

A Very BEAHRy Bunch



The first graduating class of 2011.

For SaskEnergy, the fast-paced economy in this province not only gives us an opportunity to expand our service, but it also presents us with a responsibility to engage Saskatchewan's First Nations communities in our activities that impact them.

Earlier this year SaskEnergy's Aboriginal Relations group introduced the Province's first and only program to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills to meaningfully participate in environmental monitoring activities. Called BEAHR (Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources), this initiative sees SaskEnergy leading the way by bringing in other Crowns including CIC, SaskPower and SaskWater to demonstrate our leadership in the Aboriginal community and build the foundation for mutually beneficial relationships between our company and the First Nations communities we serve.

The results of the BEAHR program have been outstanding! SaskEnergy sponsored 4 of the 15 students who attended and successfully graduated from the 7-week long course. So congratulations to them for making the first BEAHR Environmental Monitoring program a success!



The inaugural training was held at the Land of the Loon Conference Centre at Anglin Lake, 40 minutes north of Prince Albert. The employment focused training integrated local knowledge, was community-based, involved participation of Elders, and offered practical field experience.

Students learned about National Occupational Standards for environmental monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, regulatory and research practices, and how to use maps, GPSs and take daily notes. They learned about these subjects through classroom work, field trips, guest speakers, Elders and cultural advisors. At the end of the course, they earned a Certificate of Completion.



The group performing one of many hands-on training exercises.

“This program is critical to our business projects, as these monitors provide local, traditional and ecological knowledge to our employees and contractors. As well, this program helps us ensure that we fully understand the ways in which our business might affect First Nations and Metis people in the province,” explains Gillis Lavalley, Manager of Aboriginal Relations. Because of this training, we are able to utilize a certified and knowledgeable monitor for the duration of the project while we are engaging the community. We have a pool of skilled monitors from which to draw upon that will help us with projects that could potentially impact their communities.



“With the success of the inaugural BEAHR Environmental Monitoring Training, Aboriginal Relations hopes to get another monitoring program up and running in Saskatchewan,” concludes Gillis. This initiative is especially important as we will continue to have a need for monitors for the many projects we always have on the go.



For more information about the BEAHR Environmental Monitor program please contact Carol Crowe of Indigenous Visions at indigenousvisions@shaw.ca.