

# **North Shore Tribal Council**

## **First Nation Report Phase II**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

Following the outbreak of E. Coli in the Town of Walkerton, Ontario, in May 2000, and other incidents of Cryptosporidium and Giardia in other communities, the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) expressed concerns as to potential health and safety risks facing First Nation communities resulting from water supplies, treatment and storage. It was decided to retain a consultant to carry out a study of existing water facilities in First Nation communities and to assess the ability of these facilities to meet the risk challenges.

In November 2000 the OFNTSC issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Assessment Study of Water Supply/Treatment/Storage at Ontario First Nations Communities. The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) responded to the RFP and in January 2001 was awarded the assignment by the OFNTSC.

The objective of the study, as outlined in the RFP, was to provide an overall general assessment of the water supply/treatment/storage in First Nation communities to determine the magnitude and scope of existing and potential problems in terms of health and safety risks. Data was to be collected and analyzed on the facilities through observation and discussion and recommendations made on such issues as optimization, maintenance, training and the immediate need for the purchase of equipment. Estimates or details were not required.

Mr. Ross Holden, P.Eng. of Ross Holden Engineering Services was appointed as the Study Coordinator to manage the study on behalf of the OFNTSC.

To monitor the progress of the study and to provide direction, a Technical Steering Committee was formed with representatives from the OFNTSC, Ross Holden Engineering Services, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), Health Canada (HC) and OCWA. Meetings were held at OCWA's offices on January 9, 2001, February 6, 2001 and March 19, 2001. At these meetings it was agreed to expand the Terms of Reference for the study to include sewage facilities. Sewage treatment plants, sewage lagoons and pumping stations, together with water storage tanks, were to be included in the study. Sewage collection systems, other than lift stations, and water distribution systems were not to be included in the study. Individual water and sewage systems were not to be included in the report except where water from communal treatment facilities is provided to individual holding tanks.

The RFP included a questionnaire to be completed for water facilities at each of the First Nation communities included in the study. Through the Technical Steering Committee the questionnaire was revised and expanded to include the new scope of work. In addition, a second questionnaire was developed for sewage facilities. The completed summary for the North Shore Tribal Council community, is included in the Appendix "A" attached to this report.

Under the Terms of Reference for the study, OCWA representatives would travel to the communities, meet with the First Nation operators, and having enlisted their cooperation, complete the questionnaires by means of questions and discussions. A tour of the treatment facilities would be undertaken at the time

of the visit. Any concerns expressed by the operator would be recorded, together with observations made by the reporter. Reports were then to be prepared on the findings for each of the communities, documenting the potential health and safety risks that were apparent at the time of the visit. Reports for each Tribal Council and/or Large First Nation were then to be prepared to summarize the findings for all of the constituent communities.

Other information provided to OCWA by the Technical Committee included:

- Akwesasne to Wunnumin Lake  
Profiles of Aboriginal Communities in Ontario  
Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and Ministry of Citizenship  
January 1992
- First Nation Community Profile  
Ontario Region  
OFNTSC
- Capital Asset Inventory System (CAIS)

OCWA met with the Tribal Council Technical Services Advisors (TCTSA) and OFNTSC representatives on January 16, 2001 in Sault Ste. Marie to brief the TCTSA on the study and to ask for their assistance in contacting the various First Nation communities and, if possible, travel to the communities with the OCWA representative. The Tribal Council representatives were very cooperative in assisting with this study and their participation is a major reason for the very high community participation rate in the study.

Visits to the communities by OCWA and the TCTSA were made in February, March, April, May, June, and July 2001.

Draft Tribal Council and/or Large First Nations reports (22 reports in total) were produced in July 2001. These reports were circulated to OFNTSC and Ross Holden Engineering Services for review and comment. Final Tribal Council and/or Large First Nations reports were issued in October 2001 incorporating the comments received by OCWA. In October 2001, a draft Overview Report was also issued, summarizing the 22 Tribal Council and/or Large First Nation reports. The OFNTSC circulated the October 2001 final Tribal Council and/or Large First Nations reports to the various Tribal Councils and/or Large First Nations for comments in December 2001. Comments were received by OFNTSC from the North Shore Tribal Council and forwarded to OCWA on March 7, 2002 by fax. The Phase I report was finalized in March 2002 based upon the comments received.

## **1.2 Background - Phase II Reports**

Representatives from INAC were members of the Technical Steering Committee and attended the Technical Steering Committee meetings. With INAC's involvement in the initial study in Ontario, INAC have seen the value of undertaking similar studies in the rest of Canada. INAC has taken and used the Terms of Reference prepared by OFNTSC in the initial Ontario study, have modified and expanded the Terms of Reference and the Questionnaire, and in early summer 2001 taken the study Nation wide. The new Terms of Reference developed by INAC are referred to as the "National Site Assessment" study. With the National Site Assessment study expanded Terms of Reference for the rest of Canada, the Ontario study is now less detailed and lacking information is compared with the rest of Canada studies. Therefore INAC at a meeting on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001, through OFNTSC, asked OCWA to submit a proposal expanding the initial Terms of Reference to the National level of detail. By July 2001, OCWA had visited all of the First Nation communities. To properly complete all the requirements of the expanded Terms of Reference, a revisit to the community would be required. INAC stated a revisit was not financially viable and therefore it was agreed some of the requirements of the expanded Terms of

Reference could not be met. OCWA submitted their proposal dated September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001 based on the use of information gathered in the initial visits to the First Nation communities from February 2001 to July 2001 and any additional information gathered through Health Canada and discussions with the community.

