

Vermilion River Stewardship

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Vermilion River Stewardship

Vision & Mission

- **Community Supporting a Healthy, Natural and Sustainable River System!**
- **Acting as a voice for the Vermilion River and its Watershed**
- **Stewardship of our Water is a responsibility we all share!**
- **Our Children, Grandchildren and future generations are depending on us!**
- **Without water there will be no life!**

4 Run-of-River Dam Proposals using Modified Peaking - Vermilion River



Photo by Allan Oman - Copyright



McPherson Falls

- Run-of-River dam with modified peaking
- Head pond inundation extending about 100m upstream
- 4.4km of new access road to existing local road
- Inundated lands are Crown land
- Concrete spillway dam, open approach channel, powerhouse & transformer station
- Notice of Commencement dated July of 2010
- No Applicant of Record – No Site Release
- No Project Description – 8 months later



Cascade Falls

- Run-of-River dam with modified peaking
- Head pond inundation extending about 3.5km upstream
- 500m of new road & upgrade of 4km of existing road
- Inundated lands – Crown and Private Land
- Concrete Spillway dam, open approach channel, powerhouse and transformer station
- Notice of Commencement filed in July 2010
- No Applicant of Record – No Site Release
- No Project Description – 8 months later
- Vale Public Drinking Water Intake feeds 13,000 people in Naughton, Lively, Copper Cliff and Whitefish First Nations



