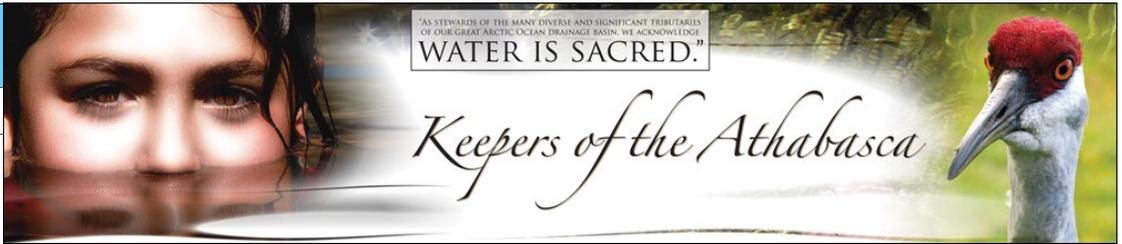
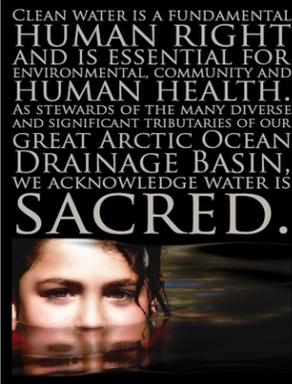


Please see our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/KeepersOfTheAthabasca for upcoming events.



Keepers of the Athabasca Watershed Society

Keepers Speak for the Water in Coalspur court case

Thanks to EcoJustice for their work representing Keepers of the Athabasca, Keepers of the Water and the West Athabasca Watershed Bioregional Society now that we have been taken to court by Coalspur Mine.

Keepers of the Athabasca wrote to Canada's Environment Minister Jonathon Wilkinson in July 2019 to express our concerns about the Coalspur mine expansion, which has never had a federal environmental assessment.

In January 2020 Minister Wilkinson changed his mind and did call for a federal environmental review for the proposed expansion of this thermal coal mine. He also called for a review of the

new proposed underground mine, that Coalspur tried to sneak in under its current Approval. In July, Minister Wilkinson listed many reasons, including fish, fish habitat, species at risk, and Treaty Rights may all be affected by this mine, and these factors are all in federal jurisdiction

In September 2020, Coalspur launched a proceeding to challenge the Minister's decision, saying he is acting "unlawfully, unreasonably, and unconstitutionally". Keepers of the Athabasca, Keepers of the Water, and the WAWBS are all named in this proceeding, along with Louis Bull Tribe and Stoney Nakoda Nation. We are respondents in this case – a real opportunity to

address the concerns of expanding thermal coal during a climate emergency that can also impact endangered Rainbow Trout and Bull Trout in the Athabasca River, and federally protected Treaty Rights.

The longer the court case takes, the longer this destructive coal mine doesn't get expanded.

Coalspur's Vista mine near Hinton has been shipping thermal coal since May 2019. They want to expand.



Keepers of the Athabasca Watershed Society

is merging with

Keepers of the Water Council

to form

Keepers of the Water Society

2021

Thank You for your support over the past decade and a half ...

We are stronger together!

keepersofthewater.ca

Problems with a well site?

Need more information?

https://www.wellwiki.org/wiki/Main_Page

Merging together for strength

The Keepers of the Athabasca would like to inform you of our upcoming merger with the Keepers of the Water. This merger will add to productivity and allow members of both organizations to work in a more solidified manner. It is a win-win situation for all. We are excited about this prospect and committed to its success.

Within the mandate for Keepers of the Water is to bring networks of people together and deliver an accessible annual gathering to share information in order to empower communities' understanding of the sacredness of water, also to have the tools to move forward with hope. When Keepers of the Water was formed in the Decho, along the

Mackenzie River in North West Territories, it included many important messages and talks of how we need to work to protect water. Keepers of the Water board, which includes one of the founders of the organization; Sam Gargan, met in November of 2019 to establish a mission, vision and mandate statement that is reflective of the 2006 KOW declaration as well as who we are today and moving forward. You can find these on the Keepers of the Water website.

Times change and new issues and focuses occur which has brought to light we are often working on many of the same issues which can create an overlap of projects, capacity, and funding. Accord-

ingly, bringing both groups together will enhance the work being done and the capacity to do so while easing the burden on funding agencies and contributors.

