

*Spring
Edition
2022*

Keepers of the Water NEWSLETTER

Spring thaw on the Athabasca River

Tu – Water

“I’ve always advocated for water because my parents and my grandparents raised us on the Athabasca River. So our water was our connection. Were very connected to our water in our everyday life, living off the land. As we harvest animals to survive.

We used to bathe and swim in the Athabasca River, that no longer happens. We are the last generation that were able to swim in our lakes and rivers. Having been exposed to that and enjoying all that through my childhood now into my later years, ‘this is what I look at’ *raises a bottle of water*



Water in a plastic bottle. When we used to drink water from the river in cups. We used to just dip in the water and drink it. But now today you can't do that because you are always thinking in the back of your mind, 'that nobody that lives along the Athabasca would even think about trying to drink because they know it is contaminated.'

The river has been poisoned by tailings ponds that are upstream from where we live. We suffer all consequences of all the impacts of industrialization. We see people hanging onto water in plastic bottles and it shouldn't be that way. Water is a sacred gift from Our Creator. For us to bottle it up in a plastic bottle it's like bottling up our spirit.

Indigenous People for many years have been talking about it and it goes way back to our ancestors. When they were alive they would warn us of what was to become and now we are facing it today. So, I make it a point and my purpose in life to advocate for our future generations survival because we didn't come this far for nothing...

I still feel hopeful that we can all unite and fight for our water, fight for our indigenous rights, our waters, our human rights... I hope that some of the things I shared have inspired you to take up a stance and unite and speak out whenever you can for our water and advocate for our water for our future generations even for the ones that have not arrived yet. We always look to protect our peoples and our generations upcoming..."

Jean L'Hommcourt speaking at World Water Day March 22



We are filling up our land and water space with a material that will never break down.






World Water Day - March 22

Happy World Water Day to Water Protectors around the Globe!

World Water Day Event
March 22, 2022





Hosted by
**Blue Quills University
and Keepers of the Water**

Location:
Blue Quills University Gymnasium

In Person:
Up to 60 gathering Visitors

Nipiy piatisiwin
Tu t'eh t'ah eh ts'eh nah
Aahkii ihtaipatapiiyop
Water is Life

To Register or clarify information, please contact:
Jesse Cardinal
nipiy3@gmail.com
1780 520 7108



watch here

KOW spent a full day at an in-person and online event co-hosted with nuhelot'ine thaiyots'i nistameyimâkanak (Blue Quills University) near the town of St. Paul Alberta Canada in the Treaty Six (6) territory.

Blue Quills First Nations College became University nuhelot' ne thaiyots' nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills in September 2015.

CLICK IMAGES



UNIVERSITY
nuhelot'ine thaiyots'i nistameyimâkanak
BLUE QUILLS

Blue Quills is owned and governed by seven First Nations (Beaver Lake, Cold Lake, Frog Lake, Whitefish Lake, Heart Lake, Kehewin, and Saddle Lake).

A Ban on Thermal Coal to Make our World a Safer Place

Thermal coal is the world's dirtiest fossil fuel - a 19th-century product that has no place in the modern world. While thermal coal is being phased out as a source of energy in Canada, we continue to export millions of tonnes of thermal coal each year, including American coal, for sale in other countries. Canada's continued role as an exporter of U.S. and Canadian thermal coal undermines this country's ability to become a climate leader and build a brighter future.

The federal government recently answered the public's outrage by committing to ban the export of thermal coal by the year 2030, but that's too far off. Thermal coal is a huge contributor to climate change, and if Canada waits until the end of the decade to impose an export ban we will miss a critical opportunity to reduce emissions and keep warming below 1.5 C.

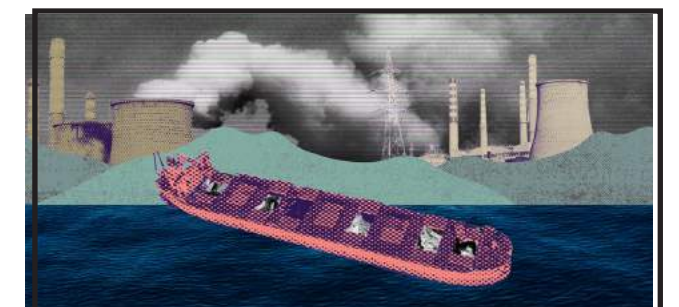
The federal government must ban the export of thermal coal by 2023. There is no excuse to continue exporting thermal coal until 2030. We have the technology to replace it with cheaper, healthier, and cleaner renewable energy.