Soo Crossing

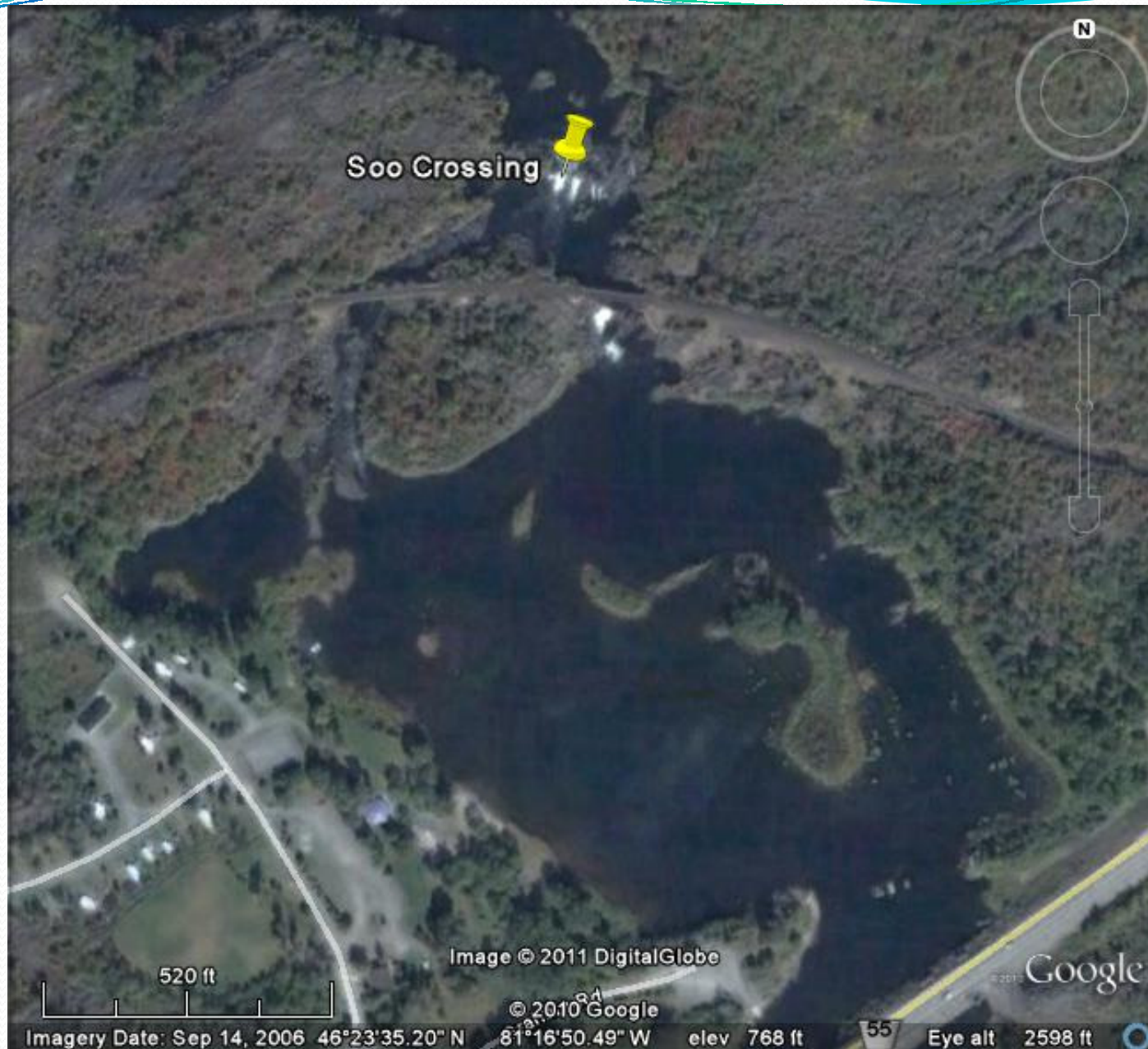


Photo by Allan Oman - Copyright



Soo Crossing

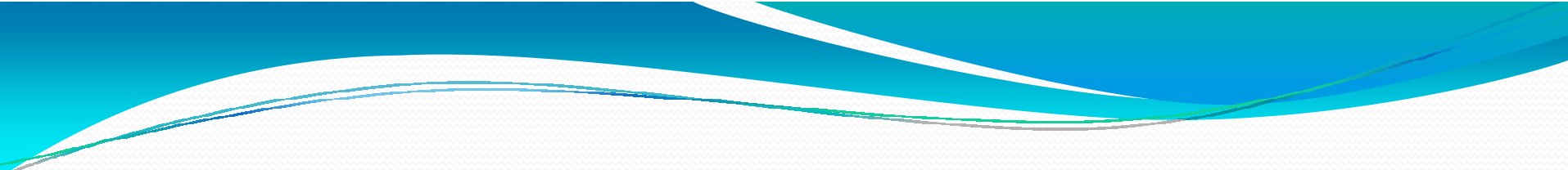
- Run of River dam with modified peaking
- Head pond extending 4.5 km upstream
- 700m of new access road to existing Hwy 55
- Concrete & Earthen Spillway, Powerhouse, Penstock & Transmission Line
- Crown, Private & First Nations Land
- Notice of Commencement filed July 2010
- No Applicant of Record – No Site Release
- No Project Description
- All 3 dams will be treated as a System under one EA
- Centennial Park & Beach – potential safety hazard





Wabagishik Rapids

- Run-of-River dam with modified peaking
- Head pond inundation extending about 600 to 1000m upstream of proposed dam to Wabagishik Lake
- 400m of new access road & upgrade of 800m to existing Concrete Spillway, Control Dam, Powerhouse, Penstock Discharge Channel, & Transformer Station
- Notice of Commencement filed July 2010
- No Applicant of Record – No Site Release
- OFSC – \$229,000 bridge located close to proposed dam
- Lake Sturgeon – Endangered Species
- Walleye Spawning Bed located within these rapids



“Modified Peaking”

- **Modified Peaking in layman’s terms:**
 - **Water flow is held back in head ponds (approx. 9 kms)**
 - **Stored water is used to generate a maximum amount of power during and after peak demand hours**
 - **Incentives offered to produce maximum energy at peak hours, not in using moderation to prevent ecosystem damage**
 - **A negotiated amount of residual flow is maintained – LRIA recommends a minimum of 2/3 of total flow – what will Xeneca negotiate?**
 - **Numerous negative impacts documented in Government Reports**

Environment Canada Report – NWRI Scientific Assessment Report
Threats to Sources of Drinking Water & Aquatic Ecosystem
Impacts of Dams/Diversions and Climate Change, Page 69 – 15.

- **Dams which store water & release flow to generate power during winter & low-flow periods cause**
 - **Thermal stratification within reservoir & modification of downstream water temperatures**
 - **Eutrophication (high nitrogen & phosphorus); promotion of anoxic conditions (low dissolved oxygen); changes in metal concentrations in outflow**
 - **Increased methylation of mercury**
 - **Sediment retention; associated changes in total dissolved solids; turbidity & nutrients in the reservoir & discharged water**
 - **Increased erosion/deposition of downstream sediments & associated contaminants**

Misema River - McGraw Falls



Misema
River
Nov. 2010





Action Taken

- **7 Feb 2011 - Letter to NDCA requesting they:**
 - 1. Deny permission to Xeneca, under Section 28(1) of the Conservation Authorities Act – which states “cannot restrict, regulate or interfere with the use of drinking water”;**
 - 2. Require Xeneca treat McPherson Falls, Cascade Falls and Soo Crossing as one interconnected system within the EA process as they will all be computer controlled to work in unison; or**
 - 3. Require Xeneca to undertake an Individual Environmental Assessment (also known as a Part II Order) on all three of these dams.**
- **8 Feb. 2011 - Letter to Xeneca requesting documentation and answers to numerous questions – some answers received**



Major Concerns:

