Research in the Northwest Territories

Community Guide to becoming involved in research

(photo: Louise Chavarie) (photo: Jean Polfus)

Why should communities be involved in research?

Involvement in research being conducted in your community gives community members and/or leadership an opportunity to influence the direction of research.

You can ask that visiting researchers work on issues that are important to your community and make sure that researchers explain the results in ways that people in the community understand.

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* Significant content in this guide has been adapted with permission from the Nunavut Research Institute and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's document, *Negotiating Research Relationships: A Guide for Communities*, and the Aurora Research Institute's, *Doing Research in the Northwest Territories: A Guide for Researchers Applying for a Scientific Research Licence*.

nwtac
NWT Association of Communities

PEMBINA institute
www.pembina.org

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What is research?

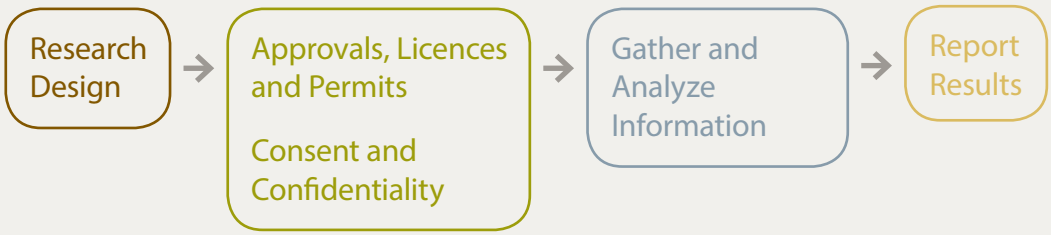
Research is a systematic process to gather, analyze and present information in order to answer a question or investigate an issue of interest or concern. In the NWT, both scientific and traditional knowledge research approaches are used to learn about people, wildlife, and the environment.

Information can be gathered in various ways, including:

a. Observing people's behaviour or activities.
b. Conducting interviews, surveys or focus groups.
c. Using non-public records that contain personal information about people.
d. Observing or counting wildlife.
e. Taking people's blood or other body samples, when not for medical purposes.
f. Capturing, then releasing, "tagging," collaring or killing animals and fish.
g. Collecting plants, ice, soil, water samples, artifacts or fossils.

The research process

During the research process, there are several points where communities can and should be engaged with the researchers. Community engagement should occur through the whole process.



Who does research?

Research conducted in the NWT is often related to resource exploration, health, and environmental impact studies. It is common for industry, government and health agencies to send researchers into northern communities. University researchers also commonly work in the north. Communities also take the lead on some research projects.

Some researchers are easy to identify because they come from outside your community, while other researchers may be members of your community. Often, community members are engaged as research collaborators, contributing technical skills and special knowledge of the land and wildlife. Researchers may also be medical personnel from health agencies or community health centres taking samples for health and environmental studies.

Researchers have a variety of motivations and objectives: for example, industry may do research to support a project, while academic researchers work to advance knowledge.

Research Design

When starting a project, researchers must decide on what they want to learn (research questions), how they are going to carry out the research (methods) and where the research will happen. The research team needs to be identified – it could include community-based staff and interpreters, possible community or regional partners, and funders.

Researchers who will work in or near an Aboriginal community should consult the Tri-Council Policy on 'Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada" and the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP).*

* www.naho.ca/documents/fnc/english/FNC_OCAPCriticalAnalysis.pdf. Researchers should also consult other available resources, such as www.nwtresearch.com/licensing/research-in-the-north.

How can communities be involved in research design?

Communities can ask researchers to look into issues that they are interested in, helping to make research responsible and useful. Communities can be active partners in planning and conducting research projects. Communities can also design and lead research and monitoring programs themselves, engaging outside researchers for support.

Communities may wish to set up a research contact and advisory group to review research applications, consider ways for the community to partner with researchers on projects, and give researchers guidance during their projects.