Keepers of the Water continues our co-campaign against the Coalspur - Vista Mine Expansion and supports the ongoing work with EcoJustice and Environmental Defence. In a world in crisis, we still have the power to build a brighter future. The federal government must lead from the front and ban the export of thermal coal by 2023

CLICK IMAGES



[Ecojustice Blog - A ban on thermal coal can make this world a safer place - posted Mar 23, 2022 by Fraser Thonson](#)



[Ecojustice Press Release - Coalition of environmental groups calls for a federal ban on thermal coal exports on Earth Day - posted Apr 19, 2022](#)

Jesse Cardinal, Executive Director at Keepers of the Water, said

"Thermal coal mining in Alberta is putting freshwater streams and species at risk, Indigenous people depend on these freshwater sources for their day-to-day needs, including drinking water. A greater understanding is needed of how thermal coal mining not only contributes to high levels of harmful emissions but affects entire freshwater ecosystems that help keep our water sources healthy. Indigenous communities want to participate in a sustainable economy that won't sell out their future generations, we demand better."

For more information about this campaign and to TAKE ACTION please DONATE! We welcome contributors who can help us sustain our work.





Acimowin (Spiritual Stories)

Storytelling with Jeff Wastesicoot

Understanding Maskihkiy

To watch the broadcast of Storytelling with Jeff Wastesicoot go to: <https://fb.watch/cw8yeRju6e/> or click on Jeff's picture on the right.



Jeff's Bio

Jeff Wastesicoot comes from Pimickamack Cree Nation (Cross Lake Manitoba). Jeff has served as a Language consultant and knowledge Keeper for many years. Jeff continues to dedicate much of his time to helping people overcome personal challenges through ceremonies, traditional medicines and counselling.

He has dedicated his life to the preservation of the Nehiyew (Cree) language and culture. Jeff recognizes the spirit within the tongue, as he interprets the parables within the Nehiyew language. He is recognized among the First Nations community as a spiritual leader and traditional healer.

Jeff's Presentation focussed on the star chart and the relationship of the star Blanket (achak ahkoop) the rights of Passage and the values of the spirit within the Languages. The relationship we have with the tree of life.



Midewiwin Women's Colours

Winter is a time when we sit together and share stories and learn from each other. It is through our stories that we pass on knowledge to one another and unfortunately because of the global pandemic meeting in person is no longer as easy as it once was. Using online tools we have adapted to meeting each other in new ways.

This past January, we hosted an online webinar through Zoom and Facebook Live and with these tools we were able to reach even more people than we would have been able to in person. There were 366 people who responded to our Facebook event page and we were able to reach over 7,500 people through 2,900 views of our live broadcast and 440 reactions and shares.

What is tar sands “oil”?

The tar sands contain a tar-like substance called bitumen mixed with dirt, sand and rock. This mixture can either be strip-mined, which requires the complete destruction of ancient boreal forests (clearcutting), or the bitumen can be melted underground using superheated steam generated by burning huge amounts of natural gas and then pumped out using many closely spaced wells. Either process requires an enormous amount of expensive energy

We Must Stop Government Regulations to Allow Release of Toxic Tailings from Oil and Gas Extraction into the Athabasca River!

Keepers of the Water is working to bring awareness and opposition to the release of toxic treated tailings pond water into the Athabasca River from oil and gas producers that will cause adverse downstream effects to the environment, Indigenous communities and their traditional ways of life, contribute to increasing carbon emissions and ultimately climate change

Keepers of the Water’s 2022 goal is to create a cohesive message to Government and Industry to address and oppose the “treat and release” plan that will bring nothing but harm to Indigenous communities, lands, territories, and all life in the tailings release pathway. Tailings ponds contain mercury, arsenic, cyanide, benzene and naphthenic acids, all pose a risk to the Athabasca River, the wildlife it hosts, and the people who depend on it. The impact of releasing literally trillions of litres of toxin-laden tailings, even if treated, into a freshwater ecosystem is not understood.

We are asking that all reclamation options be considered by the government. Neither the Federal nor the Provincial government has respected this request to consider other options and have instead imposed the release regulations as the only option about which they will consult communities. We want to offer safe solutions for dealing with the tailings ponds. Industry has not guaranteed that their technology would create safe-clean water. One technique would be to treat the water and then reuse it in the extraction process. We want to provide real options by researching safe mitigation methods and offer other solutions like treat and reuse, not treat and release, if water treatment technology is insufficient to bring the water to a quality acceptable for industrial production, how could it possibly be brought to a quality that would allow it to be disposed into a source of drinking water for First Nations communities?

