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Supplementary Information

Renseignements supplémentaires

Presentation from the Manitoba Metis Federation

Présentation de la Fédération des Métis du Manitoba

Regulatory Oversight Report for Canadian Nuclear Laboratories Sites: 2020

Rapport de surveillance réglementaire des sites des Laboratoires Nucléaires Canadiens : 2020

Commission Meeting

Réunion de la Commission

November 25, 2021

Le 25 novembre 2021

Canada

MANITOBA MÉTIS FEDERATION

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

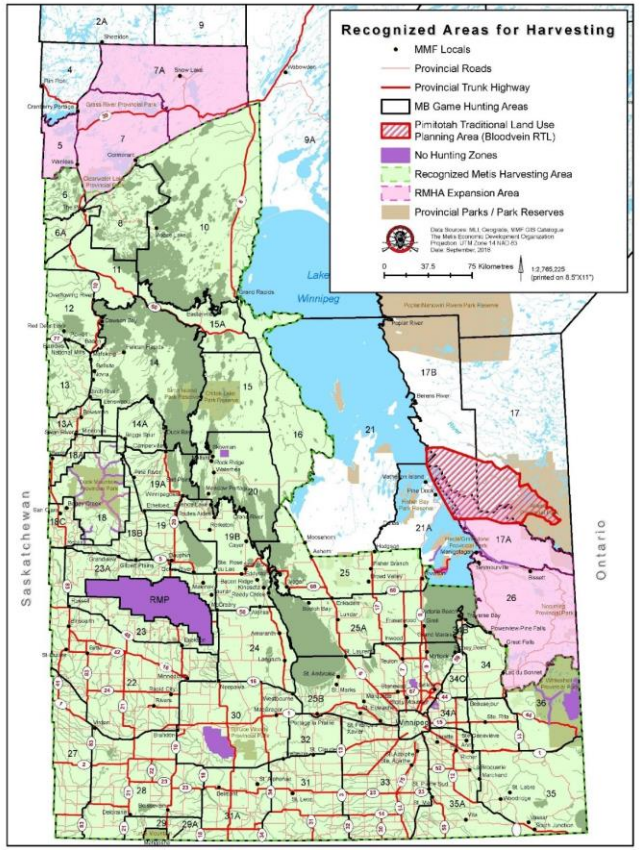
Regulatory Oversight Report for Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) Sites: 2020

OVERVIEW

- General Comments
- Whiteshell Laboratories Compliance Evaluation
- Métis Engagement
- Regulatory Compliance
- Environmental Monitoring
- Decommissioning and Long-Term Storage
- Conclusion

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Whiteshell Laboratories (WL) site is located on Métis Recognized Harvesting Area
- The Red River Métis use the lands and waters which surround the WL site for harvesting as well as exercising Métis Harvesting Rights
- The Red River Métis were not adequately consulted prior to the development of the WL site
- The Red River Métis have great interest in long-term stewardship of the WL site, transitioning the site for future beneficial use by the Métis community.



GENERAL COMMENTS

- Overall the addition of a "Plain Language" summary to the ROR improved accessibility
- MMF remains concerned with the general ROR approach which relies heavily on Proponent led data collection and monitoring.

Recommendation

Additional independence in monitoring, which meaningfully considers data collected by the MMF should be included in future RORs and the evaluation of the WL site.

WHITESHELL LABORATORIES COMPLIANCE EVALUATION

- Regulatory compliance inspections were impacted in 2020 by COVID-19 restrictions
- 2020 monitoring relied heavily on remote or desktop inspections and Proponent provided data.
- Insufficient information is provided on how remote or desktop inspections were conducted and how that may have impacted the ability for CNSC to evaluate performance

Recommendation

CNSC to detail how monitoring efforts were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and any resulting limitations on data quality

WHITESHELL LABORATORIES COMPLIANCE EVALUATION

- The 2018 and 2019 RORs evaluated the *Security* Safety and Control Area (SCA) as "Below Expectation". The 2020 ROR evaluated all SCAs as "Satisfactory"
- It is unclear whether the evaluation methodology used for this SCA was impacted by a lack of in-person site inspections.

