



GLOBAL WATER FUTURES

SOLUTIONS TO WATER THREATS IN AN ERA OF GLOBAL CHANGE



Water Security for Canadians

The following questions and comments were submitted by participants during the national webinar *Designing the Canada Water Agency for Successful Co-Development and Collaboration with Indigenous People* on September 10, 2020. Some answers were offered during the event through text and live discussion. Text answers are included below and live discussion can be watched through the [event recordings](#). Panelists are not representatives of the Government of Canada and cannot answer questions directed toward the government's intentions, plans or processes, however, have provided some ideas and thoughts on how they could approach the topics posed in some questions. All answers are solely the opinion of the responder.

Urban flooding is a unique issue that is mostly only faced by Canada's largest cities. Would the Canada Water Agency include urban flooding in its scope?

John Pomeroy: Many have advocated that the Canada Water Agency help develop and improve water forecasting and floodplain mapping methods for national applications and this could include cities. This could involve working with provincial and urban governments to improve flood risk mapping, short-term flood forecasting and future flood prediction and risk management. There is currently federal science and information involvement in these issues from NRCan, ECCC and Public Safety departments but further coordination and enhanced implementation could have tremendous benefits. Beyond urban areas there are flooding issues on many Indigenous nation territories and these governments and communities need to be fully "at the table" and co-developing these capabilities along with the provinces and cities.

Groundwater seems to be absent from the Canada Water Agency white paper and for the most part associated presentations. What is the indigenous peoples' position on the inclusion or not of groundwater in this undertaking?

John Pomeroy: Groundwater is a crucial component of Canada's water system and is implicit in all discussions about shared waters. It is the primary water source for rural Canada including many Indigenous communities and is scientifically challenging to measure, understand and protect. It needs to be carefully taken care of because when it is degraded or depleted then restoration is slow and challenging. I hope that it is a key part of the Agency and that NRCan's substantial expertise on groundwater is available to the Agency along with provincial and Indigenous groundwater information and knowledge.

Can someone please comment on how come, the Walkerton (E. coli) issue was a matter of immediate concern and was addressed rapidly, versus the many water-related issues that

affect Indigenous peoples all over the country? Simply, what is the cause of this inefficiency, and what can we do about it?

- **Dawn Martin-Hill:** I think we would put that under systematic racism, environmental racism. There are no "laws" governing water quality with FN Crown lands - that is how they get away with no liability.

Mr. Miltenberger, how did you get around cabinet confidence and confidentiality concerns and get to co-development? What was the biggest barrier to "co-drafting" or "co-design" in the NWT and how did you deal with that? What advice would you give to ensure co-development of the Canada Water Agency?

Is there any focus overall on source water protection planning initiatives for drinking water?

We need to get away from pieced water legislation/policy within various federal departments so that we have a National Water Framework for all waters. Also, it needs to be entrenched in the Constitution so that it is not politically driven.

Given that a Canadian Water Agency will not be regulatory in nature, how do you see it acting to facilitate recognition of Indigenous authority over water?

What would it mean to bring the two-row wampum teaching into the governance of the Canada Water Agency? For example, would there be two teams, one focused on Indigenous knowledge and practices, and one focused on western knowledge and practices, that would try to collaborate? Or what other ways could that teaching be centred in governance design?

Dawn Martin-Hill: It could be one model of discussion. Working together hasn't been an easy task under UNDRIP. We should have a primary role to govern our territories' waters.

With most flood damage funding for First Nations being not available because they are not "tax paying" people, what ways can strengthen transboundary water management, especially with some municipal farmers creating trenches of their own?

Where federal government ministries (e.g. Agriculture and Environment) have conflicting policies/regulations does the Canadian Water Agency have the capability to do more than flag the issue and hope the line ministries address them?

John Pomeroy: My hopes for the Agency is that it includes a strong coordinating role for water policy in the Government of Canada and works to renew the 1987 federal water policy whilst working to ensure smooth application of policy across the country. These are important considerations to bring forward to the federal consultation process.

Having travelled to many countries with Indigenous peoples, and having interacted with them, it is clear that we are dangerously behind, and that there is an invisible inertia to true reconciliation efforts.

Could you please comment on the recently signed Atlantic First Nations Water Authority agreement? How far away are other parts of Canada from reaching similar agreements?

How can youth from other communities connect with youth from Six Nations (and others) in their effort to protect the water?

I think Indigenous worldviews of water are so important and, if taken seriously by non-Indigenous institutions, could fundamentally transform how we relate to water. But I have such a hard time imagining how it could be operationalized when the Canada Water Agency would be, at worst, a colonial institution where the private property system is the foundation of law and worldview, and at best, a bi-cultural institution co-governed with Indigenous people. Do you have any examples of how a relational, non-resource-based view of water has been operationalized in an institution (also thinking of this in context of how CWA will almost necessarily be a top-down institution as all Canadian governance bodies are)?

It is my opinion the Northern Boundary agreement is "only on the books" and the current political culture in Alberta is putting Turtle Island at great risk.

Has CWA been using the Indigenous Circle of Exports Report and Recommendations March 2018? The report was achieving a pathway to Canada Target 1 through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the spirit and practice of reconciliation.

Some Resources Shared by Participants and Panelists

We Rise Together: Achieving Pathway to Canada Target 1 through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the spirit and practice of reconciliation:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf

Walkerton Inquiry, Full report:

http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/e_records/walkerton/report1/index.html and Chapter 15: http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/e_records/walkerton/report1/pdf/WI_Chapter_15.pdf

The Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5):

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>

James W. Ransom, Ettengerba Kreg, & Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force,

Environmental Science & Policy 4 (2001) 219 – 228 ‘Polishing the Kaswentha’: a

Haudenosaunee view of environmental cooperation: <https://pdfslide.net/documents/polishing-the-kaswentha-a-haudenosaunee-view-of-environmental-cooperation.html>

Ohneganos Ohnegahde:gyo Let’s Talk about Water Series:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC95POu2D6fnd4QtCbz07BIQ>