

Muskrat Falls Generation Project Stakeholder Update

SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

At Nalcor Energy, we are committed to consulting with the communities and individuals in the areas where our work and operations take place.

Nalcor has been engaging with and sharing information regarding water levels and methylmercury with Government, Indigenous leaders and the Independent Expert Advisory Committee (IEAC). As we head into the fall, we wanted to broadly share information on these and other important topics.

Mitigation Activities

Over the summer, we undertook further mitigation activities within the Muskrat Falls reservoir below the 25 m water elevation level. Approximately 40 hectares of trees were cleared on Edwards Island and associated access roads and river banks. The clearing work was completed in early August.

These trees will be safely disposed of later this fall. We will continue providing information on this in the coming weeks.

Water Levels

The safety and health of people living and working in and around the Muskrat Falls facilities is our number one priority.

In response to commitments agreed upon in October 2016 by Government and Indigenous leaders, and direction from the Premier to lower water levels on June 21, 2017, our engineering consultant, SNC-Lavalin, provided operational guidance in relation to reducing water levels.

Understanding the commitment made to Indigenous groups, in spring/summer 2017 we sought further engineering assistance as to how best to undertake the reduction in water levels. Keeping safety top-of-mind we undertook this work and lowered water levels in the Muskrat Falls reservoir from 22.5 m to 20.3 m. The average water level in the reservoir during spring conditions is about 20.0 metres.

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While lowering water levels, regular inspections were undertaken. During some aerial surveys, engineers expressed concerns about the erosion of some of the banks upstream of the facility. In the interest of public safety, we did not reduce water levels beyond 20.3 m.

Next Steps

Over the coming week, we will begin to raise the water level upstream of the spillway from the current level of approximately 20.5 m to approximately 21.5 m to allow for the safe installation of the safety boom. During this time we will be making some changes to the positions of the spillway gates. As we prepare the site for the winter season, it is critical to install the boom before ice begins to form on the river. We've prepared some additional information to explain what the boom is and why it is required to be installed.

Methylmercury Monitoring

We continue to advance work and studies on methylmercury in the lower Churchill River system. We are working closely with technical experts and consultants with extensive experience regarding methylmercury and reservoir creation from across the country.

In October 2016 and in coordination with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, Amec Foster Wheeler was engaged to undertake a Water and Sediment Sampling Program. The program includes the sampling of water and sediment at 11 locations from upstream of the future Muskrat Falls reservoir to Rigolet and provides data to detect changes in methylmercury concentrations in water and sediment.

The scientific experts who have reviewed this data have not seen any significant changes in methylmercury levels from baseline (the starting point or level used for comparison purposes) since measurement began last fall. Water methylmercury concentrations continue to be consistent with levels found in pristine river systems. All the data that has been collected and analyzed has been provided to the IEAC for them to consider in their ongoing review of the methylmercury in the reservoir.

The data and analysis is publically available on the following websites:

Municipal Affairs and Environment: http://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/methylmercury_mrf.html

Muskrat Falls Project has posted data and sampling memos from Amec Foster Wheeler at: <https://muskratfalls.nalcorenergy.com/environment/generation/methylmercury-monitoring/>

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For information about the IEAC, its mandate and members, visit:

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2017/ma/0804n03.aspx>

We understand people's concerns and fully support the IEAC. We look forward to continued dialogue with the IEAC and await further guidance regarding any additional mitigation measures.

Contact Us

We'll continue to share information with our stakeholders as begin to raise the water levels and install the boom. If you'd like to receive our regular updates, please send us an email with the subject line "Stakeholder Updates" and we'll add you to our distribution list. Our email address is: lowerchurchill@nalcorenergy.com.

CONTACT US

For more information or to speak to a member of our team, contact us:

1-888-576-5454

lowerchurchill@nalcorenergy.com

 Twitter: @nalcorenergy

 Facebook: [facebook.com/nalcorenergy](https://www.facebook.com/nalcorenergy)

