



# **Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum 2013-2015 Update Report**



Prepared for the Sahtú Renewable Resource Board  
By Christine Wenman  
PlanIt North, B.Sc. M.Sc.  
September, 2015



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## List of Acronyms

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| AANDC      | Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada |
| ARI        | Aurora Research Institute                          |
| BEAHR      | Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources  |
| CanNor     | Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency      |
| CIMP       | Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program               |
| CPC        | ConocoPhillips Canada                              |
| ECE        | NWT Education Culture and Employment               |
| EMTP       | Environmental Monitoring Training Program          |
| ENR        | NWT Environment and Natural Resources              |
| ESRF       | Environmental Studies and Research Fund            |
| GNWT       | Government of the Northwest Territories            |
| ITI        | NWT Industry, Tourism and Investment               |
| MACA       | Municipal and Community Affairs                    |
| NCP        | Northern Contaminants Program                      |
| RRC        | Renewable Resources Council                        |
| SERM Forum | Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum  |
| SRRB       | Sahtú Renewable Resources Board                    |
| SSI        | Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated                     |
| SYN        | Sahtú Youth Network                                |

## Executive Summary

Since its inception in November, 2013, the Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring (SERM) Forum has developed as an effective model for building strong leadership, capacity and communication in environmental research and monitoring.

The Forum consists of delegates from each Sahtú community, delegates from the Sahtú Secretariat Inc, youth delegates, and representatives of ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB), Government of the Northwest Territories (Environment and Natural Resources and Industry, Tourism and Investment) and Government of Canada (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency- CanNor and Environment Canada). The Forum meets regularly to discuss and learn about research programs, projects and methods in order to work towards the forum's stated objectives. These are to:

1. Identify regional priorities and research gaps
2. Build cross-cultural understanding
3. Support and protect traditional knowledge processes
4. Support regional and regulatory decision-making
5. Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results.

The Forum meets once to twice annually and holds teleconference calls every one to two months. Through these frequent discussions, both forum members and collaborating representatives from government, academia and industry are able to identify constructive ways to optimize research projects to ensure that they meet the region's core research and monitoring needs while reducing duplication and inefficiencies.

In addition to organizing their own workshops, forum members have also actively participated in several regional results workshops and have contributed to a number of strategic regional initiatives.

Looking forward, the forum has identified a number of actions to further advance its objectives.



## Introduction

This report is intended to summarize the work of the Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring (SERM) Forum during the first year and a half of its formation. By reflecting on the experiences, achievements and challenges of this first period, it is hoped that the report will also provide guidance for the Forum's continued work planning as well as to identify those lessons that can be learned and adopted for communities and agencies elsewhere in NWT that are trying to build governance capacity for resource and research management.

The SERM Forum was initiated in 2013 to support environmental research and monitoring by providing a venue for discussing plans and accommodating the priorities and traditional knowledge of Sahtú communities. Through fostering communications between Forum members, which include community, regional, territorial and federal government representatives as well as industry representation, Forum members hope to ensure that “environmental monitoring and research programs and projects in the Sahtú are coordinated and conducted in ways that reflect regional and community priorities, engage communities, value both western science and traditional knowledge, and support wise decision-making.”<sup>1</sup>

The Forum's objectives as defined in its Terms of Reference<sup>2</sup> are to:

1. Identify regional priorities and research gaps
2. Build cross-cultural understanding
3. Support and protect traditional knowledge processes
4. Support regional and regulatory decision-making
5. Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results.

This report uses the Forum's objectives as a framework by which to look back on achievements to date and to plan for further work in the next two years.



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<sup>1</sup> Sahtú ERM Forum Terms of Reference

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for the Sahtú ERM Forum Terms of Reference



## Background

NWT's Sahtú region has the potential for substantial oil production from shale resources held within the Canol shale play of the Central Mackenzie Valley. From 2012-2014, three companies were actively exploring in the region – MGM, Husky Energy, and ConocoPhillips (CPC). With recent downturns in oil prices, exploration activities appear to be on hold; however challenges encountered during the short exploration boom highlight the need for proactive planning to ensure that research is coordinated, communications are effective, community members are prepared to benefit from economic spin-offs, and environmental and social concerns are addressed. The Forum presents a venue through which Sahtú beneficiaries can collaborate with co-management boards, government, industry and academics to pursue effective planning and communications.

Regardless of current or future resource development opportunities, the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Claim Agreement has established agencies through which Sahtú Beneficiaries can exercise their Aboriginal rights through co-management of lands and resources. Full implementation of the Agreement requires the continued building of strong governance and leadership in each of the five Sahtú communities.

Regional Forum members include two youth delegates, a Sahtú Secretariat Inc. delegate and five ʔehdzo Got'ıne delegates – one from each Sahtú community. The Forum provides an opportunity for Sahtú representatives to meet with government, academic and industry representatives responsible for various aspects of environmental research and monitoring in the region in order to share knowledge and to plan for future projects.

The Sahtú Renewable Resources Board has provided in-kind administrative support to the Forum, including coordination and facilitation of meetings. The Sahtú regional office of Environment and Natural Resources has provided the primary funding mechanism to support Forum activities.

Though initiated within only the last two years, the SERM Forum has been productive since its inception. The Forum has initiated and participated in a number of projects and workshops, including those initiatives summarized here.

## Initiatives and Contributions

The SERM Forum provides an opportunity for Sahtú ʔehdzo Got'ıne representatives to develop their skills in research through consistent involvement in research and monitoring discussions over time. Similarly, community representatives are able to share their own significant expertise and experiences with government, industry and academic personnel ensuring that research and monitoring initiatives are optimally relevant and efficient. The following section outlines a number of

initiatives to which Forum representatives have been party in some form. Forum contributions are presented here within four categories:

- A. SERM Forum meetings
- B. Regional Research Results Workshops
- C. Youth initiatives to which SERM members have provided support
- D. Strategic Regional Initiatives in which SERM members have participated

Specific initiatives within these four categories are listed in chronological order with summary descriptions. Full reports are footnoted, and can be found on the SRRB's website, [www.srrb.nt.ca](http://www.srrb.nt.ca).

### **A. Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum meetings**

Annual or twice annual in-person meetings provide Forum members an opportunity to progress on their own planning and learning plans. Guests from government, academia and industry are often invited to provide updates on those research or monitoring initiatives about which Forum participants have specifically requested additional information. In-person meetings also provide an opportunity for in-depth discussions about addressing broad challenges to research and monitoring such as communications, administering research license applications, prioritizing research and building capacity. Forum members met in person in November 2013, January 2014 and in March 2015 in addition to frequent teleconference meetings.

