

Let's talk: Community conversations on partnership – Planning for a community decision on the APM Project

After many years of learning about the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) Project, Ignace has come to the point when we need to make a decision. It is a decision that will be of interest to all of us and all Canadians. Canadians are interested not only in the decision we make, but also how we made the decision.

We are asking for your help today to develop the plan that our community will use to make our decision in late 2022.

1. Planning to make a community decision

Once the community and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) have completed more detailed technical and social studies in late 2022 and discussions about a partnership agreement with the NWMO have advanced, we will need to decide if Ignace is supportive of this project. We are developing a plan and activities for how we will make that future decision, and we need your input. We have laid out a possible plan that builds on our community's work to date to explore the project to help get the discussion started.

2. What is the project?

In 2007, the Government of Canada determined that APM would be Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. The NWMO has been federally mandated to implement the project. APM involves placing our country's used nuclear fuel in a deep geological repository using a multiple-barrier system. The project consists of surface facilities, as well as the repository, which must be located in a suitable rock formation. Part of Canada's plan is incorporating learning, including Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge, to guide a process of phased decision-making. APM is designed to be flexible and responsive to new learning, societal priorities and evolving public policy. Moving to a deep geological repository is recognized internationally as the best approach for the long-term management of used fuel. A national Centre of Expertise will also play an important part of this large national infrastructure project.

3. Why is Ignace interested in this project?

After a Canada-wide site selection process, two communities remain interested in the project: Ignace and South Bruce. The leadership of Ignace expressed the two following considerations when the community initially entered the site selection process. The Ignace leadership wanted to: i) ensure that future generations are protected from the hazards associated with used nuclear fuel by helping to implement sound practices of waste management such as environmental stewardship, safety, accountability and social responsibility; and ii) advance the long-term well-being of the community through the APM Project, including promoting socio-economic growth, environmental sustainability, and well-being of the community and its surrounding area and Indigenous neighbours. Safety is paramount for both our community partners and the NWMO. The project is a national infrastructure project and subject to a high level of independent regulatory review, assessment and ongoing oversight.

4. What has been Ignace's involvement to date?

Ignace is continuing to learn about and explore the project, and has not decided whether it is supportive of implementing it in the area. Ultimately, the project requires a site that can safely and securely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel for the long time period needed. As important, it requires a supportive partnership involving the municipality, First Nation and Métis communities, and others in the area to implement the project together. A single, preferred site for the project is expected to be selected by the NWMO in 2023. Preliminary studies suggest the project can be implemented safely in the Ignace area, and the project aligns with the priorities and objectives identified by the community and described in Ignace's Strategic Plan.

5. Share your thoughts

We need your thoughts and ideas to develop the plan for our community. Please share your thoughts in the comment form, join in on upcoming community workshops, roundtable discussions and events, or reach out to us directly, so we can refine the plan together. We look forward to speaking with you and hearing your thoughts.

What we did (our history)

- **2009** – The Mayor and Council approached the NWMO to learn more about APM, and initiated outreach and educational activities.
- **2010** – The Council passes a resolution requesting information about potential project.
- **2011** – The Council passes a resolution expressing interest to learn more about APM. It establishes the **Ignace Community Nuclear Liaison Committee (ICNLC)** to help facilitate community learning and dialogue.
- **2012** – The Council, the ICNLC and the NWMO undertake technical and social studies, community engagement, and early outreach with neighbouring municipal and Indigenous communities. The ICNLC launches a local community office, monthly public meetings, website, and newsletters.
- **2013** – The NWMO completes **Phase 1 Preliminary Assessment** activities and shares findings with the community with respect to the potential of suitable geological rock and fostering local and regional well-being.
- **2014** – The Council passes resolution expressing interest in continuing to learn about APM, and initiates and plans for **Phase 2 Preliminary Assessment** studies.
- **2015** – Ongoing discussions with Ignace and area residents, as well as Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, to identify technically and socially suitable sites for initial borehole drilling and testing.
- **2016** – The Learn More Centre opens in the Ignace Plaza to house NWMO staff, as well as support detailed studies, regional engagement, and ongoing learning about the project.
- **2018** – Through community workshops and engagement activities, Ignace and the NWMO develop a set of guiding principles for potential partnerships.
- **2019** – The NWMO publishes findings from **Phase 2 Preliminary Assessment** studies and selects the Township of Ignace and the Municipality of South Bruce as the two preferred areas for more detailed study.
- **2020** – Through virtual workshops and other engagement activities, Ignace and the NWMO collaboratively develops a project vision that aligns with community values, priorities and project expectations.
- **2021** – Ignace and the NWMO develops a list of community studies to be completed by the end of 2022.

Why we did it (our rationale)

- We can be leaders and do our part for Ontario and Canada. We see the opportunity.
- We can advance the long-term well-being of the Ignace community through the APM Project, including promoting the socio-economic growth, environmental sustainability and community well-being.
- We can help ensure that future generations are protected from the hazards associated with used nuclear fuel by ensuring it is contained and isolated from people and the environment.

What is needed now (our direction)

- In late 2022, Ignace will decide if we support the implementation of the project in the area. Today, we are planning for how we will make that decision.
- Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation will also decide if it supports the project and is also developing a plan for how it will make its decision.
- Other communities in the area will need to be involved to understand and answer their concerns about the project.
- The NWMO will identify a single, preferred site in 2023, either in the Ignace area or South Bruce. Additional work will be initiated to complete the studies needed to support regulatory review and a licence application.
- The regulatory review and assessment process will be completed before a government decision.