



Ministry of
the Environment

Environmental Approvals
Branch

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ENV1283MC-2013-2814

October 1, 2013

Kaaren Olsen Dannenmann
1000 Anton Beach
Trout Lake ON
antonbeach@hotmail.com

Dear Ms. Dannenmann:

Thank you for your September 9, 2013 correspondence to the Minister of the Environment in which you express concerns with Horizon Hydro Operations Ltd.'s proposed hydroelectric project at Big Falls on Trout Lake River (Project). I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Minister.

The Ministry of the Environment is currently reviewing Part II Order requests that were submitted for the proposed Project, including your Part II Order request submitted on May 17, 2013. This letter is to acknowledge the petition and articles that you have submitted for review.

If you have any questions please contact Anne Cameron of this Branch at 416-314-8229 or anne.cameron@ontario.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with the Project.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Lashbrook
Manager (A), Environmental Assessment Services Section
Environmental Approvals Branch

c: Karen McGhee, Project Manager, Horizon Hydro Operations Ltd.
Noel Boucher, Hatch Ltd.

ENV1283MC -2013-2814

U Anton Beach,
Trout Lake, Ontario
Box 793,
Red Lake, Ontario
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Sept. 9, 2013

The Honourable Minister Jim Bradley,
Minister of the Environment,
77 Wellesley Street West,
11th Floor, Ferguson Block,
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2T5

Dear Mr. Minister:

I am enclosing a copy of the petition that is being circulated in our traditional area of Treaty #3. The signatures include those of some of our visitors and guests.

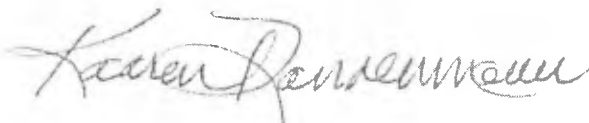
I also think it is appropriate for you to consider the articles and papers that I also enclose. The topics discussed clearly do not include all the reasons for our opposition to the building of a dam on the Trout Lake River, at Big Falls, as the proponent Horizon Inc. would like. Although these are not scholarly papers, they do articulate many of our reasons to protect our traditional waterways and values as caretakers of our traditional territory. There are many more reasons and values.

The enclosed articles are:

- About MNR The Tip of the Iceberg
- No More Appropriation of our Place Names!!
- We Cannot Allow the Voices of Our Stories to be Drowned Out
- Women are the Water Keepers
- NamekosipiwAnishinaapek and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

I encourage you and your staff to read these in the context of the Part II Order request that I and a colleague submitted to you in May of this year.

Kichi miikwech! for your time and consideration.



antonbeach@hotmail.com

Kaaren Dannenmann
807-727-3196 and

EPAB-DK

RECEIVED SEP 20 2013

February, 2013

About MNR The Tip of the Iceberg

At a recent Idle No More rally, someone asked me what MNR does. This person thought that MNR looked after the land and resources. With this writing, I will refer to my own stories and analyze how this reflects Anishinaape life experience and how this short paper answers that question.

I am sixty-three years old and Trout Lake has always been my home, although I may have spent several years in other parts of the country. Growing up in Trout Lake, I learned very early how the Department of Lands and Forests (the predecessor of MNR, whom we called wiiyaaskewiniwak, or the "game wardens") were the enemy, from whom we had to hide a lot of information, for example, killing moose or caribou or ducks for food. I was well aware of Anishinaape story on the lake, having learned through the stories of my mother and aunts and uncles and cousins, and knew what our rights were on the lake. One of my Metis friends, now in her late 30's, took a hunter safety course two years ago. She described to me the things she was learning. She said that one morning, they learned about the regulations, one of which said hunting could not be carried out after sunset. She said she proceeded to argue that point, that, in fact, they *could only start* hunting after sunset. She explained to the instructor how her grandparents and uncles took her hunting when she was a little girl and they always left after the sun had set. She said they never got into trouble. After several times back and forth, she realized that that way of hunting was the way that Metis hunted, having learned that skill from their Anishinaape relatives and from the facts of their lives. She said that, looking back, she realized that was why the meat had to be hidden. They were acting outside the laws of the state, altho' they were acting in line with the laws of the Land, where they took what they needed and gave back accordingly. We still chuckle about that story, how naive she had been all her life.