#### **Environmental Research and Monitoring Coordination Workshop<sup>3</sup>**

Tulít'a, November 5-7, 2013

The founding meeting of the Forum, this workshop gathered forty-five participants in Tulít'a to begin to find better ways to do research and monitoring in the region. These participants included representatives from all five Sahtú communities, the SRRB, federal government agencies, territorial government agencies, Aurora College, and industry. The objectives of the workshop were: to build relationships, to share information, and to determine the best ways to coordinate environmental research and monitoring in the region. Participants examined the concept of a working group and explored its goals, funding needs, and timelines for coordination of environmental



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<sup>3</sup> See the full report: A Way Forward. Report from the Environmental Research and Monitoring Coordination Workshop November 5-7, 2013, Tulít'a. Prepared for the Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum by Shauna Morgan, the Pembina Institute. December 2014 edition.



research and monitoring. They also identified Sahtú individuals and organizations that are interested and motivated to take a lead on coordinating environmental research and monitoring. The workshop was an effective opportunity for participants to clarify and communicate their roles and responsibilities. It was out of this initial coordination meeting that the SERM Forum was developed.

Partners: ENR, AANDC, CPC

### **Sahtú Environmental Monitoring and Research Forum results workshop & annual meeting**

Yellowknife, January 9, 10, 2014

Forum members and a number of support people met to recap the results from the research and monitoring coordination workshop and to explore some research themes more deeply. Discussions included a facilitated dialogue about how risk is framed, assessed and communicated. Further discussions explored opportunities to support Dene youth in developing leadership skills and becoming prepared for their future role in self-government and community administration. Guest speakers presented about research that is being done in NWT to monitor mercury in fish and other wildlife.

Key outcomes of this workshop were development of the Forum's Terms of Reference and compilation of a list of priority areas of research and monitoring identified by the group<sup>4</sup>.

### **Annual Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum meeting<sup>5</sup>**

Yellowknife, March 24-26, 2015

A full Forum delegation came together for a three day in-person meeting in March 2015. As the meetings were situated in Yellowknife, it provided an opportunity for substantial guest participation. Forum members received updates from several sources and were able to contribute perspectives to the development of some research projects. Research discussed and/or presented included archaeological research in the Sahtú mountains by Tom Andrews, GNWT Species-At-Risk updates, Environment Canada's landbird monitoring project (Samuel Hache), a monitoring and research update from Diavik mine, and an update on the mercury research synthesis work conducted with NCP funding by Shelagh Montgomery. A full day was dedicated to understanding and discussing caribou management planning and

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<sup>4</sup> Research Priorities Summary Table – Sahtú Environmental Research & Monitoring (ERM) Forum, February 2014

<sup>5</sup> For complete report see: Report from the Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum's Annual Meeting, March 24,25 and 26, 2015, Yellowknife, NT. Prepared for the Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum by Christine Wenman, PlanIt North, June, 2015.

associated research with presentations from GNWT. Constructive discussions were had with ENR communications and education staff exploring regional priorities.

### **Teleconference meetings**

The Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum has met consistently by phone (ten times from November, 2013 to September, 2015). These regular meetings provide an opportunity for Forum members to stay up to date about regional research activities and strengthen relationships among academics working in the region and community members. For instance, the Forum provides an opportunity for researchers seeking to develop research projects to discuss their approaches with Forum members prior to submitting research applications, therefore providing more genuine opportunities for iterative dialogue to build stronger research approaches with more community collaboration.

The Forum has also developed an online document repository and a public web-page housed within that of the SRRB's site<sup>6</sup>. Such initiatives will build the profile of the Forum both within the Sahtú region and more broadly in the NWT.



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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=270:sahtu-environmental-research-monitoring-forum&catid=129&Itemid=843](http://www.srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=270:sahtu-environmental-research-monitoring-forum&catid=129&Itemid=843)

## Summary of teleconference meetings

| <b><i>Date</i></b> | <b><i>Summary of topics covered</i></b>   |
|--------------------|---|
| September 3, 2015  | Discussion with Janet Winbourne about how to best consult RRCs on the Harvest Study. Debrief on 2015 cross cultural camp (Shauna Morgan). Review of current research initiatives: Mackenzie Mountain Earthscope (Derek Schutt), human biomonitoring project exploring links between contaminant exposure, nutritional status and country food use (Brian Laird), Water Safety Course and computer application (Audrey Giles), Self-Determination in Délı̨nę (Faun Rice). Discussion of approaches to investigate how to improve the research license referral process (Deb Simmons and Christine Wenman).   |
| August 27, 2015    | Special Meeting on the Sahtú Harvest Study. Discussion about how to engage with community members about the available harvest data and in so doing complement the data with traditional knowledge and narratives.   |
| June 4, 2015       | Discussions of adopting the Form model for future discussions about regional caribou management. Discussion with Janet Winbourne about the need to validate harvest study data with community members. C. Wenman discussion about SSI project to document and validate contaminant sites and waste sites. Review of Forum funding proposal. Overview of mercury biomonitoring work so far (S. Montgomery and B. Laird). Discussion about upcoming cross-cultural research camp (S. Morgan). K. Chin presentation about summer research plans for water health monitoring. Community water monitoring (Laurel McDonald). Bat Monitoring (D. Simmons). Research license applications from Imperial Oil. Délı̨nę Water Conference (Ed Reeves). |
| May 8, 2015        | Mike Schmidt provided a summary on behalf of Derek Schutt (Colorado State University) about the Mackenzie Mountains Earthscope project a project intended to image the subsurface to obtain a better understanding of earthquakes in the region. Kevin Karydnl provided a summary of a proposed Environment Canada project to research thrush and swallow migration in the Mile 222 area. Shauna Morgan provided an overview of the 2014 cross-cultural camp report and discussed plans for the 2015 camp. Both she and Joe Hanlon updated on Sahtú Youth Network initiatives. Joe and Thom Stubbs updated on the Best of Both Worlds project. C. Wenman provided a review of the draft report from the Forum's March meeting.              |
| January 8, 2015    | Brian Laird (University of Waterloo) and Shelagh Montgomery (SENES Consultants) discussed a mercury biomonitoring project and Cindy Gilday provided updates about Gary Stern's Fort Good Hope Loche Monitoring project funded by the Northern Contaminants Program.   |
| June 5, 2014       | Various member updates, review of draft Forum budget, discussion of ESRF funding and cross-cultural camp planning, SRRB intern introduction   |
| May 8, 2014        | James Hodson (GWNT) discussion planning for wildlife cumulative effects workshop  |
| April 24, 2014     | Tom Stubbs discussed the Central Mackenzie Valley Shale Oil Partnership; review of Forum's annual work plan   |
| Feb 25, 2014       | Received planning advice for Fort Nelson speaking tour, updates on research proposal submitted to ENR for funding including caribou genetics research (J. Polfus), caribou and moose parasite research (S. Kutz), Sahtú biodiversity monitoring framework, harvest monitoring. Approved SERM Forum Terms of Reference.  |
| Dec 6, 2013        | Discussed terms of reference, recapped research and monitoring workshop objectives  |
| November 18, 2013  | Debrief on the ERM Workshop in Tulı́t'a, November 5-7, Support Committee update, Review of Working Group membership, next steps   |

