

MARCH  
2020



Environment  
Community  
Health  
Observatory  
Network

Réseau  
observatoire sur  
l'environnement  
les communautés  
et la santé

# {{ECHO}} Update



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness



## Welcome to our ECHO Network Quarterly Update!

First, this ECHO Update comes with hopes that you are finding ways to be safe and supported at this challenging time. Some of our updates are directly related to adjustments we are having to make due to the fast changing situation around the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have decided to postpone the **Land Health and Healing Gathering**, which was to be co-hosted by the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and UNBC in Prince George in June. We are actively working to reschedule for a time that suits our key partners, either later in 2020 or, potentially, in 2021.
- We are currently actively re-considering timing and options for our **ECHO Network Annual Meeting** which was originally going to follow the Land Health and Healing Gathering in Prince George. We may move to a virtual meeting (June 10-12) or postpone the meeting. Further details will be forthcoming soon.
- Our 'sense of the possible' for larger-scale virtual ECHO meetings was expanded on January 28th, 2020, when we hosted our first **Collaborative Working Day**. This event was developed in response to a desire by ECHO Members to have a cross-ECHO touch point mid-way between Annual Meetings. It provided an opportunity for team members to learn about the regional case work plans and to progress important cross-ECHO conversations. We are in the process of making the recordings available via ECHO Source. Please email [Diana](mailto:Diana) in case of questions.
- Note that the **2019 ECHO Network Annual Meeting Summary Report** was made available on the ECHO Network website early this year, at <https://www.echonetwork-reseaecho.ca/resources>.
- Early this year we also submitted our **Progress Report to CIHR** which outlines how the ECHO Network has progressed towards achieving its objectives, outcomes and impacts. You can access the report [via ECHO Source here](#) or email Diana for details.
- We have had two additional online **cross-ECHO Workshops**:
  - (1) "Health in the Watershed: A Framework for Indicators in the river and Sounding Creek Watersheds in Alberta" (BRWA/UofA, October 2019), and

- (2) “*Updates on KT, Integrative Indicators and a BC pilot of the CalEnviroScreen Methodology*” (NH/UNBC, December, 2019). Watch the space for upcoming workshops this year. Recordings can be found in [ECHO Source](#) or you can contact Dinaa if you would like direct access.
- On April 28, 2020, six ECHO Network Members—Sandra Allison, Margot Parkes, Raina Fumerton, Chris Buse, Maya Gislason, and Sarah Skinner—were going to run a workshop called “Fostering an eco-social future for Public Health: EDGE, ECHO and next generation intersectoral action for health” at **Public Health 2020**, a conference convened by the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) in Winnipeg, MB. Public Health 2020 has been postponed, and this session will be rescheduled once the conference is rescheduled.
- We are pleased to welcome several new **ECHO Network team** members, including Meg Labron who joins us as the ECHO Network Project Assistant; Holly Clermont, an ECHO Post-doctoral Fellow who is working closely with Team Learning & Impact; Onitriinaia Rakotorahalaha, a Research Assistant with NBEN/UdeM; and Katrina Koehn who joins us as the NH/UNBC Regional Case Coordinator while Melissa Aalhus has transitioned into the role of ECHO Steering Committee member. See page 5 for team member profiles.
- Registration for the Spring 2020 ECHO-supported **COPEH-Canada Course in “Ecosystem Approaches to Health”** is now open! The course addresses themes including social-ecological systems, human-environment relationships and ecosystem approaches to health. It is a part online, and part face-to-face graduate level course that is being offered at four “sites”: Montréal (UQAM), Guelph (University of Guelph), Prince George (University of Northern British Columbia) and an online “site”. For more information contact Margot Parkes: [margot.parkes@unbc.ca](mailto:margot.parkes@unbc.ca) or see <https://bit.ly/2UvNYRn>.
- Two teams within ECHO submitted successful applications to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council **Knowledge Synthesis Grant** competition. Maya Gislason and Dawn Hoogeveen are co-leading a research project called “*Gender Based Analysis Plus: A knowledge synthesis to assist with the implementation and development of inclusive, diversity focused, gender-sensitive Impact Assessment processes and indicator frameworks in Canada*”. Chris Buse and K. Hanna are co-leading a project titled “*Best practices in integrated assessment approaches for regional and strategic environmental assessments: A realist review*”. Congratulations! We are already cross-ECHO benefits emerging from these synthesis grants.
- A **Geospatial ECHO (GECHO) Team** is emerging with the purpose of bringing together members across the Network who are using geospatial tools (maps, indicators, portals, GIS and more!) to connect environment, community and health data, information and knowledge. For more information or if you’d like to tune into some of their meetings, please email Jordan Brubacher at [Jordan\\_brubacher@sfu.ca](mailto:Jordan_brubacher@sfu.ca).
- The planning of the Land Health and Healing Gathering has closely involved ECHO partners from **the Oceania region** as well as the pursuit of a research grant to fuel work to be continued upon the end of the ECHO Network grant. We will keep you posted on developments on this front as they develop.
- The **Research Design Working Group** is looking ahead to a meeting in April where we will discuss research developments including adaptation of the [CalEnviroScreen](#) tool to ECHO regional cases (an ECHO-Screen?); the combination of Geospatial tools and indicator development to inform action across ECHO; priorities for team manuscripts and writing projects; and priorities for cross ECHO workshops in 2020, etc.
- Several ECHO Members participated in **UNBC Research Week** (March 2-6) presentations or poster presentations, including Margot Parkes, Ella Parker, Louisa Hadley, Christiana Onabola, Holly Clermont, and Diana Kutzner—you can find abstracts of each presentation and poster in this [online program](#). We’d be amiss not to mention Louisa Hadley won the 3-minute thesis presentation competition. Congrats Louisa!
- **Team Equity** was fueled by conversations at the ECHO Collaborative Working Day and took note that the virtual environment provided some benefits to hosting conversations on EDI challenges and opportunities. The Team is looking forward to fueling ongoing equity conversations across the network over the coming months.
- Congratulations to **Christiana Onabola** (ECHO-UNBC scholarship recipient) who was nominated by UNBC for a Pierre Trudeau Doctoral Fellowship, and was also invited to Montréal for an interview in February. An excellent achievement!
- **Team Learning & Impact** met at the UNBC campus on March 2nd during a week-long visit by core team member Holly Clermont. Holly has taken a deep dive into ECHO’s evaluation to date since she joined the team last fall and is in the midst of helping the team synthesise and further develop future evaluation activities.