- **What kind of heavy metals and contaminants will be stirred up in the river bed sediment after many years of mining emissions and sewage effluent discharge?**
- **What kind of impact will 8 kms of head ponds have on water quality, and downstream river ecosystem?**
- **How will Xeneca protect the Public Water Intake from silt, sedimentation, heavy metals and pollutants stirred up by the tail race?**
- **How will this affect those downstream whose wells are affected by River water quality and turbidity?**
- **Several Endangered Species and Species at Risk, including Lake Sturgeon**



A Few Questions for Xeneca:

- What will be the short & long term impact on water levels, water quality, aquatic life, shorelines, fish spawning & erosion
- How many times a day will water levels rise and fall in the river with “modified peaking”
- Will there be provision for fish passage
- What are the Spill Response & Emergency Response Plans during construction & after completion
- How will the Municipality & Property Owners be compensated for costs associated with any emergency or resulting damage?
- Has Xeneca provided an up-front bond for the full costs of future decommissioning – must be part of a 40 year contract.
- What questions do you have for Xeneca??

The Root of the Problem



GREEN ENERGY RUSH



Green Energy Rush

- **Current government has an “Open for Business” mentality**
- **This is reminiscent of the Gold Rush days of old – we are now in the Green Energy Rush – to exploit our natural resources**
- **Under 600 potential Waterpower Sites listed across Ontario in 2005 Hatch Acres Report - Ontario Waterpower Potential**
- **As of 8 April 2010 - 77 waterpower projects were in the works**
- **Xeneca currently has 33 FIT Contracts across Ontario**
- **FIT Program provides incentives to produce Green Energy**
- **Acts & Regs. are currently changing to accommodate this Open for Business agenda – losing our protected areas & safeguards**



Green Energy Act & Feed-In-Tariff

- **This government is offering very generous incentives with the Feed-In-Tariff program, and has provided environmental and monetary exemptions in the Act for projects that make a major economic & green contribution to the Province**
- **We're paying high prices for green energy and there is no evidence it is really green**
- **Debt will be on our children**
- **The resulting devastation to our River Systems will also be on our children**
- **Electricity is becoming unaffordable – up 45% over next 5 years – plus peak demand extra charges**



Environmental Assessment (EA) Process

- **It's a Proponent driven process from beginning to end**
- **No transparency – vital documentation is withheld until Notice of Completion is issued**
- **Once Notice of Completion is issued we have 30 days to respond**
- **On the surface there is an emphasis on public consultation, but even City Councils' hands are tied – “no” is not an option**
- **Local MNR & MOE do their best but critical decisions are made up the chain where there is more government control**
- **Invited to be on Stakeholders' Advisory Committee but must sign Terms of Reference prohibiting relaying anything negative about the Proponent or Project – this is not acceptable!**

ECO for Ontario, Gord Miller, in his 2007-2008 Annual Report

- “The ECO is contacted regularly by individuals and groups frustrated by their EA misadventures. It would not be too forceful to say that Ontario’s EA process is broken. We have lost the old vision for EA; a new vision is urgently needed.”
- “A ‘no’ decision is not a possible outcome.”
- ECO expressed concerns that once mitigation has been agreed upon it is not always carried through with – there is no accountability





Ontario Rivers Alliance

- Realized not going to protect our rivers through the EA Process
- Brought together other groups working to stop dams on rivers in their area
- Inaugural meeting held 19 February in North Bay
- Next meeting is on 2 April in North Bay
- Now have 14 Rivers & 26 Organizations in our Alliance
- Sharing of information, expertise, ideas & resources to
 - Raise awareness that these projects are not Green Energy
 - Lobby for a moratorium on processing of dam applications until the environmental impacts and “cumulative effects” on our river systems can be properly assessed



Considerations:

- **Many other Municipalities in Ontario are experiencing the same sense of frustration in this Green Energy Rush**
- **Green Energy projects are out of control, with few environmental safeguards or limitations**
- **Need to band together to place a moratorium on Green Energy & a chance to consider the cumulative effects**
- **We all want Green Energy if it is truly Clean, Green & embraced by the Community – this technology is Dirty Energy**
- **Far too many of these projects have been Green washed and the Communities have no meaningful say**
- **What is the actual contribution these run-of-river dams will make towards the total energy audit, and at what price?**



Recommendations:

- **Initiate a City led Stakeholders' Advisory Committee (SAC) to gather and assess pertinent information to determine the feasibility, as well as the cumulative environmental impacts, of these proposed dams on the Vermilion River.**
- **SAC to consist of an environmental scientist such as Dr. Gunn, or Dr. Ramcharan, and key Stakeholder representatives from the City, Vale, NDCA, Vermilion River Stewardship, MNR, MOE, Xeneca etc.**
- **Stakeholder representatives would be free to report back to their constituents and Committee members in a truthful and open manner.**
- **Failing this, insist the Proponent withdraw any restrictions in the T of R with regard to reporting back to other Stakeholders.**

THANK YOU!

