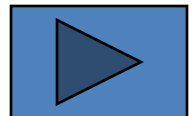




The Story of Saddle Lake Cree Nation



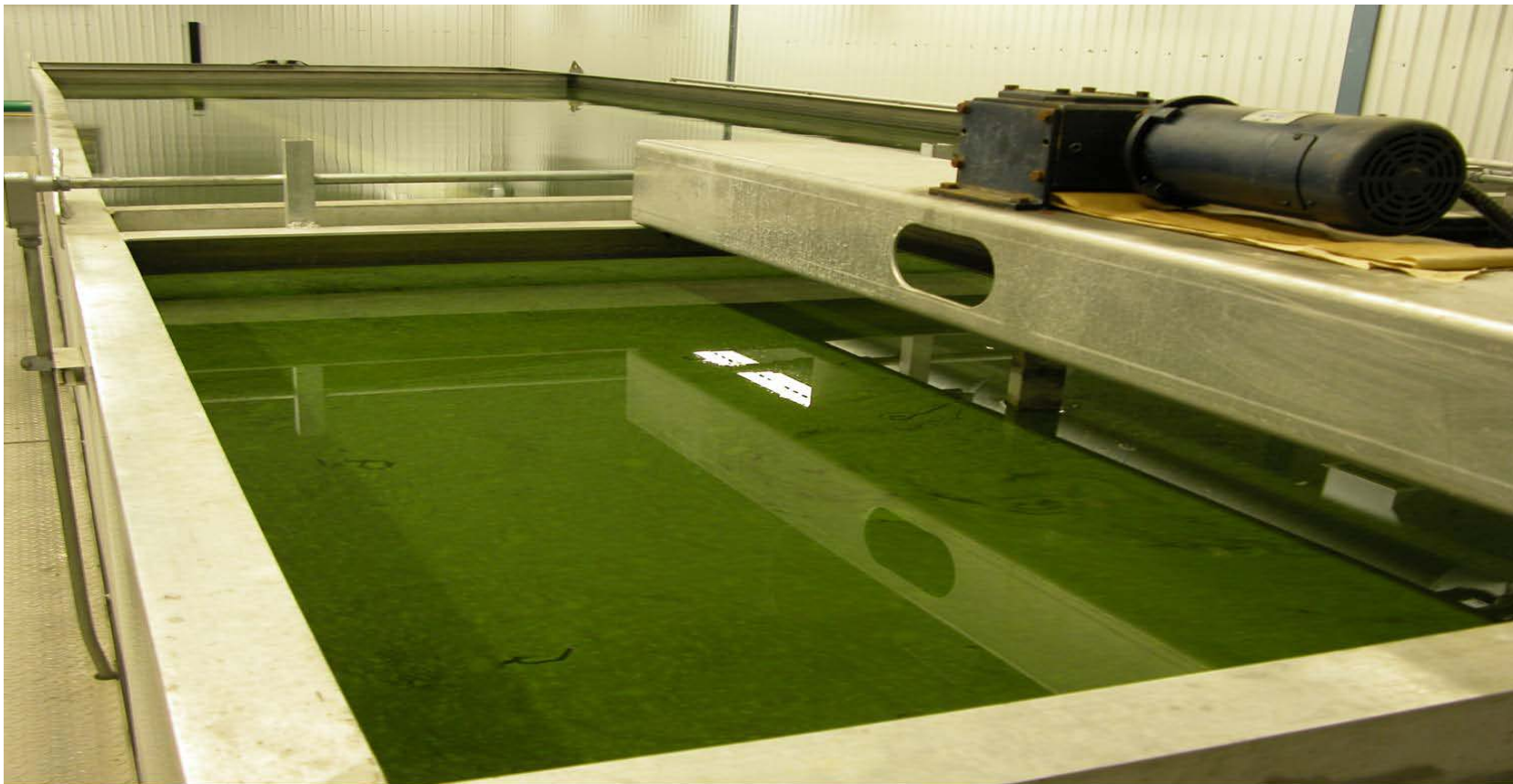


Presented by
Tony Steinhauer
Water Keeper,
Centre for
Disease Creation

1997

- Serious health concerns in community
- Saddle Lake complains to federal government
- Feds hire University of Alberta to check Saddle Lake water

U of A finds *Cryptosporidium* in treated water –
but levels are low so Health Canada says
“No Health Risk”



Health Canada continues to declare Saddle Lake water safe

- Saddle Lake try to get Envirotest to test community water and analyze content
- **Envirotest refuses and will only work for Health Canada**



- Saddle Lake feels a need to embark on an independent FN laboratory to test FN water supplies!
- Dr. David Suzuki helps Saddle Lake by attending a fundraiser for the FN laboratory