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

**March 31st Ecohealth international and the creation of an Americas Chapter:** Ongoing efforts to reconnect ecosystems, equity and health. Link to webalogue page. <https://ecohealthkta.net/webalogues/> (generally we can include cross-links to the webalogue page from the Updates, since the sessions are often relevant to this group)

**June 2020** The next ECHO Network Annual Meeting will be hosted by Northern Health and the University of Northern British Columbia. Stay tuned for updates!

**June 2020 “Ecohealth2020: Working together for a healthy, just and sustainable planet”** is scheduled for late June in Durban, South Africa. Keep in touch with new development at <https://ecohealth2020.co.za>, including forthcoming updates relating to COVID-19.

## NBEN/U de M Regional Case

As always, the fall is a busy time for the New Brunswick Environmental Network with many meetings and conferences happening.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Watershed Caucus came together for “Citizen Science, Cyanobacteria, and Strategy” a day on engaging citizens and communities in and on their watersheds and developing a strategy to effectively move watershed work ahead in the province now and in the future.

On January 10<sup>th</sup> 2020, members of Team Indicators and Cumulative Impacts which includes representatives from the New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government, the New Brunswick Department of Health, the New Brunswick Health Council, as well as Céline Surette and Saadia Hara, met for a half day meeting to discuss the adaptation of the CalEnviroScreen to the New Brunswick context. It was a productive meeting that helped identify potential data sources for indicators in New Brunswick and decide on a geographical unit.



Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative Annual Conference,  
January 23, 2020

On January 23, 2020, we held the annual conference of the Children’s Environmental Health Collaborative at New Maryland Centre in New Brunswick, titled “Healthy Environments, Healthy Minds.” The conference highlighted links between mental health and the environment and featured many great presentations and workshops, including one delivered by Céline Surette and Saadia Hara that focused on identifying potential indicators for the effects of the environment on children’s mental health. The conference was a great success with many participants from different sectors attending and sharing.

In team news, Saadia has now finished her Bachelors and has started her Masters. We are also joined by Onitriinaia Rakoto-rahalahy who will be doing her Masters under the guidance of Céline. She has a particular interest in coastal restoration work. Finally, Raissa will be leaving the New Brunswick Environmental Network to pursue new adventures in Montréal with her family in June of 2020. We wish her the best!

## FNHA/SFU Regional Case

There have been changes to our Regional Case membership since the last newsletter. We are very thankful for Linda Pillsworth’s involvement and contribution to our team during the first half of the ECHO Network program. While Linda has moved into a two-year interchange outside of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), we welcome Dr. Daniele Behn Smith to our Regional case. Daniele has been the BC province’s Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor since 2015 and we are extremely excited to have her join our Regional Case!

