Dene National / Assembly of First Nations
Office (NWT)

5120- 49th Street
P.O. Box 2338
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P7

Phone: (867) 873-4081
Fax: (867) 920-2254
Toll-Free: 1-866-511-4081
Website: www.denenation.ca

March 16, 2023

DAY 2 SUMMARY: Nagwichoonjik Water Summit

Day 2 discussed different types of Water Legislation and methods for providing feedback on various water-related issues affecting Indigenous Peoples.

The day began with opening statements from IRC Chairperson Duane Smith about the changes in the water, environment, water levels, impact of beavers into coastal regions, low water, shoreline erosion, melting permafrost, and invasive species of fish and wildlife like beavers. Dene and Metis Elders, Leaders and delegates shared their observations about the changes in the landscape and waterways from the arctic coast to the southern regions of the Akaitcho lands on the edges of Treaty 11 and Treaty 8.

"*At Colville Lake, we can still drink the water without filtering it. … The water is living*." Grand Chief Wilbert Kochon, Sahtu Dene Council.

First Peoples Law provided details on the effects of toxins in the water systems, the history of legal actions, and the potential for further inquiries to protect water and the rights of Peoples who live in the affected areas. AFN presented on Safe Drinking Water Legislation and the challenges with the current activities by the Federal government and the importance for Inuit, Metis and Dene to submit their feedback on unsafe Drinking Water.

Snookie Catholique, Information Services Director with Dene Nation and JR Manyfingers, Researcher, shared their work on Emergency preparedness. This work is part of the First Nations Information Governance (FNIGC) action plan to support the gathering of information and resources to support First Nations doing research. Snookie shared the challenges to supporting communities during environmental disasters, resources to support communities affected during multiple environmental events, what lessons they learned and the plans to release an information book on Emergency Preparedness.

The day ended with statements by the delegation about the importance of carrying these issues forward to Water and Enviromental regulators to ensure the health and safety of the water. Traditional land-based knowledge and science must work together, directed by Dene, Inuit, and Metis. We must have studies that show relationships between the water contaminants and the rates of cancers and other illnesses affecting humans, animals, fish and fish habitats.

.

-30-

For More Information:
Leanne Goose, Communications
communications@denenation.com
587-986-6215