

NWT Environmental Research Bulletin (NERB)



NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (NWT CIMP)

A source of environmental monitoring and research in the NWT. The program coordinates, conducts and funds the collection, analysis and reporting of information related to environmental conditions in the NWT.

NWT Environmental Research Bulletin (NERB)

A series of brief plain language summaries of various environmental research findings in the Northwest Territories. If you're conducting environmental research in the NWT, consider sharing your information with northern residents in a bulletin. These research summaries are also of use to northern resource decision-makers.

Developing a YKDFN Cumulative Effects Framework

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) is being confronted with environmental impacts throughout our traditional territory. This project's purpose was to develop a Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) based on YKDFN values and to improve the YKDFN's ability to monitor and manage cumulative impacts throughout our asserted territory. The CEF is being developed around the concept of *Ḏone Nàowo*—the Elders/Ancestors/Yellowknives Dene “Way of Life” and the need to protect it. The CEF is designed to be a living document, being revised as needed to ensure it remains aligned with the YKDFN's expression of *Ḏone Nàowo*.

Why is this research important?

To better monitor, understand, and manage cumulative impacts on the YKDFN's asserted territory and our way of life, a culturally relevant and community-centric approach was needed.

What did we do?

The CEF was developed by reviewing existing CEFs and holding community workshops to identify themes, valued components, and indicators. Next, community members were surveyed to gather information on valued components and their indicators. Finally, a pilot monitoring project was conducted to collect data on the indicators of valued components.

What did we find?

Ḏone Nàowo was identified as the overarching value that the CEF needed to focus on, with seven valued components selected for monitoring:

1. Being out on the land;
2. Community;
3. Respect for the land;
4. Respect for Elders;
5. Support for youth;
6. Spiritual values; and
7. Language.

When surveyed, the community indicated that barren-ground caribou is a species of concern. As such, the focus of the pilot project was monitoring caribou and caribou harvesting along the Tibbitt to Contwoyto Winter Road. A key result from the monitoring was that Traditional Caribou Harvesting Protocols are not always being honoured along the winter road.

What does this mean?

The success of implementing this framework requires involvement of the community at-large. It is the community's knowledge and observations that will inform indicators. Having our members monitor indicators of the YKDFN's values will generate culturally relevant observations and reporting. These reported observations will increase the YKDFN's ability to make informed decisions and participate meaningfully in management processes to protect the YKDFN's *Ḏone Nàowo*.



Barren-ground caribou, North of Lockhart Lake
(Credit: K. Martin)

What's next?

The CEF is a living document, designed to be informed by the community. It will be continuously re-assessed as data is collected and cumulative impact management will be adapted to protect the expression of the YKDFN's *Ḏone Nàowo* values.

Contacts

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Recommended Reading

Hutchison, B. L. (2017). *Cultural Values in Cumulative Effects Management: A Case Study with the Metlakatla First Nation*.

Weber, M., Krogman, N., & Antoniuk, T. (2012). *Cumulative Effects Assessment: Linking Social, Ecological, and Governance Dimensions*. *Ecology and Society*. 17(2).



Ptarmigan, North of Gordon Lake (Credit: K. Martin)