2003

- Tony Steinhauer, Water Treatment Operator, never gives up and contacts Dr. Hans Peterson at the Safe Drinking Water Foundation



- Dr. Hans gives a presentation to Saddle Lake
- Many telephone conversations take place

2004

- SDWF arranges for Saddle Lake water operators to collect, test and send water samples for independent testing



- Several problems are identified from this analysis
- Dr Hans arranges for other scientists to consult on Saddle Lake problem



Dr. David Schindler about Saddle Lake's raw water source:

“I’ve never seen a water supply in such poor shape! The lake is covered with blue greens, which make mats in near shore areas. Yet this is a drinking water supply for several thousand First Nations people! This is a story that city people need to hear and see. They cannot imagine that we have water problems of this magnitude in Alberta”.

- Tony Steinhauer presents Saddle Lake water crisis to World Health Organization
- SDWF issues a 7 page report: **Clarifying why Saddle Lake water was NOT safe!**
- **Saddle Lake Chief and Council issue a Boil Water Advisory for the community**

- Technical Services Advisory Council Circuit Rider (TSAG – AB Water Treatment Advisor to FN) states: Boil Water Advisory unnecessary as Saddle Lake is one of best FN Communities drinking water supplies in AB!

- Health Canada refuse SDWF Report - and continue to declare no need for Boil Water Advisory, that Saddle Lake water is SAFE!
- Health Canada claims Saddle Lake Chief & Council has no authority to declare a Boil Water Advisory!

Saddle Lake Chief and Council resolve to continue Boil Water Advisory



- SDWF presents to United Nations in New York
- Health Canada conducts their own similar tests and analysis as SDWF – Finds problems in distribution system but only reports on results from treatment plant

INAC calls a meeting and approves an
“Emergency Water Treatment system!
Direct costs approx. \$75,000, Plus approx.
\$35,000 per month operating costs



- INAC project meeting approves a four season pilot project to bring safe drinking water to Saddle Lake
- Tony Steinhauer's presents Saddle Lake concerns to an Aboriginal Forum on Water Issues at Cross Lake, Manitoba
- Tony Steinhauer, water treatment operator, Arthur Steinhauer, councilor, and Howard Cardinal, Elder, all present their story at SDWF International conference "The Future of Water Treatment"

- Saddle Lake hosts first “Template for Change” workshop, with funding SDWF received from Alberta Eco Trust and Alberta Research Council. Ironically the same day as this workshop Health Canada decided a boil water advisory should be called after all!
- Saddle Lake installs first stage of the temporary filtration treatment to improve their community drinking water.

2005

- Started piloting Integrated Biological Reverse Osmosis Membrane (IBROM) Water treatment at Saddle Lake
- Tony attends workshop in Phoenix AZ



2006

- Research & Piloting at Saddle Lake resulted in the development of a IBROM system that could also gently remove algae without the need for chemicals
- Membrane skid developed to test and clean membranes at Saddle Lake, took 8 months for authorization from INAC

2007

- AAWTT Tour of plants in Florida, INAC and Health Canada invited to join trip and to fund AWTTC but don't want to learn or to fund First Nations to learn
- SDWF conference "The Future of Water Treatment" cancelled due to INAC intimidating FN not to attend

- Health Canada lifts the Saddle Lake BWA
- BWA supposed to be lifted according to HC because truck fill station was good – but they never check distribution lines
- Saddle Lake maintains its BWA!

Zenon (manufacturer of existing water treatment process) advised Saddle Lake that a BWA should be in effect



HC ask Saddle Lake what they should test the water for?



- Now HC tests for Ammonium which affects residual chlorine residual readings. DOC, Arsenic, THM's Microsistins (Toxins)

- People come from Enoch, Goodfish Lake, Two Hills, Vegreville and other communities to pick up Saddle Lake pilot IBROM water
- Final design stage of biological water treatment at Saddle Lake Cree Nation

Soon to be Saddle Lake Centre of Disease Prevention



2008

- Saddle Lake “fast tracked” a new water treatment plant. Now Saddle Lake wants to help each of you who are still struggling to overcome the same political hurdles our community has surpassed.

- According to the United Nations safe drinking water is a human right!
- Free of coliforms doesn't mean safe, and as long as Health Canada is going to use a small subset of the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines to guesstimate whether the water is safe or not, people across Canada will continue to pay the price for unsafe drinking water.

- We need to pull together and find new ways of making the water safe



- The Safe Drinking Water Foundation has the scientific solutions, it is up to First Nation people to overcome the Political hurdles

- The IBROM produces superior water which meets or exceeds the most stringent of all international standards while leaving the smallest environmental footprint



- Thank you on behalf of SDWF, Saddle Lake and the AAWTT for listening
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With thanks to our Sponsors

