



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:**
- **Liidlii Kue First Nation AGM:**
- **Local Training Authorities:**
- **Village Council Meeting:**
- **AAROM Meeting:**

Overview of Dehcho Region Concerns

- **Global Warming**
- **Abnormalities in Subsistence Foods**
- **Human Health**
- **Impact of Commercial Hunting**
- **Local Sources of Contaminants**
- **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
- 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.
- 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
- Decrease in edible plants
- Decline in spawning areas and a shift to earlier spawning
- Decrease in availability of medicinal herbs and plants
- 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**

THE END