Questions for communities to think about:

a. How does this research relate to the needs and values of our community?

b. What would be the main benefits of this type of research?

c. If traditional knowledge is shared, how will researchers make sure that information is protected and not misused?

d. Who is available in the community to take part in the project as part of the research team or as participants? What kind of research training is available?

e. What resources – including time and funding – is required for community involvement? What funding is available to support our involvement?

Communities may work with researchers to:

a. Negotiate a research agreement that sets out the conditions for research, including the duties and responsibilities of both researchers and community members.

b. Agree on interpretation and translation needs and payment rates.

c. Find ways to actively involve community members in the research, such as hiring and training community members. For example, outside researchers could hire a local research coordinator and/or involve students at the school or college.

d. Hold a terminology workshop to go over the most important terms and concepts in English and local Aboriginal language(s) that are going to be used, figure out how they relate to what people are already familiar with, and how they can be interpreted across cultures.

Approval, licences and permits

Before gathering data, researchers must obtain research licences and permits from the appropriate authorities, such as the Aurora Research Institute (see nwtresearch.com or accessnwt.ca.) Communities are involved through the review process and have an opportunity to communicate their concerns.

It is a researcher's responsibility to make contact and address any potential concerns, questions and suggestions community members may have. Researchers must share how and why the research is being done, how it will affect the community, who is funding it and who is in charge of it.

What can communities ask for?

a. That applications be communicated in a way that the community members understand (i.e. translated, or in plain, non-technical language).

b. More time for reviewing the application.

c. Review and approval by a Research Ethics Board (e.g. university or government REB) is required for all research involving interviews or surveys of NWT residents. You can ask the researcher or ARI for this information.

Consent and Confidentiality

Researchers must obtain free, informed and ongoing consent from research participants. Consent means that you understand what the research is for, who is going to use the data and that you have formally agreed to be part of the research. **Researchers need to make sure that they have consent before they start their research.** This means that:

a. Participants have been invited to take part in the research before it begins, either in writing or verbally; they have received the information in their Aboriginal language if needed; and participants have formally agreed to participate in the research, usually by signing a consent form.

b. The research purpose and procedures are explained in plain english or the appropriate Aboriginal language(s) to make sure that people understand.

c. Identities of the researchers and funders are made clear.

d. Time and responsibilities expected of participation are explained.

e. Information about payment and reimbursement for participation is established up front.

f. Risks and benefits are explained.

g. Participants know they do not have to participate, or may withdraw at any time – participants should never be pressured to participate in research projects.

h. Community members are given enough time to ask questions, understand the information presented, and consider whether they will participate.

Researchers must maintain confidentiality as appropriate: participants must be given the option of requesting that their identities be kept confidential. This would mean that:

a. Names are not linked to information given, unless permission granted.

b. Personal information must be protected.

c. Participants must be told who may see or work with the information collected.

Gather and Analyze information

Community members may be involved in the collection of research information as interpreters, assistants, sources of information and researchers. People may be able to receive research training – for example in taking scientific samples, or doing surveys and interviews.

The community needs to decide whether it would be a good idea to ask researchers to add traditional knowledge as a component of the study. It takes effort, time and resources to do a traditional knowledge study well. The community also needs to consider the risks and benefits of sharing traditional knowledge. Some Aboriginal communities have their own research and traditional knowledge guidelines; for a variety of community definitions and policies, visit www.accessnwt.ca. In other cases, community leaders and experienced researchers can share protocols.

Researchers should ensure that their activities are coordinated with community schedules.

Fred Jumbo and Ron Kotchea with evidence of woodland caribou – fecal pellets (Sambaa K'e Woodland Caribou Field Survey Project 2009) (photo: Troy Marsh)

Deanna Jumbo testing water in Sambaa K'e (photo: Christine Wenman)

Report Results

Researchers report results by writing reports and academic papers, putting the information into posters, giving presentations and webinars, or making videos. At the minimum, researchers should provide their results to communities in plain language and provide opportunities for community members to ask questions and give their feedback.

How can communities be involved in reporting results?

a. By reviewing findings and reports to make sure that they are accurate.

b. By co-authoring reports, and co-presenting at conferences or meetings.

c. By collaborating with the researcher(s) on presentations to community members so that they are understandable and involve two-way discussion. Communities can also help to spread the word about those presentations to make sure a lot of people attend.

