National River Conservation Award of Merit for his outstanding contribution to river conservation in Canada by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. In September 2001 he was appointed the Chair of the Drinking Water Review Panel by the Government of British Columbia to review the effectiveness of the proposed Drinking Water Protection Act.

Mr. Marshall has conducted and participated in workshops on watershed management, sustainable development and environmental impact assessment in many parts of Canada, Russia, Thailand, South Korea, Barbados, Jamaica, China, Indonesia, the Middle East and the Philippines.



### **JENNIFER COUPÉ**

Major Projects Coordinator, Fort Nelson First Nation Lands Department

As Major Projects Coordinator for the Fort Nelson First Nation Lands Department, Jennifer Coupé oversees environmental assessments and permitting for major projects in FNFN territory. She acts as a liaison between FNFN Chief, Council and community and industry and government to ensure FNFN rights and interests are upheld. She has been working with the Lands Department since 2010. Before moving to Fort Nelson, Ms. Coupé volunteered and worked in museums in Alberta and British Columbia as a Collections Manager, Archivist and Librarian. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Victoria.



### **ROSS COUPÉ**

Deputy Corporate Manager, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

Ross Coupé is a relative new-comer to the North, having moved to Fort Nelson in 2010. As the Deputy Corporate Manager for the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, he is involved with local governance and policy development. Prior to coming to Fort Nelson, Mr. Coupé worked for various departments in the Federal and Provincial Government. He holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Northern British Columbia and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Victoria.

## KATHI DICKIE

Former Chief, Fort Nelson First Nation

Former Chief Kathi Dickie was the first woman Chief in Fort Nelson First Nation and continues to serve the Nation as Councillor. A member of the Fort Nelson First Nation Community Education Authority and the Fort Nelson Literary Society, she has been involved in First Nations education in one form or another for over twenty years. She is the daughter of Harry and Adeline Dickie.



## RENEE JAMURAT

Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

Renee Jamurat moved to Fort Nelson from Toronto in 2008, and loves northern living, especially the welcoming community and great friends that she has found in Fort Nelson. She is responsible for land use planning, policy development and public engagement for the NRRM, having recently completed the NRRM's Official Community Plan in 2011. She is now involved in the 2012-13 NRRM zoning update, housing and residential strategy and the Toad River Land Use update.



## SONJA LEVERKUS

Research Ecologist, Shifting Mosaics Consulting

Sonja Leverkus, PhDcand, P.Ag., R.P.Bio., is a landscape ecologist and range agrologist with extensive professional experience in Northern BC. She spent the past six years working for the BC Forest Service and is now currently employed with Keefer Ecological Services leading their northern office based in Fort Nelson. Ms. Leverkus's expertise lies in range management, prescribed fire and invasive species. She is also pursuing her PhD in natural resource ecology and management with a focus on pyric herbivory and landscape ecology along with the ecological restoration of an endangered species, Wood bison. She is an Afanasiev Distinguished Graduate Fellow at Oklahoma State University.

In 2011, Ms. Leverkus and the Fort Nelson First Nation were awarded an Aboriginal Fund for Species At Risk Grant, through Environment Canada, which supported the Dene Fire Project and their work on documenting the traditional and cultural interaction of the Dene with fire. This work has already received national recognition and forms the foundation for the Fort Nelson First Nation Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and the North East Prescribed Fire Council.

Ms. Leverkus is passionate about conserving biodiversity and collaborating to mobilize traditional knowledge with science in natural resource management and development. She continues to work closely with a variety of stakeholders including Guide Outfitters, local community members and Government Agencies as well as with the Treaty 8 First Nations in Northern BC. She started her own business in 2011, Shifting Mosaics Consulting, which is a proud sponsor of Keepers of the Water 6: Our Waters are One.



## Keynote Addresses



### Keynote: MAUDE BARLOW

Social Justice Advocate, Author, National Chairperson, Council of Canadians

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, Canada's largest public advocacy organization with 65,000 members. She was a founding member of the Council in 1985, and has served as its voluntary chair since 1988. During these years, the Council of Canadians has become a leading voice in Canada and around the world for social, environmental and economic justice. The Council fights to protect Canada's public social programs, natural resource heritage, and food security. It also advocates for fair trade and sustainable economic policies, in Canada and around the world, and promotes a peacekeeping role for Canada's armed forces.

Ms. Barlow is also a founding board member of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG), a San Francisco-based think-tank made up of international activists, scholars, writers and economists dedicated to creating sustainable alternatives to economic globalization. She is a contributing author to the highly acclaimed IFG report, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, which has been studied by scholars and politicians around the world. In 1997, she led a global fight with other members of this group to defeat the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, a proposed global treaty that would have given transnational corporations immunity from nation-state laws. Ms. Barlow is also a Councillor with the Hamburg-based World Future Council that brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making.

