

Nuclear Legacy Liability Program

Natural Resources Canada / AECL / AMEC

Dialogue Partners worked alongside AMEC Earth and Environmental, Atomic Energy of Canada (AMEC) and Natural Resources Canada to engage the community in creating a long-term strategy for the cleanup and management of radioactive waste at Atomic Energy of Canada sites throughout the country.

Highly complex information like nuclear waste management presents possibilities for shared understanding, and to integrate community knowledge and needs into the conversation.

*- Kim Hyshka, Principal,
Dialogue Partners*

What happened?

Dialogue Partners conducted interviews with key stakeholders to understand their needs, level of awareness and desire for information; we drafted information materials designed to make complex, technical information understandable and accessible.

We designed and facilitated a focus group on the materials with key stakeholders; met with First Nations and Metis communities and representatives; facilitated internal working group meetings; designed and populated the project website; and hosted information sessions in a number of different communities.

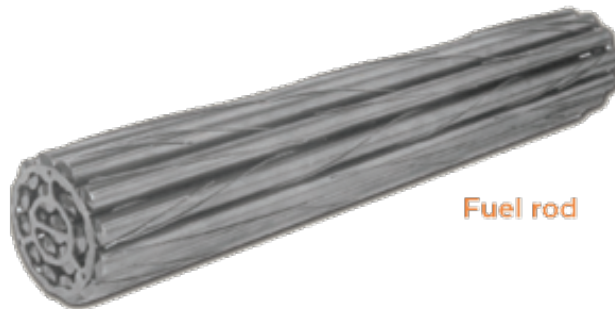


Initial focus was on the upper Ottawa Valley area near the Chalk River Laboratories where 70% of the nuclear waste is located.

Things we learned along the way.

Balancing the needs and expertise of scientists and technical experts with the needs and interests of community and stakeholders is crucial. Coaching, strategic advice and capacity building were built into the project. Testing of materials, process and approach is

critical to “getting it right” and meeting stakeholder needs.



Some of the techniques used were pre-identified for us at the start of the project, and together we learned and affirmed that there is great value in asking stakeholders how they want to be involved, and engaging them where they gather already, instead of scheduling meets for them to come to us. Ongoing relationship building with Metis, First Nation and other communities of interest will be important as the project goes forward.

Complexity as an opportunity.

Dialogue Partners approach included community capacity building workshops to train citizens to host / facilitate their own conversations.

We also ran workshops with elected officials and senior staff to build understanding and knowledge about meaningful public engagement, making and implementing sustainable decisions.