

Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum
Teleconference Meeting Notes
Tuesday April 12, 2016 1pm – 4pm

Present:

- James Caesar, Fort Good Hope RRC
- Roger Odgaard, Norman Wells RRC
- Jennie Vandermeer, ENR
- Heather Sayine-Crawford, ENR
- Bruce Hannah, ENR
- Diane Conrad, University of Alberta
- Ted Mackeinzo, Youth delegate
- Jimmy Dillon, Deline RRC
- Ed Reeves, Deline RRC
- Jennica Von Kuster, Husky Energy
- Gordon Yakeleya, Tulit'a RRC
- Michael Neyelle, SRRB
- Frederick Andrew, SRRB

Forum resource people:

- Joe Hanlon, SRRB
- Deb Simmons, SRRB
- Christine Wenman

1. Introductions
2. Review of Agenda – It was noted that Cristina Soto was not well today and so has asked to present at the next meeting. Gary Stern will also present at the next meeting.
3. Presentation of research, projects, tools and/or organizations

Diane Conrad, UAlberta - Aboriginal Youth Stories of Culture, Identity, Community & Place: A Rural/Urban Educational Youth Exchange through Performing Arts & Technology

Diane Conrad presented about an education project that she is working on in Fort Good Hope. The project is with Chief T'Seleie school in Fort Good Hope, an urban Aboriginal focussed school in Edmonton and a school on a reserve in southern Alberta.

Not only in NWT but across Canada – there are issues about Aboriginal education, for instance graduation rates that are not equivalent to non-Aboriginal graduation rates. So the goal is to nurture success, however we want to define that. The project team is working closely with teachers and administration in each of the three schools. Each school is developing their own project and then sharing their work with the other schools. Having a conversation about education, how students see themselves around issues of community, identity, place and culture.

Diane is currently on sabbatical. She spent three months in the fall in Fort Good Hope and worked with teacher Betty Barnaby and her grade 5/6 class. Betty was interested in working around place and

community mapping – looking at what places in the Fort Good Hope area are important to different families, gather stories of places, looking at family trees. Looking at how families in the communities are related to each other.

Hoping to come back up in July and do a week long intensive camp to further develop the directions that the project has started.

James Caesar – is there any published work?

Diane - Nothing has been made public. We are still early days in the project and have agreed to keep things in the three communities until such a time as everyone is ready to make it public. There is a web page that talks a bit about the project but the content that the students are uploading is private. We do hope to make some aspects of it public at some point.

The last couple of months Diane has been traveling all over the place – Australia, New Zealand and India trying to develop international partnerships to build in an international indigenous component so that kids from around the world can also engage with the students in Fort Good Hope.

Deb – Diane was at last year’s cross-cultural Camp. Did you have a chance to talk to people and were there ideas that arose from that?

Diane – I did talk to people and people were interested from Tulit’a and also Norman Wells in having the project in their communities. So that might be possible for the second phase in the project to work in those communities as well.

Deb – any tie-ins to Heidi Brown’s work on community mapping?

Diane – there is some overlap there; we spoke but it would be good to tie in again. Deb – yes, maybe that project can support your work as there is technical expertise available that may be able to help. Elders, youth, middle-aged people – everyone was talking about involving both youth and elders and you are doing that.

Deb – We are currently working on getting more information about Dene Mapping project that was done in the 70s – an incredibly rich project that was done with those young people’s family members, most of whom will have already passed away. So there is a huge amount of place based history in that project that may be of interest for you to explore with those young folks. So people may be able to see there are gaps from those projects in the 70s or whether they want to talk to elders about what they see and hear in that data. Because we can divide up the data by individuals and families. Cassettes, if there were any, got lost. So in some cases there aren’t a lot of stories to go along with the map data. We know there are place names, cabins, harvesting information but the stories that go with that would need to come from living elders.

The material is owned by individual communities so it isn’t shared without community support and agreement. But in conversation with someone like Betty and James Caesar and others, it could turn into a project design with the youth and the school and the others.

Diane – will follow-up with Heidi. It’s been a real challenge to work long distance with Fort Good Hope. Especially in the school, people are really busy. We have hired some of the junior high school students. One of the grade 9 boys has been one of the most constant communicators.

Deb – Forum likes to help with things like this. This is exactly the kind of work that people want to see happen based on what I've heard over and over again over two decades in the Sahtú. There is lots of support from our Board and in the region generally.

Report on April 5 permafrost/ groundwater related study meeting, Calgary (Bruce Hanna, ENR)

Bruce has recently returned from a groundwater and permafrost research workshop that was held in Calgary. People present included people with expertise and who have conducted research in that field including the NWT Geological Survey, the federal geological survey, Wilfrid Laurier University, Lethbridge University and representatives from Husky and Conoco Phillips. The morning consisted of people presenting their particular research project results or plans. In the afternoon there was discussion about what the next steps should be. What are the priority areas where there are still information gaps? There were gaps identified in surface water sampling, groundwater data in the Sahtú, permafrost information. There are some relevant projects that are up for funding right now. There was one gap that was mentioned that had to do with mapping groundwater springs and realizing that some of those information gaps could be addressed by documenting traditional knowledge. So this is one study that has been flagged as something to pursue in the future.

