Traditional Knowledge And

Contaminates Project

Project Goals

To help Dehcho communities identify and address their concerns about contaminants, human health and environmental changes.



Project Objectives



- Using traditional methods and practices to discuss concerns and solutions
- Provide grant opportunities for Dehcho communities to act and devise their own solutions
- Develop a common research agenda based on local and research-based knowledge and concerns
- Develop a database designed to promote interaction and documentation of knowledge:

Community Meetings in the Dehcho Region



Dehcho Leadership Meeting:

• Dehcho Elders Gathering:

• Dehcho LUP Meeting:

o Liidlii Kue First Nation AGM:

o Local Training Authorities:

• Village Council Meeting:

• AAROM Meeting:

Overview of Dehcho Region

Concerns

o Global Warming **o** Abnormalities in Subsistence Foods **o Human Health o Impact of Commercial Hunting o Local Sources of Contaminants o** Outside Sources of Contaminants • Changes in the Ecosystem • Perpetuation of Culture



Concerns About Global Warming



- Ice Conditions are changing the thickness of river ice has decreased
- Warmer water temperatures appear to be bringing salmon to the Dehcho Region.
- Weather is changing: warmer and wetter seasons
- Lakes and normally wet areas are drying up

Concerns about Abnormalities in Subsistence Foods

- Abnormalities in animals and fish (e.g., wormy whitefish and lesions on salmon, and Whirling disease)
- Moose meat tastes different and there are water bags in their lungs
- Muskrats have spots on their liver and lungs
- O Caribou have runny bone marrow



Concerns About Human Health

- Residents are alarmed by high rates of cancer and perceive there to be a relationship between high cancer rates and local contaminated sites
- People's diets are increasingly including store bought foods, pop and improperly stored canned and frozen foods
- More people are dying from stomach cancer, ulcers and other cancers



Concerns about the Impact of Commercial Hunting & Fishing

- Increase in sports fishing resulting in increased waste in river and destruction of habitat
- Fish are being destroyed – too many people touching them, measuring them and tearing up their mouths
- Commercial hunting pressure on caribous and habitat
- Need for buffer zones

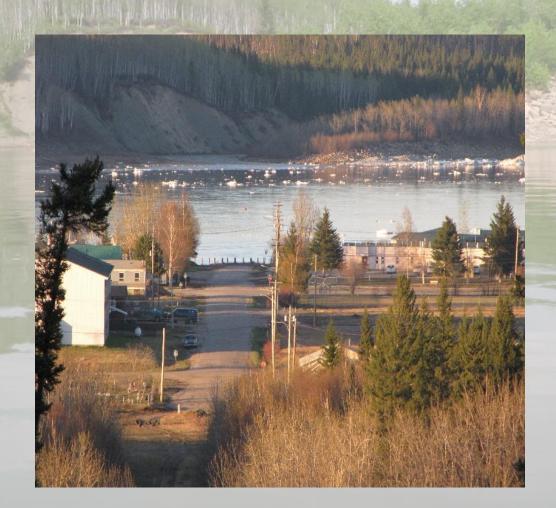
Concerns about Outside Impact on Subsistence Foods, Culture and Environment

- People are concerned about Alberta's sources of contaminants
- Tourists and Project Teams are uneducated about the environment and local customs
- Trans-boundary pollution from Alberta & B.C.
- **o** Ballast water from barges



Concerns about Changes in the Eco-System

- Loss of old growth forest habitat
- Increase in the number of otter, beaver, bear and wolves
- **O** Decrease in edible plants
- Decline in spawning areas and a shift to earlier spawning
- Decrease in availability of medicinal herbs and plants
- **O** Decline in number and size of fish



Concerns about Local Sources of Contaminants

- Concern about sources of pollutants including tailings ponds, mines, old abandoned sites, chemicals used for dust control, vehicle oil leaks, fire retardants and acid rain
- Local sources of contaminants ranging from fuel tanks, asbestos, lead based paint, and sewage
- Mercury from mining camps in rivers



Concern about the Perpetuation of Culture





- Loss of spiritual connection and traditional training relating to the environment
- There has been a loss of traditional medicine people and an increased use of the clinic
- There is a need to return to using traditional medicines and to draw on healthier lifestyle practices
- Our youth need to be taught to be caretakers of the ecosystem
- Changes in traditional diet and lifestyle
- Failure to follow traditional restrictions