Ms. Barlow is an acknowledged leader in the international water justice movement, often called the "Al Gore of water." She founded the Blue Planet Project, a Council of Canadians project that works with grassroots groups around the world to stop the commodification of the world's fresh water resources. She is a founding member of Friends of the Right to Water, a North-South Coalition seeking a UN Convention on the Right to Water. Ms. Barlow is currently chairperson of the board of Food and Water Watch, the foremost U.S. organization fighting for the right to water. In 1998, she wrote a ground-breaking analysis on the global politics around water for the International Forum on Globalization and is the co-author of the 2002 book, *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop Corporate Theft of the World's Water*, which is now published in over 40 countries and 15 languages. Her newest book, *Blue Covenant, The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, published in 2007, is also an international best seller. In 2008, Ms. Barlow wrote *Our Water Commons*, a report for a new international network to promote water as a global commons. Ms. Barlow's work on this issue has taken her to every continent where she stands with local indigenous and community groups to defend their right to water.

## Keynote: WADE DAVIS

Ethnographer, Author, Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic Society

Dr. Wade Davis is an Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society. Named by the NGS as one of the Explorers for the Millennium, he has been described as “a rare combination of scientist, scholar, poet and passionate defender of all of life’s diversity.” In recent years his work has taken him to East Africa, Borneo, Nepal, Peru, Polynesia, Tibet, Mali, Benin, Togo, New Guinea, Australia, Colombia, Vanuatu, Mongolia and the high Arctic of Nunuvut and Greenland.

An ethnographer, writer, photographer and filmmaker, he holds degrees in anthropology and biology and received his Ph.D. in ethnobotany, all from Harvard University. Mostly through the Harvard Botanical Museum, he spent over three years in the Amazon and Andes as a plant explorer, living among fifteen indigenous groups in eight Latin American nations while making some 6000 botanical collections. His work later took him to Haiti to investigate folk preparations implicated in the creation of zombies, an assignment that led to his writing *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1986), an international best seller later released by Universal as a motion picture.

Dr. Davis is the author of 200 scientific and popular articles and 17 books including *One River* (1996), *The Wayfinders* (2009), *The Sacred Headwaters* (2011), *Into the Silence* (2011) and the forthcoming *River Notes* (2012). His many film credits include *Light at the Edge of the World*, an eight-hour documentary series written and produced for the National Geographic. In 2009 he received the Gold Medal from the Royal Canadian Geographical Society for his contributions to anthropology and conservation, and he is the 2011 recipient of the Explorers Medal, the highest award of the Explorers’ Club, and the 2012 David Fairchild Medal for Plant Exploration, the most prestigious prize for botanical exploration.



## Keynote: JON WATERHOUSE

Executive Director, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

Jon Waterhouse is the Executive Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC), a grassroots organization comprised of seventy tribes and First Nations who live in the 320,000 square-mile Yukon Watershed. The goal of this consensus-based council, ‘to restore, protect and preserve’ this vast watershed, continues to inspire indigenous groups worldwide.

Mr. Waterhouse’s remarkable work has ranged from policy-level consultation with tribal, national, and international governments to native youth outreach and education. In 2009, Mr. Waterhouse guided the YRITWC to U.N. Consultative Status. That same year, Jon was named a National Geographic Education Fellow. In 2010, President Barack Obama appointed Mr. Waterhouse to the fifteen-member Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), where he is among representatives from Canada, Mexico, and the United States chosen to advise the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). He also serves on the Board of the Alaska-Sudan Medical Project as Community Development Director, assisting in the creation of primary medical care facilities in remote areas of South Sudan.



## Speakers



### CALEB Z. BEHN

Eh-Cho Dene/Dunne-Za, JD Concentration in Environmental Law and Sustainability

Caleb Behn is Eh-Cho Dene and Dunne Za/Cree from the Treaty 8 Territory of Northeastern BC. He has recently graduated from the University of Victoria with a Juris Doctor degree and is among the first UVic Law students granted the *Concentration in Environmental Law and Sustainability*.

Prior to law school, he was the Oil and Gas Officer for the West Moberly First Nations and a Lands Manager for the Saulteau First Nations. Mr. Behn is the subject of a documentary film focused on the impact of hydraulic fracturing in Canada and Aotearoa, New Zealand.



### BOB CAMERON

South Peace Environment Association

Bob Cameron has been a resident of the Debolt area since 1976. As a student of Renewable Resources Technology at Kelsey Institute in Saskatoon, and following graduation in 1973, he was employed as a Technician by the Fisheries and Marine Service of Environment Canada primarily on hydroelectric impact assessments of the Snare, Great Bear and La Matre Rivers in the NWT, with headquarters at the Freshwater Institute, Winnipeg. In 1976, Mr. Cameron began the forestry stage of his career with one summer timber cruising and three subsequent summers as Towerman at Economy Creek Lookout for the Alberta Forest Service. For the last twenty-five years, he has owned and operated a one-man Mobile Dimension Sawmill, logged his own Woodlot and Crown Timber as well as custom sawing for neighbours in the Debolt Sturgeon Heights and TeePee Creek area.

Mr. Cameron began to participate in ENGOs in 1981. He currently represents the South Peace Environment Association on the Canfor Forest Management Advisory Committee, the Board of Directors of the Alberta Environmental Network and the Peace Airshed Zone Association. He has been on the Clean Air Strategic Alliance Board and a member of the Water Shared Governance and Watershed Management Planning working group.

