



# New Post Creek Project News

Newsletter #8

April 2012

## President's Message

It has been approximately 10 months since I came on board as President of Coral Rapids Power and a lot has happened since then. This position has given me the opportunity to learn from experienced team members and build my skills. The support and encouragement from the New Post Creek project team makes this part of the job enjoyable.

The New Post Creek project entered into the Definition Phase in May 2011, and a year later we have completed a lot of work, but there is a lot left to do before we can start construction. We are mostly working on the engineering and the Environmental Assessment at this time.

The Environmental Assessment commenced in November 2011 and included the Aboriginal and Public Consultation Open Houses that were held in late November. We visited Moose Cree First Nation in Moose Factory on the 28<sup>th</sup> and gave an introduction of the project. The participants at this meeting were quite positive about the project and the information was well received. There was a genuine interest in the impacts on fish habitat and on the Moose Cree member's trapline that is near the proposed transmission line route. TTN members in Moosonee attended a community meeting that evening at the curling club in Moosonee. On Nov 29<sup>th</sup> a community meeting was held for TTN members at the reserve. This was a great chance to talk about the project with other community members and hear their thoughts on everything.

The public Open Houses were held on Nov 30<sup>th</sup> and Dec 1<sup>st</sup> in Smooth Rock Falls and Cochrane. The comments and questions are being gathered and recorded for submission into a final report. We were able to hear from a variety of people from the region about the proposed project.

We are in the process of reviewing some of the key technical documents from our engineering team. The Geotechnical Data Report is nearly complete and we expect more reports shortly. You can read more about the engineering work elsewhere in this newsletter.

As part of the Reciprocal Agreement signed with Moose Cree First Nation, the New Post Joint Working Group (JWG) is up and running with Lillian Trapper as MCFN's coordinator coming on board in Nov, 2011. I am looking forward to future meetings with Lillian and MCFN members to learn more about their interests in the project.

A trappers impact meeting was held in Cochrane on Sept 9<sup>th</sup> at the Swan Castle Inn. An introduction to the project was presented and discussions were initiated by a question and answer period.

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KGS Group completed ice cover surveys this winter using a helicopter. This photo was taken at the top of the falls.

## Environmental Assessment Update

The New Post Creek Project Team has made significant progress on the environmental work undertaken. An Environmental Assessment (EA) consultant, SENES Consultants Limited, was hired in May 2011 to undertake the Environmental Assessment. After meeting with the regulators in May to present the Project and to review the Project Description that was prepared by SENES, the environmental team started their field work to investigate a wide variety of different environmental aspects, including aquatic, terrestrial, and cultural heritage assessment. As we assess the possible effects of the Project on the environment, CRP and OPG are committed to working with all interested people on potential impacts and mitigation opportunities.

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## Consultation

Aboriginal and Public Consultation was formally initiated in November 2011 in accordance with the respective Plans prepared by SENES. Prior to publishing the Notice of Commencement in local papers, which started on November 16, 2011, letters were sent from the OPG Project Manager and CRP's President to the various First Nations Chiefs and to the Métis Nation of Ontario to provide information on the Project and offer to meet with each of them to discuss the Project. The CRP/OPG team met with Moose Cree in Moose Factory and with TTN in Moosonee on Monday, November 28, and again with TTN on the reserve on Tuesday, November 29. A meeting with the Métis Regional Consultation Committee was held on February 13, 2012. Regulators attended each of these meetings. In addition to consulting with the First Nations, meetings with trappers were held in the fall of 2011 and will continue in 2012.

The First Public Open House was held in Smooth Rock Falls on November 30, 2011, and a second Public Open House was held in Cochrane on December 1, 2011. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions at the Open House and also send in their comments. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Ontario Parks attended both Open Houses to provide information and answer questions concerning the Little Abitibi Provincial Park deregulation process. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) also attended both Open Houses. The Open Houses in 2011 provided the team an opportunity to meet with outfitters working in the area, and discussions with them will continue during the EA process.

A second set of Open Houses is tentatively being planned for the Fall of 2012 that will provide information on the final design, identify potential impacts and the associated mitigation required, and obtain input and comments on the project.