### **1.3 Phase II – Terms of Reference, Proposal and Meetings**

The Ontario Clean Water Agency ("OCWA") was asked on Thursday, August 30, 2001 to submit a proposal to the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) using the Terms of Reference entitled "Assessment Study of Water and Wastewater Systems and Associated Water Management Practices at Ontario First Nation Communities" supplied by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). These Terms of Reference are generally referred to as the National Site Assessment study. The intent of this proposal is to expand on the initial study awarded to OCWA by OFNTSC in January 2001 to bring the study information up to the National study information level.

The Terms of Reference given to OCWA on August 30, 2001 were generic Terms of Reference developed by INAC Headquarters, and were meant to be modified for the Region involved. OCWA has taken the liberty with the Terms of Reference to make assumptions where blanks existed in the Terms of Reference. As was noted earlier, INAC instructed OCWA to use existing information and any additional information that could be gathered, without revisiting the community.

Terms of Reference has been included in Appendix "B" of this report.

OCWA submitted the proposal on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001 now referred to as the "Phase II" of the study. Meetings were held on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 to clarify the proposal requirements. The negotiated activities for the Phase II study included:

- Preparing estimated costs of (Class D Level) capital works identified in the Phase I reports
- Inputting Phase I and Phase II information data into a computerized database developed by PWGSC
- Gathering Health Canada sampling and boil water advisories data
- Classifying the water and sewage facilities based upon Terms of Reference definitions
- Preparing updated Phase II reports.

The Technical Steering Committee had representation from OFNTSC, INAC, PWGSC, Ross Holden Engineering Services and OCWA. Steering Committee meetings were held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002, and March 27, 2002. Teleconference calls were also held on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 and February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002. Ross Holden Engineering Services was not involved in the meetings of February 21 and March 27, 2002.

OCWA received comments on the Phase I North Shore Tribal Council report by fax on March 7, 2002.

OCWA has also received Health Canada sampling data on North Shore communal water and sewage facilities in February 2002. This Phase II report includes the Phase I report information, along with the additional information gathered from Health Canada and discussions with North Shore Council representatives.

## 2.0 Community Water and Sewage Facilities Assessed

### 2.1 Communities

The NSTC is comprised of seven communities located along the North Shore of Lake Huron between the Cities of Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury.

From information obtained from CAIS and INAC reports, the on-site community population, number of houses, and services are tabulated below.

**Table 1(a) - Community Statistics**

Community	Pop.	Houses	Water Systems				Totals
			Communal	Wells	Holding Tanks	Other	
Garden River	907	309	303	0	0	6	309
Mississauga	458	122	109	0	0	13	122
Ojibways of Batchewana	737	215	131	31	0	53	215
Sagamok Anishnawbek	1,225	303	284	0	0	19	303
Serpent River	289	142	142	0	0	0	142
Thessalon	81	35	34	0	0	1	35
Whitefish Lake	322	111	107	0	0	4	111
Totals	4,019	1,237	1,110	31	0	96	1,237

**Table 1(b) - Community Statistics**

Community	Pop.	Houses	Sewage Systems				Totals
			Communal	Septic Tanks	Holding Tanks	Other	
Garden River	907	309	0	309	0	0	309
Mississauga	458	122	0	122	0	0	122
Ojibways of Batchewana	737	215	55	3	0	157	215
Sagamok Anishnawbek	1,225	303	0	303	0	0	303
Serpent River	289	142	0	142	0	0	142
Thessalon	81	35	0	35	0	0	35
Whitefish Lake	322	111	0	111	0	0	111
Totals	4,019	1,237	55	1,025	0	157	1,237

From the above tables the following observations can be made:

- of the 1,237 houses in the NSTC communities, 1,110 houses (90%) are serviced by communal water, based on information supplied to OCWA, and 55 houses (4%) are serviced by communal sewage services;
- 31 houses (2.5%) are serviced by individual water wells. and based on information supplied to OCWA, 1,025 houses (83%) are serviced by individual septic tanks;
- There are no houses that are serviced by individual water holding tanks with trucked water;
- 96 houses (7.8%) have other water services, and 157 houses (13%) have other sewage services;

- the Ojibways of Batchewana communal water and sewage services are supplied by the City of Sault Ste. Marie; and
- It is recommended that the CAIS and INAC reports be updated and reconciled.

## 2.2 Community Visits

John McGhee, the OCWA representative, visited six of the seven communities of North Shore in early March 2001. Douglas Nootchtai, the Tribal Council Technical Services Advisor for the Sagamok Anishnawbek, Serpent River, and Whitefish Lake, accompanied John. John was also accompanied by James Owl, Tribal Council Technical Representative for the community of Mississauga. Operators in attendance at the time of the visits included: Myles Thibault and Keith Boissontau for Garden River; Victor Francis for Sagamok Anishnawbek; Percy Owl and Frank Lewis for Serpent River; Victor Wabigwan for Thessalon; Carl Nootchtai for Whitefish Lake; and Frank Gionette for Mississauga.