## Vice Grand Chief DON DERANGER

Prince Albert Grand Council

Don Deranger is a member of the Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation in Northern Saskatchewan. He has held the executive position of Vice Grand Chief since May 23, 2003 and represents the Denesuline Athabasca communities of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake. As an elected executive representative, his portfolios include Justice, Lands and Resources, Athabasca Health Authority, Northern Lights Community Development Corporation and the Prince Albert Development Corporation.

In 1998, Vice Grand Chief Deranger was selected for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Citizen of the Year. In 1999, he received the Women of the Dawn Award for his outstanding volunteer efforts. The following year in 2000, he received the Athabasca Northern Volunteer Award. He is a member of the Mackenzie River Basin Board and played a leadership role in developing the Keepers of the Water Saskatchewan.

Vice Grand Chief Deranger is committed to work towards protection, preservation and implementation of our Treaties, without compromising our inherent rights, and to maintain the protection of First Nation traditional territories and resources. He continues to represent and voice PAGC concerns and issues to federal and provincial governments to move the Indian Government agenda forward.



## Chief BERNIE ELKINS

?Esdilagh, Tsilhqot'in Nation

Chief Bernie Elkins has served as the elected off-reserve Chief of ?Esdilagh (Alexandria), Tsilhqot'in Nation since 2008. Learning daily from his son and three daughters, he passes on the traditional teachings of trapping, tanning moose hide, and drying fish and deer meat.

Chief Elkins was Prosperity Director for the Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG). In this role, he was part of a successful team to assess cumulative impacts and preserve Tsilhqot'in rights. The proposed Prosperity mine is the third-only Canadian major project undergoing another environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. He now holds the title of TNG Vice Chair with an economic development portfolio and has been Acting Chair. In 2009, he finalized the Tsilhqot'in Framework Agreement (Strategic Engagement) with BC for protecting Tsilhqot'in proven and unproven rights beyond title lands.

Currently Chief Elkins has been re-elected for a historic Canadian initiative, as one of three Interior Chiefs representing seven Interior region nations (fifty-four Bands) under the BC First Nations Health Council, to manage Health Canada funding and programs for on-reserve members across BC. In 2006, Chief Elkins successfully demonstrated the application of traditional plant knowledge in economic development under the longest BC Environmental Assessment Tribunal, *Xat'sull v. Director Environment Management Act* (Gibraltar Mine), to discharge tailings into the Fraser River.





## Grand Chief SAM GARGAN

Dehcho First Nation

Sam Gargan was born and raised in Redknife (native name translated: "among the spruce"). His wife is Alphonsine (Constant) Gargan. They have five children: Patricia Ann, Manuel Jerome, Solomon Lee, Olga Dawn and Sammy Baptiste. Grand Chief Gargan was educated in the north and has been the Assistant Negotiator with Dehcho First Nation. Instrumental in our first Watershed Gathering in Liidlil Kue, Denedeh (Fort Simpson, NWT), he is a founder and guiding voice of the Keepers of the Water. For the past thirty-five years, Grand Chief Gargan's career was in politics: first as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for sixteen years, and then as Mayor of Fort Providence and Chief for two years each. When not actively involved in his career, he pursues his Traditional way of life as his ancestors did since time immemorial.



## LANA LOWE

Lands Director, Fort Nelson First Nation

Lana Lowe is granddaughter to Harry and Adeline Dickie. She holds a Bachelor's degree with distinction in Geography/Environmental Studies and a Masters degree in Indigenous Governance (Fellow) at the University of Victoria. Prior to moving to Fort Nelson to work for her community, Ms. Lowe worked with grassroots indigenous organizations and think tanks in North and Central America, including the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the Centre for Native Policy and Research, and the Nahual Fundación in Antigua, Guatemala. She has been the Director of the Fort Nelson First Nation Lands Department since November 2009.



## FINDLAY MACDERMID

GIS and Environmental Consultant, Amahoe Services

Findlay "Fin" MacDermid graduated in 2004 with a degree in environmental science and geography from Lakehead University. His interest in mapping and cartography drew him to the oil and gas sector in Calgary where he played a number of roles in a small exploration company and gained invaluable experience in areas such as environmental legislation, First Nations relations, and geomatics. In 2008, he formed a company, now called Amahoe Services, to work for First Nations as an independent consultant focusing on traditional land use information and how best to use it within the regulatory process. In 2009 Mr. MacDermid enrolled in the Ecosystem Biogeochemistry Graduate program at Trent University where he had the opportunity to work with nationally and internationally recognized scientists on water issues. His graduate thesis focuses on airborne trace metal emissions from the Fort McMurray region with an emphasis on the potential impacts in Saskatchewan (only 100km from Fort McMurray). His current research interests focus on the large-scale, long-term impact of industrial development on the northern environment. Environmental monitoring is a key part of understanding these impacts, and helping First Nations engage with these monitoring programs is one of his passions.

## JASMINE NETSENA

Lands Researcher, Fort Nelson First Nation

Jasmine Netsena is a member of the FNFN. She worked as a radio announcer at CKLB radio in Yellowknife and CHON FM in Whitehorse. From radio, Ms. Netsena went to television and worked on APTN's Our Dene Elders and is working on similar projects in the FNFN community.

