

**Arsenic Monitoring in the Yellowknife Area**

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources recognizes that legacy arsenic contamination in the Yellowknife region has many residents concerned.

To this end, ENR continues to conduct monitoring, in collaboration with universities and the Government of Canada, on arsenic in water, sediments, soils and fish in the Yellowknife region.

Under-ice water sampling was done by Environment and Natural Resources at seven sites on Kam Lake and three sites on Grace Lake in April.

Results from Kam Lake are consistent with recent Surveillance Network Program sampling done by Miramar Northern Mining Limited under its existing water license. Another round of sampling at both lakes is being done this summer.

The Department, in collaboration, with the University of Alberta is also working to determine the concentration of metals, including arsenic, in fish from several lakes near Yellowknife and along the Ingraham Trail.

A report on this three-year study will be prepared and made available to the public when it concludes in 2018.

Three additional monitoring projects, funded through the Northwest Territories Cumulative Impact Program, are also examining arsenic contamination in water, sediments, soils and fish in the Yellowknife region.

This work is being done by Queen's University, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Carleton University.

Preliminary results of these projects will be publicly available.

Mr. Speaker, the Department recently met with the Department of Health and Social Services to identify ways to improve interdepartmental and external communications to ensure information is shared in a timely manner.

This provided a good opportunity to share and confirm both existing and new sources of data.

Based on the meeting, Health and Social Services will be updating the map of arsenic concentrations measured in Kam Lake, as well as other nearby lakes.

Moving forward, both Departments will be refining their information-sharing process to ensure future public health advisories are accurate and are released in a timely manner.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, additional work on the human health and ecological risk of contamination in the Yellowknife area is also being undertaken through the Giant Mine Remediation Project.

I assure you and the Members of this Legislative Assembly that the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources and Health and Social Services will continue to work collaboratively on this matter and ensure the public is kept informed with accurate and timely information on legacy arsenic contamination in the Yellowknife area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.