<https://www.keepersofthewater.ca/tarsand>

CLICK IMAGES



**STAND WITH KEEPERS
OF THE WATER
TAKE ACTION TODAY!
CLICK HERE!!!**

River and Lakes Water Monitoring Program

May 2022 is the beginning of a new water monitoring initiative by Keepers of the Water.

Our goal is to collect key data about the health of river and lake water in the north and to share this information in a clear understandable way to the public on our website, in the spirit of full openness and transparency.

WHY are we doing this? Many of us on the Keepers Board have come to the conclusion that industry and government will never undertake a proper water monitoring program. In 20 years of promises all we have seen is program failures, secrecy and near complete lack of sharing collected data with the public in general. We now understand that Industry and the Alberta government prefer to hide, under report or downplay any information which would make industry practices or provincial regulations look bad.

We have grassroots members of Keepers of the Water that will begin to monitor the Upper, Middle and Lower Regions of the Athabasca River, Clearwater River, Slave River and Beaver River. We will also begin long term monitoring of lakes; one at Kikino for human impacts like recreational uses and lakes in Northern Saskatchewan known to be impacted by tar sands industrial acid rain.

WHAT are we measuring?

We have acquired modern digital portable monitoring equipment which is quick and simple to use. Initially, for the first 2 years we will be measuring just a few parameters and will increase the parameters as our program budget grows.

In 2022 and 2023 we will be collecting data on DO (dissolved oxygen) temperature, EC (electrical conductivity, salinity) and pH.



Aqua TROLL® 400 Multiparameter Probe



We've spent years developing the most robust water monitoring apps, software and communications devices available, because it's our job is to make your job easier with data you can trust and equipment and systems you can rely on.

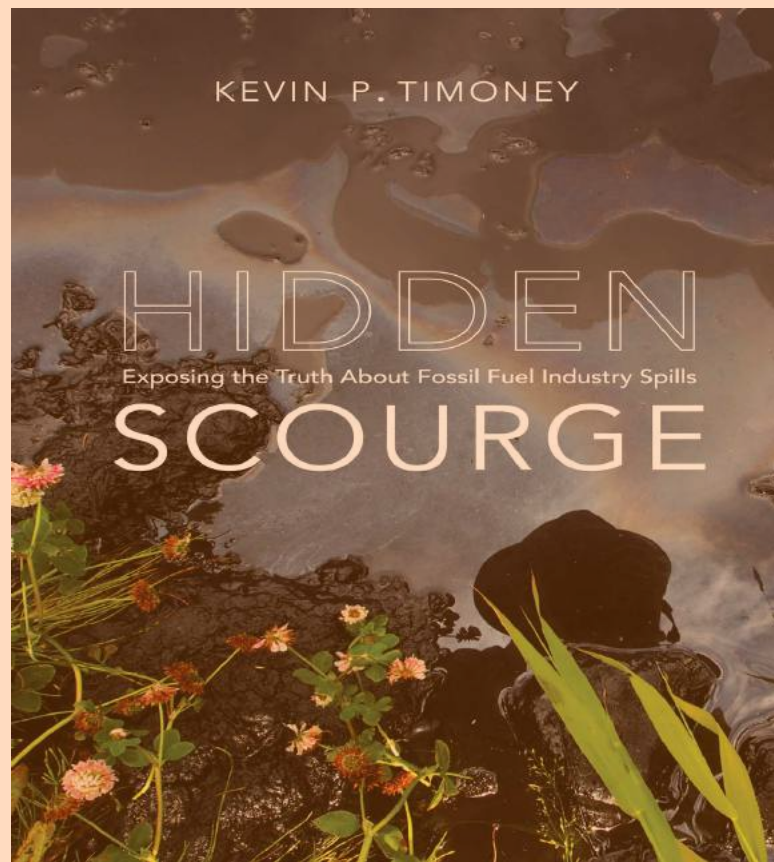
Our powerful mobile app, cloud-based data services platform and field-ready communication devices are part of a shared ecosystem of products designed to work seamlessly with water quality, water level and water flow monitoring instruments and telemetry to ensure that you have accurate data when and where you need it.



For more information about this campaign and to TAKE ACTION please DONATE!

We welcome contributors who can help us sustain our work.

