



FAX COVER

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Message :

We would like to introduce you to two of the members of the Advanced Aboriginal Water Treatment Team (AAWTT), Tony Steinhauer and Howard Cardinal and the First Nation community that supports them. Please feel free to contact us at info@safewater.org or (306) 934-0389 if you have any questions or comments.

Tony Steinhauer and Howard Cardinal

When Tony first began to suspect the water was the cause of his community's poor health he consulted even more with Elders and Community Leaders. One Elder, Howard Cardinal, immediately supported Tony's theory. Slowly, over the years, the other Elders and community leaders also came on board, but from the beginning Howard took it upon himself to learn as much as he possibly could about water quality. He and Tony became a force to be reckoned with as they often knew more than the engineers and government officials who were continuing to try and assure them "all is well in Indian country" or "White is right"! David Suzuki tried to help them and they called on the Alberta Research Council with no success, as with many other organizations.

Howard presented at every opportunity to spread word of their concern and mistrust of their drinking water supply and met Dr. Hans Peterson of the Safe Drinking Water Foundation at one such conference. Howard learned of the work being done at Yellow Quill First Nation in northern Saskatchewan by Dr. Peterson. Many of the councilors at Saddle Lake now had close family members struggling with the many illnesses and slowly they began to realize that perhaps Howard and Tony were on to something ... in 2004, Howard invited Arthur Steinhauer to share the stage with he and Tony, to express their increasing concern and reaffirm their beliefs that water was to blame. Arthur was quite emotional as his daughter had just suffered a miscarriage. Howard stood to his side showing great compassion and support for his friend and fellow community leader. Other councilors at Saddle Lake were also influential in the position they took to assume responsibility for their own people having truly safe drinking water.

Howard played a significant role in the Saddle Lake Chief and council building a laboratory (out of their own band funds) to research water quality, Howard and Tony were receiving many requests to present at different conferences, and usually did so together. They were a tough act for anyone who had to follow. Howard always ensured that their Aboriginal cultural beliefs not to record, not to photograph, not to "sell" their culture were held in high regard, and Tony never needed any convincing. What they found was that their cultural beliefs were so very close to what unbiased scientists were also finding. Together they knew that without sharing their beliefs they could not move the issue forward.

In 2004 Saddle Lake called their own Boil Water Advisory (BWA), usually called by Health Canada (HC). It was challenged by HC, over the years many scientific reports were written and analyses were conducted in support of the Saddle Lake decision. In fact, in June 2008, even the manufacturer of the existing water treatment equipment advised a BWA was necessary as the water being produced was not safe to drink. Still,

a year later, HC continued to challenge the band's decision and state, "All is well in Indian country". Howard was the driving force behind Saddle Lake leaders challenging Health Canada to have their Health Canada Scientist Dr. Vic Gagnon attest that the water was safe! A statement that SDWF scientists knew he could not make!

Howard became increasingly determined to challenge the status quo on the right of his people to have truly safe drinking water. In 2007, Howard too was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer – rare but also affecting others in the community! As his health deteriorated Howard still insisted on travelling to present to the Ontario Chiefs in late October 2008, with Tony at his side the pair shared their knowledge and their experiences openly. The audience greatly appreciated all they had to say and gave them a standing ovation, a pipe ceremony and a water song sung in their honour!

In early November they were both invited to present in Yellowknife, NWT and Howard was so excited and looking forward to one more presentation. It wasn't meant to be as, back in the hospital, Howard was fighting a losing battle. Tony visited him when he returned, "*Another standing ovation*" he told him, "*but boy do they have problems, babies needing dialysis when they are born, or diabetic when they are born, skin rashes like you have never seen, and cancers, so many cancers ...*". Howard replied "***Well what are you doing sitting here with me? Get out of here, you've got work to do!***"

CALL TO ACTION FOR First Nations Drinking Water

Name of community: _____

I wish to remain anonymous Yes **or**

Contact person: _____

Water Treatment Plant Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

What time would be best to call the contact person ? _____

Position: _____ Email: _____

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our research scientist who will be starting work in our lab on Monday, January 12th, 2009.

Date: _____

1) Do you treat ground or surface water? _____

2) What treatment process do you use, can you describe it?

3) How much water do you treat per day? _____

4) Do you have support when problems arise? Yes or No please explain

5) Who do you answer to when there are problems? eg. a committee or Chief & Council

6) How many people do you service with water? _____

7) Do you have an adequate supply amount of water for your community? Yes or No

8) What are the total and free chlorine levels in your distributed water?

a) Does it vary within the same close range? _____

b) Free chlorine: _____

c) Total chlorine: _____

9) What are the chlorine residuals in the distribution system?

10) Have you had any boil water advisories? Yes or No

a) If yes why was it called? _____

b) How was it resolved? _____

c) How long did it last? _____

11) Do you measure turbidity? Yes or No

a) What are the average levels? _____

12) Do you drink your water? Yes or No

a) If so how does it taste? _____

b) Does it carry an odor? Explain if it does. _____

13) Does the raw water have any smell? _____

14) Do you have raw water data?

15) Do you have treated water data?

16) Are you willing to share some of the data with SDWF's Advanced Aboriginal Water Treatment Team (AAWTT)? _____

17) Do you want a scientist to have a look at the data and get back to you with his/her interpretation?
Circle Yes or No

18) Do you have any health concerns for your community when it comes to the water?

19) Is there anyone from outside the community that tests your water? Circle Yes or No
If so who? For example EHO, or water quality monitor.

Do you test your water on all the water quality parameters yearly? ie: iron, arsenic, etc.
Circle Yes or No

If so are you willing to share your results with SDWF's AAWTT?
Circle Yes or No

20) Do you know what your annual bill is for chemicals for your water treatment process
\$ _____

21) How long has it been since INAC allocated any funding to improve or replace your water treatment plant? Please Circle
Less than 5 years 5 – 10 years over 10 years

22) How much did INAC spend on your community water treatment? \$ _____

Any comments:

I have forwarded the information you have sent regarding First Nations Call to Action for Safe Drinking Water to our Chief and Council Yes or No