



**CHAMPAGNE AND AISHIHIK FIRST NATIONS**

**Champagne and Aishihik First Nations want responsible and clean energy:**



# RESTORE ÄSHÈYI (AISHIHIK)

AISHIHIK HYDRO FACILITY

Äshèyi Män (Aishihik Lake) is located in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) Traditional Territory in the Yukon. The Aishihik hydroelectric facility is located at the south end of the lake, about 110 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse, and has provided electricity to Yukoners since 1975. It currently provides up to 37% of the Yukon's energy year-round with a larger reliance in winter.



*Historic photo of old Äshèyi village, prior to construction of the hydro facility.*

## 1960s

### CAFN PEOPLE ARE REMOVED

- » Indian Affairs removes people from Äshèyi (Aishihik) village to Haines Junction.



## 1972-1975

### THE DAM IS BUILT

- » The Northern Canada Power Commission (NCPCC) constructs the Aishihik hydroelectric facility (dam) to meet energy demands of the Faro Mine; CAFN opposed and was supported by the Yukon Indian Brotherhood – Council of Yukon Indians.
- » The Aishihik dam was built without any consideration of the impact on CAFN people or the long-term impact on the environment.

## 1975-2002

### FIRST LICENSE PERIOD

- » CAFN Citizens' rights and culture are impacted when high water erosion causes loss of CAFN homes, graves and heritage resources. Low waters cause die-off of muskrat and whitefish and other impacts.

## 1995-2002

### FIRST RELICENSING PROCESS

- » 2002 Department of Fisheries and Oceans requires YEC to raise the allowable low water level and ensure fish monitoring.
- » The Yukon Water Board issues license, with conditions and mitigations.

## 2002-2019

### SECOND LICENSE PERIOD

## 2011

- » Yukon Energy Corporation (YEC) installs a third turbine at the power plant, increasing its capacity from a 30 megawatt (MW) plant to 37 MW.
- » Winter flooding and icing throughout the Aishihik River valley and around Canyon Creek subdivision increase.

## 2016-2018

### JOINT PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

- » YEC and CAFN enter into a Protocol Agreement to work together on the relicensing of the Aishihik generating station and aim for consensus on the proposed future operation of the dam.
- » The Protocol Agreement is forged because of past challenges between YEC and CAFN and in recognition of the long-term impacts on CAFN dän (people) from the hydro facility.

## SEPTEMBER 2018

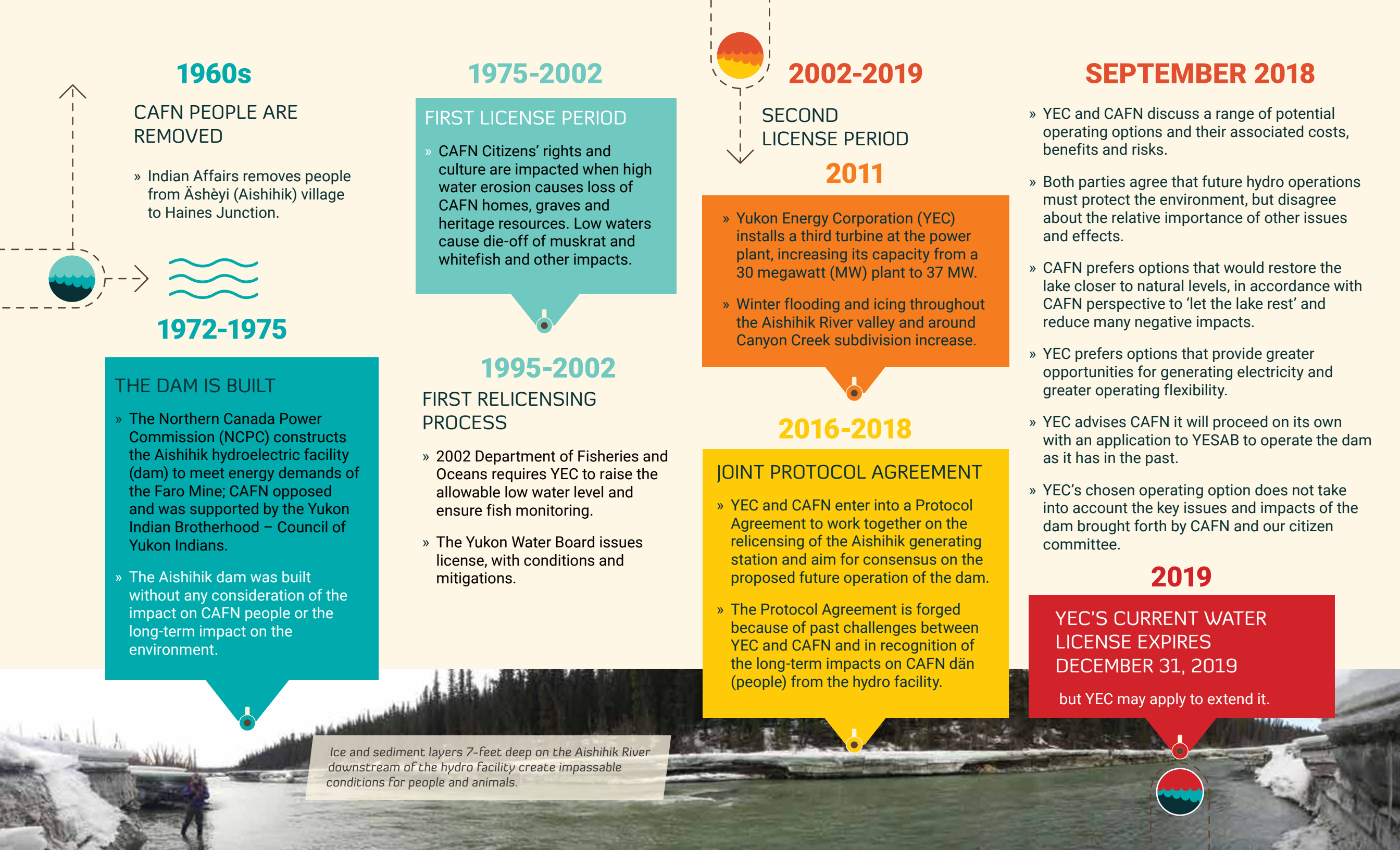
- » YEC and CAFN discuss a range of potential operating options and their associated costs, benefits and risks.
- » Both parties agree that future hydro operations must protect the environment, but disagree about the relative importance of other issues and effects.
- » CAFN prefers options that would restore the lake closer to natural levels, in accordance with CAFN perspective to 'let the lake rest' and reduce many negative impacts.
- » YEC prefers options that provide greater opportunities for generating electricity and greater operating flexibility.
- » YEC advises CAFN it will proceed on its own with an application to YESAB to operate the dam as it has in the past.
- » YEC's chosen operating option does not take into account the key issues and impacts of the dam brought forth by CAFN and our citizen committee.