## B. Regional Research Workshops

SERM Forum members have been primary participants in regional results workshops since the Forum's inception. By bringing together government researchers, academics and private business representatives, opportunities to bridge cultural differences and to optimize research efforts are created.

### **Research Results Workshop<sup>7</sup>**

Tulít'a, November 27-28, 2013

The three day workshop, funded by the Northern Contaminants Program and the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program and coordinated by the ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı, provided opportunities for Forum members to understand some of the key research projects that are happening in the Sahtú region and to learn about key research programs that are run by federal and territorial government departments such as the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program and the Northern Contaminants Program as well as research and monitoring programs run by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada and ENR. In addition, a number of researchers explained projects exploring caribou genetic diversity and wildlife health. Through the three days of presentations and dialogue, Forum participants were able to make recommendations for what should be studied, how research should be done and how resources can best be used to support good research. The presentations and the recommendations are summarized in the resulting report.

Partners: NCP-AANDC, CIMP-AANDC

### **Sahtú Wildlife Cumulative Effects Monitoring Workshop<sup>8</sup>**

Fort Good Hope, September 2-4, 2014

SERM Forum members along with other community representatives met to review the existing list of 34 research questions that had been identified at the January, 2014 SERM Forum meeting in Yellowknife. The questions were reviewed to identify whether progress had been made in addressing them and to ensure that they were still relevant questions. In addition, additional priorities were identified, creating a total of 62 research questions. Through facilitated dialogue and by identifying a number of criteria through which the research questions could be evaluated, the questions were prioritized in order to provide guidance for future research endeavours.

Partners: CIMP-ENR

### **Research Results Workshop<sup>9</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup> Full report: "It's about our survival" Keeping the Food and Water Safe in the Sahtú Region. Research Results Workshop, Tulít'a, November 27-28, 2013. Prepared by Shauna Morgan, Pembina Institute.

<sup>8</sup> Full report: Sahtú Wildlife Cumulative Effects Monitoring Workshop Summary report. Prepared by Tait Communications and Consulting, November 17, 2014.

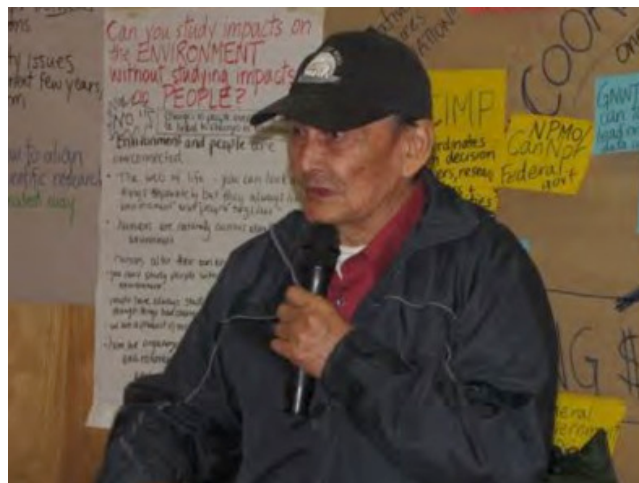
Tulit'a, January 20-22, 2015

Held January 20-22, 2015, the workshop brought together about 60 participants, representing community researchers, elders, leaders, and youth, and government and university researchers.

As with the results workshop held in November 2013, the general objectives of the gathering were to learn about what research and monitoring is being done in the Sahtú and to explore how communities have been involved and how these research and monitoring projects have helped decision-makers to manage risk. The workshop also explored how to identify good research questions and how to ensure all partners continue to move forward with well coordinated, community supported research projects.

With over 20 presentations, the workshop covered three main themes: 1) water, fish and wildlife health and environmental change; 2) compiling, monitoring and planning for biocultural diversity; and 3) frameworks, guidelines and Sahtú research agenda.

Partners: NWT ESRF, CIMP-ENR



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<sup>9</sup> Forthcoming (2015). We need to work together – Research Results Workshop, Tulit'a, January 20-22, 2015.). Report prepared by Shelagh Montgomery, Arcadis Canada Inc. Tulit'a, NT: ?ehdzo Got'inę Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board).

## C. Youth Initiatives

The importance of youth involvement is routinely stressed by Forum members. As funding allows, youth representatives are involved in Forum meetings through the participation of one youth participant for each Sahtú community. The youth themselves have also emphasized the importance of having separate opportunities for parallel learning and youth-led initiatives outside of the Forum venue, resulting in the continued development of the Sahtú Youth Network. With support and guidance from the Forum, the Sahtú Renewable Resource Board has coordinated a number of projects that have targeted youth involvement.



### Sahtú Youth Network

The Sahtú Youth Network (SYN) was formed as a Forum by which youth could engage on health and climate change issues, empowered with the tools to make healthy choices in their lives, and with the knowledge and confidence needed to face a future of unprecedented climate change. Originally conceived of within the Climate Change and Health project, the youth intend for the group to become self-sustaining and to provide on-going opportunities for youth from each of the five Sahtú communities to network and create regional initiatives to connect youth to their culture, language and elders while building skills in leadership, communication and resource management.

The SYN has established a Facebook group to facilitate member communications and a SYN website is currently being developed<sup>10</sup>.



