



## FACT SHEET

**March 30, 2006**

### **Key Steps: Towards the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement**

**1977: Northern Flood Agreement (NFA) is signed** by the governments of Canada and Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and five First Nations including the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN). The NFA established a mechanism for compensating individuals or communities adversely affected by Lake Winnipeg Regulation and Churchill River Diversion.

**1996: NFA Implementation Agreement is signed by NCN, the governments of Canada and Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro.** It includes Article 8, which established the Future Development process. Discussions about Wuskwatim begin almost immediately following the signing of the agreement.

**1997: NCN's Future Development Office is established** by NCN Chief and Council to pursue discussions with Manitoba Hydro on the development of the proposed Wuskwatim Project and to establish NCN's Future Development Team.

**Late 1999: NCN and Manitoba Hydro jointly select a study team to conduct required biophysical and socio-economic studies** as part of the regulatory approval process. The joint study team design and implement a Joint Study Program to address the concerns and issues raised by NCN and Manitoba Hydro.

**2000: Community consultation begins and continues to date.** The involvement of the NCN Members, particularly the extensive involvement of NCN in all facets of project planning and the environmental impact assessment studies, has made a substantial contribution to the overall planning for the Wuskwatim Projects.

These activities involve the participation of Chief and Council, the Future Development Team and NCN's professional advisors. Some elements of the process included:

- Brochure materials
- Local radio and television updates
- Newsletter updates
- Website updates
- Audiovisual materials in Cree
- Meetings with Members

- Meet and greet gatherings • Small group meetings • Open houses
- Door-to-door home visits

**2000 and 2001: A comprehensive survey of NCN Members is conducted.** The purpose is to learn their opinions and concerns regarding possible future hydroelectric developments, previous agreements with Manitoba Hydro and community development planning. Member involvement has limited the adverse effects and enhanced positive effects of the Wuskwatim Projects.

**2001: Wuskwatim Agreement in Principle (AIP) is approved by a majority** of NCN Members in a secret ballot vote. The AIP sets out the framework for negotiations with Manitoba Hydro on the Wuskwatim Projects.

**2001: Public Involvement Plan is established** to ensure other interested parties, such as northern communities and individuals, in addition to NCN Members, also have meaningful involvement in the project. Five rounds of public involvement were undertaken throughout the environmental assessment process. Some elements included:

- Public open houses • Meetings with community leaders and Members
- Workshops • Website updates • Newsletters
- Summary of the Environmental Impact Statements in Cree

**April 2002: Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are issued.** The Environmental Management Team, selected by NCN and Manitoba Hydro in 1999, responds to these guidelines prepared by federal and provincial regulators in carrying out EIS studies for the Wuskwatim Generation and Transmission Projects.

**August 2002: Provincial and federal government regulators are involved in the process of consultation as part of the duty to consult,** as required by Section 35 of the Constitution. The purpose of this consultation is to consider how aboriginal rights and treaties might be affected before the governments consider issuing licenses and permits for the Wuskwatim Projects.

**2002: Nelson House-based Atoskiwin Training and Education Centre (ATEC) is approved,** with funding from Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba and Canada.

**2003: Wuskwatim-related training programs begin through ATEC.** Around 300 people have so far completed training and many are employed in their fields of study.

**2003: Summary of Understandings (SOU) is released to NCN Members**

for discussion. The SOU is an outline or preview of what will be contained in the PDA.

**2004: The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission (CEC) holds four months of public hearings** on the Wuskwatim project in Winnipeg, Thompson and The Pas. Preparation for the hearings began in 2003.

**October 2004: The CEC issues its report** recommending the Wuskwatim Generation and Transmission Projects be granted licences under the Manitoba Environment Act. The report finds that Manitoba Hydro and NCN have adequately justified the projects and concludes they are viable and economical.

The CEC also concludes that with appropriate mitigation and monitoring and if the projects are constructed and operated as proposed, biophysical, socio-economic and cultural effects will not be significant. The CEC states that, if managed in an appropriate manner, the benefits for aboriginal people, northerners and all Manitobans could be significant.

**November 2005: Comprehensive Study Report** prepared by Fisheries and Oceans Canada under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act concludes the Wuskwatim Generation Project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.

**March 30, 2006: NCN and Manitoba Hydro jointly announce the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement (PDA) has been finalized and approved** by NCN Chief and Council and Manitoba Hydro's Executive Committee.

**March 30, 2006: NCN announces the schedule for consultation** with its membership on the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement and the dates for the ratification vote.

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**June 7 (advanced poll) and June 14 (voting day), 2006: A secret ballot ratification vote on the PDA** will be held. The PDA is subject to the approval of a double majority of NCN Members. Approvals by Manitoba Hydro's Board of Directors, as well as regulatory approvals from the federal and provincial governments will also be required for the project to proceed.