Recommendation

Provide more information is required detailing the Proponents changes to *Security* at the WL to understand impacts on Métis rights

MÉTIS ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement by CNSC in 2020 focused on consultation and accommodations commitments and obligations. These efforts are viewed by the MMF as positive, however, represent what should be an ongoing process.
- CNSC and CNL must be proactive in engaging and consulting with the MMF about future planning for the WL site

Recommendation

CNSC and CNL should continue to work with the MMF to identify methods of including Métis participation in monitoring and decision-making at the WL site

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

- The ROR continues to refer to and draw information from the original Comprehensive Study Report for the WL site.
- WL Comprehensive Study Report is now more than 20 years old and must be updated given the significant physical changes which have taken place during decommissioning

Recommendation

Update WL Comprehensive Study Report focusing on the remaining hazards and potential dose to the public and potential future users of the land, especially the Métis community.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- Independent monitoring was not conducted at any CNL site in 2020, and further, IEMP was not conducted at the WL site in 2019.
- Gap in independent data continues to increase, limiting the ability to independently verify WL performance
- MMF is concerned with this knowledge gap

Recommendation
CNSC provide a timeline for when IEMP collection will continue at the WL site.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- In 2016 CNL began reporting levels of uranium, plutonium, americium, strontium-90 and cesium-137 released to surface waters
- The release of uranium and americium is not surprising, however, the release of plutonium is unexpected
- Winnipeg River flowing to Lake Winnipeg is the receiving environment for runoff and effluent.
- It is unclear where plutonium is coming from at the WL site and presents significant concern to Métis citizens, who harvest, especially consuming wild fish, from these environments.

Recommendation

Investigation should be conducted to the source(s) of radionuclides, and an assessment should be conducted on options for controlling source(s)

DECOMMISSIONING AND LONG-TERM STORAGE

- Métis Citizens currently exercise rights and conduct harvesting activities within 100 m of the WL site
- This proximity emphasizes the need for ongoing information sharing between CNSC, CNL, AECL, and the MMF regarding decommissioning efforts
- CNSC, CNL, and AECL must engage the MMF in developing a mutually agreeable Communication Strategy for WL decommissioning activities
- Strategy should include an ongoing process to inform the MMF about:
  - Decommissioning and demolition activities
  - Potential adverse effects
  - Processes for shared decision-making.

Recommendation

CNSC, CNL, and AECL must engage the MMF in developing a mutually agreeable Communication Strategy for WL decommissioning activities

DECOMMISSIONING AND LONG-TERM STORAGE

- Management/storage of waste from the WL site relies on sufficient waste storage capacity at the Chalk River facility.
- Insufficient information is provided on this plan or the feasibility of it, or potential alternatives in the ROR
- While the specifics on decommissioning the WL site are outside of the scope of the ROR, the MMF has provided several comments, including issues and suggested recommendations on how to address these issues concerning the WL site decommissioning process.

DECOMMISSIONING AND LONG-TERM STORAGE

- The MMF remains concerned with proposed plans to conduct in-situ decommissioning of the WL facility.
- In-situ decommissioning would prevent the site from being fully reclaimed and returned to a natural state.
- The WL site provides an excellent opportunity for joint-stewardship in which supports the MMF in its goals of planting 2 million trees, develop a hatchery and rearing pods, as well as allowing site access for citizens and harvesters.

CONCLUSIONS

- More information is required to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on data quality and the ability of CNSC to perform adequate oversight of nuclear facilities.
- CNSC should propose plans to ensure that monitoring through the IEMP can occur even in the face of continued COVID-19 restrictions.
- Where information cannot be sufficiently collected, or where information quality may be compromised due to COVID-19 restrictions, a SCA rating option of "insufficient information" or "not possible to evaluate" should be included.

CONCLUSIONS

- The ROR process continues to rely heavily on Proponent led monitoring
- CNSC must increase the amount of independently collected data for performance verification.
- Greater consideration must be given to incorporating MMF collected environmental data for the evaluation of WL performance
- MMF continues its interest in having a more active role in the independent assessment and post-decommissioning decision-making at the WL site.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