When I came back to Trout Lake to live, in my early 30's, I was often startled when MNR conservation officers came *roaring into* the quiet of the forest, "visiting" and poking around. Literally, poke around. They checked every pile of snow, looking for meat or fish or whatever. I knew that their "friendly" tones disguised attempts to flesh out some criminal activity. Invariably, they would find some horrific infraction of their law. I went thru a series of court cases, all of which I won. I knew that, of course, we NamekosipiiwAnishinaapek have the right to use gill nets, any time of the year, we can hunt moose without the authority of an Ontario hunting license, we can LIVE in Trout Lake in regular homes, rather than what they called "trapper shacks". We can build homes without the necessity of seeking their permission. We can even have a TV and a satellite dish and computer and phone! Even hardwood floors!!! Of course, we knew all along that we could, the state is always slow to know what is common knowledge and what is ancient knowledge.

I still see how MNR uses intimidation tactics on our Elders and youth so that they will stay away from Trout Lake. They like to hide behind their uniforms and guns and big new vehicles. They know how to use them to intimidate and terrorize and did just that.

But no more. We are all learning that our responsibilities on the Land also come with inalienable hereditary rights. Idle No More is teaching us our rights and teaching us to stand up and defend our rights.

We see how expert they are in their "divide and conquer" practices. They cultivate special relationships with certain members of the community, they show their favouritism. They think that this will create jealousy amongst us, that we will root out the traitors, their favourites. They have perfected these to the extent that individual MNR people are not even consciously aware of what they are doing. They have been well-trained. But we are aware, we are vigilant. We don't let that slow down our efforts of rebuilding our community or defending our homeland. When they see us allowing one another our differences of opinion, our differences of life experience, they think we are divided. For us, it is about Circle. We don't call each other liars, we simply say, "I see it this way, from my perspective" or "My memories of that event are quite different, this is how I remember it, from my perspective."

MNR conducted an initial survey (actually, Hatch did it) of the rivers in Ontario that may have areas where water power could be harnessed and developed. Question: What gave MNR that right when they did no consultation with FN's of this survey? That is not acceptable and MNR has to be held accountable for deviating from normal FN consultation protocol.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources immediately sought proposals to develop three hydropower sites on the Trout Lake River. What gave MNR the right to seek proposals for these sites on the Trout Lake River? Again, with no consultation with the First Nations community of Trout Lake.

That same year, the government introduced the Standard Offer Program providing standard terms and conditions intended to make it simpler and less costly for operators of small renewable energy facilities to supply Ontario's electricity system.

On October 11, 2007, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency received a project description for the Trout Lake River Hydroelectric Project. The proponent for this project was Horizon Hydro Inc. This project was proposed as a "run of the river" hydro power facility on the Trout Lake River with a capacity of between 3 and 5 MW. It was not until this occurred that the Trout Lake Anishinaapek were notified. The NamekosipiwAnishinaapek were unanimously opposed to the project.

On November 24, 2005, the Supreme Court released ruling on *Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada*. In this decision, the Supreme Court examined consultation and accommodation duties in the context of historical treaty rights. This court case requires consultation and accommodation of First Nation issues on any development projects. MNR totally ignored this and stands in violation of this case law.

On November 12, 2010, Canada endorsed the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Article 26 of the Declaration says: *1. Indigenous Peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. 2. Indigenous Peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. 3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with with due respect to the customs, traditional and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.*

Not only do we NamekosipiwAnishinaapek have the right to the free use and occupation and development of our ancestral areas of the Trout Lake River, but that right is **recognized internationally**.

Furthermore, Article 28 of the declaration says: *1. Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.*

Not only do the state and companies have to consult and accommodate but also need our prior informed consent. MNR and Horizon did not seek to address any of these requirements. They are acting out of a misguided and arrogant sense of entitlement that is a part of their invisible knapsack of white-skin privilege. Shame on them all.

This writing describes just the tip of the giant iceberg of the role that MNR plays in the insidious effort to separate the Anishinaape people from their lands in order to clear the way for the destructive activities of industry in their endless pursuit of profit and power.

Written by

Kaaren Dannenmann

No More Appropriation of our Place Names!!