The community facilities visited were as follows:

**Table 2 - Community Visits**

Community	Facilities Visited
Garden River	Water facilities
Mississauga	Water facilities
Ojibways of Batchewana	No visit - Community is connected to a municipal system
Sagamok Anishnawbek	Water facilities
Serpent River	Water facilities
Thessalon	Water facilities
Whitefish Lake	Water facilities

Information contained within this report is based on discussions with the plant operators (as noted above), a quick walkthrough and visual inspection of the facilities.

The findings presented by OCWA are based on provincial legislation pertaining to drinking water and sewage treatment requirements and on practices adopted by OCWA in the operation of facilities.

Specifically, the requirements of the Ontario Drinking Water Protection Regulation (O.Reg. 459/00) have been incorporated into the analysis. These requirements are more stringent than the guidelines included under the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality - Sixth Edition.

The study only includes the assessment of communal systems. **No detailed review was conducted by OCWA.**

Individual systems, such as septic tanks and individual wells, were not assessed.

### 2.3 Communal Systems

The communal water systems in the communities are shown below:

**Table 3 - Communal Water Systems**

Community	Water Supply Systems
Garden River	Ground water source - Water Treatment Plant (WTP) with in-ground pressure distribution system
Mississauga	Ground water source - WTP with in-ground pressure distribution system
Ojibways of Batchewana	Connected to the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Sagamok Anishnawbek	Ground water source - two well systems, WTP, two in-ground pressure distribution systems - one elevated storage tank
Serpent River	Ground water source - four well systems, one WTP, four in-ground pressure distribution systems
Thessalon	Ground water source - direct to distribution system
Whitefish Lake	Ground water source - WTP with in-ground pressure distribution system

The communal water systems, with the exception of Ojibways of Batchewana, are supplied from ground water sources. Ojibways of Batchewana is supplied from the City of Sault Ste. Marie. All communities have pressure distribution systems. Five communities maintain distribution pressure by means of pumps and pressure tanks, the sixth community, Sagamok Anishnawbek, has an elevated tank to maintain system pressure. Garden River has green sand filters, and both Mississauga and Whitefish Lake have iron removal and chlorination. The Sagamok Anishnawbek's supply is chlorinated only. In the case of Serpent River, only one of the four well supplies is chlorinated. Thessalon's water supply is distributed without treatment or chlorination.

The communal sewage systems in the communities are shown below.

**Table 4 - Communal Sewage Systems**

Community	Sewage Treatment Systems
Garden River	No communal system - septic tanks
Mississauga	No communal system - septic tanks
Ojibways of Batchewana	Communal system - pumps to Sault Ste. Marie
Sagamok Anishnawbek	No communal system - septic tanks
Serpent River	No communal system - septic tanks
Thessalon	No communal system - septic tanks
Whitefish Lake	No communal system - septic tanks

Six of the seven communities have individual septic tanks. Only the Ojibways of Batchewana community has a communal collection system with the sewage being pumped to the City of Sault Ste. Marie for treatment.

### 2.4 Classification of Facilities

The water and sewage facility classifications are based on classification guidelines developed by Public Works and Government Services Canada, Appendix I of the Terms of Reference for this study and with discussions with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Human Resources, Certification Section. These guidelines are similar to the Ontario Guidelines as specified in Regulation 435/93. However, the

sludge/backwash water disposal criterion was omitted in the Terms of Reference guidelines, but was included for the purpose of this study.

The classifications of water and sewage facilities for the North Shore Tribal communities are summarized below.

**Table 5 – Classification of Facilities**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Water Treatment Facility</b>	<b>Sewage Treatment Facility</b>
Garden River	Class I	No communal system
Mississauga	Class I	No communal system
Ojibways of Batchewana	Connected to City of Sault Ste.	Connected to City of Sault Ste.
Sagamok Anishnawbek	Class I	No communal system
Serpent River	Four (4) Class I Systems	No communal system
Thessalon	Class I	No communal system
Whitefish Lake	Class I	No communal system

### **3.0 Potential Health and Safety Risks to Communities**

#### **3.1 Definition of Risk**

In the area of risk assessment, the concept of the frequency of occurrence, probability, and impact of risk situations are fundamental because they are used to assess the risk itself. When an impact assessment of water and wastewater systems is required, before any corrective measure can be implemented, the type and magnitude of impacts on the residents of a community must be identified.

The risk in relation to public health should be viewed as the product of such factors as: the frequency of occurrence of the event, the probability of the occurrence of negative effects and the seriousness of effects. All these factors were considered while surveying each system. The definition of Risk has been changed from the Phase I report. Risk in the Phase II assessment will focus on drinking water health protection using a simplified method under four categories. For more detailed descriptions of the categories entitled "Risk Assessment Model" are included herein under Appendix "B," Terms of Reference Appendix "E".

#### **Low Risk (Ranking Scale 1-4)**

Systems operating without major problems and are able to produce the drinking water that meet the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.

#### **Medium Risk (Ranking Scale 5-7)**

Systems with deficiencies that would require repairs and upgrades, should be identified. Some remedial action may be required to: construct a new facility, upgrade existing facilities, improve operation and maintenance practices.

Also, water systems that do not meet the Aesthetic Objectives (AO) parameters, indicated in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality are included in this category as are wastewater systems that do not meet MOE's Guidelines for Effluent Quality and Wastewater Treatment at Federal Establishments (GEQWTFE). The operation of water and wastewater facilities should not create a health risk to the public. In the case of water facilities, the quality of produced water may include a minimal excess of iron, manganese and sodium. Similarly, wastewater treatment facilities that may be experiencing operational problems, but will not create immediate health and safety risks.