Partners: Health Canada's Inuit and First Nations Health and Climate Change Adaptation Program, AANDC Territorial Development Fund.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=305:sahtu-youth-network&catid=134&Itemid=892](http://www.srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=305:sahtu-youth-network&catid=134&Itemid=892)



## D. Strategic Regional Initiatives

The Forum has provided guidance to and Forum members have actively participated in a number of strategic regional initiatives that contribute to the Forum's stated objectives. These initiatives have been sponsored and facilitated by the SRRB with support and sponsorship from a number of partners. These include the projects listed below.

### **Best of Both Worlds**

#### **Sahtú Gonéné T'áadets'enı̨tq - Depending on the Land in the Sahtú Region<sup>11</sup>**

June 2013-March 2015

Best of Both Worlds is a two-phase project of the SRRB develop an Action Plan for promoting workforce readiness to support a healthy mixed economy. Phase 1 (2013-2014) involved a literature review, a workshop, a focus group and interviews through which participants discussed their current realities and future visions with regards to having a strong mixed economy. Dialogue focused on recognizing aspects that support a strong mixed economy or that, conversely, present barriers. Participants further explored strengths and challenges in education and training for the mixed economy. In the Phase 1 report, a number of recommended actions were identified for program development, education and training. Phase 2 includes completion of an Action Plan document and a Sahtú Economies website. Project Team members have presented about the project to the Forum on several occasions, and regional/community Forum members have both participated in project activities and reviewed draft reports.

Partners: CanNor, ITI



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<sup>11</sup> Best of Both Worlds: Sahtú Gonéné T'áadets'enı̨tq - Depending on the Land in the Sahtú Region Volume 1 – Discussion Document. Prepared by Betty Harnum, Joseph Hanlon, Tee Lim, Jane Modeste, Deborah Simmons and Andrew Spring with the Pembina Institute. December 2015 Edition.

## **Staying Strong – Sahtú Youth and Elders Building Healthy Communities in the face of climate change<sup>12</sup>**

September, 2013 to March, 2015

With funding from Health Canada's Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program, Youth and elders explored aspects of their changing environment due to climate change and considered those impacts in a context of broader cumulative effects. A focus of the project was the development of youth leadership skills and core strengths, developed through on-the-land activities and opportunities to learn from their Elders. The project was initiated with a planning workshop in September, 2013.



In October 2013, some Sahtú youth were able to attend the PowerShift BC conference held in Victoria BC, at which youth from across the country gather to build their knowledge, networks and leadership skills. The project also contained a substantial on-the-land component, with youth joining a fall hunt at Píetl'ánejo (Caribou Flats), and a community spring hunt at K'áalq Túé (Willow Lake). The Climate Change and Community Health workshop was held in Tulít'a, November 5-7, 2013, with 10 elders and 12 youth from all five Sahtú communities,

In addition, Eugene Boulanger, worked with Sahtú youth at the Sahtú Environmental Research Results Workshop in Tulít'a, Nov 27-28, 2013, focusing on youth engagement, facilitation and skill building. At this workshop and other project activities, youth frequently outlined a need for greater and more consistent engagement of youth at meetings. Encouraging their involvement and creating consistent, safe spaces for youth leadership development has consistently been identified as a priority for the Forum.

During 2014 and 2015, the initiative grew to include youth from all communities, making it a fully regional project. Participants developed the structure for the Sahtú Youth Network (see prior description for more details) and interviewed Elders in order to complete a vulnerability assessment of health impacts from climate change.

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<sup>12</sup> Full report: Staying Strong. Sahtú Youth and Elders Building Healthy Communities in the Face of Climate Change. Volume 1: Final Report. Prepared by Tee Lim with ʔehdzo Got'ine ʔots'ę Nákedı and The Pembina Institute, December 2014 edition.

In January, 2015, SYN members participated in and presented at the SRRB's Caribou Gathering in Délı̨ne and the Research Results workshop in Tulı́t'a. In March 2015, the youth met to develop an action plan to address the priority areas that they identified: 1. Build healthy relationships between youth and Elders; 2. Promote Dene language revitalization; 3. Promote on-the-land learning and safety skills while travelling across the land and water; 4. Gain more education to become scientists and researchers; 5. End dependence on fossil fuels.

Partner: Health Canada: Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program for Northern First Nations and Inuit Communities, AANDC Territorial Development Fund

**Environmental Monitor Training Program  
Tets'ehxe (Drum Lake)<sup>13</sup>**  
March 14-29, 2014

Blyth & Bathe were contracted to carry out the delivery of the Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR) Environmental Monitor Training Program (EMTP). The program ran from March 14th to March 29th 2014 at Tets'ehxe (Drum Lake) and provided an intensive, condensed EMTP training to students from the Sahtú Region. Two Students were from Colville Lake, five from Tulı́t'a, one from Norman Wells and three from Fort Good Hope. Students were selected through an abnormally stringent selection process, which was carried out by a selection committee from the Aurora College Campus in Norman Wells.



Conducting the EMTP training entirely on the land was an innovative approach that proved to be successful with the trainers suggesting that the format serve as a model for future courses.

The camp was planned in conjunction with the Sahtú Cross Cultural Research Camp allowing the environmental trainees to learn from their community land-users and leaders as well as from the formal teachers and on-site academics. Training and certification have been important foci of the Forum and to date, Forum members have identified gaps in ensuring that those who have completed the training program obtain the requisite number of diversified work experience hours. In addition, Forum members have noted that technical training without leadership training can be void of context preventing participants from following through with the program and achieving meaningful working roles within their communities. The

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<sup>13</sup> Full report: Environmental Monitor Training Program: Tets'ehxe (Drum Lake), Sahtú, March 14-March 29, 2014. Prepared by Genevieve Cote and Adam Bathe, Blyth & Bathe.

further development of Environmental Leadership Training Programs through which students not only gain technical skills but also develop the understanding of the broader context in which those skills are applied as well as the confidence to communicate that context and to contribute to effective decision-making is priority for the Forum.

Partners: Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), Aurora College, Behdzi Ahda RRC, CPC, Fort Good Hope RRC, ECE, ITI, ENR, Norman Wells RRC, Tulit'a RRC.

### **Sahtú Cross-Cultural Research Camps<sup>14, 15</sup>**

July 12-19, 2014, Taaló Túé (Stewart Lake, Tulit'a District)

July 4-11, 2015, Sans Sault area (Mackenzie River, K'áhsho Got'ıne District)

The Sahtú Cross-Cultural Research Camp, held at Taaló Túé (Stewart Lake) from July 12-19, 2014, was a forum for Dene/Métis knowledge holders and scientists to learn about each other's research questions and ways of learning about and monitoring wildlife, habitat, harvesting and water. The Camp served several purposes related to both knowledge sharing and knowledge gathering, including a contribution to the certification of local environmental monitors, and collection of baseline data in an area near the shale oil exploration play. Camp activities were centred around two



Environmental Studies Research Fund programs – “Wildlife, Habitat and Harvesting”, and “Surface Water and Groundwater” research.

