

SAUGEEN OJIBWAY NATION

FACTSHEET #2



STEWARDSHIP AND LEGACY ISSUES

What does it mean to be a “Steward” in our territory?

We, as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, have always had a deep and profound connection to our land and waters. We have cared for the territory many ways through learning and acting upon the Great Laws that have taught us how to live in harmony with all things. Our Ancestors took on a stewardship role in caring for our territory. They did this by recognizing the health of the lands, waters, plants and animals; through much community discussion, and by acting in a way that supports balance and sustainability.

It is important that we think about what caring for Saukiing Anishnaabeking means to us today. Each of us was born with certain qualities and gifts that help us to understand how we can fulfill our role as Anishinaabek. We look at how our Ancestors described our relationship with the land and waters, and we do this by remembering our Great Laws.

Where do our Great Laws come from?

The Great laws governed the place and movement of sun, moon, earth and stars; governed the powers of wind, water, fire, and rock; governed the rhythm and continuity of life, birth, growth, and decay. All things lived and worked by these laws. - Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*

Our Ancestors built a strong foundation for carrying out our role as “Stewards.” The many stories and teachings that have been passed on to us today tell us about the universe and our existence. They are our Original Instruction. They tell us how we can carry out our responsibilities and they show us how we can interact with the land, the waters, the plants, and with our fellow animal beings and human beings in a good way.

The late Saukiing Anishnaabe Author and Storyteller Basil Johnston documents some of the teachings he was given in his book *Ojibway Heritage*. He retells how Creator, the Great Spirit, Kitche Manitou, formed the universe, created life, and provided us with The Great Laws of Nature “for the well being and harmony of all things and all creatures.”

Why is remembering our roles as “Stewards” important?

At the present time, we are faced with issues related to nuclear waste and nuclear power generation in our territory. As we begin to understand these issues and find ways they might be addressed it is important that we remember how to carry out our role as “Stewards”. We must observe and listen to all those with whom we share our territory including the waters, the plants and the animals. We must remember to consider the generations of our people to come who will inherit the legacy of the choices we make today.

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STEWARDSHIP AND LEGACY ISSUES CONTINUED

What do we mean by “Legacy Issues” as it relates to the nuclear power industry in SON Territory?

Since the nuclear facility at Douglas Point was first constructed in the 60’s the people of Saugeen Ojibway Nation have been voicing their questions and concerns with nuclear power generation in our territory.

We have had questions like:

- Why weren’t we notified of the project for a nuclear facility and why weren’t we given a say?
- What if there is an accident at the site?
- Are we exposed to radiation coming from the facility?
- How is the facility impacting our waters and our fisheries?
- Why are our many of our people not getting jobs at the facility?

The deep long-standing concerns we have had surrounding nuclear power generation in our territory cannot be ignored. The Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) Joint Council pressured the industry and government to recognize our territory as well as the important role our people have in caring it. We have concern for the lands and waters currently being utilized by and surrounding the Bruce Power Nuclear Power Plant.

After years of discussion with the SON Joint Council, Ontario Power Generation finally made a commitment to our nation that they will work with us to resolve the “Legacy Issues” (see sidebar for a definition) stemming from nuclear power generation in our territory.

How do we begin to identify and address our “Legacy Issues”?

The first step is to identify the impacts of nuclear power generation on our people our territory and our way of life. This process will take time and must be driven by the community. Over the coming weeks and months the SON Joint Council and Environment Office will work to gather community input and ideas to make informed collective decisions as a nation. You will be asked about your issues as part of identifying the Legacy Issues we have with nuclear power generation in our territory.

Web: saugeenojibwaynation.ca Phone: 519-534-5507, Facebook, Twitter

What are

“Legacy Issues”?

The historical and on-going impacts of the nuclear industry. This includes impacts on:

Our Territory

- on the lands
- on the waters
- on the air
- on the fish, birds, insects, animals and ecosystems

Our People

- on our health and well-being
- our cultural and spiritual connection to our territory

Our Economy

- on the health of the fisheries, waters and the land
- on our growth and future

Our Rights

- to make decisions on issues, projects and developments that may impact our lands, waters and communities.