



**CHAMPAGNE AND AISHIHIK FIRST NATIONS**

## RESTORE ÄSHÈYI

*Äshèyi Män* (Aishihik Lake) is in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' (CAFN) Traditional Territory in the Yukon. The Aishihik Generating Station (AGS) 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 37% of the Yukon's energy year-round and a larger portion in the winter.

### **TIMELINE:**

**For Thousands of Years CAFN *dän* (people) live at *Äshèyi* (Aishihik) in areas including *Äshèyi* village, Chemi and Tthe Yanlin.**

#### **1960s CAFN people are removed**

Indian Affairs removes people from *Äshèyi* village to Haines Junction.

#### **1972-1975 The dam is built**

- The Northern Canada Power Commission (NCPC) proposes the AGS (also known as the Aishihik dam) to meet Yukon's growing energy demands, including the Faro mine.
- CAFN opposes the dam with support by the Yukon Indian Brotherhood and Council of Yukon Indians.
- Concerns about impacts on CAFN people and the environment are dismissed.
- NCPC constructs the dam, the first license is granted, and the dam begins operating.
- The original life of the facility was projected to be 60 years.

#### **1975-2002 First licence period**

- CAFN Citizens' rights and culture are impacted when high water levels and fluctuations cause impacts including erosion, and loss of homes, graves and heritage resources.
- Low waters impact muskrat, whitefish and other species, and prevent access to the lake for cultural activities
- Damage to the environment prevents *dän* from connecting to the land.
- In 1987 the AGS is transferred from Canada to Yukon at no cost, and Yukon Energy Corporation (YEC) is formed as the AGS owner/operator.

#### **1995-2002 First relicensing process**

- CAFN raises concerns about the effects, and many concerns are not addressed in the new licence.
- 2002 Department of Fisheries and Oceans requires YEC to raise the allowable low water level and ensure fish monitoring.
- The Yukon Water Board issues licence, with conditions and mitigations.

### **2002-2019 Second licence period**

- In 2011 YEC installs a third turbine at the power plant, increasing its capacity from 30 to 37 megawatts.
- Winter flooding and icing throughout the Aishihik River valley and around Canyon Creek subdivision increase.
- YEC's 2016 plan identifies future turbine upgrades that would further extend the life of the AGS past its planned 60 years

### **2016-2018**

- YEC and CAFN sign a Joint Protocol Agreement to work together on the relicensing of the AGS, with the aim of reaching consensus on the future operation of the dam.
- YEC and CAFN identify and discuss a range of potential operating options, and YEC terminates the process before the parties can reach consensus.

### **2019-2020**

- YEC submits its application to Yukon Environment and Socio-Economic Assessment Board (YESAB) for a short-term (3-year) licence.
- CAFN agrees to the short-term licence renewal to allow more time to work with YEC toward better long-term solutions.
- In 2019 and early 2020, CAFN documents many concerns with ongoing impacts with YESAB and the Yukon Water Board in an 800-page submission.
- The Yukon Water Board holds a public hearing for the short-term (3-year license) in Dakwākāda (Haines Junction) in January 2020. Many CAFN Citizens and leaders attend and provide comments.

### **2020-2022 Third licence period**

- YEC is granted a licence to continue operating the AGS to December 31, 2022.
- Licence conditions require YEC to work with CAFN and to collect environmental and heritage information to understand issues raised by CAFN.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

- CAFN and YEC continue to discuss future operations of the AGS.
- YEC submits its own proposal to YESAB for a new long-term license in July 2020.
- CAFN does not support YEC's proposal because it does not reflect CAFN input or address identified impacts and concerns.
- CAFN continues to seek collaborative solutions to the ongoing impacts of the dam with YEC and Yukon before the long-term licence is issued.
- Unless our concerns are fully addressed in YEC's final licence application to the Yukon Water Board, we will have no choice but to oppose granting of a longer-term licence for the AGS.

## **WHAT IS CAFN'S GOAL FOR THE NEW LICENSE?**

### **The long-term health of our land, water, fish, wildlife and people through:**

- Stronger protections for our land, water, animals and people.
- Lead stewardship role for CAFN *dän*, including in monitoring and mitigation, as well as through shared decision-making.
- Changes to the long-term operation of the AGS to stop the worst impacts and to allow Asheyi to heal

The story of the dam at *Äshèyi* is one of hardship and past wrongs. We have been impacted by the production of affordable power for Yukoners and industry for close to 50 years, and the costs are high. The AGS is not green or sustainable energy; it comes at an enormous environmental and cultural cost to CAFN and Yukoners.

Unless CAFN concerns are fully addressed in the final Water Board licence application, we will have no choice but to oppose the granting of a longer-term licence.

**We have an opportunity now to reconcile past wrongs by working together.**

## **WHAT DOES CAFN WANT?**

- To ensure the rights of CAFN people are upheld.
- Recognition of our rights and the value of our relationship to the land and water.
- Reconciliation through a new path forward, founded on respect, and acknowledging past harms.
- Responsible and clean energy; we must be part of the solution for the AGS and other energy options for the Yukon.

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

- Speak up at public meetings about the AGS licence renewal.
- Provide your comments during the YESAB review.
- Participate during the Yukon Water Board process.
- Encourage Yukon leaders to reconcile past wrongs with CAFN.
- Contact CAFN for more details on how to be involved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#restoreasheyi

#ourwaterourvalues

[CAFN.ca/aishihik-relicensing-2019](https://www.cafn.ca/aishihik-relicensing-2019)