#### **High Risk (Ranking Scale 8-10)**

Systems with potential health and safety concerns such as the repetitive water boiling advisories, not meeting the Maximum Acceptable Concentration (MAC) parameters specified in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, and other issues of a similar nature. Deficiencies identified under this category may pose an immediate health risk for residents of a surveyed community.

#### **Not Enough Information to Assess (Ranking Scale 0)**

To properly assess the various categories for Water Source, Design, Operation, Reporting and Operators, OCWA would have to revisit the facility being evaluated. OCWA was requested to evaluate the facilities based upon the existing information gathered without a revisit to the facility. This category was created by OCWA if there was insignificant information to assess the facility.

### 3.2 Methodology for Risk Assessment

The methodology for the risk assessment consists of ranking each category, water source, design, operations, reporting, operators, individual wells and overall ranking as low, medium or high risk. This ranking is based on the "Risk Assessment Model" in the Terms of Reference and as discussed in Section 3.1. This methodology was approved at the January 17, 2002 meeting and January 23, 2002 teleconference meeting by the Steering Committee. Except in certain cases where Health Canada data was available, individual wells were not evaluated, as they were not part of the Terms of Reference.

### 3.3 Risk Assessment

For reference purposes, the Boil Water Advisories issued over the last year that have been brought to OCWA's attention by the operators, are included herein. Health Canada compiled a list of active Boil Water Advisories dated November 2, 2001. It should be noted that there may have been other advisories issued of which OCWA is not aware. Requests to Health Canada, by Ross Holden, have not provided confirmation or any additional information to that included below:

**Table 6 - Boil Water Advisories Issued in the Last Year**

Community	Number of Boil Water Advisories
Garden River	One Boil Water Advisory on communal system issued in August 2000 reported
Mississauga	No Boil Water Advisories reported
Ojibways of Batchewana	N/A – No Visit
Sagamok Anishnawbek	Boil Water Advisory currently on communal system
Serpent River	Several Boil Water Advisories issued over the years
Thessalon	Boil Water Advisory currently on communal system
Whitefish Lake	No Boil Water Advisories reported

Community water systems have been assessed high risk if there was a Boil Water Advisory in effect at the time of the OCWA visit, there is a history of repeated Boil Water Advisories, a Boil Water Advisory has been issued in the last 12 months, and, in the absence of any information, the reason and the corrective action taken to address the Boil Water Advisory.

The Garden River community had one Boil Water Advisory in the summer of 2000 that lasted eight days. The coliform levels were addressed and the problem has not re-occurred. Therefore, the OCWA risk assessment of the Garden River community did not include the Boil Water Advisory.

The Sagamok Anishnawbek community was on a Boil Water Advisory at the time of the OCWA visit. The Serpent River and Thessalon communities have Boil Water Advisories due to their water supply system having no disinfection.

The information collected by OCWA from on-site observations and interviews, is summarized in the seven Community Reports included herein under Appendix "A". These reports include a risk analysis according to a category rating system as developed by Ross Holden and OCWA. Descriptions of the categories entitled "Risk Categories and Risk Factors for Water" and "Risk Categories and Risk Factors for Sewage" are included herein under Appendix "B". One of the three categories (high, medium or low risk) has been assigned to each community system as shown below.

With the available information, OCWA has assessed the water treatment facilities using the above noted definition of risk:

**Table 7 – Water Facilities Risk Categories**

COMMUNITY	CATEGORY Water	SECTION RANKING Water	RISK Water
Garden River	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	9	High Risk
	C. Operations	6	Medium Risk
	D. Reporting	6	Medium Risk
	E. Operators	7	Medium risk
	F. Individual Wells	9	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b>
Mississauga	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	5	Medium Risk
	C. Operations	7	Medium Risk
	D. Reporting	1	Low Risk
	E. Operators	7	Medium Risk
	F. Individual Wells	10	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b>
Ojibways of Batchewana	N/A – No Visit		
Sagamok Anishnawbek	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	9	High Risk
	C. Operations	7	Medium Risk
	D. Reporting	9	High Risk
	E. Operators	7	Medium Risk
	F. Individual Wells	9	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Serpent River Pumphouse #1	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	7	High Risk
	C. Operations	8	High Risk
	D. Reporting	6	Medium Risk
	E. Operators	4	Low Risk
	F. Individual Wells	8	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Serpent River Pumphouse #2	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	9	High Risk
	C. Operations	9	High Risk
	D. Reporting	6	Medium Risk
	E. Operators	4	Low Risk
	F. Individual Wells	8	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Serpent River Pumphouse #3	A. Water Source	10	High Risk
	B. Design	9	High Risk
	C. Operations	9	High Risk
	D. Reporting	6	Medium Risk
	E. Operators	7	Medium Risk
	F. Individual Wells	8	High Risk

COMMUNITY	CATEGORY Water	SECTION RANKING Water	RISK Water
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Serpent River Pumphouse #5	A. Water Source	0	No Data
	B. Design	4	Low Risk
	C. Operations	8	High Risk
	D. Reporting	6	Medium Risk
	E. Operators	4	Low Risk
	F. Individual Wells	8	High Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Thessalon	A. Water Source	0	Not evaluated
	B. Design	10	High Risk
	C. Operations	6	Medium Risk
	D. Reporting	8	High Risk
	E. Operators	9	High Risk
	F. Individual Wells	0	Not evaluated
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
Whitefish Lake	A. Water Source	7	Medium Risk
	B. Design	5	Medium Risk
	C. Operations	5	Medium Risk
	D. Reporting	1	Low Risk
	E. Operators	4	Low Risk
	F. Individual Wells	5	Medium Risk
	<b>G. Overall Ranking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b>

The Sagamok Anishnawbek, Serpent River and Thessalon water facilities are considered high risk because of the Boil Water Advisories.

