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# ʔehdzo Got'łneGots'éNákedı Sahtú Renewable Resources Board

Tłegóhłı (Norman Wells), February 20-22, 2024  
Public Listening Session  
Climate, Wildfire and Caribou

**Information Request 3 – Submission**  
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)  
& Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)  
March 18, 2024



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada

Canada

## FIRE IMPACTS

### 1. Can you provide more detail on the impacts of ash on wildlife (including fish) and water? How is this assessed and monitored?

- The impacts of ash on wildlife and freshwater ecosystems, including fish, are complex and a subject of active research in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere. Some effects are known, but there are also many unanswered questions.
- Ash can have negative impacts on wildlife, streams and lakes for several years after fire. There can also be negative impacts when there is too little fire on the land, such as reduced availability of some habitats.
- It would be impossible to provide comprehensive details on the impacts of ash on wildlife and water, but we can give some examples.
  - Wildfires impact downstream water through combustion of vegetation and alteration of soil properties. In brief, combustion of vegetation reduces the interception of precipitation by the canopy and evapotranspiration, facilitating greater water accumulation on the surface of soil, enhancing erosion.
  - In addition, wildfires can cause soil structure to collapse and wildfire ash can clog soil pore space, further preventing infiltration and enhancing overland flow. Heat from the fire can also induce water repellency in soils by volatilizing organic compounds which travel downward in the soil, eventually condensing into a hydrophobic layer, again contributing to surface water accumulation. This accumulation of surface water then increases erosion, exporting sediment, nutrients, ash constituents, metals, and various trace elements. In down stream waterways, these products can variously cause increases in water turbidity and algal blooms.
- These impacts are not new. It has been going on for millennia. But with increased fire frequency and intensity, the impacts may be magnified and there may be some new impacts.

## FUNDING

1. Communities have told us at the PLS that having funding information and applications on the websites or sending emails is insufficient, overwhelming, and burdensome. How will you communicate to communities about, and assist them with, funding opportunities in the Sahtú? Please include concrete steps and action items.
  - While we acknowledge that funding information on websites has been complex to navigate for community members, we have nevertheless included a list of available and applicable federal programs (below) for information purposes. If communities have questions, please reach out to:
    - **Kiera Hulett**, [Climate Change Preparedness in the North](#)  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs  
[kiera.hulett@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca](mailto:kiera.hulett@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca)
    - **Tomas Piotto**, [The Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program](#)  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs  
[Tomas.piotto@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca](mailto:Tomas.piotto@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca)
    - **Merran Smith**, [Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program](#)  
Indigenous Services Canada  
[merran.smith@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:merran.smith@sac-isc.gc.ca)
    - **Christa Domchek**, [Climate Change Community Liaison](#)  
Northwest Territories Association of Communities  
(867) 873-8359  
[christa@nwtac.com](mailto:christa@nwtac.com)
  - Through the **Indigenous Climate Leadership** initiative, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada are working directly with the Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated to support engagement on Sahtú Climate Leadership. Continued conversations with SSI have taken place to develop a plan to engage Sahtú communities this spring and summer (2024) to identify Sahtú climate leadership priorities and develop recommendations to the Government of Canada. Additionally, CIRNAC and ECCC are working with a number of other regional- and community-level First Nations across the NWT to support coordination of these processes, and, where possible, to identify shared priorities and recommendations. For more information on the Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda, please reach out to:
    - **Brecken Hancock**, [Manager](#)  
Indigenous Climate Policy  
Climate Change Branch  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
[brecken.hancock@ec.gc.ca](mailto:brecken.hancock@ec.gc.ca)

INFORMATION REQUEST 3 – ECCC & NRCan – MARCH 18, 2024

- **Dylan McMahon, Manager**  
Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
[dylan.mcmahon@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca](mailto:dylan.mcmahon@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca)
  - **Ben Linaker, Senior Policy Analyst**  
Indigenous Climate Leadership  
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
[ben.linaker@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca](mailto:ben.linaker@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca)
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- For a searchable list of federal programs that support Indigenous climate action and clean energy projects, see [Indigenous climate and environmental funding - Canada.ca.](#)

*Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs*

- [Climate Change Preparedness in the North](#) provides support to Indigenous and northern communities and governments in the North to help them adapt to climate change impacts. Funding supports projects such as vulnerability and risk assessment of climate change impacts, development of hazard maps and adaption plans and options, and implementation of non-structural and structural adaptation measures.
- [Engaging Indigenous Peoples in Climate Policy](#) provides capacity funding to support National Indigenous Organizations, their regional affiliates and other regional organizations to engage in climate policy discussions. The program also supports capacity and engagement projects with regional organizations, modern treaty organizations and other unrepresented groups.
- [The Harvesters Support Grant](#) supports food sharing within the immediate community by increasing the number of community harvesting and food sharing initiatives as well as the number of harvesters engaging in these activities.
- [The Indigenous Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program](#) provides funding to support Indigenous Peoples in the design, implementation, or expansion of long-term community-based climate monitoring projects. The program supports community-led projects to monitor climate and the environmental effects of climate change on communities and traditional territories.
- [The Northern Responsible Energy Approach for Community Heat and Electricity program](#) (Northern REACHE Program), supports northern and Indigenous communities in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut in their transition to renewable, sustainable and affordable sources of energy. Stream 1 Funds renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, and related capacity

## INFORMATION REQUEST 3 – ECCC & NRCan – MARCH 18, 2024

building and planning in the North. Stream 2 Funds the feasibility and planning stages of hydroelectricity and grid interconnection projects in the North.

### *Environment and Climate Change Canada*

- [The Indigenous Leadership Fund](#): The Low Carbon Economy Fund (LCEF) supports projects to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, generate clean growth, build resilient communities, and create good jobs for Canadians. LCEF currently has four streams: the Low Carbon Economy Challenge, which supports the use of proven, low-carbon technologies to reduce GHG emissions, the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, which supports provinces and territories to help them deliver on commitments to reduce GHG emissions, the Indigenous Leadership Fund, which supports clean energy and energy efficiency projects led by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis governments, communities, and organizations, and the Implementation Readiness Fund, which supports activities and investments that increase the readiness of GHG emissions reduction projects.
- Applications are closed for [Indigenous Guardians](#) and [Indigenous-led Natural Climate Solutions](#); however, the programs may be of interest due to their focus on stewardship and conservation. For both programs, details about future application processes are in development with Indigenous partners using a distinctions-based approach with First Nations, Inuit and Métis and more details will become available on the programs' websites.
  - [Indigenous Guardians](#) supports Indigenous rights and responsibilities in protecting and conserving ecosystems; developing and maintaining sustainable economies; and continuing the profound connections between natural landscapes and Indigenous cultures. The program is eligible to Indigenous communities, Indigenous Nations, governments, and representative organizations. Non-Indigenous recipients for the program represent recipients contracted by one Indigenous recipient to exceptionally receive and administer the funds on their behalf.
  - [Indigenous-led Natural Climate Solutions](#) funding supports First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nations, communities and organizations to build capacity and to undertake on-the-ground activities for ecological restoration, improved land management, and conservation. These activities aim to effectively sequester carbon and maximize co-benefits for biodiversity, climate resiliency, and human well-being.

### *Indigenous Services Canada*

- The [Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program \(CCHAP\)](#) funds the efforts of First Nations and Inuit communities to identify, assess, and respond to the health impacts of climate change. There are 2 streams for the program: Climate Change and

## INFORMATION REQUEST 3 – ECCC & NRCan – MARCH 18, 2024

Health Adaptation Program North and Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program for First Nations South of 60°N. This program is designed to build capacity for climate change and health adaptation by funding community-designed and driven projects. Both streams operate with external, First Nation and Inuit-led governance committees responsible for selecting funding recipients. All First Nations and Inuit communities are eligible for funding, including Band Councils, Tribal Councils, Indigenous Associations, and governments of self-governing First Nation and Inuit communities, including councils and boards formed under these agreements.

- In partnership with First Nations communities, provincial and territorial governments and non-government organizations, Indigenous Services Canada's [Emergency Management Assistance Program](#) (EMAP) helps communities on reserve access emergency assistance services. EMAP provides funding to First Nations communities so they can build resiliency, prepare for natural hazards and respond to them using the 4 pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. EMAP support wildland fire non-structural mitigation and preparedness initiatives through the FireSmart Funding stream.

### *Natural Resources Canada*

- While not specifically tied to caribou, the Wildfire Resilient Futures Initiative will provide investments in research, demonstration, and knowledge mobilization for the prevention and mitigation of wildland fire. Research themes include: wildfire risk assessment, wildfire risk mitigation and adaptive forestry practices. The anticipated launch of the grants and contributions research program is early 2024.