

**Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum
Teleconference Meeting Notes
Thursday May 26, 2016 1pm – 2:30pm**

Present:

- James Caesar, Fort Good Hope RRC
- Roger Odgaard, Norman Wells RRC
- Jennie Vandermeer, ENR
- Heather Sayine-Crawford, ENR
- Bruce Hannah, ENR
- Ted Mackeinzo, Youth delegate
- Jimmy Dillon, Délı̄nę RRC
- Ed Reeves, Délı̄nę RRC
- Frederick Andrew, SRRB
- Mylene Ratelle, University of Waterloo
- Karen Dunmall, DFO

Forum resource people:

- Joe Hanlon, SRRB
- Mandy Bayha, SRRB, Délı̄nę RRC
- Christine Wenman

1. Introductions – everyone was introduced with a special welcome to Mandy Bayha who is working with the SRRB, the Forum and the Délı̄nę RRC for the summer. She is a student of the Environmental Sciences; having just finished a year of a University transfer program in Red Deer, she will be starting at Royal Roads University in the fall. Mandy is going to be instrumental in helping to coordinate the cross-cultural camp. Welcome Mandy!
2. Review of Agenda – Today’s date didn’t work for some of the planned presenters so Brian Sieben, Cristina Soto and Gary Stern will try to join next call. It does work for Karen Dunmall of DFO, however, so she will be joining us towards the end of the meeting.
3. Research license applications updates (Joe Hanlon)

Joe Hanlon – SRRB office in Tulıt’a.

There are three current research license applications up for review and all seem to be geological studies. One is taking place at Police Island near Tulıt’a. Another involves work along the Canol trail. One of the questions that Joe had for the research team was if they had any more information to indicate that they were sufficiently prepared to travel safely and responsibly on the land. They responded by sharing a really detailed and complete logistics and safety plan so it is great that the research licensing process results in such quick information sharing. This safety plan was sent by Dr. Martin Smith who is leading the project. A third application was from the NWT Geological survey. Typically, the Board staff feel that the NWT Geological Survey has appropriate expertise, experience and policies to guide their work so feedback for that project was limited to encouraging communications with the Forum and with the Norman Wells RRC. Christine added that Kathryn Fieess from NWT Geological survey, who has presented to the Forum in person previously, had been in touch and that they will try to organize for one of the team members to provide an overview of the project at the next call. A team member will be able to provide more detail about the kind of research that is being done, how, and why.

4. Cross-cultural camp planning
 - Timing – period most are available is July 29-August 8: travel to Délı̄nę Friday, July 29, travel to camp July 30; return to Délı̄nę Sunday, August 7, return home Monday, August 8. All are

encouraged to stay the entire time, but two shifts can be arranged for those on tight schedules. Unfortunately, there was a really tight window for the camp this year given that Délı̨nę is hosting the camp and that they have a really busy summer with other on-the-land initiatives.

- Mandy added that CCR Camp participants are also welcome to join the celebration of the Tsá Túé (Great Bear Lake) International Biosphere Reserve designation, planned for August 10/11/12. The RRC staff will also be able to show people around Délı̨nę and introduce them to community members and community spaces during those days.
- Climate change seems to be emerging as a key theme because a lot of the projects that researchers are doing, which are responding to key questions that Forum members have raised, have to do with effects of a changing environment. For instance, Jenn Baltzer's work looking at ecology in forests after fire over time is increasingly relevant given increases in fires. Andrew Spring's work has been with the community of Délı̨nę focusing on community identified vulnerabilities and health effects from climate change with a focus on food sustainability. Also, it is looking likely that the camp will be combined with an initiative called Tracking Change, which is a broader research initiative of the Mackenzie River Basin Board to look at traditional knowledge associated with change across the Basin with an emphasis on how these changes affect aquatic species and fishing livelihoods.
- Work is still being done to see who is interested in participating but so far a number of people have been approached and/or have communicated interest.
 - Human biomonitoring (Mylène Ratelle and Brian Laird) Mylène confirmed that this is marked in her calendar and she will be able to attend the camp.
 - The proposed tracking change project would focus on water and fishing livelihoods traditional knowledge (proposed Tracking Change project). It is hoped that Kim Howland's team studying fish ecology on Great Bear Lake will tie in and be supported through this work. Ed updated that Colin Gallagher who is part of Kim's team at DFO has been in touch and they are planning field work in Délı̨nę this summer, which will coincide with the camp. Jenn Fresque-Baxter is also working closely with the Tracking Change program but unfortunately she couldn't make today's call either. She will hopefully make the next call and would be someone who could speak to that initiative in more detail.
 - Jenn Baltzer's work looking at how forests rejuvenate after fire has some preliminary results, which she will likely be able to present about. This work isn't located in the Sahtú yet but its results are certainly of interest to Forum Members who have identified questions like this as priorities. Bruce added that Jenn has also submitted a proposal to work in the Sahtú on identifying areas of permafrost vulnerability. So, she may be able to speak to that project and those methodologies as well.
 - Andrew Spring is Jenn's partner so it is looking like the whole family may be able to attend the camp! Andrew has been working with Délı̨nę on follow-up to initial research that was completed documenting community identified vulnerabilities to climate change. Ted explained that in follow-up to identified priorities, Andrew has supported Ted and others in the community in training youth in traditional practices and supporting their involvement by using more contemporary forms of communication like facebook. Ted has just earned his certification from his elders in moose hide tanning. So, if any of the Forum members have moose hide around, Ted will take them for you! Mandy is now learning from Ted. Mandy updated that the Délı̨nę RRC has also identified