The Mississauga water facility is rated medium risk because of the need for operator training and chemical feed pump problems.

The Whitefish Lake water facility is rated medium risk because of the insignificant chlorine contact time.

## **4.0 Rationale for Assessment and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Legislation and Guidelines**

Following is a list of Provincial and Federal regulations and guidelines that pertain to the design and operation of water and sewage facilities:

- Ontario Water Resources Act;
- Ontario Drinking Water Protection Regulation (O.Reg. 459/00);
- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality - Sixth Edition (GCDWQ);
- Guidelines for Effluent Quality and Wastewater Treatment of Federal Establishments (GEQWTFE);
- Canada Labour Code - Part II; and
- Ontario Regulation 435/93.

The GCDWQ and GEQWTFE guidelines were used as reference when evaluating facilities. Other relevant regulations (Ontario) may also have been referred to in performing assessments and evaluations of facilities.

### **4.2 Operators**

**Operator training is paramount to the successful operation of water and sewage systems and the mitigation of health and safety risks.**

Consideration should be given to introducing a formal operator training and certification program for this community. The Circuit Rider Training Program is available and can provide valuable assistance in this respect.

Under provincial legislation, in addition to mandatory certification requirements, water and sewage plant operators are required to have a minimum of 40 hours per year of training.

Training should include the fundamentals of water and sewage treatment, collection and distribution system, the design and operating requirements of facilities, sampling and testing procedures, the importance of reporting protocols, emergency responses, and preventive maintenance. Health and safety should continue to be the focal point of training education.

### **4.3 Sampling and Reporting Procedures**

Sampling, testing and reporting is a straightforward method of ensuring that facilities are properly operated and that health risks to the community are minimized. This is carried out by ensuring that the operators have proper monitoring equipment, on-site testing equipment, and laboratory facilities. In addition, off-site laboratory testing, feed back reporting and follow up is fundamental to ensuring operational excellence.

Sampling and testing of raw water, treated water and distribution systems should be undertaken on a regular basis, with all results being made available to the operators and other appropriate agencies.

Sampling and test results of sewage effluents should also be tabled with the operators and agencies. Non-compliance issues should be addressed at once.

Boil Water Advisories should be addressed immediately. These Boil Water Advisories indicate a breakdown in operating procedures, including equipment failure, and may have an adverse impact on

community health. A formalized reporting structure should be developed to address adverse sample results and Boil Water Advisories.

#### **4.4 Water Sources**

##### **4.4.1 Surface Water**

There are no surface communal water sources applicable to the NSTC report.

##### **4.4.2 Groundwater**

Groundwater sources, used for drinking water, should be monitored to ensure that no contamination is occurring from such sources as sewage effluent discharges, septic tanks, landfill sites or other sources of activity. In addition, naturally poor quality groundwater should be treated and monitored.

#### **4.5 Sewage Effluent**

Discharge of effluent from lagoons or sewage treatment plants, to receiving water, should be monitored to ensure compliance with discharge criteria in accordance with the facility design. Disinfection by chlorine or ultraviolet means should be maintained at all times. Discharges from overflows, by-passes, or other non-treatment situations can cause serious problems to drinking water sources as well as damaging the environment and should be minimized. Sewage effluent discharges should be located downstream from the community water intakes.

While not investigated under the terms of this study, it is important to note that sludge disposal, from treatment facilities, should be monitored to ensure that cross contamination to drinking water sources does not occur.

#### **4.6 Equipment Requirements**

##### **4.6.1 Safety Equipment**

Appropriate safety equipment should be maintained on site at each facility for the safety of the operators. This includes protective clothing, where chemicals are being used, together with shower and eye wash stations in the event of spills occurring. Specialized equipment, together with procedures, should be in place where entry to confined spaces has to be undertaken by the operator.

##### **4.6.2 Amenities**

Treatment plants should include laboratory space for in-house testing. In the case of combined water and sewage plants there should be two separate laboratories.

Office facilities should provide for the storage of files and records.

It is recommended that facilities that do not have a self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) should borrow this equipment from the Fire Department. This is a recommendation because the required maintenance for this equipment is difficult to perform due to the remote location of First Nations communities.

Work areas, for maintenance of equipment, should be clearly defined, organized and not impact on the operation of the facility.

All necessary tools should be made available to the operator to undertake emergency equipment repairs and to conduct routine maintenance. Proper organized storage areas for all tools and equipment should be available to the operator.

Separate chemical storage is required so that the chemicals are in one area and separate from the normal day to day activities of the operators.

Washrooms/showers areas should be provided to allow operators to maintain a high standard of hygiene.

#### **4.6.3 Hazards**

Access to all tankage, equipment and infrastructure should be protected to prevent injury to operator staff. Walkways and railings to tankage together with fall arrest systems should be in place.

Emergency lighting should be provided at all plants to prevent accidents occurring during power failures and to allow emergency operation to continue

Chemical storage areas should be constructed to provide containment of any spill and should also be properly ventilated. Fuel tanks should also be enclosed in containment areas. In both cases, the containment areas must prevent any leakage to either drinking water supplies or to the environment.