The changes to our team have provided us with an opportunity to re-examine how we want to focus our efforts over the remainder of the ECHO Network’s research program. Specifically, we are working to align our case study with the efforts of The First Nations Population Health and Wellness Agenda (PHWA). The PHWA is a partnership initiative between the offices of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at FNHA and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) at the Ministry of Health. It presents an eagle-eye view of First Nations health and wellness in BC that is grounded in First Nations teachings and guided by reconciliation and relationship building. It uses a strengths-based approach to focus on wellness and resilience, and two-eyed seeing to bring together First Nations and Western ways of knowing. The overarching goal of this work is to support First Nations to achieve the vision of healthy, vibrant, self-determining children, families, and communities. Our regional case activities will include making space to explore initiatives such as the We Walk Together project, and strengthening intersectoral actions for First Nations health and wellbeing.

As for upcoming events, the FNHA’s Environmental Public Health Services (EPHS) Interior team has the honour of joining and supporting the Gathering Our Voices 2020 Indigenous Youth Event from March 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. The gathering will be occurring on Secwépemc traditional territory (Kamloops, BC) and the EPHS team will be highlighting important program areas as well as the Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network.

## BRWA/U of A Regional Case

The “Health in the Watershed” project continues to be an important focus area for the BRWA and UofA Regional Case. In particular, we’ve made good progress in developing a more integrative indicator framework to look at environment, community, and public health in the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds of Alberta. We hosted an online Learning and Impact Workshop with the ECHO Network in October 2019 to share our progress to-date and gain feedback to further strengthen and inform our work. This workshop, as well as a number of related meetings hosted by the ECHO Network in recent months, have provided an active forum to discuss various approaches to selecting, assessing, and reporting on environment, community, and public health indicators. These discussions and cross-ECHO connections continue to shape our work here in Alberta.

Energy systems and climate adaptation have also been central priorities for the BRWA over the past several months. In October 2019, we hosted our second “Finding Common Ground” Tour in the Battle River watershed. The purpose of this bus tour was to explore the diversity of energy systems and climate adaptation projects currently taking place across the watershed, and provide a mechanism for participants to share their knowledge and experiences with other people in their networks. The BRWA has also begun working with the City of Camrose’s Green Action Committee to put together a series of public engagement events on the topics of climate adaptation and action. The intent of these events is to build a shared knowledge base to support the development of a climate action plan for the City.



“Finding Common Ground” Tour participants visit the coal and natural gas-fired Battle River Generating Station

## NH / UNBC Regional Case

This past winter/fall season has brought many changes for our regional case. With Barb Oke from Northern Health’s (NH) Office of Health and Resource Development (OHRD) on a temporary leave, Melissa Aalhus has stepped in to the role of Interim OHRD Regional Manager and Regional Case Co-Lead. To fill Melissa’s position, Katrina Koehn has joined the team as an OHRD Technical Advisor and Regional Case Coordinator. Dr. Sandra Allison has left her position with Northern Health, with Dr. Raina Fumerton filling as Interim Chief Medical Health Officer and ECHO Co-Chair. Shayna Dolan has also moved on from her position as the Regional Case Research Assistant. Many thanks to those internal and external to the ECHO network who have been helping us make these transitions as smooth as possible!

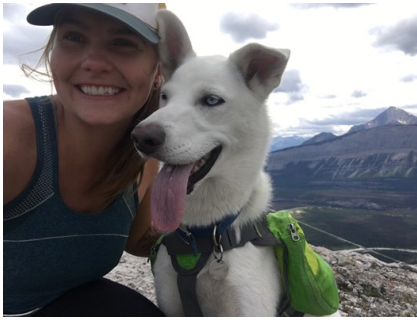
Dr. Chris Buse, Regional Case Co-Lead, has been expanding and refining work on the BC Enviro Screen Pilot Project. This has included collaborating with other regional cases to build capacity across the network for conducting pilot Enviro Screens. Chris also hosted a meeting with an interdisciplinary team from NH to discuss how to refine the BC Enviro Screen indicators to ensure this tool can be optimized for decision-making within the region. Our regional case hosted our 2<sup>nd</sup> Learning and Impact Workshop in December 2019 to share some of the learnings about integrative indicators we have developed through the BC Enviro Screen.

The OHRD has been working towards finalizing knowledge translation materials that we have developed to communicate the health impacts of resource development and related assessment methods. We presented on these materials alongside Chris at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Learning and Impact Workshop mentioned above, and at the Knowledge and Research Exchange on Health and Resource Development (KaRE) Network quarterly meeting in November 2019. We aim to have these materials posted up on ECHO source soon.