The University of Waterloo had just finished a report that did some analysis looking at available groundwater. This report provided advice on gaps and next steps. Whereas the Golder report had been a bit of a compilation, the Waterloo work was an analysis.

Participants discussed accessing those reports. The Golder report is very large. Deb has it as she was on the technical advisory committee but it needs to be put on a stick. Action – Christine and Deb to work with Catarina Owen to get the Forum's document repository up to date with these studies included.

Deb - Sahtú Atlas – can we get some of the spatial data onto the Sahtú Atlas so that it is more accessible to the community?

Bruce – community based monitoring – etc have data sharing agreements. There is one I can send any time. The other ones require that those groups with data sharing agreements give consent.

James –Work anticipated in FGH area in the next little while?

Bruce – not sure, there were not plans that were specific to FGH that were discussed by this group at this meeting. The icing mapping is led by the NWT Geological Survey (Steve Kokelj) and Geological Survey of Canada (NRCAN).

4. Research license applications updates (Joe Hanlon)

Joe Hanlon – SRRB office in Tulít'a.

One of the things that I've been doing is keeping track of ARI scientific research licenses. If a researcher wants to do work in the Sahtú, they have to fill out a research license and I get a copy of the research license application.

Look back at last three months - -

Projects with licenses that have been granted

These have already been approved. I can help connect you with lead Principle Researcher at any time if you have any questions about any of these projects.

- a) ***Mapping, language and stories in Deline*** (Deb Simmons is the lead; it is an SRRB study) 5 year project and this is a final year. This is one of those confusing things about the licensing system. The licenses have a term for renewal so our term ran out and we had to apply all over again from scratch. Might be a good model for doing similar work in other communities.
- b) K. Chin, ENR CIMP – ***Establishing a watershed framework for assessing cumulative impacts of development.***
- c) **Sahtú region caribou and moose study** – continuation of the SRRB’s work with Jean Polfus on caribou and moose genetics. All five communities. This work is continuing this year.
- d) Review and impact analysis: Health Canada Climate Change Health Adaptation Project. Deb – in the Sahtú there have been a number of projects funded by the Health Canada Climate Change Health Fund. Examples include:– FGH Erin Freeland-Ballantyne, 2009-2010 in Délı̨ne that had to do with foundations for young people to think about moving into a changing environment. Tulı́’a – youth/elder gathering and led to the formation of the Sahtú Youth Network idea that is still sort of in the works and to more youth led initiative. Ex. On-the-and camp with Daniel T’Seleie in the coming year. Andrew Spring’s recent work in Délı̨ne. This year they are doing an assessment and looking into the results of all of these projects. In discussion with Ottawa, we are limited by what we can learn without looking at the larger picture. So health Canada said they would be willing to fund a project to do a major assessment. Dr. Frances Abel is the lead researcher and she has had a team of people fanning out across the north, doing case studies, visiting communities who have done these studies over the year, in part as a basis for supporting more funding about what is good about the program but also to learn from any weaknesses in the program. So linked to, but distinct from the project that A. Spring is involved in, which is one project.
- e) Colville Hills Bedrock Mapping and Stratigraphic Studies – Geological survey of Canada. The communities are Fort Good Hope and Colville Lake because all of the sites are in the Kashog’ine district. This has been approved.

Current applications – still open for comments

- a) ***Early Palaeozoic earth surface environments in NWT*** - Dr. Elizabeth Turner – Laurentian University. – not Joe’s area of expertise. Basically doing geological work and in the Tulı́’a district – Tulı́’a and Norman Wells would have received research license application forms.
- b) ***Can Dene ways of resolving conflicts and building peace inform governing structures?*** Lyla Erasmus – University of Victoria. Looking to work in Délı̨ne and do interviews with elders on government and how people traditionally would have resolved conflicts. She has approval from all of the organizations in Délı̨ne (not RRC because it is not a wildlife research project so they don’t receive the research license for this one.)

Deb – a project like that may have been misinterpreted in part by the people in Inuvik that it is not really relevant to people in the RRC but Deb’s interpretation is that it is very very relevant because RRC is a governance institution under the land claim.

Roger – I know Lyla. I think that she has it worked out with Délı̄nę. I’m with you – the RRCs are a governing body and they will work it out while they do this. So Délı̄nę can work it out with Lila and the project.

Deb – I’m talking about the ARI in general. That we should take a look at what is relevant to RRC and give ARI some direction. SRRB used to only receive applications that were directly related to wildlife and habitat and we requested to receive all applications which is how we found out about Diane’s project, which is extremely relevant.

