

# Environmental Health Research Group

## Newsletter

### Summer (August 2019)

#### Reminder of our Research!

This is a collaborative project within several communities in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and northern Ontario with the aim of investigating the levels of contaminant exposure in participating communities. Dr. Brian Laird and our team measure contaminants and nutrients in human samples. This work is the initial phase to provide knowledge on contaminant exposure in the communities and promote the use of country foods in order to improve nutrition. In parallel, we are now working on projects to answer concerns we have heard from community members and leaders during consultation meetings regarding initiatives to improve food security and on the relationship between water, human wellbeing and climate change.



#### What did we do in the last few months?

- We sent results letters to participants from the **Sahtú** and **Dehcho (NWT)** for mercury in additional segments of hair.
- We are also doing the lab analysis for additional contaminants, called perfluorinated compounds, in blood samples from participants from the **NWT** who consented to the biobank.

#### What will we do in the next few months?

- We will attend a camp on the land on Marten River, near Tuli't'a, from August 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>. This camp on water knowledge sharing is planned in collaboration with the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board and Wilfrid Laurier University.
- We are preparing the research on food, fish and mercury in **Fort Albany (ON)**, with the involvement of the Mushkegowuk Council.
- We are finalizing the community reports and the individual results letters for people from **Old Crow (YK)** who participated in the research project in February.

#### What are the Results so far?

The main results of the NWT project can be found online: <https://uwaterloo.ca/human-exposure-and-toxicology-research-group/research>

Other recent results we have found:

- All the participants from **Old Crow** had levels below the limit requiring a early phone call and immediate action.
- In the **NWT**, while 60% of participants have concerns about the safety of country foods, 72% have concerns about the store-bought foods. Water is also one of the main items people think may impact the amount of contaminants we are exposed to. As such, we will participate in the Water knowledge sharing camp to discuss these issues with **Sahtú** residents.