Finally, in support of the EA work, SENES has developed a project website that has updated information and reports, etc., that can be accessed by the public. A copy of the Project Description, the Notice of Commencement, and materials presented at the Open Houses is also available from the website. The website, at [www.newpostcreek.com](http://www.newpostcreek.com), will be the best place to find out more about the Environmental Assessment process and download copies of any material about the Project. Contact information is available there as well if you wish to submit questions or comments about the Project.

## Cultural Heritage Assessment

Assessment of the Project's impact on cultural heritage is being carried out according to the *Ontario Heritage Act*. All areas proposed for development will be studied. Cultural heritage field work is being carried out by Dr. John Pollock with TTN members also involved with this field work. The archaeological team also assisted the engineering geotechnical field work to ensure that should any artifacts be found, proper procedures would be followed. No artifacts were found.



George Ross and KGS staff collecting water samples.

## New Post Joint Working Group

In keeping with the Reciprocal Agreement between TTN, Moose Cree and OPG, the New Post Joint Working Group (New Post JWG) has been established. The New Post Creek Project would like to welcome Lillian Trapper to the position of MCFN Coordinator. Lillian started in her position a week before the meetings scheduled with Moose Cree, TTN and the public, and was able to travel with the team to attend all the consultation meetings held in November/December 2011. The New Post JWG has met several times since December 2011 and will continue to meet throughout 2012.

## Aquatic

Fisheries field work was initiated in 2009 to assess habitat, fish community and fish spawning locations. This work was expanded in 2011 to further assess the above but to also assess mercury levels in fish. Above the New Post Falls, New Post Creek has a simple and sparse fish community. Below the New Post Falls some walleye spawning has been noted, while sturgeon have been noted below the falls, sturgeon spawning has been noted near Abitibi Canyon. Whitefish spawning was not observed over the 3-year period.

## Terrestrial

Terrestrial environment studies were carried out on all areas impacted by the Project (e.g., generating station, transmission line). The studies include assessing the Project's potential impact on:

- caribou
- moose
- forest birds
- raptors
- waterfowl
- aquatic feeding areas
- vegetation
- species at risk

Terrestrial studies were completed in the fall of 2011 and included observation and plant species characterization throughout the project area, including the intake, powerhouse, and transmission line route. A forest resource assessment was also undertaken in this area.

# Engineering Update

Since the last newsletter update, our engineering consultant, KGS Group, has completed a significant amount of work for the Project including:

- a geotechnical study to establish the foundation requirements for the various structures required at the site;
- ongoing studies of the river flow and ice conditions throughout the year and how this will affect habitats, energy production, and construction;
- evaluation of dam safety and public safety requirements;
- the work necessary to start preparing the project site drawings and specifications; and
- various studies with equipment suppliers to establish the most cost-effective technology options for the purpose of establishing specifications.

## Technical Review

TTN/CRP and OPG participated in a technical review with KGS of all engineering activities. The objective was to review of each of the components (the intake, penstock, powerhouse and transmission line) and to identify any questions and concerns with the results and the assumptions used. The meeting served as an opportunity for all participants to have a clear understanding of where we are in the engineering design process and to set out the next steps.



New Post Constructors and MJ Labelle assisted with the geotechnical investigations.

## Geotechnical Investigations

The construction costs for the foundations of the various structures are an important part of the project costs. Having better certainty about the conditions below ground to construct stable and safe foundations for the dam, penstocks and powerhouse is essential and will influence the location of the various structures, the construction methods and the costs. In the fall of 2011, KGS Group, with assistance from New Post Constructors and MJ Labelle, performed the investigations necessary to improve our understanding of the conditions below ground. The work consisted of excavating 10 test pits in the proposed Project area and along the proposed transmission line route and the drilling of a number of boreholes to reach further into the ground. Various tests of soil and the underlying bedrock were also conducted. Samples of the bedrock were sent to laboratories to confirm that it can be used for the production of concrete. These geotechnical investigations built on the knowledge gained from the work that was done in 2009, and will help to refine further the conditions throughout the area. The east bank of the Creek was difficult to access and required a change in the test methods. The results showed that the bedrock was deeper than expected. This required seismic refraction tests to be carried out just before the winter to better understand the layout of the bedrock below. In general the results do not indicate any serious concerns.