The research camp provided opportunities for experiential learning in monitoring approaches and participants facilitated scientists in field research including conducting stream sampling and identifying songbirds and waterfowl. Participants included youth who had just completed an Environmental Monitoring

Training Program certification at Drum Lake, which provided a unique opportunity for immediate follow-up and continued education. The camp was extraordinarily well-received by all participants providing a venue through which shared

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<sup>14</sup> At Home on the Land: The Sahtú Cross-Cultural Research Camp, July 12-19, 2014, Taaló Túé (Stewart Lake). Prepared by Shauna Morgan, Pembina Institute. A photo voice presentation about this camp at Taaló Túé can be found at the SRRB's website at: [http://srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=292:cross-cultural-research-camp&catid=9:uncategorised&Itemid=689](http://srrb.nt.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=292:cross-cultural-research-camp&catid=9:uncategorised&Itemid=689)

<sup>15</sup> Report forthcoming (2015). Prepared by Shauna Morgan, Pembina Institute.



understandings could be developed overcoming differences in cultural perceptions and language.

The cross-cultural research camp was held again in summer, 2015. This second Sahtú Cross-Cultural Research Camp had a focus on supporting students from the 2014 cohort of Sahtú environmental monitors-in-training to become certified and obtain access to employment and more advanced training opportunities. Camp organizers worked closely with ENR Sahtú Region staff to ensure this process is in alignment with GNWT requirements.

A secondary focus was on research and monitoring related to climate change and associated socio-ecological shifts, including new challenges in understanding fire, caribou populations, water health, contaminants (with a focus on mercury), and food security. The Camp program incorporated both traditional knowledge and scientific ways of knowing.

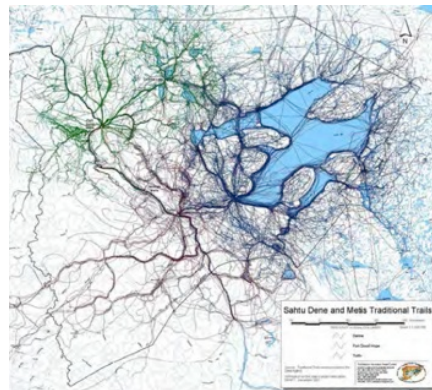
Partners: ESRF, CIMP, NCP, ECE, MACA, CPC

### **Spatial Data Cataloguing, Compiling and Documentation Initiatives<sup>16, 17</sup>** January 2013-ongoing

A broad spectrum of initiatives to catalogue and compile existing spatial data and support new mapping endeavours was coordinated by the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board with support and guidance from the Forum, and funded by CIMP, ESRF, and the Full Circle Foundation (Tides). Several community engagement tours were undertaken to seek additional input and guidance. The results of this work will be increasingly useful with a direct role in decision-making about land use and environmental research and monitoring.

The spatial initiatives include:

- Comprehensive cataloguing of spatial datasets<sup>18</sup>
- Dene Mapping Project repatriation
- Spatial traditional knowledge compilation
- Online spatial atlas needs assessment
- Online Sahtú Atlas (using Nunaliit Atlas Framework)



Partners: ESRF, ECE, CIMP, SSI, Sahtú GIS Office, ARI, Carleton University

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<sup>16</sup> Full report: Sahtú Wildlife, Habitat and Harvesting Program: Spatial Data Projects 2014-2015. Prepared by Heidi Brown and Kristi Benson.

<sup>17</sup> Full report forthcoming, 2016. Prepared by Kristi Benson.

<sup>18</sup> Available online at [www.srrb.nt.ca](http://www.srrb.nt.ca).

## Monitoring Framework and Traditional Knowledge Research Guidelines 2014-2016

Still under development, the Monitoring Framework and Traditional Knowledge Research Guidelines will involve literature review and collaborative research with RRCs and industry. The Monitoring Framework will be developed to complement existing BEAHR Occupational Standards and course curriculum for training monitors, as well as the NWT Experiential Science curriculum for high schools, and the NWT CIMP's Pathways guide for community-based research. The intended audience will be RRCs and community members, high school students, adult education students, as well as industry and researchers.

Partners: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

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The various initiatives that SERM Forum has spearheaded or in which SERM Forum members have participated have all contributed to addressing the Forum's objectives. Although most initiatives could be seen to at least partially touch on *all* objectives, the following table illustrates those objectives most central to each initiative.





## SERM Forum initiatives & principle links to objectives identified in the Forum's Terms of Reference

| Objective (as defined in the SERM Forum Terms of Reference)  |   |                                       |  |  |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Initiative   | 1. Develop an integrated regional research agenda | 2. Build cross-cultural understanding | 3. Support and protect Traditional Knowledge Processes | 4. Support regional and regulatory decision-making | 5. Identify opportunities for collaboration |
| <b>A. Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum meetings</b>                               |   |                                       |  |  |   |
| Workshop Forum in-person meetings (November 2013, January 2014, March 2015)                        | X   | X                                     | X  | X  | X   |
| Teleconference calls (held every 1-2 months)   |   |                                       |  | X  | X   |
| <b>B. Regional Research Results Workshops</b>  |   |                                       |  |  |   |
| Several regional results workshops (November 2013, September 2014, January 2015)                   | X   | X                                     | X  | X  | X   |
| <b>C. Youth initiatives to which SERM members have provided support</b>                            |   |                                       |  |  |   |
| Youth participation in SERM Forum meetings   |   | X                                     |  | X  |   |
| Support of Sahtú Youth Network   |   | X                                     |  | X  |   |
| Youth involvement in cross-cultural camps and training programs                                    |   | X                                     |  | X  |   |
| <b>D. Strategic Regional Initiatives in which SERM members have participated</b>                   |   |                                       |  |  |   |
| Best of Both Worlds Sahtú Gonéné T'áadets'ení to Depending on the Land in the Sahtú Region         | X   | X                                     | X  | X  |   |
| Staying Strong – Sahtú Youth and Elders Building Healthy Communities in the face of climate change | X   | X                                     | X  | X  |   |
| Environmental Monitor Training Program   |   | X                                     |  | X  |   |
| Sahtú Cross-Cultural Research Camps  | X   | X                                     | X  | X  | X   |
| Spatial Data Cataloguing, Compiling and Documentation Initiatives                                  | X   |                                       |  | X  |   |
| Monitoring Framework and Traditional Knowledge Research Guidelines                                 |   | X                                     | X  | X  |   |

## Future directions

### Themes and objectives

The approaches used by the Forum have proven to be effective in working towards the Forum's stated objectives. Through on-going discussions, Forum members have completed substantial work in identifying regional priorities and are making progress in understanding to which degree those priorities are being addressed by current projects and programs or to which degree gaps persist.