Communities can ask for copies of final reports and papers in plain language summaries, including in Aboriginal language(s).

Discussing operations of the municipal water cycle (photo: Caroline Lafontaine)

Christine Wenman facilitating (photo: Caroline Lafontaine)

Community Engagement

Information about the purpose of the research, methods involved, and findings should be shared throughout the whole project, not just at the time of application for research approval.

Before, during and after research has taken place, communities can invite researchers to:

a. Speak at community and council meetings.

b. Give talks at schools.

c. Provide non-technical posters of the research to display in the community.

d. Appear in the local newspaper or on the radio.

e. Provide short videos describing the research and its findings.

f. Co-present with community collaborators to make sure that everyone understands.

g. Provide copies of all reports and papers produced from the research, including plain and non-technical language versions.

CLIMATE CHANGE CLAUSES IN CONTRACTS

ADAPTATION
SMART MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES

Climate Change Adaptation & Communities

Communities are on the frontlines of the Climate Change Challenge.

Although your municipality may be always applying the climate change lens to all that you do, you also need to craft your tender and proposal documents to ensure that your consultants and contractors also consider climate change as well.

Can we help you with your climate change challenge?

Northwest Territories Association of Communities

Phone: (867) 873-8359 x 7
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www.nwtac.com

SMP-Adapat-02

Some clauses that you might want to consider for your tenders and/or construction contracts are:

- Clauses which ensure that the permafrost disruption is kept to a minimum.
- Ensuring that cuts into the permafrost are closed as quickly as possible to reduce thaw.
- If the timing can reduce the impacts of the work without compromising the quality of the work, make sure those terms are clearly spelt out in the work.
- All surface and ground water should be effectively managed on site to reduce the impact on the permafrost.
- The site drainage plan should be implemented as soon as possible in the project.

Some clauses that you might want to consider for your Requests for Proposals and/or consulting contracts are:

- All design work must be completed with consideration of climate change expected within the design lifespan of the infrastructure. These considerations must be clearly documented.
- All site planning should also consider climate change impacts. See Site Planning Smart Management Practice.
- All site planning should also consider climate change Impacts.
- Have the building and site plan designers sign affidavits that they have duly considered climate change impacts in their design for the designated lifespan. This should be stamped by either the architect or engineer as appropriate.

Be sure and take advantage of the contract review service available through the Northern Communities Insurance Program

THE CLIMATE CHANGE LENS

ADAPTATION
SMART MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES

Climate Change Adaptation & Communities

Communities are on the frontlines of the
Climate Change Challenge.

Although the development of Climate Change Adaptation Plans is critical to the resilience of NWT Communities - *it is important that communities put on the climate change lens for all decisions that they make.*

There are tools that can help communities to apply that lens more consistently and to remind all involved of its importance and they can be as simple as adding a section on all of your reports to Council/ Committees and Boards.

Can we help you with your Climate Change Adaptation Planning?

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Note both Sustainability and Climate Change Adaptation Sections

TOWN OF ADAPTATION

Report #: PW-2011-01

To: Council

From: I.B. Adapting, Director of Public Works

Meeting Date: January 1, 2011

Subject: Community Drainage Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT: Report #PW-2011-01, prepared by I.B. Adapting, Director of Public Works, regarding the Community Drainage Plan be received;

AND FURTHER THAT: the Community Drainage Plan, as prepared by Adaptation Engineering Consultants, be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT: the approved Community Drainage Plan be implemented starting this year were possible when completing regular maintenance and through inclusion in next year's budget submissions.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (ICSP & ENERGY PLAN):

Will ensure completion of ICSP Action Item #PW-35

Will reduce Energy Consumption due to reduction in Sump Pump Use

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

Identified Adaptation Action # 12

Note: will slow permafrost degradation

Next Step to require drainage plans on all new Site Plans

Relates to Home Owners Property Checklist as distributed 2 months ago

ORIGIN / BACKGROUND

Thgj to owehotwhg gqjechqhv. Thrwrow

DISCUSSION

Thgj to owehotwhg gqjechqhv. Thrwrowryo

ATTACHMENTS

Community Drainage Plan as prepared

CONCLUSION

That the Community Drainage Plan, a Consultants, be approved;

and that the approved Community were possible when completing re year's budget submissions.

