

{{ECHO}} Update

Environment, Community, Health Observatory Network
Strengthening intersectoral capacity to understand
and respond to health impacts of resource development



ECHO Network team members gather at UNBC campus for the ECHO Launch meeting in Prince George, BC, May 2017

Welcome to our quarterly ECHO update: September edition! Since our last update, our ECHO Network team has held a memorable launch meeting in Prince George in May 2017, and initiated a range of launch-related activities. This update gives you a glimpse of efforts across our core ECHO team, our regional cases, and initial steps we are taking to strengthen intersectoral capacity to understand and respond to health impacts of resource development. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and welcome suggestions for future updates!

Our **launch meeting** provides an important point of reference for our 5-year learning journey. Over 40 members of our team participated in launch activities in Prince George and surrounding areas from May 8-11. The launch meeting report is currently available at <https://ecohealthkta.net/health-resource-development/echo>. Other network updates and materials will soon be available at our shared ECHO website, to be launched later this year; you can expect details in our quarterly update!

Informed by our launch meeting, core team initiatives in the launch phase of the ECHO Network, include:

- Reinforcing our **commitment to Indigenous perspectives** –exemplified by our launch meeting activities and selection of a Dakelh name for our project by Lheidli T'enneh elder Edler Edie Frederick at our launch meeting. "**Way-dell-tu-ih**", is the translation of 'echo' in the Dakelh language of the Carrier people of north central BC. We hope to identify Indigenous names for our ECHO Network in each territory we work in;

(continued)

- **Updating our work plan** to reflect themes emerging during the ECHO launch meeting. This includes a core team commitment to focus on the experiential, creative, and reflective research process involved with this integrative research project; preliminary strategies to harness and share secondary information and databases within and across each regional case; and elevating priorities and strategies for capacity strengthening & mentoring mechanisms across the team, especially with early-career colleagues;
- Establishing the initial phases of our **governance plan, collaboration structures and processes**. Key aspects of this include initiating formal funding transfer agreements (between UNBC, SFU, U. Alberta, and U. de Moncton, and regional partner organisations), initiating inter-institutional ethics application processes spanning all relevant university and research partners, and the hiring of ECHO research staff;
- **Confirming and expanding the ECHO Network research team** of research assistants and postdoctoral fellows across all regions. Our team current stands at 16 mostly part-time research team members, across four universities who are initiating ECHO-related research tasks, including targeted summer practicum students and positions. To optimize our mentorship and capacity-strengthening goals we are developing entrance and exit processes for all team members and have been trialing these with incoming Research team members;
- Convening the ECHO **Operations Committee** (all regional coordinators), who are now meeting monthly to progress our work plan, and the 3rd meeting of the **Steering Committee** on August 21st to advance governance related tasks, including ECHO policies and procedures that allow us to work together from a common ground across the range of institutional contexts in our team: environment, community and health oriented research partners from government and non-government sectors, as well as a range of academics;
- **Planning for primary research tasks:** entrance interviews and surveys to learn more about individual, organizational and/or regional case motivations and capacities within the ECHO Network, creating the foundation of our learning community; establishing a baseline of information about the Network;
- **Facilitating team collaboration** across space and time, through the adoption of the Canadian-based digital platform known as Igloo, which is we are currently customizing to our team's needs. We will provide updates about Igloo and our new ECHO website in our next quarterly update.
- **Initiating a series of exchanges across regional cases** – exemplified by the regional launch in New Brunswick in June 2017, the chance for northern BC team members to travel to the Battle River in early October, and an opportunity for Margot to meet with ECHO Network partners in Australia and New Zealand later in 2017.

ECHO preview: Upcoming meetings and events, involving or hosted by ECHO team members

We welcome team suggestions for future upcoming events and meetings. Please email ECHO Research Manager, Diana Kutzner at Diana.Kutzner@unbc.ca

September 2017	BRWA is hosting a “Finding Common Ground” bike tour – Camrose, AB
Sept 29-Oct 1, 2017	Members of northern BC team will attend the Rural Alberta Innovation and Learning Commons 2017, in Olds AB. https://www.rail-commons.ca/ and will be hosted by the BRWA and University of Alberta Augustana campus for site visits in and around Camrose, AB
Oct 24, 2017	Margot Parkes will attend a Roundtable event hosted by ECHO team members Pierre Horwitz (Edith Cowan University's Centre for Ecosystem Management) & Tony Capon (Sydney School of Public Health) entitled “Enhancing research collaborations at the nexus of ecology, human health & well-being”
Late Oct-mid Dec	Margot Parkes will be visiting ECHO collaborators and colleagues in NZ / Australia
Jul 30– Aug 3, 2018	ECHO Network Annual Meeting– Camrose, AB