The name of the project is an appropriation of the name of our home place. It is no more a Trout Lake Hydro project than Niagara Falls is. Horizon Inc.'s website _____ is dedicated to *its* plans for Big Falls, on the Trout Lake River. The title of the site is **TROUT LAKE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT.**

The Trout Lake Anishinaape people strongly object to this misuse of the name of our homeplace, Trout Lake, Namekosipiink. Shame on Horizon for using an old colonial tactic and not expecting the NamekosipiiwAnishinaapek to recognize this old trick. Shame on Horizon for expecting us to respond by shutting down and being quiet and "complying with our silence".

The appropriation of another peoples' sacred items, stories, place names, national images, regalia, or any other personal or national matter is an old colonial trick to psychologically subjugate a group of people. Suzan Shown Harjo, activist, journalist, Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee Indian, is very articulate in her description of how appropriation is used against the psyche of a people in order to maintain and continue this subjugation. (Oprah, 1992.) This appropriation and (mis)use attempts to relegate the colonized people into the past, making them invisible and irrelevant. The appropriation attempts to demean and belittle us, reducing us to mascots and jokes. Appropriation in any form attempts to cartoon us, dehumanize us, *put us in the past tense*. Appropriation is meant to take away our vitality, our viability, our spirituality.

Some of Harjo's examples are seen as people drive around in vehicles or fly around in airplanes that have appropriated the names of our nations or our heroes and leaders. Our images and names are used to sell food products, clothing, rifles, etc. This is not acceptable.

In his article, Canoe Tripping in the periodical Pathways, The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education, Summer 2010, 22(4), Phil Dannenmann describes the process which makes the act of cultural appropriation unrecognizable and invisible. Beginning his discourse from the place of privilege, where one does not ever have to question his place, but finding a place of awareness through his Anishinaape teachers, he finally arrives to the position of responsibility. This is the place where Horizon needs to be, as well as MNR.

Many academics now recognize, and question themselves and one another about, the thin line between the deep learning of Indigenous thought and appropriation. In her paper (published in the CANADIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION 33, 4 (2010): 925-950 ©2010 Canadian Society for the Study of Education/

Société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation), Celia Haig-Brown puts forward the following questions:

When and how does learning a secondary discourse become cultural theft? Can it ever be anything else?

It seems that these questions often blur for many white people, go in and out of focus, especially those who work for MNR and other government agencies involved in the facilitation of resource extraction, and most especially for those who work in industry based on resource extraction.

MNR has asked the Trout Lake Anishinaabek to write to them to explain our opposition to the Big Falls hydro project. I could write a book, and in fact, books have been written. I would like to know what they have been doing for the ten years+ that they knew about our opposition to the project. Why have they not been gathering information from our people so they can be informed about the opposition? Did they think they could position their heads, collectively, in the sand and our opposition would magically disappear?

MNR and Horizon have tried to minimize the Trout Lake people's opposition to "concerns". They want us to describe our concerns so they can deal with them one by one, or they can simply have an underling send us a form letter. When we are devastated by their actions and projects and inaction, MNR and Horizon will say, that had not been their intent. We can say, you may not have intended to run over us but IT HURTS JUST THE SAME, we still feel the staggering pain and violence. MNR and Horizon will say, we didn't know, we just didn't know. And we will ask, WHAT didn't you know? You know when you see it and hear it, that it is wrong. We will paraphrase Indigenous writer, professor, political activist Thomas King (*From Amazon Books description of King's narrative, The Truth about Stories*): "Don't ever again intimate that you might have done things differently if only you had known. You KNOW DIFFERENT now. DO different NOW."

Trout Lake and its river system are sacred to us. The water is as much a part of us as the blood that flows through our veins. The names we give to each place, every stop in the river, every bend, every point, every ripple, every tree and rock and blade of grass -- all document our history, our story, our stories. Our experiences, our laughter, our dream -- all are etched along the shores of the lake and river. NO MORE DESTRUCTION of our Land and Water. No more appropriation of our Land and Waters.

We are quiet no more. We are vocal and loud and visible. We are **IdleNoMore**.

-- by Kaaren Dannenmann

We Cannot Allow the Voices of Our Stories to be Drowned Out

In Horizon's EA Report, the view of our cultural heritage is carefully minimized, kept very narrow, with the archaeologist(s) and anthropologist(s) making every effort to keeping it to reporting physical artifacts such as pottery sherds and arrowheads, of which there are apparently none at Big Falls. The report said that there was no significant archaeological finds at any of their test sites. This is so old-school. To whom is it not significant? Who set the bars for significance? This is unacceptable. The world around us is changing.