She has worked as a story collector for the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and the Alaska Highway Project, as well as other research and video projects. She has been with the Lands Department since August 2011. Jasmine's grandmother is Celine Netsena.



## JULIA O'SHANNASSY

Water Resources Engineer

Julia O'Shannassy is a Professional Engineer in BC and Alberta with a Bachelor's of Engineering (Environmental) and Master's of Engineering (Civil), specializing in Water Resources.

Ms. O'Shannassy has been involved in environmental consulting for over twelve years and has been involved in the surface water components of large oil sands and mining EIAs. She has extensive knowledge of hydrology, water quality and fish habitat issues, and the associated regulatory requirements. Ms. O'Shannassy has been actively involved in helping the Fort Nelson First Nation with hydrology issues since Spring 2012.



## BEN PARFITT

Resource Policy Analyst, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;  
Researcher, POLIS Institute, University of Victoria

Mr. Parfitt joined the BC Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives four years ago as its resource policy analyst. As a long-time writer on BC's bountiful natural resources and the huge challenges involved in managing them in environmentally and socially responsible ways, he jumped at the opportunity to broaden his research 'and to spread some innovative ideas around' with the CCPA.

Mr. Parfitt values being part of a great team at the CCPA as well as the opportunities provided to meet regularly with environmental activists and the many people who work in the province's resource industries and who are committed to progressive change.





### **KEN PAULSON**

Chief Operating Officer, BC Oil and Gas Commission

Ken Paulson is the Chief Operating Officer with the BC Oil and Gas Commission and prior to that was the Chief Engineer until October 2011 when he assumed his current position.

Mr. Paulson has more than twenty-five years of experience in the field of pipeline engineering and inspection. Prior to graduating from the University of Saskatchewan in 1986, he worked as a pipeline inspector. As a past chair of the ASME Pipeline Systems Division and a former Board member of the International Petroleum Technology Institute, Mr. Paulson is well connected with engineering communities within the oil and gas sector in North America and globally. He maintains an active involvement in the industry through ASME and other industry organizations, including a leading role in the Canadian Standards Association.

Prior to joining the Commission, Mr. Paulson was Technical Leader at the National Energy Board, where he provided oversight and direction to technical work within their Operations Business Unit. He was actively involved in the development of goal-oriented regulatory approaches for the energy sector and has assisted other governments within North and South America developing safety and engineering regulations as they apply to the oil and gas sector.



### **Grand Chief STEWART PHILLIP**

President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

In October 2008, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip concluded his fourth consecutive term as Chief of the Penticton Indian Band (PIB) after having served the Band as Chief for a total of fourteen years. In addition, he served as an elected Band Councilor for a ten-year period and continues to serve as the Chair of the Okanagan Nation Alliance. In October 2006, the Okanagan Nation, led by the Elders of the Penticton Indian Band, acknowledged his lifetime commitment to the defense of Indigenous Peoples' Title and Rights by bestowing on him and his family the rare honour of the title of Grand Chief.

Over the last thirty-seven years, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip has worked within the Penticton Indian Band Administration holding a variety of positions, such as Band Administrator, Director of Land Management, Education Counselor, Economic Development Officer and Band Planner.

Aside from serving as a member of the PIB council for a total of twenty-four years, he is proud to be in his fifth three-year term as the President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

He has taken an active role in the defense of Aboriginal Title and Rights by readily offering support to Native communities in need. He has taken a personal approach seeing first-hand the impact of fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago, lobbying on Parliament Hill to defeat the First Nations Governance Act, standing with Elders of Treaty 8 against oil and gas development in the Peace River, burning referendum ballots with fellow chiefs in protest and has stood on the steps of the Legislature with 3000 other people united under the Title and Rights Alliance banner.

## JEREMY J. SCHMIDT

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Harvard University; Advisor, Water Ethics Network

Jeremy Schmidt, PhD is a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University. He earned his PhD in Geography from Western University, where he held one of Canada's prestigious Trudeau Scholarships. His dissertation examined water governance and ethics in Alberta. He also holds a masters in geography from McGill University and a B.A. in geography and philosophy from the University of Lethbridge.

Dr. Schmidt's policy recommendations on issues of justice and First Nations water governance have been put directly to the Alberta government in the legislative assembly. He has worked with UNESCO, the Canadian Water Resources Association, and is the co-editor of *Water Ethics: Foundational Readings for Students and Professionals* (Island Press, 2010).



## KEVIN SMITH

Senior Remote Sensing Analyst, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Kevin Smith is a senior remote sensing analyst with Ducks Unlimited Canada. He has been working to help map wetlands throughout the Western Boreal Forest, as well as to provide conservation planning tools to support partnerships as well as policy.

A biologist by training, Mr. Smith has a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University, where he specialized in landscape ecology. His bachelor degree was from Cornell University, with a specialization in Aquatic Insect Ecology.

Mr. Smith has extensive experience in North American wetlands, and has logged over 1500 hours of field data collection in helicopters, airboats, argos, and on foot. This extensive field experience led to the production of A Field Guide to the Wetlands of the Boreal Plains Ecozone of Canada. He researched and developed the classification scheme and technical mapping procedures for the Enhanced Wetland Classification, and has mapped or overseen the mapping of over 150 million acres of wetlands throughout Canada. His current role is to oversee the wetland mapping, to further the development of conservation products, to assist in conservation planning, and to provide partnership project support.