All plant facilities should maintain a housekeeping program to eliminate tripping hazards and to allow proper plant operation.

#### **4.6.4 Chlorine Analyzers**

Continuous chlorine residual analyzers should be installed at all water treatment facilities to monitor chlorine levels in the drinking water entering the distribution system. It is important to monitor disinfection as changing water source conditions can change the effectiveness of the treatment processes. Analyzers should be re-calibrated on a regular basis.

#### **4.6.5 Turbidity Meters**

Continuous turbidity meters should be installed at all surface water treatment plants to monitor the turbidity of the treated water. In addition operators should monitor the turbidity of the raw water because turbidity changes will affect the operation of the treatment processes. Turbidity meters should be re-calibrated on a regular basis.

#### **4.6.6 Flow Meters**

Flow meters should be installed at water and sewage facilities to monitor constant and changing flow conditions.

At water treatment plants, the recorded flow data provide historical information on community consumption and unusual demands caused by broken watermains or leakage. These data are used to coordinate chemical requirements, plant operation, and long term capacity planning.

Flow meters should be re-calibrated on a regular basis.

#### **4.6.7 Alarms**

Alarm systems should be installed in all water and sewage treatment plants, and all sewage pumping stations. These alarms monitor and report on changing treatment process conditions, equipment failure, power failure and unauthorized intrusion. The alarms can register either at the facility and/or remotely, by dial out, to an emergency number.

Each facility should be reviewed and appropriate alarms installed accordingly, in order to minimize potential risks to the services being provided.

#### **4.6.8 Spare Parts and Tools**

Sufficient spare parts should be catalogued and stocked at all treatment facilities to allow for repairs to essential equipment and for the ongoing maintenance of all equipment. A recommended spare parts list should be developed for each plant.

Essential equipment, such as chemical feed systems, should be duplicated to allow switch over when one system fails and thereby allow treatment to continue. The original systems should then be repaired as soon as possible.

The necessary tools should be made available to the operator to make repairs to equipment. Without the appropriate tools, it makes repairs difficult for the operator.

#### **4.6.9 Backup Power**

Backup power should be considered for each facility in order to maintain treatment functionality during power outages.

#### **4.6.10 Filtration**

Not applicable to NSTC.

#### **4.6.11 As-Built Drawings and Maintenance Manuals**

All facilities, including treatment plants, pumping stations, storage tanks, and collection and distribution systems, should have as-built drawings made available to the operators.

In the case of plants and pumping stations, Operations and Maintenance Manuals should be available on site.

These documents allow the operators to understand the systems and to respond and react to emergency issues including process failure and equipment failure. These documents also permit scheduled maintenance to be undertaken and future planning to be carried out.

### **4.7 Maintenance Programs**

#### **4.7.1 Preventative Maintenance**

All facilities should have a preventative maintenance program prepared and implemented. This ongoing routine management plan ensures that all equipment is kept in a fully functional condition. This practice reduces down time, helps to minimize non-compliance situations, extends equipment life, and reduces risk. Equipment duplication of critical systems also assists in maintaining compliance. Damaged or broken equipment should be repaired immediately and, in the case of backups or duplicated equipment, not left until both systems are in states of disrepair.

#### **4.7.2 Scheduled Maintenance**

Routine maintenance of other system components should be carried out on a scheduled basis. Such items as watermain swabbing and flushing, sewer flushing, hydrant draining prior to winter, and other routine items should be planned and implemented. The benefits of these programs is to monitor excessive water losses from water distribution systems and excessive inflow and infiltration into sewage collection systems. In both cases properly maintained systems are less costly to operate and the capacity, as designed, can be maintained thus delaying future capital expansion.

#### **4.8 Contingency Planning**

Each facility, community or group of communities should develop a contingency plan. This document should contain all contacts, names, addresses and telephone numbers in order to allow effective responses to all potential emergency and unusual circumstances. Such a plan could include the procedures to be followed for such occurrences as operator absence, changes to water source quality, flooding or fire events, chemical spills, bypassing of sewage, power failures and major equipment failures. With such plans in place, the response to an unusual event can be handled in a timely and effective manner.

Boil Water Advisories should also be addressed in the plan. When a Boil Water Advisory is issued, a process should be in place to work towards having the Boil Water Advisory lifted at the earliest possible time.

#### **4.9 Record Keeping**

A separate log book for each facility should be maintained by the operator(s) to record important operational issues, changes to the operation of the facilities, and the completion of the maintenance.

#### **4.10 Individual Systems**

Individual systems, including septic tanks and wells, can be susceptible to major problems that pose health and safety risks to community residents.

Septic tanks that are not properly constructed and maintained can cause serious problems by polluting groundwater supplies and hence drinking water supplies that depend on groundwater. In addition, poorly functioning systems can result in breakthrough of untreated or partially treated sewage to the ground surface.

Wells that are poorly installed or maintained can be serious health risks, should the groundwater become contaminated from septic tanks or other polluting sources. Surface water infiltration into poorly sealed well casings can also introduce pollutants into the water.

Where individual holding tanks are located at residences for the storage of bulk water deliveries from communal treatment facilities, procedures should be established for the monitoring of these tanks, together with the delivery tankers. This process will ensure that risks associated with the delivery of drinking water to community residents is minimized.