Thank you for being part of this exciting venture, your continued support of our organization, and your commitment to the protection of waters. Together we are strong.



Keepers of the Athabasca



KEEPERS OF THE WATER COUNCIL

5001-43rd Ave.
Athabasca, Alberta
T1J42C0

Our Keepers of the Athabasca website keepersoftheathabasca.ca will soon be for archive and research purposes only. For news, events, and more, please see keepersofthewater.ca

Contact our Co-chairs:

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Keepers of the Athabasca and the Oil Sands Research Interest Group (OSIRG)

Keepers of the Athabasca has participated in many multi-stakeholder groups over our 15 year life span. We participate in these groups to learn what's going on, and to offer comment. Increasingly, it seems like our comments are not considered.

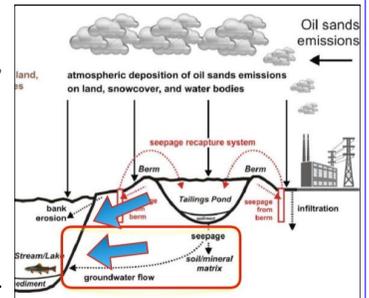
Tailings Management Framework review (2017): we learned how companies set their own plans for tailings management, and submit their own research to be evaluated by the Alberta Energy Regulator. Also, this review committee presented the very first indication about how the Alberta government is keeping the door open for companies to 'treat' and release tailings to the Athabasca River.

Mine Financial Securities Program review (2018): we learned how very little the government is collecting as security against future oilfield site reclamation. The Alberta government has collected just \$200M on a potential reclamation bill of \$260B.

Integrated Water Management Working Group (2017-2019): we learned about the 'pilot projects' that tarsands companies are currently working on to "treat and release" their tailings to the Athabasca River. This group has enlisted the government of Canada to change a number of health, environment, and other regulations to allow tailings release to take place. First Nations are opposed to this.

Oil Sands Research Interest Group (2020/21): this newest group is mainly interested in facilitating tailings "treatment and release" to the Athabasca River. All of our suggestions for green chemistry and full containment for tailings have been ignored.

How tailings ponds leak: operators are using Alberta's geology as a filter



Swan Hills Hazardous Waste Treatment Centre and Faust Osmose Site #6

In February 2020, Keepers and our partners Swan River First Nation took lake sediment core samples in Lesser Slave Lake. Working with Pacific Rim Labs, we were trying to find evidence of the 2009 fire and explosion that closed the Swan Hills Hazardous Waste Treatment Centre for 10 months with millions of dollars in damages.

Instead, while 'hints' of the Swan Hills explosion are evident, what we found is that there have been CDDs (chlorinated dibenzo-p dioxins) seeping into the lake for decades. These toxic chemicals exceed federal guidelines for the protection of aquatic environments; the source may be the Faust Osmose Site, a wood preserving plant that exploded back in 1970.

There was an incomplete clean up of arsenic and PCBs from this site in the 1990's before anything was known about the dioxin contamination. Since heavy dioxin loads were discovered here in the early 2000s, the site was fenced off and

access was limited until 2018.

In 2018, Alberta Environment contracted to put a clay cap on top of the worst of the dioxin contamination and they removed the perimeter fencing. Fencing is only around the clay cap. Right now, Big Lakes county is involved in building a road down to Lesser Slave Lake, hauling hundreds of loads of random fill since September 2020 and potentially tracking toxins.

We have a map supplied by Alberta Environment and Parks Compliance Assurance that shows several of the worst hotspots were excavated and placed within the capped area. Local people did not see evidence of any hotspot excavation. In one of the places, 5 year old trees are growing, which contradicts this map.

Also, clay capping does not prevent contaminant spread to groundwater. While there are many groundwater

wells on the site, the Lesser Slave Lake itself had never been measured for the chemicals of concern until our lake sediment core samples.

We are working with the Alberta Ombudsman to respond to local residents' concerns, as well as with our partners Swan River First Nation and Métis Nation of Alberta to set up a fish study and determine affects to fish and human health.

Map showing toxic hotspots left over after an incomplete clean up in the 1990's. Keepers is working with local concerned citizens and Alberta Environment and Parks Compliance Assurance to discover whether these were actually excavated in 2018 and placed within the clay cap.