### DANNY SOLES

Acting Mayor, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

Danny Soles began working in Fort Nelson in 1979 having been attracted to the area by the numerous logging opportunities, and in 1983 he moved to Fort Nelson permanently. Mr. Soles has been an active participant in the development of local farm land, and still operates a productive farm at McConachie Creek. He has served for many years on the Fort Nelson Farmers Institute promoting locally grown food and livestock, and continues to advocate for more serious farming in the region. The forest industry has been Mr. Soles's winter pursuit for many years and he continues to work for the revitalization of this industry. He believes that though residents of Fort Nelson live in an area with vast resources, the most important resource is people, so to that end he seeks to nurture and maintain good relationships between people and their environment.



### HELENE WALSH

Board Member, Keepers of the Athabasca

Helene Walsh has a MSc in Zoology from the University of Alberta. She has been involved with forestry issues since 1998, including participation in the development of the Forest Stewardship Council Boreal Standard. Ms. Walsh currently serves as Boreal Campaign Director for CPAWS Northern Alberta Chapter, mostly working on the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement in Alberta. Since 2005, Ms. Walsh has been involved with Alberta oil sands issues through being the CPAWS representative on the multi-stakeholder Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA). She is also active as a volunteer with Keepers of the Athabasca with a current focus on stopping the building of new projects in the tar sands area.



### NORINE WARK

Acting Executive, Keepers of the Water; Principal, Wilton+Wark

Water holds deep meaning to Norine Wark. "It is a sacred gift, an essential element that sustains and connects all life." As a direct descendant of the mighty Vikings, Erik the Red, and his son, Lief Erikson, she was born with the love of water in her veins. Her life has been richly blessed with the music, the beauty, the wonder, the sustenance and the fierce might of great rivers, lakes and oceans. She has watched in mute horror as the ageless waters she knows and loves are increasingly polluted, diverted and depleted, and are now dying in her single lifetime. She feels it is with great honour that she has become a Keeper of the Water, and that she is given this opportunity to share her bond with water with fellow Keepers. United, we can turn the current abuse and neglect of our waters around.

Norine Wark returns for her second coordinatorship, having previously coordinated Keepers of the Water II, and is an acting executive member of the Keepers of the Water. She is now in school, working on a doctoral dissertation that will assist in bringing holistic water education to Keepers of our Great Arctic Ocean Basin.

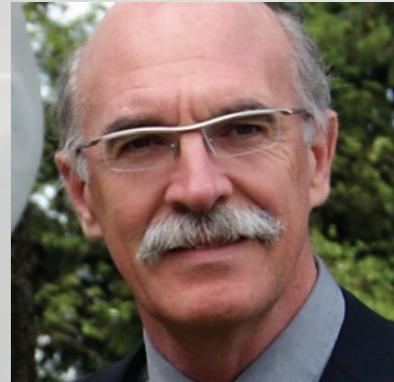
## GILLES WENDLING

Hydrogeologist, GW Solutions

Gilles Wendling, PhD, PEng has over twenty-five years experience in hydrogeology and water management. He started the firm GW Solutions Inc. in 2005, focusing his work on aquifers at the watershed scale. He particularly focuses on groundwater and surface water interaction, and is regularly consulted by Radio Canada and CBC to provide opinions and interviews about water and watershed related matters.

GW Solutions is working on projects both for the City of Dawson Creek and the Custodian of the Peace Society to characterize the hydrogeological conditions, both in the shallow aquifers and in the deep rock formations, to assess how shale gas-related activities (drilling, hydraulic fracturing, disposal of liquid wastes, etc.) may affect aquifers and watersheds.

GW Solutions was retained by the Pembina Institute to perform a study of the potential impacts of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) extraction on Salmon and Salmon habitat in the headwaters of the Skeena, Nass and Stikine Rivers, locally referred to as the Sacred Headwaters. Dr. Wendling's firm was also part of the team which produced the Action for Water, the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN)-proposed ten-year plan for protecting regional water resources and improving understanding of RDN's watersheds. GW Solutions has worked since 2009 with the Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society (MVIHES) to define the interconnection of the aquifers and the Englishman River, near Parksville, Vancouver Island. Aquifer monitoring is on-going.



## TED WHITE

Manager, Water Strategies & Conservation, BC Ministry of Environment

Ted White is Manager of the Water Strategies and Conservation Section with Water Protection and Sustainability Branch of the Ministry of Environment. Mr. White has been involved with Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan since its inception and now leads the policy team for the proposed Water Sustainability Act. A biologist in training, he has worked with the province in a variety of water related initiatives since 1994 that include: water quality and community watersheds, BC Hydro Water Use Planning, and watershed planning. The work on modernizing the Water Act provides an opportunity to better understand the value of water to British Columbians and the challenge of trying to find practical solutions that protect the resource and respect people's values.



## Chief SHARLEEN WILDEMAN

Fort Nelson First Nation

Chief Wildeman was elected as FNFN Chief Councilor in August 2012. In addition to being Chief, she has been working with Spectra Energy since 2000. Chief Wildeman has served on the FNFN Council since 2009 and enjoys being on the land, hunting, fishing and picking berries with her family. She is grand-daughter to Fred and Madeline Burke.