Through opportunities for in-person meetings and one-on-one dialogue, both Forum members and the support group are better able to understand one another's perspectives and approaches. In addition to building understanding, knowledge, relationships and networks, the Forum's work to date has also provided direction for future endeavors. The following directions have been identified from a thorough review of the recommendations that have emerged from the various Forum initiatives to date and are presented according to the objectives specified in the Forum's terms of reference.

#### ***Objective – Identify a Regional Research Agenda***

- Continue the on-going work that has sought to list, thematize and prioritize research questions so as to inform future directions. On-going work is needed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of existing projects and programs so that a gaps analysis can be completed. The Forum will work with government departments and academic partners to review the framework completed to date so as to identify which research priorities are already being addressed or partially addressed through past, present or planned research. Outstanding gaps will be highlighted.
- Work towards establishing a more integrated research agenda that will function to guide government, industry and academia ensuring that the Forum is not only being responsive to research requests but in fact, guiding the prioritization of research from its outset.
- Develop a well-informed and clear perspective on regional study approaches that can be concisely communicated and advocated for by the Forum
  - Clarify roles and responsibilities in initiating, funding, and overseeing a regional research strategy
  - Better understand various types of regional research strategies including strategic environmental assessments in order to identify

which approach best addresses the research needs identified by the Forum

- Find and analyze examples of regional research strategies elsewhere that could inform work in the Sahtú
  - Identify mechanisms for regional research strategy work to inform policy, regulation, and decision-making
  - Identify potential partners and resources to support a regional research strategy
- Further develop a robust socio-economic and socio-cultural research agenda that builds from traditional knowledge and addresses themes beyond the natural sciences. In so doing, build on and implement the recommendations made in the “Best of Both Worlds” project, which examines and envisions what an optimal mixed economy in the Sahtú region might be. Secure SSHRC funding that shows intersections of biological and socio-cultural with focus on caribou.



### ***Objective – Build cross-cultural understanding***

- Continue to provide opportunities for dialogue between Forum members and researchers for government and industry. Opportunities for semi-structured in-person discussions have proven invaluable in bridging understanding, developing shared language and strengthening partnerships. Consistent meetings have been effective in building cross-cultural understanding and have been achieved through regular conference call meetings punctuated by occasional in-person results workshops, discussions and on-the-land learning through annual research camps. Each of these is important in ensuring that topics can be addressed with adequate breadth and depth.
- Nurture the development of an understanding of Dene concepts with application in research. This must be done as an integrated and collaborative process such that both Dene capacity to identify and communicate Dene concepts is built while government, industry and academia build their understanding of Dene concepts. To date, substantial work has been done in developing place names through the Sahtú Atlas project, while the best of Both World Concepts prioritized Dene words and concepts in describing a

mixed economy. Forum members have identified a need to further develop an understanding of names of song birds and other species, which would build on the work completed to date.

***Objective - Support and protect traditional knowledge processes***

- Based on the research priorities identified and the gap analysis conducted, develop approaches to traditional knowledge research and identify appropriate sources of funding.
- Maintain an emphasis on on-the-land experiential learning with intergenerational participation and teaching, building on the success of the first two cross-cultural research camps.
- Develop additional on-the-land learning for youth with elders. These opportunities build confidence, leadership skills, and connection with elders and cultural identity.
- Continue to involve youth in Forum activities. Additionally, provide parallel environments through which youth can build leadership in safe, encouraging and youth-directed environments.
- Finalize the Traditional Knowledge Research Guidelines that are being developed by the Sahtú Traditional Knowledge Working Group

***Objective - Support regional and regulatory decision-making***

- Further support environmental monitors and environmental leadership development in on-going training opportunities and in connecting them to diverse and meaningful work opportunities.
- Develop a web page that is a one-stop shop for researchers who would like to learn about the framework for research in the Sahtú region.
- On critical issues related to decision-making, use the Forum as an opportunity to discuss and more fully develop all participants understanding of the issues. The Forum is emerging as a case study for supporting stronger local governance and capacity with organizations in the Sahtú and beyond looking to the Forum as a model.

- Identify avenues to work with decision-makers to constructively address identified challenges or gaps.
- Further develop the Sahtú Atlas as a tool for community and regional inputs into decision-making.

***Objective - Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results.***

- Build on the existing role of the Forum as a mechanism of communication between researchers and community members, in particular the Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs). Identify additional methods to facilitate RRCs in reviewing research licenses in a meaningful and efficient way so as to encourage better research approaches and so as to optimize available resources.
- Strengthen the focus on communications. Forum representatives have identified challenges in communicating what they are learning to their Renewable Resource Councils and broader communities. In addition, challenges are still evident in ensuring that research approaches and results are broadly communicated to those interested.
- Review the current process of research license referral and reviews so as to identify opportunities to increase community engagement while reducing the administrative burden to referral bodies.



## Approach

In order to address the emerging themes and recommendations, the Forum will continue to meet and to develop initiatives throughout the 2015-2016 year. Forum members are striving to meet approximately monthly by phone and have begun the fiscal year with two teleconference meetings already; approximately ten meetings are anticipated throughout the year.

An in-person meeting is also planned as this provides the best venue to involve all participants in discussion and planning and to build relationships between Forum members and their research and monitoring partners. It is anticipated that one meeting will be held in a Sahtú community while another will be held in Yellowknife. Meeting in the Sahtú provides an opportunity for greater visibility and communications with Sahtú community members, while Yellowknife meetings ensure that the Forum can access the knowledge of many research partners.

In addition to the Forum meeting, which provides an opportunity for continued education for Forum members and their support network as well as opportunities to plan for effective research and monitoring, Forum members will also participate in related workshops or training opportunities. These external events may include the following or other identified learning and networking opportunities:

- Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program annual research results workshop and NWT Geoscience Forum
- Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserve research and monitoring plan meeting
- Cross Cultural Research Camp
- NCP National Results Workshop

As per its terms of reference, The Forum consists of delegates from each Sahtú community, SSI delegates, youth delegates, and representatives of ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı, Government of the Northwest Territories (ENR and ITI) and Government of Canada (CanNor and Environment Canada).