Education Corner



Kevin Timoney – Hidden Scourge:
Exposing the Truth About Fossil Fuel
Industry Spills

Watch the presentaion here on facebook

Analyzing over 100,000 industrial spills from Alberta, Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Montana, and the Northwest Territories, Hidden Scourge takes the reader on a journey behind the firewall of disinformation to uncover scientific truths about crude oil and saline water spills and the cumulative impacts of the fossil fuel industry on ecosystems and society.

On November 19, 2021 KOW was pleased to host a talk over Zoom by Kevin Timoney, author of Hidden Scourge.

Honoring Our Board Members



Cleo Reese



Roxanne Blood

This year we were able to gift our hardworking volunteer board members with new Keepers of the Water Jackets!

AH-HAY/MUSSI CHO to all of our exceptional Executive, Board and Staff.



Candyce Paul

“Indigenous reciprocity is much more complex than a two-way exchange of favors...while the word reciprocity is not used often in our daily lives, it is deeply embedded in most Indigenous cultures.” - Roberta L. Jamieson, Canadian lawyer, First Nations activist, and keynote speaker at the opening of the IFIP World Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy

Reciprocity, the practice of exchanging with others for mutual benefit, is the basis for relationships in many Indigenous communities. Protecting the environment protects resources for all, including future generations—and that this is the highest form of reciprocity. “Remember that water is our first food, and that food is water. We must conserve our land and our water at the same time,” - Melissa Nelson of The Cultural Conservancy



**WATER AND
MEDICINE
GATHERING**

Save the Date

**3RD ANNUAL WATER AND
MEDICINE GATHERING**
JULY 28-30TH, 2022
LOCATION: KANIYASIHK
CULTURE CAMP, ISLAND LAKE, SK
HOSTED BY: KANIYASIHK
CULTURE CAMP AND KEEPERS OF
THE WATER
REGISTRATION OPENS IN APRIL
FOLLOW KCC AND KOW
FACEBOOK PAGES FOR UPDATES

www.kaniyasihkculturecamps.com
www.keepersofthewater.ca

Upcoming Events

3rd Annual Water and Medicine Gathering

July 28-30th, 2022

*For More Information or to
Register Contact: Jesse Cardinal
ed@keepersofthewater.ca*

**Water and Medicine Gathering Registration
Form 2022 Keepers of the Water &
Kaniyasihk Culture Camps - [CLICK HERE](#)**





Job Posting - Post Secondary Summer Student Needed

POSITION SUMMARY

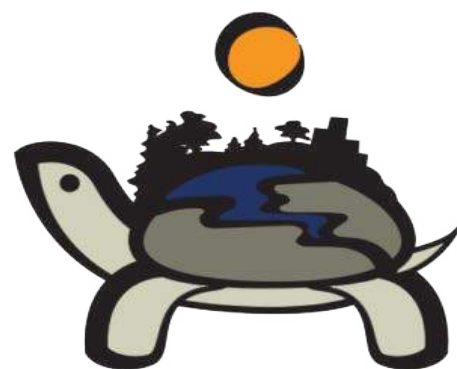
KOW is a growing organization and we are currently working on many projects that involve tackling climate change and looking at how extreme extraction of fossil fuels impacts the water.

We have a big educational component in our work and we are expanding this with both the launch of a Monitoring program that will include western science data collection for water quality on rivers, lakes or streams.

KOW has also been in the process of building a resource tool that can be utilized by schools and youth programs, this would include a youth mentorship component on how to become a water steward, as well as western science and Indigenous knowledge of water.

The successful summer student will assist in working with our team in both the Water Monitoring Program and School Resource Toolkit and Youth Mentorship Program building.

**Keepers of the Water
is seeking a University
Summer Student from May
to August 2022**



The position requires skills in the following areas:

- Communication skills in both emails, zoom, phone
- Proficiency in Microsoft programs, google programs and other applicable software
- Written skills for reporting, producing material to go on website or newsletter
- Ability to use creative and critical thinking to contribute to programs
- Writing for different audiences
- Being able to work independently and remotely
- Familiarity with Indigenous Peoples rights and histories in so-called Canada
- Familiarity with Water protection and climate justice work
- Familiarity with the Arctic Ocean Drainage Basin
- Presentation skills

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Send Resume and Cover Letter to:
ed@keepersofthewater.ca

CLOSING DATE: April 29, 2022

QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 2 years of environmental science both western and Indigenous
- Knowledge of Indigenous rights and environmental protection
- Ability to work independently and remotely with little to no supervision
- Ability to work in fast paced environment and respond
- Understanding of communications related technology
- Good writing skills

