



Alton Natural Gas Storage and Sipekne'katik Potential Benefit Agreement

The following fact sheet provides information for the Sipekne'katik community meeting on May 24th. Alton plans to go ahead with the project to make natural gas storage caverns. Alton has been meeting informally with the Sipekne'katik Chief and Council as well as Band staff on whether we can cooperate on environmental protection and benefits since the summer of 2016. The most recent meeting was on May 9, 2017 with Chief and Council. Through the discussions, the following areas of potential cooperation have been identified for environmental protection and benefits:

- Alton will work with Mi'kmaq organizations on environmental monitoring and cultural study of the Shubenacadie River in partnership with researchers.
- The Band will have positions on Alton's environmental protection team and during construction.
- Alton will help provide funding for a new highway gateway for Exit 10. This high visibility entry to Sipekne'katik will develop over time, but will be similar to 13A for Millbrook.
- Alton will help provide funding for a commercial, land-based aquaculture project for Striped bass. This could also help restock striped bass & other fish species in rivers across the province.
- Energy is expensive. Alton to help provide renewable power (geothermal, solar or wind) and or help energy efficiency upgrades at band buildings or help with co-generation for the aquaculture project.

The following questions and answers are commonly asked about Alton. Fact sheets, videos, newsletters, studies and other materials are available on: altonnaturalgasstorage.ca

What is Alton?

Alton is a natural gas storage facility. It is where natural gas will be stored deep underground. It is located near Stewiacke.

There is no drilling for natural gas at Alton. There is no fracking at Alton. There is a government ban against fracking in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Natural gas will be stored in the caverns at Alton. Natural gas moves out of the storage caverns as it is needed for homes, businesses, hospitals and universities in Nova Scotia. Natural gas at Alton will come from the North American pipeline network which includes natural gas produced in Nova Scotia's offshore.

What science has studied Alton?

From 2005 – 2007, independent studies were conducted by Jacques Whitford (now Stantec), Martec, Matrix, Soltech, Thaumass and Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and provincial Environment Assessment documents.

Dalhousie University researchers in Bible Hill are studying the Shubenacadie River estuary, taking an inventory of fish, examining the wider food web and measuring salinity, temperature and oxygen. The study is ongoing. It is the most detailed study ever on the river with nearly 10 years of data collected to date.

A Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge was done study in 2007 and updated in 2012. In 2015, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs hired independent experts, Conestoga Rovers, to review Alton science. The review led to a better environmental monitoring plan.

What fish have been studied in the river?

Many dozens of fish and organisms were identified as culturally important or as indicators of ecosystem health in and around the Alton river site. These species were screened for potential effects from Alton. The 20 most sensitive species were profiled in [Fish Fact Sheets](#).

There is an ongoing study by Dalhousie of Striped bass. Watch the [Research on the Shubenacadie](#) and [Seine net survey](#) videos on the Alton website. There is information on the research and monitoring in the Alton newsletter.

How salty will the brine make the river?

The release of the brine into the river will mirror the river's natural salinity. Salinity in the river goes up and down naturally with the tide and rainfall. There is a large range. Fish and other organisms that live in the river are used to the constantly changing salinity. If the river salinity ever reaches the high end of the natural range (~ 28 parts per thousand, ppt), brining automatically stops. This past summer the salt level in the river was naturally higher than 28 ppt due to the long period of dry weather.

How safe is the cavern site where the gas will be stored?

Alton must follow the strict standard set by the Canadian Standards Association for underground storage caverns.

Alton is being designed with safety controls and back-ups for those controls to prevent natural gas leaks. Emergency Shutdown (ESD) valves will close when there is any unsafe condition within the plant. The above-ground storage facilities will be protected by fire detection, gas monitors, isolation systems, emergency shut-down devices, and fire extinguishers. Emergency Response Plans will be in place before the facilities become operational and during construction.

How do you decommission Alton?

The steps to decommission are part of the strict standard called CSA Standard Z341, Storage of Hydrocarbons in Underground Formations set by the Canadian Standards Association. Alton will meet or exceed the requirements of this rigorous national standard, in addition to all Nova Scotia regulations. A copy of the standard is on the Alton website.