*“Water is sacred, water is life; we are the water.*

*The rains and snow bless the land.*

*We give thanks for water in all its forms - ice, snow, rain and lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and bogs.*

*The water in the wombs of our mothers connects us with all the water of Mother Earth.*

*We think of our children and our future generations. We think of our responsibility to them and to the plants and animals.*

*This gives us strength. We must work together to protect our grandchildren and the environment they live in. To do this, we must form a coalition and work together in unity. We know it is important to get the facts out now. We must also ensure that in this time of rapid development the duty to consult and accommodate is upheld. We must take this issue further and not let what we say die. To make sure this happens we are developing our options and strategies and identifying current challenges and opportunities.”*

Elders' Resolutions Preamble • “Tu beta Ts'ena” Water is Life,  
August 20-24, 2007 • Thebacha, Denendeh (Fort Smith, NWT)



*“As a keeper of the land,  
as Dené, the water is my responsibility.”*

FNFN Elder

*“There are many times when I go out there and it's quiet,*

*only the ghosts of yesterday live there as I sit by the river outside the house that I grew up in, sitting by the campfire in solitude, close my eyes and in the mind, I see the many children playing, I smell the smoke of many campfires, I hear the laughter and stories of my people and my heart aches for those happy days and all I can do is cry.*

*The tears fall and the pollution keeps coming.”*

Alice Rigney • Fort Chipewyan AB



# BACKGROUNDERS

Keepers of the Water **DECLARATION**  
Keepers of the Water **ROUGH WATERSHED PLAN**  
**TÚ NI TTHÉH • We Need the Water**

## Keepers of the Water Declaration

*September 7, 2006*

We the peoples gathered in Liidlii Kue, Denendeh, from September 5-8th, 2006, having come together as Keepers of the Water, connected as peoples residing in the vast basin including Lake Athabasca, Nsededha (Slave river), Tucho/Tu'neda (Great Slave Lake), and Dehcho.

RECALLING THAT the Creator sent Zhambáhdézhá as a messenger to the Indigenous peoples who live on Mother Earth, bringing us sacred laws to live by. We have been taught that the land is our Mother, and the waters are her blood that sustain life for all peoples, lands and creation. We are born from our Mother Earth and we are inseparable from her.

AFFIRMING THAT water is essential to life, and the right to life constitutes a fundamental human right, recognized by all countries of the world.

FURTHER AFFIRMING that as Indigenous peoples, since time immemorial, have fundamental rights to live on our own lands and to survive as peoples. As a sacred trust we have been given responsibility from the Creator to ensure the integrity of all waters in our lands in all its many forms – from the aquifers deep underground, to the rich marshlands, rivers and lakes that connect and sustain our communities, to the glaciers on the high mountains, to the rains and snow that restore and replenish our Mother Earth in an unending cycle of renewal.

RESPECTING that our sacred laws have not been honoured and that our Mother Earth is being abused out of ignorance and greed.

CONVINCED that our fundamental human rights with respect to water must be acknowledged and respected by all others.

CONVINCED that climate change, together with the unprecedented impacts of oil and gas extraction, oil sands developments, land conversion, deforestation, hydroelectric development, mining activities, industrial discharges, atmospheric pollution and water withdrawals on our waters, are diminishing the quantity and quality of water in our basin, other present and any future activities that change our land.

BEARING WITNESS THAT we are seeing the impacts of these changes before our eyes. When we travel our lands and waterways we see receding shorelines and depleted populations of fish and wildlife. Exotic species of plants and animals are encroaching, while indigenous species are disappearing as conditions change too quickly for them to adapt. The land and wildlife are being poisoned by pollution and contaminants. The very rhythms of the seasons are no longer familiar to us.

RECOGNIZING that causes of these changes are many and complex, but they are all caused by human action, government and industry, and we as the peoples of the Basin all share a common fate.

ASSERTING our rights to defend and protect the body and blood of our Mother Earth according to our sacred laws. Demanding that immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the spirit of the water, which sustains all life within the Basin, be protected today for our ancestors and future generations.

## WE PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Water is a sacred gift, an essential element that sustains and connects all life. It is not a commodity to be bought or sold. All people share an obligation to cooperate to ensure that water in all of its forms is protected and conserved with regard to the needs of all living things today and for future generations tomorrow.

All peoples in the Basin have a fundamental human right to water that must be recognized nationally and internationally, and incorporated into domestic law and policy. Progress towards the realization of the right to water must be monitored, and appropriate institutional mechanisms developed to ensure that these rights are implemented.

These rights require water undiminished in quality, quantity or natural rate of flow, to access waterbodies for purposes of harvesting, travel and navigation, and to prevent or seek redress for any action that may affect these rights. These rights extend to water as part of a healthy environment, and recognize spiritual and cultural values, taking into consideration the needs of the most disadvantaged and of future generations.