The OHRD has been working support various Environmental Assessments and associated legal Conditions for multiple natural gas, coal, landfill, and hydro projects across the NH region. We have also been reviewing provincial policy documents and had the opportunity to attend an Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) workshop hosted by the Minister’s Advisor Council on Indigenous Women. We are working alongside folks from the FNHA/SFU regional case to learn more about how GBA+ and IGBA+ can be meaningfully incorporated into the Environmental Assessment Process. NH has been involved in reviewing the recently updated Prince George Air Quality Emissions and Modelling report expected to be released later this spring. We have also been collaborating with Dr. Lisa Ronald, who is a CIHR Post-Doctoral Fellow supporting NH projects focused on air-quality related health impact assessment and surveillance.

# ECHO Network Team Member Profiles

## Meg Labron, ECHO Network Project Assistant



Meg is a Master of Social Work candidate at the University of Northern British Columbia, on unceded Lheidli T'enneh territory. Her thesis research explores an emerging model of environmental social work within the context of mental health practice and Indigenous-led land-based healing in the Northwest Territories. She is passionate about social and environmental justice, integrative and place-based approaches to addressing complex problems, growing her own food, and hiking with her dog Ophelia. She has prior work experience in frontline mental health and housing, community development, policy and research, as well as equine and horticultural therapy. Her work with ECHO has involved cross-Network logistical support and she is now primarily focused on planning the Land, Health & Healing Gathering this June, which UNBC will be co-hosting with Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. ECHO is the interdisciplinary home Meg always dreamed of, and she is very happy be learning and working alongside you all!

## Onitriina Rakotorahalahy, NBEN/UdeM Research Assistant

Je suis Onitriina Rakotorahalahy ou Oni, originaire de Madagascar. Je suis Agronome de formation. Je fais maintenant partie du réseau ECHO de Nouveau Brunswick. Je suis actuellement des cours en Maîtrise en études de l'environnement à l'Université de Moncton et sous la supervision de Céline Surette, PhD. Ma thèse se consacre surtout sur le rôle des femmes dans l'adaptation au changement climatique et/ou dans la transition écologique. En me basant sur les enjeux de l'équité, du genre, de la sécurité alimentaire et de la santé, on vise à pousser la capacité des femmes à agir dans les prises de décision. Les zones d'étude se baseront à Cocagne (Nouveau Brunswick) et à Itampolo (Madagascar). Les méthodes basées sur les arts seront privilégiées comme le photovoice.



## Katrina Koehn, NH/UNBC Regional Case Coordinator



Katrina holds an Honours BSc in Health Sciences from Simon Fraser University. She works as a Technical Advisor for the Office of Health and Resource Development (OHRD) at Northern Health, and is based out of Fort St. John. Her background is in infectious disease epidemiology, and she has greatly enjoyed learning about the mutual challenges to data collection and analysis that exist within the E-C-H and resource development sphere. Katrina is assisting with knowledge translation for our regional case, and contributes to ECHO-informed reviews of policy documents, provincial Environmental Assessments, and grant proposals.

## Publications of Interest

- Sloan Morgan, V. (2020). "Why would they care?": Youth, resource extraction and climate change in northern British Columbia, Canada. *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe Canadien*, in press, DOI: [10.1111/cag.12605](https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12605)
- Harrison, S., Kivuti-Bitok, L., Macmillan, A., & Priest, P. (2019). EcoHealth and One Health: A theory-focused review in response to calls for convergence. *Environment International*, 132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2019.105058>
- Martin, D.; Ratima, M.; Delormier, T. and Castleden, H. (2019) *Wbenna Ora: Healthy Lands, Healthy Peoples*. [Special Issue]. Vol 26(3).
- Howard C, Buse C, Rose C, MacNeill A, Parkes M. (2019). Lancet Countdown 2019 Report: Briefing for Canadian Policymakers. London UK: University College of London and the Lancet. [https://storage.googleapis.com/lancet-countdown/2019/11/Lancet-Countdown\\_Policy-brief-for-Canada\\_FINAL.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/lancet-countdown/2019/11/Lancet-Countdown_Policy-brief-for-Canada_FINAL.pdf)
- Parkes, MW., Poland, B., Allison, S., Cole, D., Culbert, I., Gislason, MK., Hancock, T., Howard, C., Papadopoulos, A., Waheed, F. (2019) Preparing for the future of public health: The ecological determinants of health and the call for an eco-social approach to public health education. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-019-00263-8>.
- Poland, B., Parkes, M.W., Hancock, T., McKibbin, G., & Chircop, A. (2019). A Changing Role for Public Health in the Anthropocene: The Contribution of Scenario Thinking for Reimagining the Future. In S. Quilley & K. Zywert (Eds.), *Health in the Anthropocene: Living Well on a Finite Planet*. (Chapter 6). University of Toronto Press