## Next Steps

SERM developed a logical framework work plan in order to chart a path for undertaking the objectives identified in its Terms of Reference. This iteration of the table includes an assessment of achievements to date and identifies next steps.

| Objective                                      | Task   | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product   | Achievement to date  | Next steps (2015-2016)  |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review plans for the Sahtú ESRF Wildlife, Habitat and Harvesting   | Promote Forum Research Priorities for future work to be funded by the new NWT version of ESRF. | Participate in the Experts Workshop   | Two technical advisory groups were put together to guide these plans.          | Invite further discussions to Forum about Northern ESRF plans and opportunities.  |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Assist in developing the Sahtú Monitoring Framework document. This is an SRRB initiative advised by the Sahtú Forum support group. | Promote Forum Research Priorities.   | Participate in the Monitoring.  | Research lists and subsequent priorities were generated through two workshops. | Existing list (draft framework) needs to be compared to past, current and planned research initiatives to identify gaps. More integrated research strategy must be developed. |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review and compile list of industry monitoring programs in the Sahtú Region.   | To examine if and how Forum Research Priorities are being addressed.                           | Identify gaps between industry monitoring programs and those priorities identified through the Forum. | Monitoring Framework development was supported by AANDC.                       | S. Montgomery will continue to work on monitoring framework with intent to finish this fiscal year.   |

| Objective                                      | Task   | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product   | Achievement to date   | Next steps (2015-2016)   |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Provide input on approach to boreal caribou range planning.  | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Document link between range planning and Forum Objectives.  | Range planning work was deferred to prioritize work on caribou population studies, which helped to identify spatial distribution of populations. This is important background to future range planning. | Forum will be responsive to participate in ENR work on range planning.   |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review progress on 2011-2015 Barren-Ground Caribou strategy. | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Document link between Barren-Ground Caribou Strategy, identify gaps (in relation to Forum Research Priorities) and establish a list of opportunities related to the Strategy. | Work has focused on identified trends and developing and finalizing the management plan. Government partners have presented to the Forum on the management plan.  | Forum will continue to support priority areas identified through management plan and prepared to engage once action plan is developed. Forum will ensure continued input into how monitoring occurs.     |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review Sahtú Harvest Survey results.                         | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Recommended approach for future harvest monitoring.   | Harvesting reports have been obtained from ENR.   | Reports to be reviewed at next Forum meeting. Forum members have expressed interest in inviting the outfitter umbrella organization representative to present. Further learning and discussion required. |

| Objective                                      | Task   | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product   | Achievement to date  | Next steps (2015-2016)   |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review ?ehdzo Got'ine Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board) Research Agenda.                             | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities.   | Make recommendations for research that will meet the Forum's Research Priorities and provide opportunities for collaboration. | Research lists and subsequent priorities were generated through two workshops.   | Existing list (draft framework) needs to be compared past, current and planned research initiatives to identify gaps. More integrated research strategy must be developed. |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review plans for the Sahtú ESRF Surface Water and Groundwater program.   | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. Put forward priorities for future work to be funded by the new NWT version of ESRF. | Participate in the Experts Workshop   | New Northern ESRF has been developed and the first meeting was held in the summer, 2015.                                     | The Forum will continue to understand and contribute to ESRF plans for development of a surface and groundwater program.   |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and Action Plan Activities, such as Community-Based Monitoring in the Sahtú. | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities.   | Identify opportunities for collaboration.   | Discussion to date have identified the need for a second detailed results presentation with the NWT Water Stewardship staff. | Invite NWT Water Stewardship staff to next Forum meeting for detailed results presentation and discussion about role in developing an integrated research agenda.          |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review DFO research agenda and activities in the Sahtú.  | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities.   | Identify opportunities for collaboration.   | Outstanding. DFO also had an NWT staffing gap but Deanna Leonard has returned to NWT.  | Further communications with DFO is needed. They will be involved in research monitoring meeting specific to Délıne.  |

| Objective                                      | Task   | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product                 | Achievement to date  | Next steps (2015-2016)  |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review ENR draft multi-scale Cumulative Effects Monitoring Program for wildlife.   | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Identify opportunities for collaboration. | Forum participated in CIMP-hosted workshop in Tulit'a in which research questions were explored and prioritized.                             | Further work is needed to develop a comprehensive research agenda that better elaborates the list of questions into well-developed and prioritized nodes. |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Provide input on cumulative effects assessment and monitoring approach, including: Boreal Caribou Blueprint; Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) Strategic Plan. | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Identify opportunities for collaboration. | Forum has heard from ENR presenters about the blueprints and has worked with CIMP to discuss research priorities.                            | The Forum's discussions with partners on caribou management and research is ongoing.  |
| Identify research priorities and research gaps | Review Sahtú-based CIMP and ENR Letters of Intent and proposals  | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Identify opportunities for collaboration. | Achieved   | Task repeated for 2015-2016   |
| Build cross-cultural understanding             | Participate in Cross-Cultural Research Camp planned as part of the ESRF Wildlife, Habitat and Harvesting program.  | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Refine Forum Research                     | Cross-cultural camp was very well attended with rave reviews. A second 2015 cultural camp was also successful organized and attended.        | An annual cross cultural camp is seen as central to the Forum's processes.  |
| Build cross-cultural understanding             | Provide support and guidance for the new Sahtú Youth Network (Health and Climate Change project sponsored by the ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı)                           | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Refine Forum Research                     | Youth network participated in cross-cultural camp and a number of on-the -land hunts with elders as well as working groups and focus groups. | Further youth network participation in Forum activities but an emphasis on youth-led independent activities and leadership strengthening opportunities.   |