The use of water for industrial and commercial purposes is fundamentally limited by the requirement to not substantially alter the quantity, quality or natural rate of flow of the water within the Basin. The full costs of such water use decisions must be internalized and assumed according to the principle that polluters must be held accountable. This principle includes environmental bonds that would be great enough to ensure full remediation and reclamation from potential damages.

All governments and industry have common responsibilities to protect and conserve water, and must sustain commitments to implement these responsibilities.

The precautionary approach must be widely applied in all decisions or actions that may affect the quality, quantity or natural rate of flow of water within the Basin.

Comprehensive watershed management and land use planning to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the Basin must be implemented in advance of industrial allocations or development decisions.

The health and integrity of the Basin as a whole will only be achieved through integration and cooperation at all levels. Measures to protect and conserve water must be enacted and implemented by all levels of government.

Local communities have obligations to act decisively to protect the health and integrity of their water sources. All governments share responsibilities to take proactive steps to fund and sustain local capacity, training and infrastructure to improve and maintain the health and integrity of water and waterbodies throughout the Basin.

Indigenous and local communities play a vital role in water management because of their knowledge, traditional practices and relationships to the land. Formal mechanisms to improve scientific and traditional knowledge and understanding and to advance the effectiveness of measures to monitor, protect and conserve water must be undertaken by governments, industry, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Information about the state of water within the Basin must be collected and be disseminated to communities in a timely and accessible way. This will be sustained by a network of Indigenous and local communities who will gather to share experiences, knowledge about how to sustainably develop, protect and conserve their watersheds.

# Keepers of the Water Rough Watershed Plan

Key elements of a draft watershed plan for the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin

## LAND AND WATER USE DECISION MAKERS

1. This plan must recognize First Nation and Treaty Right implementation, and government to government relationship between Aboriginal people and governments.
2. Environmental groups and local citizens need to support First Nation and Treaty Rights as a means to ensure plan implementation.
3. We must consider the impacts of activities in our watershed on peoples and wildlife beyond our watershed and political jurisdictions.
4. Cumulative impact assessments must be done by independent scientists, not self regulating industries.
5. Moratorium on large scale developments such as tar sands and Site C dam until sustainable environmental management plan approved by consensus by true multi-stakeholder group (like us!).

## WATER RESOURCES, INVENTORY AND MONITORING

1. Monitoring has to start immediately, even at a small scale.
2. Sampling representative of the watershed and the hazards must meet the test of local and traditional knowledge as well as statistical and scientific rigor.
3. The flow and water temperature of rivers and tributaries has to be monitored, year round (even in the winter when ecosystems are very sensitive and the industries very active).
4. For every 10 wells drilled, the industry has to install one monitoring well.
5. The monitoring information has to be made readily available, in a timely manner.

## PRESSURE OF INDUSTRY ON WATERSHEDS

1. Active and meaningful local involvement in decision-making with full recognition of Treaty/Aboriginal rights, responsibilities and interests.
  - We need to be involved as local people in enforcing limits on environmentally damaging activities.
  - Greater level of coordination and cooperation between all groups and First Nations in the watershed.
  - Public education regarding existing guidelines and publicly affirming the good practices and guidelines that are in place can give companies incentive to do well.
2. Full analysis of situations and options (as it relates to industrial developments in the basin).
  - Use of wind power.
  - We need an honest and full analysis of our situation and options in relation to energy needs.
  - Conservation of energy.
3. Identify and set limits of acceptable impact/development.
  - Identify and set limits of acceptable change.
4. Implement systems for full-cost accounting for industrial development.
  - Triple bottom-line.
  - A full account of benefit that includes environmental, social and economic impacts.
  - We need to be clear in pointing out the true cost of industrial projects and activities.

5. Need for government direction, adequate and enforceable regulations.
  - Regulatory structures need resources for enforcement.
  - A willingness to pay more to provide resources for management and enforcement, and an informing of government regarding a willingness to pay for effective accomplishing of environmental objectives.
  - We need to hold the government accountable to commitments and promises they have already made.
  - We need to pressure or influence government to enforce existing guidelines.
  - A tax regime that rewards conservation of energy and other resources.
  - Carbon taxes.
  - The government needs to be given clear directives that demonstrate financial outcomes of proposed solutions.

### **SENSITIVITY AND VULNERABILITY OF ECOSYSTEMS**

1. People used to be able to drink the water from any lake or river; now they can't trust the health of the water or the fish in many water bodies.
  - For the entire Arctic Drainage Basin the goal must be to be able to drink the water anywhere without harm to health (subject to natural parameters).
  - Government, industry and people must establish standards, make decisions and behave in ways that achieve this goal.
2. The Arctic Basin contains numerous landscapes with unique variability and vulnerability to change (e.g., muskeg and permafrost).
  - Important and sensitive ecosystems unique to the North need special recognition within the development regulatory framework.
3. Communities are seeing changes in fish (not spawning, flesh sticky, infected, deformities), beavers and trees disappearing, etc.
  - Lakes and rivers are the heart and veins of the Earth.
  - Whatever impacts ecosystems upstream also impacts communities (people, animals and fish) downstream. Fish are especially sensitive and vulnerable.
4. Elders remember the land the way it was; young people think it's always been this way (e.g., Pingos melting).
  - Local knowledge (aboriginal and non-aboriginal) is an important source of information and should be included in watershed planning and monitoring.
  - It is important to take a long-term view in monitoring and recording changes in water systems.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT**

1. Early consultation and awareness of the Plan dispels misunderstanding, is open and transparent to all watershed citizens, groups, governments, business and is specific to community/region.
2. One-on-one communication is important and having local/regional person(s) to communicate vision and plan (i.e. Elders to communities/spokesperson to industry/government).
3. Positive message of renewable energy; extinguish fossil fuel reliance as viable alternative for truly democratic energy system.
4. Respect equally two streams of knowledge in our awareness/education/involvement (local, traditional, indigenous and science) and bring knowledge forward through experiential learning (hands, head, heart).
5. Youth involvement is essential, needs to be engaged through experiential education/awareness involvement.