Prepared By: I.B. Adapting, Director of Pu

Approved By: U.R. Resilient, Senior Administrative Officer

COMMUNITY DRAINAGE PLANS

ADAPTATION
SMART MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES

Climate Change Adaptation & Communities

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Climate Change Challenge.

Since many communities in the NWT have developed very organically and slowly, most do not have Community Drainage Plans. Why would you need one in our dry conditions?

Climate Change is changing all that . In addition to the increased precipitation that is falling in more intensive storms, one of the greatest threats to permafrost is water whether it is on the surface or below ground. One of the most effective ways to manage this threat is through the development and implementation of Community Drainage Plans.

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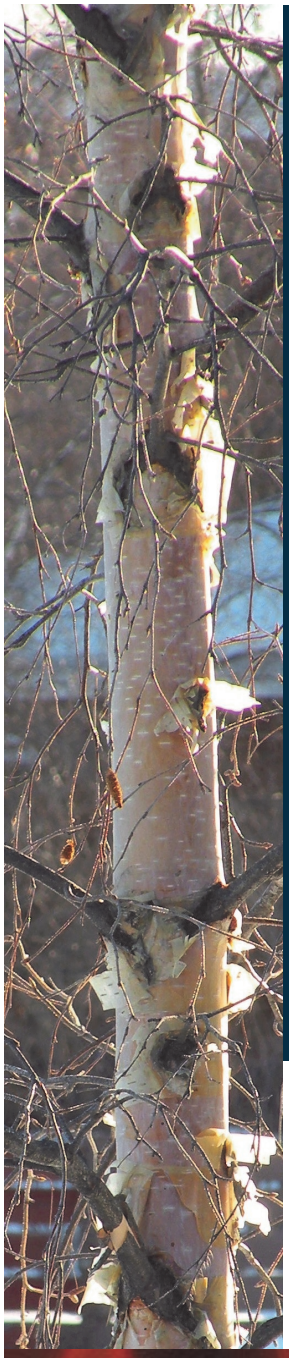

The importance of Community Drainage Plans

- **Manage surface water in the community**
- **Protect permafrost from standing water**
- **Allows for more effective planning**
- **Protect roads from standing water thus reducing damage**
- **More likely to be able to contain spills**
- **Better able to handle increased storm volumes and intensity**
- **Increase Public Health and Safety**
    - **Removes Mosquito breeding grounds**
    - **Removes drowning hazard**
    - **Reduced mold**
    - **Increased lifespan of permafrost**
- **To be combined with drainage improvements on private property. See Smart Management Practice Sheet.**
- **To be combined with Site Drainage Plans on new development—See Smart Management Practices Sheet**

PERMAFROST/HAZARD MAPPING

ADAPTATION
SMART MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES

Climate Change Adaptation & Communities

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Climate Change Challenge.

When you must meet any challenge, including climate change, knowing where your risks are is an important element in helping with planning to meet the challenge.

What the mapping might look like varies from community to community depending on hazards and vulnerabilities. How you might get the mapping done might vary depending on what mapping is already done.

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Some sources for information to complete hazard or permafrost mapping in your community:

