
contracts on Keeyask in the areas of employee retention, camp catering and housekeeping and security; and

- A variety of mitigation and monitoring measures addressing impacts on fish, mammals and birds.

Commission Comment – KCNs' Assessments

The Commission found that the three KCN evaluations added greatly to an understanding of the Keeyask Project and to the environmental, historical, cultural, social and spiritual context of the Project. In addition to documenting the experiences and knowledge of members of the communities that will be most affected by the Project, these three reports provided a better idea of how the KCNs came to their decisions to participate in Keeyask and how they put forward issues of great importance to them. They added immeasurably to the ability of Panel members to consider the holistic nature of impacts to the environment of the Lower Nelson River. The reports presented a range of views regarding the Project – pro and con and mixed – and this helped the Panel to better understand the relationship between hydroelectric development and neighbouring communities. The viewpoint of the three reports, which takes a long view of the region and does not distinguish impacts on a project-by-project basis, is especially worthwhile in understanding the cumulative effects of hydroelectric development in northern Manitoba.

they may have valid concerns, or missing an opportunity to participate because they do not understand the various processes.

Governments and proponents need to be cognizant of the impacts of so much consultation on the communities and their leadership. The current protocols should be reviewed to establish a streamlined communication process that is effective but less of a burden on the communities.

15.3 Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment

During the Commission's hearings on Bipole III, it became apparent that there was a need for a Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment on the Nelson River system, to address past, current and future impacts of hydro development. We made a recommendation to that end, which was accepted by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

The Keeyask hearings underlined for the Panel that this was of the utmost importance. The Panel is pleased that this activity is underway. The Panel encourages both the Province and Manitoba Hydro to allocate all necessary resources to ensure that this is completed as soon as possible.

15.4 Aboriginal Worldviews

The Panel found the inclusion of the Cree worldview and Aboriginal Technical Knowledge (ATK) to be a very positive and critical part of the information, providing a context for much of the scientific studies.

In doing this, the Partnership has taken a very big and positive step. This demonstrates good faith in making strides to understand and incorporate ATK into a process which has typically ignored it, relying, in the past, solely on Western Scientific Knowledge (WSK). But, in the Commission's view, this is only a first step; it is still very much a work in progress. Manitoba Hydro – and its partners – and the Government of Manitoba need to continue to develop this. A narrow approach to doing this will not succeed. The work must be collaborative with Aboriginal communities, with academics and with groups across country who are also pursuing respect for and incorporation of ATK and Aboriginal worldviews into environmental decision-making. A wealth of historical information is available, as well as advice on the consequences of particular management actions. The Commission encourages Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship to take into greater consideration Aboriginal worldviews and ATK in resource and environmental management.

Given that a WSK environmental assessment seeks to find no residual effects after mitigation on individual VECs, when viewed from a global ecosystem perspective, this can be seen as a flawed process. ATK, on the other hand, places paramount importance on protecting the whole of the ecosystem. Incorporating the two approaches could well provide great benefits to our environment.

One method of facilitating these interactions could be through a "Grandmothers Circle". This concept was presented to the Panel by its one Aboriginal member, Reg Nepinak, an Anishinabe member of the Pine Creek First Nation, who was raised in a traditional family with its values and respect for *Askiy*. It is described in the accompanying text-box, written by Mr. Nepinak. The Panel believes this is worth sharing.