Jennie – let’s leave it as part of the bigger question into reviewing ARI research application processes

Christine – I have asked Jonothan Michel to share their procedure for determining which Sahtú organizations receive which application. I don’t know if this is a formal written policy or not. I’ve also asked for a list of which organizations received which applications over the past few years and response rates or if responses were received, if they have that information available. I haven’t heard back yet but I am going to follow-up and so we can discuss this further on the next call.

- c) ***Nááts’ihch’oh National Park Reserve traditional knowledge study.*** Led by Parks, Tulít’a and Norman Wells RRCs. Leon Andrew is the lead interviewer and translator. Parks staff will be involved.

Christine – will they be looking at outside of final boundary to inform the SLUPB decision on land designation for those areas?

Joe – don’t think so. Looked at a broader area in an earlier study.

Deb – people were really interested in looking at Keele area in earlier study so there is a desire to focus on the Park, which did not receive as much focus.

Gordon – I am on the Parks Committee – The idea is to focus on the Territorial Park – what we wanted to do is because the TK study is very important. The goal is to look at all the stories and family histories inside the park.

Leon Andrew is the research lead for both communities but in Norman Wells Lisa MacDonald will be joining him as well. In both cases, they will have parks staff – Janet and Park Manager trainee. In Norman Wells, Bonnie Deschene helping. 3-4 person team working on this in both communities.

- d) **Climate driven permafrost degradation and its impact on slope failures** - Dr. Ryley Beddoe, York University – renewal of a license.

- 5. March community caucus meeting update
Please see brief summary that was circulated

Christine reviewed the two-page summary. There was discussion that some of the questions listed as social research questions were also raised as research approaches. The hope is that researchers will adopt holistic approaches so that some questions of identity, of building

leadership, of making ourselves healthier etc. can be built into approaches of environmental monitoring.

Bruce raised the point that the Tundra Science Camp offers excellent opportunities for NWT youth to “become leaders bridging two worlds” a theme that is frequently raised by Forum Members. The students who attend the Tundra Science Camp have frequently ended up pursuing related university programs. The Science Camp allows youth to experientially explore both western based science methods and traditional knowledge approaches to learning and leadership.

Jennie and Heather echoed that this is important. Only one youth from the Sahtú has ever gone. It is usually Yellowknife-based students who benefit from this. Deb encouraged Jennie to use her administrative access to the SRRB facebook page to promote the camp. Heather and Jennie will work to get the word out in communities.

Deb echoed that there should be lots of opportunities for youth coming up so it will be important to support youth in accessing the opportunities. The Tundra Science Camp is one of them but hopefully there will also be the cross-cultural research camp, Dechinta opportunities and Daniel T’Seleie is organizing a youth camp in the Sahtú. Coordination for all these initiatives will be really important.

6. Research Strategy work plan
Please see 2 page document circulated

Christine reviewed the workplan and sought feedback. Roger noted that there will need to be a lot of opportunities for going through the draft line by line.

Bruce suggested that Health and Social Services and the Department of Transportation of GNWT should also be engaged. Jennie suggested that he, she and Heather have a call to discuss how best to engage other departments.

Jennie also suggested that the Chair try to present the initiative at annual general meetings such as the one held by the Sahtú Secretariat.

7. SERM Forum Terms of Reference review (please see attached document with tracked changes
At the recent community caucus in Tulit’a, Sahtú Forum Members reviewed the Forum’s Terms of Reference and provided some suggestions for updates. Further review is required to seek feedback from the broader forum membership and to ensure that suggested changes were captured as recommended.

Christine reviewed which changes were made and why. It was agreed that she would meet with James to make sure that his comments were adequately incorporated and would incorporate some other concerns that were raised about the number of meetings. Also, a draft with tracked changes will be sent out so that people know exactly which changes were made.

At the next meeting we can look at the next draft and see if it is ready to be passed or if more time is needed. It is not really urgent that this be done.

8. Forum Chair nomination

In reviewing the Terms of Reference at the Community Caucus, the need for a Chair was highlighted.

Roger volunteered to be Chair and everyone was really supportive of the suggestion, thanking Roger for stepping forward.

9. Forum reporting and work plan update

There is a need to pull reporting together for the two in-person meetings and for the Forum's activities for the whole fiscal year. The aim is to have these ready for review at the next teleconference meeting.

10. Next meeting date – proposed – Date for May meeting?

The next teleconference call was set for Wednesday May 25, 1-4pm

Forum Members were asked again to please fill out the doodle poll to help identify a good time to meet in the fall.

Summary of actions / tasks

- Jennie, Heather and Bruce to meet to provide the Forum with advice about how to best engage all appropriate GNWT departments in development of the research strategy.
- All Sahtú-based Forum members to please help disseminate information about the Tundra Science Camp and encourage Sahtú youth participation. Also to promote it on the SRRB facebook page.
- 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 prior to May meeting
- All Forum Members please fill out doodle poll about fall meeting time
- 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.
- Diane Conrad to follow-up with H. Brown about possible tie-ins between the education project and the mapping project.