Walter Bayha to be the Dene language expert and historian so he will be key in helping to facilitate many of these dialogues and initiatives at the camp. Andrew has been working with the community of Kakisa in the Dehcho on a similar project through the same funding base. They are a couple of years ahead in their project work and have identified networking with other communities with similar goals as an objective within their own work plan so it is looking likely that Melaine Simba from Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation who has been a lead coordinator on that project will also be able to attend the cross cultural research camp. This will result in some great opportunities for exchange across regions.

- Christine has been in touch with Samuel Haché who is interested in participating in the camp this year and will confirm whether Environment Canada is able to resource his participation or participation by his colleague Rhiannon. Samuel attended the camp two years ago and also presented at an in-person meeting of the Forum about a year and a half ago. If he attends the camp, he will be able to provide updates on some current project work that they are doing, which involves setting recording devices out along winter roads so that they can get recordings from places that wouldn't otherwise be easily accessible in the summer. They put devices out in the Tlicho this region but are hoping to expand the project into the Sahtú next winter. There have also been discussions about following-up on questions that the Forum has identified about TK regarding migratory birds including changes in species distribution and changes in their seasonal arrivals as well as documentation of Dene names for birds. The camp may present an opportunity to explore these potential projects further.
- A number of people have been invited who are working on projects involving youth in the Sahtú. Valerie was on the last Forum call and is working with youth in Fort Good Hope. Ken Caine wasn't able to make this call but he will hopefully be able to join a call in the near future. As Mandy and Ted have identified, a major focus of the camp will be engaging youth and also trying to make sure that those Sahtú residents who have completed environmental monitoring training participate so that they can keep building practicum hours and making connections with prospective employers. With these youth and research partners who are working with youth, a major theme of the camp will be youth environmental leadership.
- The camp can be an opportunity to facilitate further discussions and work about the Dene Mapping Project place names and land use validations.
- An additional hope is that the camp can continue efforts towards supporting various Research and monitoring planning initiatives, including caribou management planning, research and monitoring of the Tsá Túé Biosphere Reserve, and the Sahtú Regional Research and Monitoring Strategy. Christine, Deb, and Walter Bayha will be there to support these dialogues and David Livingstone has also been invited.
- Mandy noted that she, Joe, Jenny and Ted are planning a meeting by phone tomorrow to develop a more detailed work plan about camp planning. The hope is to have all of the details organized well ahead of time as this will contribute to everyone's safety and enjoyment.
- Roger discussed research presentations that he has attended documenting ice caps melting and the anticipated consequence of rising seawater. With these expected changes, the researcher in question identified the likelihood of global food shortages emerging as a real and severe consequence. The findings of western science is telling a similar story to Dene traditional knowledge, both in terms of contemporary observations as well as the earlier prophecies of Sahtú people. Mandy agreed that these are central themes and that learning about traditional knowledge is a passion of hers.

She is fortunate to be able to work on this and that the camp will be an opportunity to explore these themes in more detail.

