

# NWMO IDENTIFIES POTENTIAL DRILL SITES IN HORNEPAYNE AREA

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is a corporation made of the power utilities in Canada that use nuclear reactors to produce electricity. In 2010 the NWMO launched a process to select a site to construct a “deep geological repository” in which the NWMO intends to bury all of Canada’s highly radioactive nuclear fuel waste. The Municipality of Hornepayne has been cooperating in the NWMO process since 2011.

In February 2018 the Nuclear Waste Management Organization released a map outlining potential sites for exploratory drilling in an area south of Hornepayne, as a next step in their search for a potential burial site for all of Canada’s high level nuclear fuel waste. The NWMO has submitted a “Borehole Drilling Project Description” to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and has been directed to consult with area First Nations identified by MNRF.

The NWMO has reportedly submitted their list of open houses and Community Liaison Committee meetings and a list of individual meetings as their record of “public consultation” on the proposed drill sites and activities. The MNRF is not inviting public comment on the NWMO application, and has not made the application publicly available. Unsolicited comments can be sent to the Wawa District Manager, the Director of Integrations Branch, and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.<sup>1</sup>

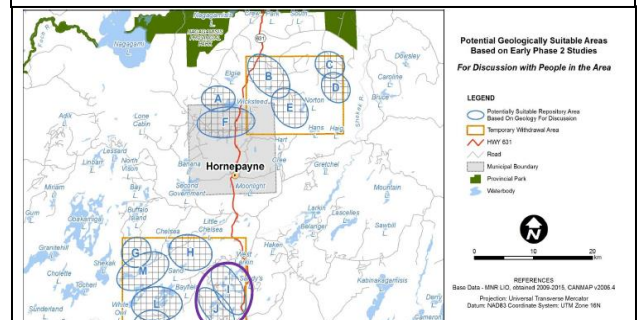
The three boreholes mapped by the NWMO are in Bayfield and Beaton Townships, just to the west of Highway 631 and approximately 20 kilometres outside the Municipality of Hornepayne. The boreholes are in the Superior Recreation Access Area, which is an area designated in the land use plans for enhanced management to “enhance and maintain the natural and recreational values of the area”.<sup>2</sup>

Borehole 01 is south of White Owl Lake Road, approximately a half-kilometre west of Corner Lake and north of Bone Lake. Borehole 02 is less than a quarter-kilometre northwest of Wabos Lake and is immediately south of Fall-In Lake; Otter Lake is less than a ½ kilometre west. Borehole 03 abuts Highway 631, on the southern-most shore of Beavertrap Lake.

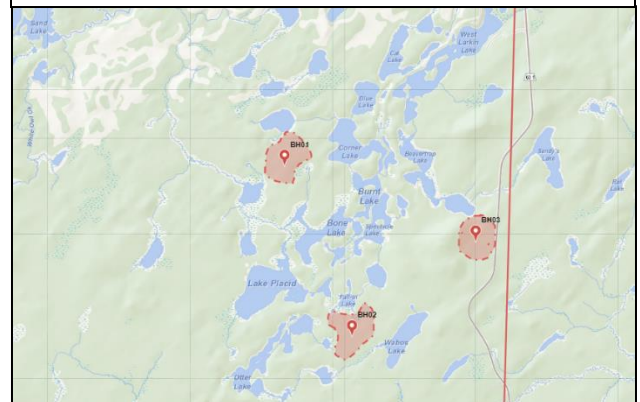
The area is rich and active with recreational uses; all three potential sites are within less than two kilometres of cottages and camps, trails, portages, and canoe routes, and valued tourism lakes are nearby.



In 2012 the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines withdrew 64,650.4 hectares in the Hornepayne area from mineral prospecting, staking, sale and lease while the NWMO studied them as possible nuclear waste burial sites.



Initially identified as “general potential suitable areas”, areas that will be subjected to further investigation became “candidate” areas in the second phase of NWMO’s “Step 3”. In some cases, the boundaries of candidate areas go beyond the areas withdrawn by MNDM in 2012.