Sonya Atalay, in her paper, *Indigenous Archaeology as Decolonizing Practice* says: "The decolonization of archaeological practice has also been influenced by the changing demographics of the United States and the increase in diversity at institutions of higher education. As the ethnic and cultural diversity of the United States and its institutions of higher learning increases and a greater number of Indigenous people and others familiar with the effects of colonization on their culture and communities enter the academy, the topic of archaeology's colonial lineage continues to move further to the foreground, creating a diverse critical mass, of sorts, of those interested in changing aspects of the practice of archaeology. In terms of Indigenous people, the situation in the United States is similar to that found among Indigenous groups globally, where very few Indigenous people are archaeologists, although a majority of the archaeology under examination in many regions are sites used by, lived in, and created by the ancestors of living Indigenous populations. Following the leadership of community activists and scholars in other disciplines, a large number of Indigenous people continue to commit themselves to reclaiming ancestors and repatriation struggles. To facilitate these struggles, some have received training and advanced degrees in archaeology. Others have found archaeology to be a useful part of understanding tribal histories and recovering Indigenous traditions. As a result, there are a growing number of Indigenous people who have careers, in one form or another, in archaeology, and the influence of these Native leaders, who often view themselves as Indigenous activists working to change the discipline of archaeology from within, is now capable of having a profound effect on the direction of archaeological methods, theories, practice, and ethics."

Decolonizing archaeological practice means to take down or put away the colonial lens or framework through which archaeological interpretations, in the past for the most part, in the present for the Big Falls archaeological report, have been built (Atalay, paraphrased). Decolonized archaeological practice has to be "with, for and by Indigenous people" -- Atalay continues: "we must then continue to explore ways to create an ethical and socially just practice of archaeological research—one that is in synch with and contributes to the goals, aims, hopes, and curiosities of the communities whose past and heritage are under study, using methods and practices that are harmonious with their own worldviews, traditional knowledges, and lifeways." By definition, this includes the oral history, the stories of the people. Present-day archaeology, such as that at Lakehead University, strives to include all these facets, especially story.

The stories of our NamekosipiiwAnishinaape ancestors are all along the Trout Lake River, at each falls and rapids, each lake and bend in the river, at every camp site. Hundreds of people, over hundreds of centuries, made the same journey two, three, four times each year. An early European visitor to the area, geologist Dowling (1896:17), specifically took the time to mention that the Trout Lake River where "Indians form large camps in the autumn to catch whitefish as they are ascending the river to the spawning grounds." He obviously saw this as a significant, seasonally important place for the Trout Lake people.

Every Anishinaape person on every trip would have had a story to tell. These stories were almost lost to us when that seasonal, migratory way of life was disrupted by the "discovery" of gold in the Red Lake area in the 1920's and, to a greater extent, by the building of the dam at Ear Falls resulting in the massive flooding of Lac Seul and the creation of its huge reservoir. The stories were almost lost to us when our community of Trout Lake was dismembered over the past 85 years, first by the gold rush, the damming of Ear Falls, the residential schools, alcohol, diseases, Christianity, the great scoop and the deaths of our people on the land. Consistently, our stories were denigrated as "legends" and "myths" and "fables" and "tales". Slowly, over the years, the stories were put away, for a time when we would need and use them again. That time is now.

These stories, hundreds of thousands of them, have been preserved for us by our relations on the land and near the water. As an example of this reality, in *The Truth About Stories*, Native novelist and scholar Thomas King explores how stories shape who we are and how we understand and interact with other people. From creation stories to personal experiences, historical anecdotes to social injustices, racist propaganda to works of contemporary Native literature, King probes Native culture's deep ties to storytelling. Many other Canadian researchers (e.g., Asch 1997; Cruikshank 1992, 2000, 2005; Palmer 2005) have made the point that oral history is so significant in North American cultures, it is surprising that **local oral story was not considered during this environmental assessment.**

With wry humor, King deftly weaves events from his own life as a child in California, an academic in Canada, and a Native North American with a wide-ranging discussion of stories told by and about Indians. King reminds the reader, Native and non-Native, that storytelling and storyhearing carry with it social and moral responsibilities. "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now." (*From Amazon Books description of King's narrative, The Truth about Stories.*) This is relevant to the Environmental Assessment process in that the highest courts of the country has seen fit to recognize and acknowledge the oral tradition of Indigenous people. (Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, 1997.)

