

**Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum
Community Caucus
Tulít'a, March 29,30,31, 2016**

Key accomplishments / themes

Representatives met over three days from Délı̨ne, Tulít'a, and Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council as well as Sahtú youth, Sahtú ENR, and the ʔehdzo Got'ı̨ne Gots'ę Nákedı. Ten representatives were present in total, as well as two resource people.

Holding a community caucus allowed a focused discussion on community and regional needs.

Agreement and improved understanding were reached on the following topics:

1. A stronger shared understanding about what a Sahtú regional research and monitoring strategy could look like and what every body would like it to try to achieve through its development and implementation.
2. Some key Dene terms were discussed – values and principles that should underpin the Research Strategy.
3. The group discussed a structure for the strategy that could make sense for each Sahtú community and consider research and monitoring goals at different *scales*.

As land use, identity, culture, language and history are very much tied to *place* in the Sahtú region, whereas the land claim region and districts are more recent constructs, it was discussed that people tend to identify as people with roots in specific places. Groups of people are named for their historic and current ties to important places in the Sahtú:

- Sahtúgot'ı̨ne, Shúhtagot'ı̨ne, K'áalɔgot'ı̨ne, Dəogágot'ı̨ne, Delagot'ı̨ne, K'ahshshogot'ı̨ne
 - Métis people have roots to one of the above places and Móla have more recently established connections with place.
4. There was a lengthy discussion about the need to directly include Metis people, emphasizing that Dene and Metis people share family and are part of Tłéché (one family)

5. The group further discussed important research areas:
 - How can we protect harvested animals like moose and caribou?
 - What is the meaning of our stories?
 - Who are we as Dene and Metis?
 - How can our youth become leaders bridging two worlds?
 - How do we live well together as human beings?
 - How can we make ourselves healthier?
 - How can we relearn what was lost at residential school – love and sharing? How can we decolonize ourselves?

6. It was discussed that the strategy should support specific approaches to research, such as:
 - respect for wildlife and the land
 - respecting and valuing Dene knowledge
 - supporting youth on the land
 - Denetsįłı

7. The Forum’s terms of reference were reviewed and representatives provide advice on any required updates (see attached TOR with tracked changes). The group also emphasized the need for a Forum Chair.

8. Everyone agreed upon a generalized work plan for continuing the development of the strategy, including: establishing a mandate, seeking input, reviewing drafts and having formalized adoption of a final draft. (see attached work plan)

9. Jean Polfus presented her research results by phone. Everybody present was really excited about the significant results. The genetic work shows that Sahtú ɥɔdzı are especially unique and adapted to the forest of the Sahtú. It also demonstrates that Sahtú ɥɔdzı and mountain caribou shouldn’t technically be included in the group “woodland caribou.”

10. Specific feedback was given on the initial directions of the draft strategy. Forum members discussed the need for plain language but acknowledged that the strategy would have different target audiences so would need to try to speak to all audiences. Some advice on specific wording was provided, which will be incorporated in subsequent drafts.