In February 2018 the Nuclear Waste Management Organization released a map showing potential drill sites

<sup>1</sup> Director (Acting), Integration Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

<sup>2</sup> Crown Land Use Policy Atlas designation “E1771r: Northeast Superior Recreation Access Area”

## Treaty and Traditional Territories

Pic Mobert First Nation,<sup>3</sup> Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River First Nation)<sup>4</sup> and Hornepayne First Nation have each clearly communicated to the NWMO that they are unwilling to have the NWMO continue their program within their territories, and are opposed to a nuclear waste repository being sited in any of the areas associated with Hornepayne or Manitouwadge's participation in the NWMO process. The MNRF has directed the NWMO to “consult” with five area First Nations on their proposed drill program.



## Background on NWMO Candidate Areas

In their “Preliminary Assessment Report” released in November 2013, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization identified three areas in the very general vicinity of the Township of Hornepayne as being “general potentially suitable areas” for the burial of high level nuclear waste.<sup>5</sup> The centre block was referred to by the NWMO as “South Central – Chelsea Bayfield” and described as being “along the south-central margin of the Hornepayne area, south of Hornepayne Lakes and between Mitchell Lake and Star Lake, in the Black-Pic batholith.<sup>6</sup> NWMO’s report described this “potentially suitable area” as being “predominantly Crown land and does not contain any protected areas, or active mining claims. The area is easily accessible by Highway 631”.<sup>6</sup>

The area included the north-western portion is in Cholette Township, the northern portion in Chelsea Township, the north-eastern portion in Larkin Township, the south-Western portion in Mathews Township, the northern portion in Bayfield Township, and the north-eastern portion in Beaton Township; the largest portions are in Chelsea and Bayfield Townships.<sup>7</sup> The area is almost entirely in the Nagagami Forest Management Unit, with the exception of a small south-western portion which is in Mathews Township and is in the White River Forest. Major lakes in the NWMO identified “potentially suitable area” include McCoy Lake, Chelsea Lake, Sand Lake, Jay Lake, Cat Lake, Blue Lake, Corner Lake, Beavertrap Lake, Burnt Lake, Spectacle Lake, Bone Lake, White Pine Lake, Lake Placid, Fall-in Lake, Wabos Lake, Smokey Lake, Otter Lake, Bayfield Lake, South Bayfield Lake and White Owl Lake.

At the time of the land withdrawal,<sup>8</sup> most of the area was within General Use Area G1774, named “Obakamiga - Bayfield Lake General Use Area”, which had commercial tourism with some public recreation opportunities as the primary land use. In 2016, the land use designation was changed as a result of the Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project, and the area was re-designated as an Enhanced Management Area, E1771r: Northeast Superior Recreation Access Area. According to the policy “land use direction and resource management activities will be compatible with enhancing and maintaining the natural and recreational values of the area. The land use intent of this area is to promote and enhance opportunities for a diverse set of recreational activities for the benefit of communities located in the Wawa District. Priority will be given to activities that promote well planned access for enhanced recreational activities, community connectivity and improved resource use in the area.”<sup>9</sup>

This briefing note was prepared by Northwatch. For more information, please visit [www.northwatch.org](http://www.northwatch.org), or [www.KnowNuclearWaste.ca](http://www.KnowNuclearWaste.ca). For regular updates, find [Northwatch](#) on Facebook and join the Facebook group “[Concerned Citizens of Hornepayne](#)”

<sup>3</sup> <http://picmobert.ca/departments/lands-resources/nuclear-waste-management/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://issuu.com/algomanews/docs/october\\_12th\\_\\_2016/12](https://issuu.com/algomanews/docs/october_12th__2016/12)

<sup>5</sup> NWMO: Preliminary Assessment for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada’s Used Nuclear Fuel, The Corporation of the Township of Hornepayne, Ontario – FINDINGS FROM PHASE ONE STUDIES, APM-REP-06144-0001 NOVEMBER 2013

<sup>6</sup> NWMO 2013 Page 40, 41

<sup>7</sup> MNDM Claimaps online mapping system, 2012

<sup>8</sup> MNDM WITHDRAWAL ORDER NO.W-P-99/13, November 2013

<sup>9</sup> Crown Land Use Policy Atlas designation “E1771r: Northeast Superior Recreation Access Area”, as posted at [http://www.gisapplication.lrc.gov.on.ca/services/CLUPA/xmlReader.aspx?xsl=web-primary.xsl&type=primary&POLICY\\_IDENT=E1771r](http://www.gisapplication.lrc.gov.on.ca/services/CLUPA/xmlReader.aspx?xsl=web-primary.xsl&type=primary&POLICY_IDENT=E1771r)