In 2003, Thomas King gave a series of five lectures on CBC's Massey Lectures. He was the first Massey lecturer of North American

Indigenous descent. He began telling some traditional oral stories, but quickly wove his way through literature and history, religion and politics, popular culture and social protest, in an effort to make sense of North America's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous." (King 2003)

How could our stories be seen as dangerous? Our stories are gentle and fun, but because they describe our relationships on the land, with All our Relations, based on respect, rights, responsibilities and reciprocity, our stories are a danger to those who view the land as a commodity, a way of maximizing profit and power. Our stories had to be silenced in order to change us, to assimilate us to their values and ways.

The Church and the residential schools were not the only ways that this was attempted. Aboriginal peoples' lives on the land were also under attack. In an MNR publication called "Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America", chapter four, written by Peter W. Hutchins, is entitled "The Law Applying to the Trapping of Furbearers by Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: A Case of Double Jeopardy." In the middle of page 33 is this paragraph: "During the 1920's, government officials began to map trapping areas. These were then given to individuals of families who, in return for the purchase of an annual trapping license, acquired an exclusive right to trap their "registered lines". This system was first introduced in British Columbia, but spread to all parts of northern Canada excluding the High Arctic, which still lay beyond the reach of all but the most adventurous of white trappers. These registered traplines were an attempt to *introduce an orderly White presence in the wilderness*, and were also held to be the only way of protecting limited wildlife resources from excessive harvesting. They were equally an attempt to *bring what were considered the Indians' unusual economic practices into line with ideas of ownership and exclusivity in the interests of rational production for a market economy*. Registration was not designed with Indian land use or Indian interests in mind, but Indians everywhere were urged to register lines and accept the rules of the newest colonial game. This was the first direct attack upon and restriction of Indian life in the region. (Brody 1981: 88-89)" (Emphasis mine.)

Phew. In one short descriptive paragraph, Ontario's new legislation of the late 1940's would attempt to do what the residential school system and the Indian Act were taking too long to do. Separate the people from their land. Keep the people off their land. Scatter them across the continent of Turtle Island so they won't know where their home is.

Still, it did not happen. And, now, in 2013, new legislation is being put in place to carry out what the state has yet not been able to do. With Bill C-45, The Federal Government vacates jurisdiction over waters, parks, fisheries, etc. and the responsibility and duty to consult and accommodate, honour treaty rights, requirement of free, prior and informed consent. By vacating it to the Province, the Feds wash their hands clean of Treaty Rights knowing the Province feel free to do whatever they want. This bill would allow the Provinces to have more powerful expropriation powers.

What is the story behind this long line of Federal efforts to abrogate treaty responsibilities? of the potential massive destruction to life and land and water? Where do we begin to look for these stories? Whose stories are they?

One of the stories was given to me when I turned on the TV this morning, to David Suzuki's program, The Nature of Things. It was about Charles Darwin's story of evolution. They call this story "the way of natural history", they call it "natural law". A story of natural selection. A story of the survival of the fittest. A story of brutal struggle for existence, for survival. A story where people fight each other, one side wins, one side is exterminated. Ahh, yes, I see the danger in that story. There is a danger to all peoples who are not the "strongest" physically, who are not the "fittest" physically. There is danger to the Land and all its peoples.

Another story surfaced from that program, the Biblical story of creation and the commandments from God. In Genesis 1:28, God said to his human creations, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." I see the danger in that story, too. It also is about the subjugation of others, about a hierarchal way of being in relation to all others on the planet. Inevitably, that story also leads to staggering pain and deprivation and violent death.

"Stories are wondrous things." (King 2003.) Yes, some stories are still wondrous things. Indigenous people do not view the Land in that way. Indigenous peoples' story begins with the view that all life on the Land are our Relations. We are all equal, we are all a part of the great Circle of Life. We share and help and look after one another. Just as the Land and Waters look after us, we look after them, too.

What do we want for Big Falls? We have never allowed the disruptions of our life ways on the lake and river to terminate our stewardship of the area. Each year, we still paddle its waters, camp at Big Falls. We are looking after the portages, keeping the river navigable for future generations of story-tellers. We want a camp ground established at Big Falls, so that our stories, our teachings can have a wider audience. We want the river trails maintained, scenic lookout spots re-established, we want to preserve the shorelines from further erosion, set up new information plaques that are more about our story.