## Fort Nelson First Nation Perspectives: Tú ni Tthéh • We Need the Water

For countless generations, Fort Nelson First Nation people, the Dene and the Cree, have enjoyed an intricate relationship with our land and our water. Our people need water, not only to survive as human beings, but also to survive as Dene and Cree people in our land.

The water gives us life. It provides us with sustenance, health, comfort, mobility and a spiritual and cultural connection to the land and all our relations. Since time immemorial, our people used water everywhere in our land. The availability of fresh, clean water allowed us to travel freely throughout our territory, providing for our families. Unfortunately, the industrialization of our land in the past two generations now threatens our traditional relationship with water and all life that it sustains, including our own. This is a problem that FNFN Elders believe can be solved, but only if we work together.

### WE NEED THE WATER TO SURVIVE

FNFN's ancestors, Elders, and present day members have lived across the entirety of our territory since time immemorial. Our lives have always revolved around our rivers, lakes and streams - water systems that bear our names. The rivers, lakes, streams and muskeg are all integral to our survival as Dene and Cree people in this land:

1. We are River People. Our people have always lived along the rivers and lakes in our land. We have always had a close relationship with water.
2. The river is the road for us. In summer we travel the river in jet boats and canoes. In winter, we travel the frozen waters with our skidoos, along rivers that our ancestors walked and our dog teams once ran.
3. Water has always provided a means of economic survival for our community. Our waters have always provided us with the means to support our families in our territory.
4. Water is integral to our cultural traditions and survival. Moose, beaver and migratory birds are hunted along rivers and in wetlands. Food and medicine is gathered, drums and regalia are made, fire is built. Water sustains all of this.
5. Daily survival on the land requires getting water, keeping water...everyday it is needed. To survive on the land, our people collect water to live.
6. The rivers in our territory provide life and nourishment for our people. Hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting food plants - it all happens at the river and the muskeg.

7. Water provides our people with medicines for healing and comfort. Many of our medicines grow only in the muskeg or along rivers.
8. Water has a ceremonial and spiritual element for our members. Water provides us with spiritual health, with ceremonies and celebrations, memorials and commemorations.

*"Water is life. Without water is death. Water is life; that is why we always talk about the land, water and the air, those things we need for our life."*

## **WE USED TO BE ABLE TO DRINK WATER EVERYWHERE**

Our Elders tell us of the days when we could drink water from anywhere in our territory. Our Elders were born and raised along the rivers and lakes in our territory and grew up drinking from the muskeg, from rain, from snow and ice, from creeks, lakes and rivers. It had always been that way, but our relationship with water changed with the coming of the Alaska Highway and the discovery of oil and gas in FNFN territory.

*"Everything we needed was out there, we knew our world."*

## **WE CAN'T DRINK THE WATER ANYMORE**

Our Elders say that they will not drink water off the land anymore because they are scared about what is in it. With ongoing oil and gas activity in our territory, our Elders, through experience and knowledge gained over the past 50 years, fear for the health of our people, the animals, and our land, now and into the future.

*"We drank the water at any creek, muskeg, lake water, any kind of water, we all had a camp near the water, Every place we gotta put the camp near the water. Today, I go out there I'm scared to drink the water."*

## **IF WE ALL COME TOGETHER WE CAN SOLVE THIS PROBLEM**

Industrial resource extraction has been occurring within FNFN territory for two generations now, and for two generations, we have been concerned about its effect on our people, our land and the future of water in our territory. Today, with the introduction of shale gas extraction and hydraulic fracking methods, we are concerned that we are facing the largest and most destructive industrial force that our waters have ever known. As a community, we need to take the responsibility work together and face these problems so our land and waters remain healthy and we continue to survive as healthy Dene and Cree people in our land.

*"There is something about the way we are using resources...the relationship with water...we are forgetting it's a reciprocal relationship...water belongs here."*

# FRIENDS & SPONSORS

A special thank you to our host, Fort Nelson First Nation,  
and the Fort Nelson FN Lands Department.

SILVER SPONSOR

Tervita Corporation

BRONZE SPONSORS

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Harvest Energy/Harvest Operations Corporation

Nortech Business Solutions

PennWest Exploration

Shifting Mosaics Consulting

FRIENDS OF THE KEEPERS OF THE WATER

Dowd Brothers Contracting

M&M Resources

Overwaitea Foods

Quicksilver Resources Canada

... and all the community members and leaders who supported  
this important event through their travel and participation.