## 2019

### YEC'S CURRENT WATER LICENSE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2019

but YEC may apply to extend it.

*Ice and sediment layers 7-feet deep on the Aishihik River downstream of the hydro facility create impassable conditions for people and animals.*



Spring water drawdowns dry out critical shallow water habitats and traditional key harvest areas for CAFN people. Fish and muskrat death and displacement occurs, in addition to erosion and damage to heritage sites.



## THE PROTOCOL AGREEMENT

- » The 2016 Aishihik Hydroelectric Power Generation License Renewal Co-management Protocol Agreement between CAFN and YEC set out a path for working together to decide how to operate the hydro facility in the future, to resolve issues related to the Aishihik reservoir/watershed and to jointly develop applications to the Yukon and Socioeconomic Assessment Board (YESAB) and the Yukon Water Board.
- » CAFN created a Champagne Aishihik Community Advisory Committee (CACAC) of Citizens to provide recommendations and keep Citizens informed of the process.
- » YEC and CAFN, along with other stakeholders, identified different operating options for the Aishihik generating station that should be evaluated. Studies and community consultation were set up to inform the comparison of options. These options are based on different water storage options in the lake (maximum and minimum water elevations) and downstream flows.

## CURRENT SITUATION

- » The two advisory committees established to recommend a preferred operating option did not reach a consensus on what lake level regime they should recommend to CAFN and YEC.
- » CAFN and YEC had agreed to take 2 to 4 weeks to consider the recommendations to date and work toward a consensus even if the advisory committees could not reach an agreement.
- » YEC surprised CAFN with a notice they would immediately move forward with a 'business as usual' project proposal to YESAB to operate the dam as it has in the past, with no intent to accommodate any of CAFN's interests, contrary to the protocol agreement
- » CAFN leadership has asked YEC to honour the signed Agreement by continuing discussions in order to reach consensus.



When CAFN signed the Protocol Agreement with Yukon Energy Corporation in 2016, it was in good faith. For us, this meant we would find energy solutions and develop a long-term plan for clean energy for the Yukon together.



Extensive icing and flooding on CAFN land into mature forest causing erosion and stress to the land.



## CAFN'S GOAL FOR THE NEW LICENSE

- o Champagne and Aishihik's main goal for this water license renewal is the long-term health of the land, water and people, and is based on the recommendations of our Community Advisory Committee and extensive community consultation.



The YEC control structure at Aishihik Lake.