Anishinaape stewardship of the area has to be re-established and our hereditary authority recognized and acknowledged. One of our tasks as Namekosipiiw-Anishinaapek is to learn our ceremonies on the land: the Full Moon ceremonies, the Solstice ceremonies, the gratitude ceremonies. We need to relearn the stories of our ancestors, live the life that will bring the stories back to us. We have ways to receive them again. We will do what we have to do to get them back. We need to protect Big Falls. Protect the river, protect the water. It is our sacred responsibility.

NO HYDRO DEVELOPMENT AT BIG FALLS!! -- by Kaaren Dannenmann

Women are the Water Keepers

Water is one of the four Life-Givers of the Medicine Wheel. It is associated with the Direction of the West. We all come from water, All our Relations need water for survival. Water is a part of us all, water is all of us. Women, as the bearers of the children, have been given the sacred responsibility to take care of the Water. Women are the Water Keepers. They give a voice for this most precious relation. As keepers of the water, Anishinaape women are stepping up and advocating for the water. This is huge and important responsibility. The woman's role and responsibility as water-keepers is a moral and ethical authority that has to be recognized and acknowledged by the state, *especially Ontario.*

Our very lives and well-being depend on clean, healthy watersheds and lands. Water is a part of our daily lives

We use water when we prepare our food and cook. Water quenches our thirst and provides a home place for our relations the fish and crayfish and water bugs and ducks, geese, and loons, as well as the aquatic animal and amphibian and reptile relations.

As humans, we were carried in water in our mothers' wombs, it kept us safe and healthy. As we grow, we learn valuable teachings from the water. It is very strong. It can split large rocks when it freezes in a crack in the rock. Water can move huge boulders along the bottom of a beach, leaving trails marked by smaller rocks along the side. When we are feeling weak and powerless, we can think of the water and be inspired by its strength. Water, when still in ice form, when it is moved by the wind, can rearrange the shorelines as it piles high onto the rocks and pushing them around. I know of small islands being entirely removed by this phenomenon.

During the summer months, water can come crashing onto the shorelines and keep us off the lake. Its strength and power are an incredible sight to see. Children will often play in these giant waves and learn their own strength against the power of the wind and water and begin to cultivate a healthy respect for the wind and water.

We learn that water can also be very gentle, giving us a safe place to take our canoes and find peace and reconnection and spiritual renewal. We can swim and relax and enjoy this gentle side of this Life-Giver. We use water to keep ourselves and our homes and belongings clean.

The water also teaches us humility. When it rises into the air, it always comes back down to the earth. When it falls on the mountains or hills, we see that it seeks the lowest parts of the land in which to settle. This humility is a huge example to us human people, to the Anishinaapek. We will never forget that.

As we experience the worldwide destruction of the Life-Giver Water, we are uniting in action to protect waters from being polluted and poisoned thru development like mining,

hydro dams, fracking, logging, farming, etc. Employment from these industries are temporary but the pollution remains long after the industries close down.

Even the consumption of water by towns and cities for the daily use of their citizens is a concern. There is so much waste of this precious Relation. All kinds of things, manmade chemicals, are being dumped into the city water systems and end up in the rivers and lakes and oceans.

In recent years, the grandmothers have started sacred water walks to raise awareness about the Water. These Water Keeper actions have begun all over Turtle Island. Many of our organizations have seen the necessity of having councils or commissions of Water Keepers as a part of our organizations. Keepers of the Water conferences and gatherings are being organized throughout our traditional territories. In northern Ontario, one First Nation has issued a Watershed Declaration in an effort to protect the Waters of their traditional Lands.

In the traditional territory of the NamekosipiiwAnishinaape people, they are struggling to defend their historic migratory canoe routes. Each year, this small community has followed the water trails of their ancestors up and down the Trout Lake River. The women, especially the young women, will share their tremendous knowledge and teachings about water as they undertake their work to save Big Falls.

-- by Kaaren Dannenmann

Namekosipiwanishinaapek and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Trout Lake Anishinaape people are continually being told that it is the legal authority of the land that is relevant. We hold that moral and ethical and spiritual responsibilities, as identified in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, hold just as much, if not more, authority in all human story. History is on our side.