Beyond the scope of this study, it is advisable to consider undertaking a review of individual systems where water testing results indicate potential problems.

## 5.0 Recommended Action Items

Based on the three classifications developed under Section 3.0, the findings, as recorded in the Community Reports included under Appendix "A", are now tabulated below for each communal water and sewage facility in each community.

### 5.1 Immediate Action Issues

Immediate action issues may include high risk items such as broken or malfunctioning equipment, unfiltered surface water, Boil Water Advisories, and noncompliance issues such as exceedances of health related parameters stipulated in GCDWQ, or sewage discharge to the environment.

#### 5.1.1 Water

Immediate action items that are recommended, in relation to communal water supplies in the communities, are as follows:

**Table 8 - Immediate Action - Water**

Community	Action Required
Garden River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Investigate phenol, turbidity and lead exceedances</li> <li>• Provide safety equipment at plant</li> <li>• Purchase and maintain required tools</li> <li>• Add continuous on-line chlorine analyzer at plant</li> <li>• Add spare chlorinator unit at plant</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>
Mississauga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate ongoing chemical feed pump problems</li> <li>• Investigate reason for low manganese removal</li> <li>• Operator training required for this complex plant</li> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Implement a general housekeeping program</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>
Ojibways of Batchewana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - No visit made to site</li> </ul>
Sagamok Anishnawbek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate Boil Water Advisory and develop action plan to have it lifted</li> <li>• Increase level of bacti and chemical testing</li> <li>• Investigate reoccurring pump failure problem</li> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Provide safety equipment at plant</li> <li>• Add spare chlorinator unit at plant</li> <li>• Add continuous on-line chlorine analyzer at plant</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>
Serpent River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add chlorine disinfection</li> <li>• Investigate chemical exceedances at Pump Houses.</li> <li>• Add continuous on-line chlorine analyzer at plant</li> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Provide additional safety equipment at plant</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> </ul>

Community	Action Required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>
Thessalon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add chlorine disinfection</li> <li>• Add continuous on-line chlorine analyzer at plant</li> <li>• Investigate pressure problems in the distribution system</li> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Provide safety equipment at plant</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>
Whitefish Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate re-occurring power supply problems</li> <li>• Investigate insufficient chlorine contact time</li> <li>• Ensure all test results are returned to the operator and kept on site</li> <li>• Provide safety equipment at plant</li> <li>• Add flow meter at plant</li> <li>• Add alarm systems at plant</li> </ul>

The above comments have been extracted from the Community Reports enclosed herein under Appendix "A".

### 5.1.2 Sewage

Immediate action items that are recommended, in relation to sewage treatment in the communities, are as follows:

**Table 9 - Immediate Action - Sewage**

Community	Action Required
Garden River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Mississauga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Ojibways of Batchewana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - no visit</li> </ul>
Sagamok Anishnawbek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Serpent River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Thessalon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Whitefish Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>

The above comments have been extracted from the Community Reports enclosed herein under Appendix "A".

### 5.2 Short Term Action Issues

Short term action issues may include medium risk items such as the undertaking of capital works and equipment together with operational review to bring the facilities up to approved standards. This classification also includes an assessment of the operator's knowledge, skill levels and abilities, and the necessity for further and ongoing training.

### 5.2.1 Water

Items that should be considered for implementation, as part of an ongoing plan of action, include the following:

**Table 10 - Short Term Action - Water**

Community	Action to be Undertaken
Garden River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As-built drawings to be kept on site</li> <li>Provide emergency backup power</li> </ul>
Mississauga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As-built drawings to be kept on site</li> </ul>
Ojibways of Batchewana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - no visit</li> </ul>
Sagamok Anishnawbek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As-built drawings and operations manuals to be kept on site</li> </ul>
Serpent River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As-built drawings and operations manuals to be kept on site</li> <li>Provide adequate emergency backup power</li> </ul>
Thessalon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider emergency backup power</li> <li>As-built drawings and operations manuals to be kept on site</li> </ul>
Whitefish Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As-built drawings and operations manuals to be kept on site</li> </ul>

The above comments have been extracted from the Community Reports enclosed herein under Appendix "A".

### 5.2.2 Sewage

Items that should be considered for implementation, as part of an ongoing plan of action, include the following:

**Table 11 - Short Term Action - Sewage**

Community	Action to be Undertaken
Garden River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Mississauga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Ojibways of Batchewana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - no visit</li> </ul>
Sagamok Anishnawbek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Serpent River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Thessalon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>
Whitefish Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A - individual septic systems</li> </ul>

The above comments have been extracted from the Community Reports enclosed herein under Appendix "A".

## 5.3 Long Term Issues

Long term issues may include low risk items and the strategies needed to be put in place to ensure long term optimal operation of the facilities, which will minimize risk to the communities.

### 5.3.1 Water and Sewage Communal Systems

It is expected that the action items as described in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 will be undertaken to bring the facilities up to full operating standards. At the same time consideration should be given to planning the long term strategy necessary to maintain that level of operational excellence. This strategy will both minimize the long term health and safety risks to the communities, and at the same time maintain the capital investment value of the facilities.

To achieve this long term objective, a support structure should be developed that will provide assistance to the community administration on such issues as operator training and certification, testing and reporting, responding to non-compliance issues including Boil Water Advisories, contingency planning, preventative maintenance and planning issues.

