

Associations Present:

Canadian Association of Nuclear Host Communities (CANHC), Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM), Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB).

Thirteen Municipal Forum members attended the first meeting of 2024 at NWMO’s Toronto offices. Representatives from ROMA and SUMA made their first appearance as members of the Forum.

1. Welcoming Remarks

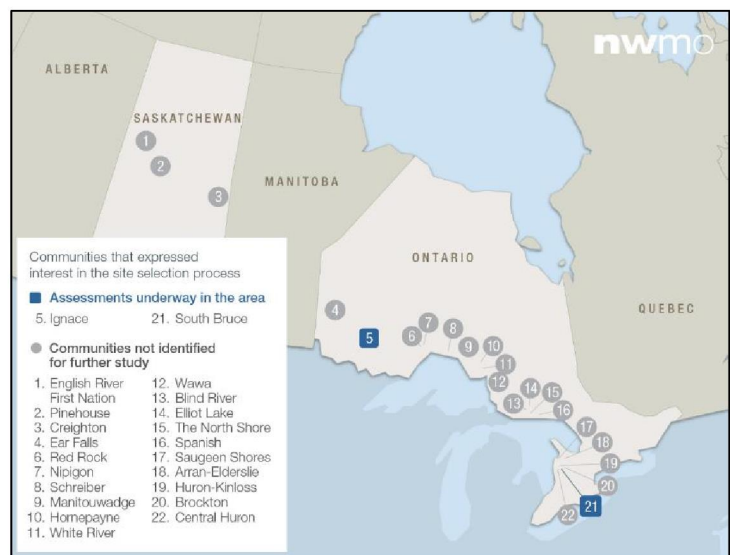
Vice-President of Site Selection, Lise Morton, welcomed attendees and described work in several areas in support of site selection. Potential hosting agreements with the [Township of Ignace](#) and the [Municipality of South Bruce](#) were signed this year. These significant milestones map out what happens, including local investments, if they are a willing host and selected as the location for a deep geological repository. Each of the four siting communities, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, the Township of Ignace, Saugeen Ojibway Nation and the Municipality of South Bruce, will develop for themselves their process to determine willingness. The NWMO plans to make an announcement on site selection by the end of the year.

The NWMO also published updated [Confidence in Safety reports](#) which support the conclusion that a deep geological repository can be constructed safely at either site. Last year, regional and siting area communities visited the Onkalo deep geological repository in Eurajoki, Finland and where they asked questions and heard directly from local officials about the impact the facility has had on their community.

2. Update on NWMO Siting Activities

In April, Ignace hosted the Northwest Nuclear Exploration Event and in May we also attended the South Bruce Nuclear Exploration Forum. Organized by the municipalities, these events provided the public an opportunity to learn more about the potential hosting agreements and engage NWMO subject matter experts to discuss and answer questions on a wide range of technical, environment and social aspects of the project.

Community members are participating in their locally developed willingness programs to determine community support for hosting the project. In Ignace the willingness process is anticipated to be completed in the coming months and in South Bruce a referendum is scheduled for October. Similarly, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and Saugeen Ojibway Nation will develop their own process for determining willingness.



3. Government Relations Update

Government Relations Director, Dakota Kochie, provided an update on our work to manage relationships at the provincial and federal levels of government and internationally. Given the nature of the project with interim storage in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick and potential additional future used fuel with prospective nuclear energy projects across Canada, building relationships is part of outreach to support awareness and understanding about the NWMO's mandate and the project.

4. Indigenous Relations and Sustainability Update

Vice President, Indigenous Relations & Strategic Programs, Bob Watts, presented several initiatives furthering the NWMO's Reconciliation and sustainability work. The NWMO is undertaking a three-year [Reconciliation strategy](#) building on the Reconciliation Policy of 2019. Focusing on learning, action, relationships and healing, activities include an annual Reconciliation assessment and cultural awareness training. Ongoing workshops on Indigenous Knowledge and Western science examine how can we consider Indigenous Knowledge in the context of our work.

Through discussions with Canadians and Indigenous peoples, the NWMO identified a common theme of questions about how the project will protect water. This led the NWMO to publish a [Water Statement](#) which outlines how the entire purpose of the plan for used nuclear fuel is to protect people and the environment, including water.

5. Roundtable & Updates

President & CEO, Laurie Swami spoke to recent updates indicating that with the recent signing of the potential hosting agreements, this is an exciting time in the lead up to site selection.

Attendees were invited to introduce themselves and provide an update for their association. As the nuclear sector grows, CANHC's work is becoming more active in engaging communities across Canada and promoting coordination of host communities internationally. SUMA provided an update on the selection process for a small modular reactor location in Saskatchewan. For the first time, minister delegations were held at NOMA. In New Brunswick, the UMNMB reported that as part of municipal reform, the number of local entities will be cut from 340 to 90. UNMB is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

6. Site Selection

Potential hosting agreements are needed to advance the willingness process and negotiations with the remaining siting area communities are ongoing. With the recent publication of the Confidence in Safety reports, this supports our focus on the willingness process to reach site selection. Internationally, the NWMO is receiving interest from countries that want to learn more about our consent-based siting process.