- Funding – although no funding has yet been secured, applications have been submitted to the Territorial Development Fund for 50k and a draft proposal is being worked on for submission to the Tracking Change Program for 25k. These would be a good start and additional funding will be sought from other contributors, including ENR. The Territorial Development Fund application was circulated and then a number of changes were made based on feedback that was received. The Tracking Change draft is currently being reviewed by Brenda Parlee who is the regional lead on the tracking change program and once her comments have been incorporated a draft will be circulated to the Forum.
 - Location – The DRRC has identified Porcupine Bay, just down the river as a great spot for the camp this year. It is close to town, which will help keep logistics simple and reduce safety concerns.
5. Report on Polar Knowledge/North American Space Agency Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment (ABoVE) Workshop, May 10-12

Bruce, Deb and Leon attended a workshop recently hosted by NASA and Polar Knowledge about the ABoVE program (Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment). This is a research program that is supporting research to investigate climate change effects at a large scale including the NWT as a regional node. GNWT folks, some community folks, industry representatives and lots of academics (for instance Jenn Baltzer) were in attendance at this workshop in Yellowknife to discuss how the research program will unfold. An outstanding challenge is that it is unclear how NASA will be able to accept and address new proposals as they can only contribute to American lead researchers. Partnerships will likely present opportunities to involve Canadian researchers as well as potential contributions from Polar Knowledge Canada.

6. Karen Dunmall, DFO

Karen presented at the in-person meeting in January about a pilot study that she was proposing to CIMP to investigate the efficacy of using environmental DNA (eDNA) to test for the presence of bull trout, dolly varden, and salmon in the Mackenzie. By comparing eDNA measurements to the results of fish net catches, they can start to see if the method works. Can eDNA be used to detect these fish in the Mackenzie River if they are there? How far away do we have to be before we don't detect their presence any more?

The CIMP funding proposal was successful so that work will be going ahead this summer. Karen is working with a fisherman in Norman Wells. She has been communicating with the Norman Wells RRC and will continue to do so as the project evolves.

Karen thanked the Forum for their on-going support. The Forum was strongly supportive of this project upon hearing about it at the January in-person meeting and is a partner on the project with the CIMP proposal.

7. Research Strategy and reporting updates

- With the focus on proposals during the last few weeks in time for deadlines, some of the next steps regarding the research strategy and various reporting requirements were not completed. These will now be picked up and the Forum should see report drafts soon as well as invitations to community organizations to participate in development of the research strategy.
- Jennie, Bruce and Heather did discuss GNWT participation and have discussed the issue with Erin Kelly the ADM. As ENR already has a role supporting the Forum, participating in meetings and being an active Forum member, a formal invitation to participate in developing the research strategy is not seen as necessary. As drafts are ready, they can be distributed to Bruce, Erin and Heather will distribute it for comment within ENR. ENR will also take drafts to the interdepartmental science committee through which those representatives can distribute it to their respective departments. What will be needed is sufficient review time for these review processes to occur. Departments with research mandates are taking part in the committee and include ENR, Health and Social Services, Public Works, Aurora Research Institute, Education Culture and Employment, Department of Transportation.

8. Closing comments

- Roger emphasized that there is a need to secure funds for an NWT wide youth network. There was discussion that with a lot of youth at the camp as well as a number of partners active in supporting youth, that the camp will be a great venue for the youth to work on Sahtú-wide plans, identify current initiatives and gaps that need to be addressed.
- Jennie recommended that this topic be on the agenda as a stand-alone item for the next Forum call.
- Mandy congratulated Ted who is now on the Délı̨ne Gotine Council and hopes to be able to represent youth interests, among others. A youth council is being established as a self-government initiative so Ted is taking big steps already in his leadership of youth and youth issues.

9. Next meeting date

The next teleconference call was set for Wednesday June 29, 1-4pm

Summary of actions / tasks

(includes outstanding tasks from April call)

- Christine to follow-up with NWT Geological Survey about updating about research on next call.
- Sahtú youth network to be agenda item on next call
- Forum Chair to consider opportunities to present research strategy concept at SSI AGM (Roger, Christine and Deb to follow-up)
- Deb and Christine to work with Catarina Owen to update document repository including water report sent by Bruce
- Christine to send out tracked change version of TOR once additional comments have been incorporated
- Christine to distribute draft Forum 2015-2016 reporting
- Christine to follow-up with Jonathan Michel to have more information about ARI procedures for Sahtú research license distribution as well as past records of organizational response (this is complete but can be reported on during the next call).
- Diane Conrad to follow-up with H. Brown about possible tie-ins between the education project and the mapping project.