## WHAT DOES CAFN WANT?

- o To ensure the rights of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations people are upheld as an outcome of the relicensing process.
- o Like all Yukoners, CAFN wants responsible and clean energy. We want to be part of the solution when it comes to Aishihik and other energy options for the Yukon.
- o We now have an opportunity to reconcile past wrongs by working together and developing an option that will benefit Yukoners and reduce the impacts on the environment and our people.
- o We believe recognition of our rights and the value of our relationship to the land and water are essential.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- o Please support CAFN in our goal to reduce the pressure on Aishihik Lake and River basin to restore healthy lakes, rivers and wetlands, and respect for the people who call this their home. It is time to address the legacy of Aishihik dam and its impacts on our land and people.



Protecting traditions: Äshèyi dän (people) preparing and drying fish in a smokehouse.

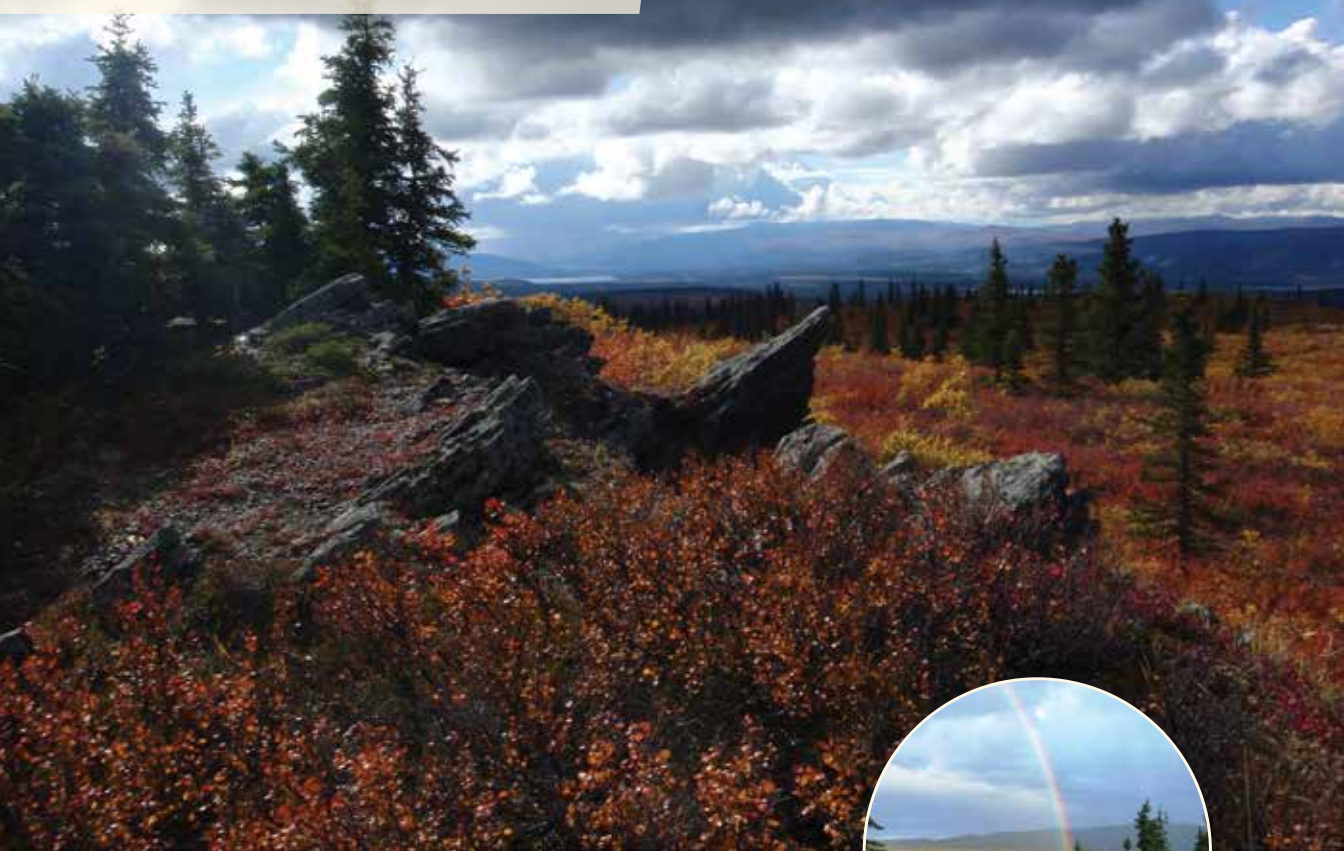
## YOU CAN:

- o speak up at public meetings about the Aishihik license renewal,
- o provide comments during the YESAB review,
- o participate during the Water Board Hearing, and
- o encourage Yukon Government leaders to support CAFN on our path to work together to reconcile past wrongs.



PHOTO CREDITS: All photos are from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations collection.

Lookout over Aishihik Lake and MacIntosh Valley.



A rainbow over  
Ashèyi Män.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

visit: [CAFN.ca/aishihik-relicensing-2019](https://CAFN.ca/aishihik-relicensing-2019)  
[#restoreasheyi](https://twitter.com/restoreasheyi)

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