New Brunswick ECHO Regional Launch



From left to right:
Carole Tranchant, Mélanie LeBlanc, Annette Bourque, Daphnée Albert, Donald Cole, Wanzor Beaubrun, Todd Arsenault, Christine Landry, Alain Patoine, Céline Surette, Serge LaRochelle, Raissa Marks, Bonnie Hamilton Bogart, Margot Parkes, Olivia Sanford, Cathy Vaillancourt

The ECHO Network New Brunswick regional hub launch was held on June 12th at the beautiful Université de Moncton campus – une rencontre bilingue qui a permis aux participants de s’exprimer dans la langue de leur choix. This full-day meeting was a great way to start collaborating and building relationships with the 17 participants that represented the national ECHO Network, members of the NB Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative, NB academia, allies within the provincial government and local watershed experts. After an overview of the national ECHO Network and the NB case, the participants heard great presentations on the different NB tools (current or in development) such as geospatial, health impact assessment, art-based and indicators on children’s environmental health. Merci à tous ceux qui sont venus de près et de loin!

Greetings from the Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA)!

The Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) has several projects on the go that connect with the ECHO Network. We are working with the City of Camrose to develop educational materials related to the Camrose Source Water Protection Plan, and have initiated a new riparian restoration program in the eastern reaches of our watershed. Plans are underway for a “Finding Common Ground” bike tour of the watershed in September, a key focus of which will be the intersection of climate change, our energy choices, and our collective health and wellbeing. We will be visiting several energy hubs in the region, including the Hardisty tank farm, Halkirk wind facility, and Battle River coal-fired generating station. We are also excited to work with Dar Amsalu, the ECHO Network Research Assistant based out of the University of Alberta, and are in conversation with Alberta Health Services about the possibility of examining the potential links between energy development, groundwater quality, and community health in the watershed. Many exciting things are happening, and we look forward to collaborating with the ECHO Network to enhance our efforts further!

BATTLE RIVER WATERSHED PRESENTS:

Finding Common Ground

BIKE TOUR & DOCUMENTARY

In a region rich with energy options and opportunities

HOW DO WE POWER OUR WAY FORWARD?

September 5th-7th, 2017

Join us as we explore the watershed’s energy options. Peddle with us, or meet us there. All voices are needed, and welcome.

Learn More: www.battleriverwatershed.ca/finding-common-ground
Facebook Event: Finding Common Ground, #BattleRiverResilience

With support from Community Environment Action Grant

ANNOUNCEMENT: The University of Alberta and the Battle River Watershed Alliance will host the 2018 ECHO Network Annual meeting, July 30th – August 3rd 2018.

Updates from First Nation Health Authority Regional Case

We continue to have monthly webinars for the BC Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network. Cait Nelson, Wildlife Health Biologist from Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations, provided a presentation on "Understanding Chronic Wasting Disease" (CWD) during our July webinar and there is now a CWD Project on LEO to help track this disease throughout BC. Our outreach for the LEO Network continues and we are currently working with other LEO hubs to develop LEO lesson plans to be utilized in classrooms to engage youth in the LEO Network.

The wildfire situation in BC this summer has kept FNHA very busy and highlights the significance of extreme weather due to climate change. Heavy smoke has blanketed the southern half of BC for almost two weeks now and hopes are for rain and a change in weather patterns in the forecast soon!

Our core team has some changes occurring with one of our Knowledge Users, Lindsey Beck, going on maternity leave. We are happy to announce that Nicole Cross, FNHA Regional Director of the Northern region, will be joining the ECHO Steering Committee. We are in the process of organizing our initial regional hub meeting so the team can come together late August / early September.

Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network

the eyes, ears and voice of environmental change

Register for free and explore at:
www.leonetwork.org

For more information, contact
Thomas.Okey@gmail.com
or
Dionne.Sanderson@fnha.ca



The LEO Network BC hub has monthly webinars with guest presenters.

