

SAUGEEN OJIBWAY NATION

A Brief History



We have been living in Saukiing Anishnaabekiing (*the location of the Saukiing Anishnaabek*), on Turtle Island, and among the waters of the Great Lakes since time immemorial. As part of the Anishnaabek, *The Original People* and *Those Who Were Lowered*, our identity is founded on our laws, teachings, practices, experiences and relationships. We have always had a deep and profound connection to our land and waters. They have sustained us through great times and hardships. We have always been Stewards, caring for our territory and ensuring that we are not destroying the land and water that support all life.

We have descended from Anishnaabek groups that came together throughout the Great Lakes region and who formed the Three Fires Confederacy. The Confederacy worked together in support of *mino-bimaadiziwin, Living In A Good Way*, with all creation and among the Anishnaabek. Our Ancestors hunted, fished, harvested and gathered medicines from all over the territory in order to maintain the health and well-being of our nation. In all aspects of life our territory, Saukiing Anishnaabekiing, has sustained our nation and we in turn have responsibilities in caring for it.

The Saugeen Ojibway Nation Joint Council

The Saugeen Ojibway Nation Joint Council (or “Joint Council”), the political leadership for the Saukiing Anishnaabek, have always met to discuss governance over our lands and waters. In the mid 1800’s the Saukiing Anishnaabek entered into a series of treaties with the intent of sharing treaty lands with the Crown. Crown reserved lands for our communities are now only about 1.5% of our territory. Yet, we have maintained that we have a key role in determining how our treaty lands would be used and we have compelled the settler government to accommodate our continued use and benefit from these lands.

Today the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) is comprised of two communities: the Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. In recent years, the Chippewas of Nawash and Saugeen First Nations have re-affirmed the relationship and established the Joint Council. Initially, much of the work of the Joint Council revolved around the Treaty 72 land claim. We have won a landmark decision in the Canadian courts that protects our commercial fishery and the revitalization of our fishing economy is an important priority for Joint Council. After years of work we have also locked in commitments from the Ontario Power Generation related to the actions of the nuclear industry in our territory.

The SON Environment Office

The SON Environment Office provides coordination and support to the Joint Council on matters that impact or may potentially impact our rights, interests and jurisdiction in Saukiing Anishnaabekiing. The Environment Office receives direction from Joint Council to place efforts into matters in the territory that include, but are not limited to, land use, resource extraction, energy production, waste management, and our fisheries. The goal of the Environment Office is to provide support to the Joint Council through processes of making informed, sound and strategic political decisions that reinforce and strengthen the stewardship role we hold in our territory.

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FACTSHEET #1



We have a nuclear waste issue in our territory...

The Nuclear industry has been in our territory since the 1960s. Since that time nuclear waste has been produced and stored above ground at the Bruce Power site. This includes all types of waste: low level waste, intermediate level waste, and high level waste.

Every day, more nuclear waste is produced and stored in our territory. Low and intermediate nuclear waste is also being shipped to the storage facility in our territory from the Darlington and Pickering nuclear power plants. Right now about 40% of Canada's used nuclear fuel is stored in our territory.

We did not ask for this problem.

Nor have we been part of any decision-making around the activities of the nuclear industry in our territory. Still, the nuclear waste issue is here and it is one we must face.

For more than a decade now the Saugeen Ojibway Nation has pushed the nuclear industry to recognize our rights to manage the current and future impacts of nuclear waste on our territory and people. This is a fight we've won.

In 2013, Ontario Power Generation recognized our rights in two meaningful ways:

- by committing to address the historical impacts (or "legacy issues") of their operations operations in our territory
- by committing that the Deep Geologic Repository for low and intermediate level waste will NOT be built without our consent.

There is much work ahead for us. As stewards of our territorial lands and waters we have always asserted our inherent rights to our way of life. We have always upheld our values of living in harmony and balance with the land, waters, and all life that exists here. We can now set the course for how nuclear waste will be dealt with in our territory. We can work to right the wrongs of the past five decades of exclusion. The decisions ahead belong to all of us. What we decide will set the course for the future of our territory and our people.

Nuclear Waste Types

Low Level Waste:

- any material exceeds background levels and is more radioactive than allowed by the regulator
- includes clothing, rags, mops, soil, equipment and tools
- most of its radioactivity decays within 300 years

Intermediate Level Waste:

- waste that must be isolated for several hundred to several thousand years
- includes used reactor core components and resins and filters

High Level Waste:

- the most highly radioactive waste also known as used or spent fuel
- includes used reactor fuel rods
- remains radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years

Coming Soon: Free, Prior and Informed Consent Factsheet, Legacy Issues Q&A, Nuclear Waste Q&A, Key Events Timeline, and others.

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