This study has focused on communal water and sewage facilities. In order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the entire system, further assessment of the water distribution systems and sewage collection systems should be undertaken. Problems associated with leaking water systems and infiltrating sewage systems are previously discussed under Section 4.0.

Consideration should also be given to further studies of individual systems including sewage septic tanks, water holding tanks, water wells, and other individual systems. These facilities were not required to be assessed as part of this report.

Items that should be considered for implementation, as part of a long term action plan, include the following:

**Table 12 - Long Term Action - Water and Sewage Communal Systems**

Community	Action to be Undertaken
All Communities	• Develop and implement a training program that will lead to certification of all operators
	• Develop and implement a system for obtaining water analyses of raw water, treated and distributed water
	• Ensure all non-compliance results are reported to the appropriate authorities
	• Provide separate laboratory, office space, maintenance areas, washroom, and shower facilities at all plants
	• Develop and implement a comprehensive preventative maintenance program for all systems
	• Develop and implement a comprehensive contingency plan to address all potential emergencies and unusual circumstances for all systems

### 5.3.2 Water and Sewage Individual Systems

The investigation of individual septic tanks, water holding tanks, individual wells, and other individual water and sewage systems were outside the scope of this study. There is potential for individual systems to cause health and environmental problems. Items that should be considered for implementation, as part of the long term action plan, include the following:

**Table 13 - Long Term Action - Water and Sewage Individual Systems**

Community	Action to be Undertaken
All Communities	• Develop and implement a training program for truck haulers
	• Develop and implement a protocol for taking water samples and put in place an action plan to address non-acceptable sample results
	• Develop and implement a protocol for regular cleaning and disinfecting individual water holding tanks
	• Implement an individual well inspection program to ensure potential contamination is minimized
	• Implement a sewage septic tank inspection program to inspect all septic tanks for potential contamination of ground water supplies and the environment

## 6.0 Summary of Observations

The OCWA representative, together with the Tribal Council Technical Services Advisor, visited the communities of the North Shore Tribal Council in early March 2001 and met with various operators. This report summarizes the information gathered, and observations made, at the time of the visits.

The North Shore Tribal Council is made up of seven communities, which are generally located along the north shore of Lake Huron, between the Cities of Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. Based on information obtained from the INAC report, there are 4,019 people occupying 1,237 houses, as reported by CAIS, within the communities.

All of the communities have a communal water supply system that services 90% of the houses. Six of the communities have communal systems that are comprised of groundwater sources with a pressure distribution system. The Ojibways of Batchewana community is supplied by the City of Sault Ste. Marie. One of the systems has full treatment, one system has iron removal and chlorination, two systems have only chlorination, and one system has no disinfection. The Serpent River community has four separate pumping station systems – one system has full treatment, and the remaining three systems have no treatment.

Only part of the Ojibways of Batchewana community has a communal sewage treatment system connected to the City of Sault Ste. Marie, representing 4% of the total population of the NSTC. The remaining population (83%) of the NSTC is serviced by individual sewage septic tanks, and 13% have other services.

Garden River, Mississauga, Sagamok Anishnawbek, Thessalon, and Whitefish Lake have Class I water treatment facilities.

Operators informed OCWA that the Sagamok Anishnawbek and Thessalon communities are currently on a Boil Water Advisory, that there has been one Boil Water Advisory on the Garden River community, and that the Serpent River community has had several Boil Water Advisories.

The report has identified potential high risk issues at the following three locations because of the Boil Water Advisories:

- Sagamok Anishnawbek communal water system;
- Serpent River communal water systems; and
- Thessalon communal water system.

The high risk items, identified in the Community Reports, and summarized in Tables 9 and 10, should be acted on immediately. These items may include repairs to critical components of the treatment processes that, if not addressed, could lead to contamination of water supplies, or contamination of the environment by sewage. Also included are those items that monitor the facilities, to ensure the treatment process is operating properly.

The report has identified potential medium risk issues at the following two locations because of the following:

- Mississauga communal water – operator training is needed, and chemical feed pump problems, and ineffective manganese removal.
- Whitefish Lake communal water – insignificant chlorine contact time.

Short term action items have been identified and summarized under Tables 11 and 12. These items deal with operator health and safety issues, which improve the response time of the operator to correct alarm situations. Other items include capital and operational improvements to bring performance of the facilities up to standard.

Finally, the long term recommendations, listed under Tables 13 and 14, are to maintain or improve the operational excellence of the facility, minimize the long term health and safety risks to the community, and maintain the value of the capital assets.

Overall observations would indicate that operator training is the main area that requires a long term strategy to be developed to ensure that health and safety risks to the communities are minimized. In addition, occupational health and safety issues should also become part of the operating requirements.

Sampling and testing, together with reporting and remedial actions, are essential to the proper operation of water and sewage facilities. From OCWA's experience in operating facilities across the province, it becomes readily apparent that operational excellence can only be achieved through compliance with all of the provincial regulations. These regulations cover all aspects of treatment including compliance issues, training and certification, testing and reporting, documentation, and contingency planning. By meeting these regulatory requirements, the health and safety risks to the operators, community residents, and the environment are mitigated.

Although outside the terms of this study, it is recommended that further in-depth studies be considered for the facilities, including the distribution and collection systems, to review design, compliance and capacity issues.

A continuing review and monitoring program should be undertaken of individual systems, including water holding tanks and septic systems, to ensure the integrity of those systems and to mitigate any health risks.