Updates from Northern BC Regional Case



Satellite image of wildfire smoke in the Interior region of British Columbia, taken July 18, 2017.
Source: NASA Worldview

Northern Health (NH) continues to work at the project level, and is participating in the Environmental Assessment reviews of LNG, mining and pipeline projects. Recently, NH facilitated an inter-agency meeting for the north and released a Communicable Disease Guide for Industrial Camps. We expect to release additional documents soon that focus on the social and health impacts of resource development. NH, the Cumulative Impacts Research Consortium (CIRC) and other partners are participating in a Knowledge and Research Exchange group for northern BC.

NH now has dedicated staff for an outdoor air quality program, and is working on a guidance document that will provide strategic direction and a collation of relevant air quality information. The program coordinator is also responding to complaints and inquiries and engaging with airshed

management groups, regulatory agencies as well as experts across the province. Outdoor air quality risks in the north vary and recently NH has been busy responding to poor air quality conditions as a result of wildfires in the Interior region. Over the last few months, CIRC has had the chance to convene community workshops in the Nechako and Peace River Regions. In order to facilitate an interactive and arts-based workshop with grade 8 students, we developed an "integrated values mapping" tool to elicit and spatially locate various environment, community and health values that are important to youth living in the Nechako Region. CIRC facilitated "data-driven storytelling" workshops in five different communities in the Peace River Region in June 2017. As part of this process, CIRC staff compiled a suite of publicly available information into a "regional profile" displaying socioeconomic, health and environmental indicators for the Peace River Region. In combination with the regional profile, the data-driven storytelling process was designed to integrate narrative and lived experience with quantitative data to better tell a story of regional change.

Research team members gather in Prince George

During the week of July 10th Margot Parkes and team welcomed ECHO Research Assistants (RAs) Dareskedar Amsalu and Jordan Brubacher to UNBC. ECHO RAs will work collaboratively on network-wide tasks and have a particular focus in each of the regional cases. Dareskedar is based at the University of Alberta and focusing on the Battle River Watershed Alliance case. Jordan is based at Simon Fraser University and focused on the First Nations Health Authority case. Jordan and Dareskedar spent a large portion of their visit engaging with the UNBC GIS-lab about the open-source web-based portal tool being developed by the UNBC team, with particular input from Joseph Gothreau and Scott Emmons.



Clockwise from bottom left:
Katie Cornish, Marlee Vinegar, Shayna Dolan, Jennifer Baddelay,
Diana Kutzner, Joseph Gothreau, Margot Parkes, Jordan
Brubacher, Bunu Sharma, Dareskedar Amsalu

RAs engaged with various team members in Prince George, including Shayna Dolan, RA for the Northern BC case, as well as team members further away, including the ECHO Network Regional Coordinators, and Wanzor Beaubrun, the RA associated with the New Brunswick case. The July gathering also benefitted from the contributions of Marlee Vinegar—the ECHO Networks first Practicum student who was an integral part of the team from May to August 2017. We wish Marlee all the best as she returns to UBC to complete her MPH degree.

Introducing our ECHO Network Regional Coordinators

A summer snippet from each of the regional coordinators...



Melissa Aalhus- Northern Health (BC)

Earlier this summer, I spent some time sailing with my sister in the Lower Mainland. Since then I've been fishing and camping around northern BC. I also have plans to do some exciting hikes in the Tumbler Ridge area.

Dionne Sanderson— First Nations Health Authority (BC)

I had a great first time being an MC at my cousin's wedding down in Penticton, BC and I am looking forward to canning cherries and making apricot jam this weekend in Summerland, BC! So really, I have been having some fun in the Okanagan with many trips out there this summer!



Sarah Skinner— Battle River Watershed Alliance (AB)

This spring and summer have provided many opportunities for me to get out and explore some of the beautiful watersheds of Western Canada, including the Battle, Bow, Red Deer, Athabasca, North Saskatchewan, and South Saskatchewan rivers. My travels have also taken me to a number of significant sites in Treaty 6 territory, which have provided me with new insights into the rich history, heritage, and ongoing stories of the Métis and First Nations

Christine Landry— New Brunswick Environmental Network (NB)

Christine has been a part of the ECHO network from its inception. Recently, Christine took a position with the federal government and will be leaving her position with NBEN and the ECHO Network. We wish Christine the best of luck in her new endeavors! NBEN is hiring a new ECHO regional coordinator—stay tuned for updates in the very near future.

