

Nę K'ə Dene Ts'ı̨ Forum Meeting Notes

May 16, 2017, 1:00 pm-3:30 pm approximately

Notes by DL Simmons

Participants

Forum Members

Leon Andrew (Chair), Roger Odgaard, Jennie Vandermeer, Rhea McDonald, Michael Neyelle, Bruce Hanna, Stephanie Behrens, James Caesar

Other Participants

Alana Fletcher, Thom Stubbs (left early), Mary Ann Neal, Andrew Spring, Merritt Turetsky, Mylène Ratelle, Kirsty Gurney

Agenda

- Opening: Prayer, introductions, agenda
- Researcher updates
- On the Land Updates
 - Shúhta Goᑭepé (Mountain Caribou) Conservation/Stewardship Planning camp Dechenla Lodge, July 26-August 3
 - Dene Ts'ı̨ School update, Dəocha (Bennett Field), August 26-September 10
 - Advanced Wilderness First Aid Course update - June 5th to June 8th, Tulít'a
 - On the Land Coordinator and Intern hirings – SRRB
- Next meeting

Meeting Notes

Opening

- Prayer by Leon Andrew

Researcher Updates

NWT-Wilfrid Laurier Partnership

- Andrew Spring will be completing his doctoral dissertation soon, and his role might change over the coming months; he'll be playing a role in liaising between communities and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Permafrost Mapping

- Merritt Turetsky (Wilfrid Laurier University) has been developing tools at a global scale that can help people make predictions about how permafrost is going to change in the future. We can gain a lot more information to make predictions if we know more about the characteristics of permafrost.

- Is interested in learning how her tool can be adapted to a finer spatial resolution so that they can be of use to people on the land, including slumping, “drunken forests” etc.
- Changing permafrost leads to a lot of unpredictability.
- Timing: We already have the start of a tool that could be adapted soon, and would like to get the conversation going this summer; seeking funding (from NSERC), but this will take at least a year; can get started without formal funding.

Discussion

- Jennie – interested in mapping permafrost and understanding the relationship of permafrost with forest fires; would like to see Sahtú people accompany the researchers on the land.
- No research license has yet been applied for, but if there’s interest they’ll move forward.
- Rhea noted that Husky Energy had a permafrost specialist – recommends contacting Jenica von Kuster.
- Kirsty – may wish to collaborate with respect to CIMP research on water quality; is in partnership with the NWT Water Strategy monitoring program; will be focused on wetlands. Bruce suggested connecting with Ducks Unlimited, and NWT Geomatics
- Deb – Leon and I met Sarah Cooley (University of California at Los Angeles) at the recent Earth to Sky climate change source in Yellowknife sponsored by NASA’s ABoVe (Arctic Boreal Vulnerability – her interest is in hydrology in the Mackenzie Valley; Merritt confirmed that there is a strong link between hydrology and permafrost, and she does a lot of work with Sarah’s supervisor. They will be using
- Jennie – this is of great interest, for example as slumping (subsidence) affects the Enbridge pipeline.
- Bruce – another related project is being led by David Rudolph, University of Waterloo, supported by the Environmental Studies Research Fund, which is an outgrowth of the earlier state of knowledge project led by Golder.
- Thom Stubbs noted the linkage with the ALCES toolbox.
- Andrew and Merritt – suggests a mapping initiative to point out areas of concern, and can validate the scientists’ models.
- Merritt – Steve Kokelj (ENR) has been an important collaborator in developing the project design.
- Deb pointed out that another connection is the Tracking Change project with University of Alberta.

- Deb – this discussion has been a dream come true, highlighting the kind of research synergies and collaborations that can emerge from Forum meetings – given the number of researchers working on water and permafrost research in the Sahtú, it would be a good idea to have a theme “cluster” meeting.

Action

Bruce, Andrew and Merritt will work together to coordinate a hydrology and permafrost cluster teleconference some time in June, prior to fieldwork time.

Sahtú Decision Support Tool

- Thom Stubbs – ALCES decision tool for modelling; Thom would like to talk with the Forum at an upcoming teleconference to talk about the focus of the project; Deb and Thom will also be talking about a way of collaboratively interpreting and presenting the outcomes in communities.

Human Biomonitoring

- Mylène Ratelle (University of Waterloo) – results of the Délı̨nę sampling are forthcoming, and the team is preparing to work with Fort Good Hope; and continues to discuss possible participation with Tulít'a, Colville and Norman Wells.
- Deb – Brian Laird, the lead for this project, has agreed to support a daylong meeting of Renewable Resources Council members and elders so that they have a chance to discuss the project among each other and provide advice.

Strong People, Strong Communities Research

- Deb – Rauna Kuokkanen is arriving in Tulít'a this week to return results of her research. She will be working with a small community team to plan for a public meeting and focus group. Once she's had a chance to return the results to the community, she will be able to share the results more widely.

Research License Applications

- Deb (SRRB) - two research license applications in the works
 - Dene Kedə to Dene Ts'ı̨ı Knowledge Synthesis
 - Community Mapping Initiative

Sahtú Wildlife Facebook page

- Deb (SRRB) – we are asking researchers to draft Facebook posts about their projects for our Sahtú Wildlife Facebook page, www.facebook.com/sahtuwildlife.

Sahtú Library

- Deb noted that Alana Fletcher is working on the Sahtú Library which had 399 references in it – we're asking people to share their libraries related to Sahtú research with us, and plan for this as

On the Land Updates

Reminders of planning underway for:

- Shúhta ʔepé (Mountain Caribou Conservation / Stewardship Planning) camp planning Dechenla Lodge, July 26-August 3.
- Dene Ts'ı̨ı̨ School update, Dəocha (Bennett Field), August 26-September 10
- Advanced Wilderness First Aid Course update - June 5-8, Tulít'a
- On the Land Coordinator and Intern hirings – SRRB: the purpose of the coordinator position is to provide secretariat support for the Forum, and support for communities in accessing traditional economy/on the land programming.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm approximately.