

NWT Science Agenda Supports Scientific and Traditional Knowledge

Press Release - For Immediate Release

YELLOWKNIFE (November 5th, 2009) - The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is recognizing the importance of science in supporting effective public policy decisions through the first Northwest Territories' (NWT) Science Agenda.

The NWT Science Agenda establishes a strategic framework for science in the NWT. It sets a path for this Government and the people of the Northwest Territories to play a leadership role in the development and management of science knowledge, and the use of traditional knowledge in all scientific and other research conducted here.

The GNWT has identified five core priority areas for research: cultural sustainability, environmental sustainability and stewardship, health and wellness, natural resource management, and sustainable communities. These priorities are the broad areas where the GNWT believes research should be focused in order to improve the quality of life of NWT residents and maintain the integrity of NWT cultures, ecosystems, environment and communities.

"The NWT has always been, and continues to be, an important area for scientific research by governments, regulatory bodies, industry and academic institutions," said Environment and Natural Resources Minister Michael Miltenberger. "We need to play a key role in the direction and management of science because it is a critical component of ensuring environmental sustainability, health and wellness, cultural retention and economic diversification and development."

While many scientists and researchers study the North, many areas of importance to NWT residents are often overlooked or under-represented in the research. As a way to better represent Northern interests, new research into cultural sustainability is being conducted in partnership with community groups.

"Research in this field helps us gain a better understanding of various pressures felt by Aboriginal governments, organizations and peoples," said Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). "This work prepares our students with an understanding of how important science is to the NWT, and I hope it attracts students into careers in the sciences."

To support cultural sustainability in the classroom, ECE developed Experiential Science textbooks highlighting the vast breadth of traditional knowledge held within the NWT. In addition to teaching the scientific method, the textbooks include traditional stories, showing how there are many ways to learn about the land and cultures of the North.

A copy of the GNWT's Science Agenda, *Building a Path for Northern Science*, is found on-line at www.enr.gov.nt.ca.

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