## River Characterization

There are four main areas of study on the reach of New Post Creek from the Otter Rapids Bridge to the area below the Falls. The first has been to develop better data about midwinter flows. There is an ongoing survey program for this purpose. The second has been to understand the ice cover conditions through such activities as an ice assessment, as this can have an important impact on the type of construction to be considered and the effects on the future operation of the reservoir. Third, there are ongoing activities to determine the amount of sediment in the river, as this can affect the construction of the dam and the turbines. Finally, there are ongoing activities to characterize the flows and effects of the Project on the potential habitats.

## Modelling for Minimum Flow Assessment

KGS and SENES have been working together to develop a 2D model to assist the team in determining an appropriate minimum flow. Once the modelling work is completed, OPG and CRP/TTN will meet with MNR, Ontario Parks, MOE and DFO to discuss the flow requirements to maintain habitats in the affected areas of the Creek.



Stanley Sutherland showing one of the trees identified during the Cultural Heritage Assessment as previously being used as a trail marker.

## Employment and Training Update

Freda Ouellette, Coral Rapids Power Employment and Training Coordinator (ETC), is working on long term planning for TTN members for the New Post Creek project. Freda is working with the TTN Education department and other ETCs to assess existing training programs and funding that may be available from governments, industry associations, or other groups.

This work includes identifying current work opportunities, business programs, and funding for TTN members. To date, the ETCs have identified opportunities for Operating Engineers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, Sheet Metal Workers, Electricians and Carpenters and Labour positions. If you need more detailed information please come in to the Employment and Training office in the Apatisawin building or call 705-272-2096.

Freda has been collaborating with the ETCs for the Lower Mattagami and Detour Gold projects to find opportunities for members. The ETCs can help with your cover letter and resume at their offices.

Many of the training opportunities and most jobs require a grade 12 or equivalent education. This may be a barrier for some people, but there is assistance and courses you can take to get your grade 12 or equivalent, and this will help you get more training, and maybe a job.

From time to time, the employment coordinators will send out emails to TTN members. Please contact us if you have an updated email address, and we can add you to our list. We send training posters, applications packages, job postings, and possible training opportunities.

Here are three things to remember when applying for a job: The purpose of a cover letter is to get your resume read. The purpose of your resume is to get an interview. The purpose of an interview is to get a job. Please keep the employment coordinators up to date with your contact information so that you won't miss out on training, employment and workshops that come available.

If you haven't filled out a Needs Survey please contact Freda as soon as possible.



Another aerial photo taken by KGS Group. In the foreground of this photo you can see the top of the New Post Creek Falls, and the Abitibi River in the background.

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I am planning on moving my office to Cochrane soon. It will be situated at the Apatisiwan Building. Moving closer to the community will mean more chances to speak with TTN members and let them know what we are working on. Once I have moved, I will post a note on our website, and invite everyone to drop by to discuss the project.

On another note, the OPG Project Manager for the New Post Creek project, Heather Ferguson, has accepted a one-year assignment as Project Director on the Business Transformation Project effective March 19<sup>th</sup>. Although she will be greatly missed for her hard work on this project, CRP wishes her the best in her upcoming position. Heather was instrumental in advancing the New Post Creek project along these past two and a half years. She was a joy to work with and I am very grateful for the patience and support she has shown me.

Coral Rapids Power and TTN would like to welcome Matt MacDonald who will be replacing Heather Ferguson as the New Post Creek Project Manager. Mr. MacDonald is currently the Project Manager for the Mattagami Lake Dam and the Long Lake Dam so he has experience working with First Nations on waterpower projects. To ensure a smooth transition Heather and Matt will be working closely together until the end of March.

- Wayne Ross, President

**Check out the new union information on the Coral Rapids Power website on the employment page! The page has details about the minimum age, education, and other items about the unions involved in major construction projects. Talk to Freda to learn more.**

**For project information please contact:**

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