"Pre-History"

Trout Lake, Namekosipiink, has been home to a community of people for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence of Blackduck pottery indicates Trout has been peopled for at least 1300 years. (Jill Taylor-Hollings, The Trout Lake (Namekosip) Archaeological Project: A Brief Summary. December 2006.) John Richthammer, in a letter to District Manager Graeme Swanwyck, dated, May 27, 2007, refers to "both oral history and archaeological evidence, the latter of which confirms that the Saulteaux (Ojibway) lived in the Trout Lake area for more than three-thousand years." It is more likely that it was well more than double that time, as Scoot Hamilton commented on a recent study in Trout Lake (field notes, Dannenmann, 2006). I agree with Hamilton, since there are stories told that relate to just after the ice age.

222 Years Ago

Richthammer also refers to the journal entries of John Best, the Red Lake - Trout Lake Hudson's Bay Company factor, specifically to the day, Monday, November 7, 1791, when "Captain Huggemaw (Ogemah) Kiishik came in [and] brought 30 beaver of furs and the flesh of two beaver." (B. 177/a/2, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.) European-descended fur traders have been in the Trout Lake area for a little over 200 years, mostly in sporadic visits and a couple of short-term posts.

88 Years Ago

Gold was "discovered" in the Red Lake area in 1925, followed by a gold rush in 1926, which brought thousands of people into the region, changing forever the local landscape and the way of life of the Anishinaapek living in the area. That is less than 100 years ago.

Trout Lake Treaty

As the Elders have storied, Trout Lake itself was protected by the Trout Lake Treaty, negotiated by Kiishik (Sam Keesic) in the mid-to-latter 1800's. For this treaty, Kiishik received all the trappings of successful negotiation: Union Jack flag, suit of clothing and medallion. His grand-daughter Tetipayaaninook Sarah Olsen remembered these items. She would repeat the stories of the treaty, how it was to protect Trout Lake forever, for the exclusive use of Kiishik's descendants. Kiishik died in Trout Lake, in the fall of 1929. The terms of his treaty were respected during his whole lifetime and until

ten years after his death, when the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (predecessor of MNR) opened Trout Lake for commercial fishing, opening the door for white people to move to Trout Lake. One of the men who was licensed to fish was Einar Olsen. In the following years, more licenses were issued: Albert Cook, Sarah Yates, Wilfred Wright. In the 1950's, tourism was established on the lake; four tourist camps were on the lake by the 1960's. By this time, there was a concerted effort on the part of the tourist outfitters and backed by the Department of Lands and Forests (predecessor to MNR) to remove the remaining Anishinaapek from Trout Lake. They were discouraged from staying in their homes, which were now small log cabins set in the bays, after the tourist season was over. They were not allowed to cut certain types of trees for firewood, and they were not permitted to build new cabins, especially after the department burnt down the cabins. They were treated like convenient commodities when guides were needed, but as mere annoyances otherwise, referring to their homes as "eyesores" for their guests. (MNR files on Trout Lake commercial fishing, DKD notes, 1987.)

Within forty years of Kiishik's death, the terms of the Trout Lake treaty were buried under the intentions and actions of MNR, tourism and commercial fishing.

People's Culture

A people's culture is directly linked with their relationship to the land. If that relationship is based on mutuality and reciprocity, that relationship is characterized by mutual respect and a strong sense and system of rights and responsibilities. Anishinaapek view themselves as a part of the community of Creation, a part of the Circle of Life. The Land is as much a part of that same community, after all, the Land is our Mother. The trees, the water, the air, the grass, the rocks, animals, birds, fish, insects -- all are a part of the same community of Life. We are all related and interconnected and interdependent. Our community is All Our Relations.

Charley Fisher described our life on the Land as "first and foremost a spiritual activity" (A Treaty #3/Ontario Trapping Agreement: A One Man Lake First Nation Perspective" by Charley Fisher, April, 1995). Our laws on the Land came in the form of our ceremonies. Our relationships with All Our Relations is characterized by our ceremonies.

The ceremonies teach us our place in Creation and teach us to love that place. We are not better than any of Our Relations, we are equal to all: the moose, the bear, the snake, the eagle, the wood tick, the leach, the clam, the turtle. We are all equal. We have also been en-trusted by our Creator to be caretakers of one another. Trout Lake has always cared for us and has been gentle with us. We reciprocate in the same manner, we will take care of Trout Lake and her waters, we will be gentle with her water. We will defend her water from pollution and development and destruction. She is a part of us and we are a part of her.