| Objective   | Task   | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product   | Achievement to date   | Next steps (2015-2016)  |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Build cross-cultural understanding                  | Engage in cross-cultural dialogue to support balancing of cultural approaches to the research and monitoring agendas identified under Objective 1.   | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Refine Forum Research Priority List and activities.                   | Forum communications (cross-cultural camp, teleconferences and in-person meetings are proving to provide substantial opportunities to build bridges in cross-cultural understanding | Four in-person meetings planned for 2015-2016 including a results workshop, a Forum annual meeting, summer cross-cultural camp and Forum participation in other research or education initiatives |
| Support and protect traditional knowledge processes | Participate in Traditional Knowledge Guidelines Workshop   | Maintain awareness, gather information and promote Forum Objectives and Research Priorities. | Participate in development of Sahtú Traditional Knowledge Guidelines. | Have Traditional Knowledge Guidelines Working Group with funding from AANDC   | Continued development of research guidelines with intent on completed draft end of this fiscal.   |
| Support regional and regulatory decision-making     | Participate in Research Results Workshop for 2015.   |  | Refine Forum Research Priority  | Priority list achieved.   | Gaps to be analyzed.  |
| Support regional and regulatory decision-making     | Present and discuss results of activities related to Objectives 1-3 at regional decision-making Forums, including: Sahtú Secretariat Inc. Assembly; Sahtú Dene Council Assembly; ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı meeting; Sahtú Partnership meeting; Sahtú Land and Water Board information sessions. | Promote Forum and seek input to guide research priorities.                                   | Refine Forum Research   | There have been several opportunities for Forum members to present to Sahtú Secretariat Inc and other community-based organization have also been engaged about caribou issues.     | Continue to identify how the Forum's work can and should best influence decision-makers and continue to foster consistent avenues of communication.   |

| Objective  | Task  | Goal/why   | Desired outcome / product   | Achievement to date   | Next steps (2015-2016)  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Support regional and regulatory decision-making  | Monitor Sahtú Land and Water Board Public Registry. Monitor changes in environmental legislation.   | Stay up to date on Land Use Permit and Water Licence applications and activities and regulatory decision-making processes. | Information will be considered in Forum's activities.   | The Forum has ensured consistent participation from an industry representative and so has been able to keep members updated on environmental initiatives by private industry working in the region and elsewhere. | Continue to encourage industry participation.   |
| Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results. | Present and discuss results of activities related to Objectives 1-3 at community forums, including ʔehdzo Got'ine meetings and Land Corporation meetings. | Promote Forum and seek input to guide research priorities.   | Refine Forum Research   | Members have expressed frustrations with being under-resourced to support sufficient communications within their own communities, with RRCs and with Land Corporations.   | Further investigate how to support Forum members in strengthening communications within their communities.  |
| Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results. | Information Management.   | Identify what we know.   | Compile list of previous and current research in the Sahtú Region that falls within the Forum's Objective | The Forum website is being populated. The Forum has spent some time examining past research topics from a list shared by the Aurora Research Institute.   | Development of Forum website hosted within SRRB website. Website will act both as repository of information, portal to research and on-going communication tool. Forum has also been using social media and will build its social media presence. |



## **Appendix A – Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

Many environmental research and monitoring programs and projects are underway in the Sahtú Region, and the need for this work is expanding with the emerging shale oil play in the Tulít'a District. On November 5-7, a meeting including representatives of Sahtú organisations, government and industry reached a consensus that such programs and projects should be well coordinated, with strong input from Sahtú communities.

As a consequence, Sahtú organizations and the Government of the Northwest Territories (led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources) have agreed to create a Forum that will support research and monitoring proponents and Sahtú organisations in sharing priorities, plans and proposals, providing feedback and guidance, coordinating objectives and activities. The aim is to more effectively address important issues in the Sahtú.

### **Vision**

Environmental monitoring and research programs and projects in the Sahtú are coordinated and conducted in ways that reflect regional and community priorities, engage communities, value both western science and traditional knowledge, and support wise decision-making.

### **Purpose**

The Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring (ERM) Forum will support environmental research and monitoring by providing a venue for discussing plans and accommodating the priorities and traditional knowledge of Sahtú communities.

### **Objectives**

*The Forum will address the following objectives in supporting environmental research and monitoring in the Sahtú Region:*

- Identify regional priorities and research gaps
- Build cross-cultural understanding
- Support and protect traditional knowledge processes
- Support regional and regulatory decision-making
- Identify opportunities for: collaborative research involving communities; communication; information-sharing; and cross-cultural interpretation of research results.

### **Guiding Principles**

The Forum is cross-cultural, and our processes are based on the following principles of mutual respect:

- All comments are important
- All members can openly share their opinions
- Decisions are made by consensus.
- Be open-minded/don't judge
- Information is plain language and shared with communities
- Stay focused on objectives
- Think past, present, and into the future

### **Forum Structure**

The Forum is comprised of a Chairperson, Forum Membership, and Forum Support Group.

Chairperson:

- The Forum is led by a Chairperson who is appointed by a consensus decision of the group. The appointment is reviewed annually.
- The Chairperson works with the Forum Support Group to set meeting Agendas, and facilitates meetings.

### Forum Membership:

The Forum consists of representation from each of the five Renewable Resources Councils in the Sahtú Region; Sahtú community youth, the Territorial, Federal, and Aboriginal governments, industry, and the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board.

- The majority of the members are Sahtú beneficiaries.
- Alternates are delegated to ensure consistent membership and attendance.
- The Forum may identify additional delegates by consensus to participate as needed.

The membership should include people with a range of qualifications, including:

- Aboriginal harvesters
- Strong communicators
- Training in traditional knowledge and science
- Leadership abilities
- Action oriented
- Passionate

### Forum Support Group:

- The Forum Support Group consists of staff from the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Government of Northwest Territories, and the Central Mackenzie Explorers Group (CMEG).
- The Forum Support Group assists the Chair in planning and organizing Forum activities, and delivery of plain language and technical documents and reports at least once per year, including.

1. Written advice on research and monitoring coordination.
2. A rolling five year research blueprint, with annual updates.

3. Assessments of research and monitoring in the Sahtú.
4. Assessments of progress on Forum objectives, and updated Terms of Reference.

### **Roles of Forum Members**

*Forum members assist in achieving the objectives of the Forum in the following ways:*

- Attend meetings or send an alternate.
- Be prepared – read background material before each meeting.
- Review and provide feedback on documents distributed by email.
- Provide guidance to the Forum.
- Report back to communities or organizations.

### **Meeting Frequency**

- The Forum meets in person at least twice per year.
- At least two additional meetings by teleconference will likely be required, with a frequency to be determined according to workload.
- Meetings will be held in Sahtú communities as much as possible.

### **Reimbursement of Meeting Costs**

Meeting costs including travel expenses and honoraria for Forum members, as required, will be reimbursed by the Government of the NWT per their funding guidelines or through other funding systems that may be determined in the future.