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## PRESS RELEASE

### *For Immediate Release*

#### Conference sheds light on First Nation views of shale gas and water

Fort Nelson, BC, 3 October 2012 – More than 200 people packed into the Northern Rockies Regional Recreation Centre for three days during the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Keepers of the Water conference hosted by the Fort Nelson First Nation, September 26-29<sup>th</sup>.

The conference brought diverse perspectives about shale gas, fracking and water to Fort Nelson and provided an opportunity for local residents to join in the growing debate and search for solutions to responsible water use and management in the shale gas industry in northeast BC.

The conference marked a first step toward a responsible and collaborative water management strategy for northeast British Columbia. Speakers included National Geographic explorer, Wade Davis, Union of BC Indian Chief's president, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Yukon River Intertribal Chair, Jon Waterhouse, National Chair of the Council of Canadians, Maude Barlow, Ken Paulsen, Chief Operating Officer of the Oil and Gas Commission, Ben Parfitt from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and other First Nations, scientists, academics and activists concerned about water and shale gas development in BC.

Fort Nelson First Nation Chief, Sharleen Wildeman said: *"This conference sends a clear message that FNFN takes water use and management in our territory very seriously, and that there are people locally and throughout North America who also take our concerns seriously and are willing to work with us towards solutions."*

The conference also allowed Fort Nelson First Nation to share their culture with local residents and conference participants. A traditional moose camp was set up throughout the conference and participants enjoyed evenings of traditional foods, live music, Dene hand games and traditional drum dances and ceremony.

FNFN Councilor, Kathi Dickie noted that, *"We all need to come together, work together to deal with the major challenges that we all face. The Fort Nelson First Nation was honoured to welcome so many visitors and share our culture, our food, our water. The coming together of so many people from all directions was amazing and our approach of collaboration with all stakeholders was reinforced."*

### Background

The Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN) is a Dene and Cree community in northeastern BC. Signatories to Treaty 8 in 1910, the FNFN has been facing increasing shale gas development in their territory since 2005. FNFN is not a member community of the Keepers of the Water.

The Keepers of the Water is comprised of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people; environmental groups and concerned citizens working for the protection of all living things today and tomorrow in the Arctic Drainage Basin.

Link to the FNFN Lands Dept website: <http://lands.fnnation.ca>

Link to Keepers of the Water VI website: <http://www.keepersofthewater.ca/gatherings/2012>