Our ceremonial ways are also what distinguish our teachings from the non-Aboriginal laws and policies and regulations. *A people's culture is directly linked with their*

relationship to the land. If that relationship is based on the principles of private property (possession, ownership), then the relationship is characterized by the commodification of the land and everything on the land, often including other human beings (notably, let's recall that it was still in the recent past, that a man's wife and children were referred to as a his "chattels" as well as the system of slavery and human trafficking). The political, economic, social and cultural systems that are based on this relationship are the cause of all the destruction, pollution, violence, chaos and crises happening around the world. This can no longer be mystified or hidden behind smoke screens. This is very clear to us.

This clarity has been reflected on some of the picket slogans that have appeared at Idle No More rallies:

Stop Corporate Greed!

People before Profits!

Our Land is our Life!

We Advocate for the Land!

520+ years of Resistance!

Stop Harper!

Homeland Security: SAVE BIG FALLS!!

Only AMIK can build dams in our territory!!

Women are the Water-Keepers!

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

After many years of opposing the Un Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on November 12, 2010, Canada issued a Statement of Support, endorsing the declaration. The areas of greatest concern for the Government of Canada has been those provisions dealing with lands, territories and resources; and the free, prior and informed consent that could be used as a veto. No kidding.

Article 25 of the Declaration reads:

"Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard."

It is, therefore, internationally recognized and acknowledged that we have the the right to maintain and strengthen our distinctive spiritual relationship with our traditional lands. Namekosipiwanishinaapek on Trout Lake and our migratory water routes. The Trout Lake River. Big Falls. We are maintaining and strengthening our relationships to those lands and waterways.

Article 26 of the Declaration reads:

"1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

"2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

"3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned."

We have the right to develop our areas as we see fit. Well, we see fit to develop our traditional and historic travel routes as canoe and trail routes, develop the river trails and portages and camp sites as our ancestors had done since time before memory. That is what we choose to do. If this turns into an economic endeavor, that is our choice, and no hydro company has the right to destroy that, nor does any provincial ministry have the right to sell out our land and waterways. That is already understood internationally.

Although it may not be a legal obligation on the part of Canada to act according to these provisions, it is definitely seen as a moral and ethical obligation.

Article 31 of the Declaration reads, and clearly states exactly the goals and efforts of the NamekosipiwAnishinaapek -- we could not articulate it any more clearly:

"Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions."

-- by Kaaren Dannenmann

PETITION to PROTECT BIG FALLS from Hydro-Electric Development

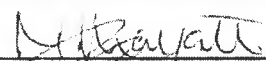


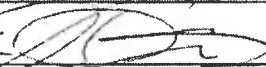
To: Minister David Oraziotti, OMNR, Queen's Park, Toronto, ON
 District Manager Graeme Swanwick, MNR, Red Lake, ON
 Regional Manager Northwest MNR, Allan Willcocks, Thunder Bay, ON
 Waterpower Site Release Coordinator, MNR, Peterborough, ON

Whereas: In 2005, the Ministry of Natural Resources, without consulting First Nations or any other people, contracted Hatch Energy to conduct a survey of Ontario rivers that would be suitable for hydroelectric development. When the survey was concluded, information was posted publicly and bids were solicited for hydro development, again, with no consultation with First Nations or any other people.

And whereas: The Trout Lake River, with no consultation with the people whose traditional land this is, was one of the rivers selected for hydro development – three sites on the river were identified. Big Falls was the most convenient site because it is road and power line accessible. On June 13, 2007, MNR announced that it approved, without consulting the Namekosipiwanishinaapek, Horizon Hydro Inc.'s proposal to develop a 3.2-MW hydropower project at Big Falls.

And whereas: The First Nation people of Trout Lake, the Namekosipiwanishinaapek, have opposed these plans from the first. This river has been their main annual migratory route and Big Falls is of huge cultural significance. Today, it is a center of camping, canoeing, traditional education, feasting, sweat lodge and other ceremonial activities. It is also an important recreational and economic site for other residents of the area.

Therefore: We, the undersigned, because the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has been the impetus of these plans right from the beginning, want the OMNR to withdraw all approvals to the Hydro-electric plans at Big Falls. We want the OMNR to protect Big Falls and the whole Trout Lake River from any development plans.

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