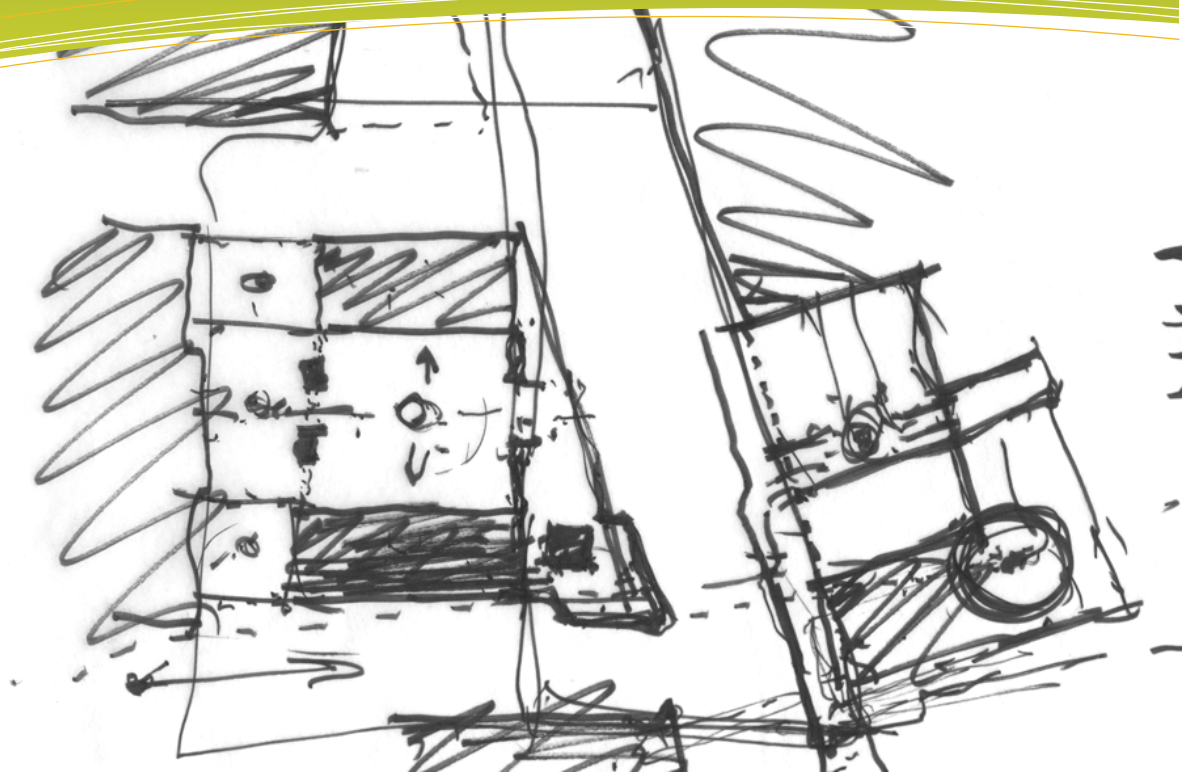
- Community Members especially elders
- Satellite Images
- Mapping from ENR and MACA
- Geotechnical Reports (check with Public Works, GNWT)
- Geotechnical Consultants

Clyde River Flooding Mapping

Tsiigehtchic Permafrost Mapping

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SITE PLANS

ADAPTATION
SMART MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES



Climate Change Adaptation & Communities

Communities are on the frontlines of the Climate Change Challenge.

A large development in your community like an office building, store or school can have a significant impact on your community. Be sure you have a comprehensive site plan review completed to minimize climate change impacts.

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Don't be shy about insisting that a comprehensive site plan review be completed. It becomes even more critical with climate change. Some things to consider are:

- Be sure that your Public Works Director and Fire Chief review the plans and provide comment.
- Do not hesitate to have an experienced northern engineer review the plan on your behalf. Pick an engineer that you are comfortable with and who knows your community and its potential climate change impacts.
- The cost can be recovered by adding those fees to your building permit fee.
- Have the building and site plan designers sign affidavits that they have duly considered climate change impacts in their design for the designated lifespan. This should be stamped by either the architect or engineer as appropriate.

Some things you might want to ensure you or your consultant have an opportunity to review:

- Drainage Plan both on or off the site. Review how it integrates with your Community Drainage Plan.
- Should the developer upgrade the ditches and sidewalks adjacent to their property? (Be sure that this is included in a potential requirement in your zoning or general plan)
- Grading and information on surfaces
- Snow storage
- If the building is large you may want to have wind tunnel testing completed
- All site planning should also consider climate change Impacts.

Be sure that your by-laws and forms reflect the new fees that might be required as part of your revised site plan process