

Municipal Hazardous Waste Assessment

Assessing climate change risk to municipal hazardous waste disposal sites in eight Northern NWT communities.

CONTEXT

Hazardous wastes, such as used oil, fuel, batteries, paint and mercury items used by residents and the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors have accumulated in NWT community waste disposal sites. The northern part of the NWT has experienced rapid climate warming of at least 2.7°C during the past 50 years, a warming trend which is sure to continue. Permafrost thaw, coastal erosion and slumping have accompanied this warming. These landscape changes can result in traditional storage locations becoming unsafe and increasing the likelihood of hazardous wastes being released into the environment.



OBJECTIVE

Develop an inventory, including a cost estimate for the transportation and disposal of hazardous wastes, now on municipal lands. This inventory and cost estimate assessment will be combined with a climate change risk assessment to prioritize management and removal options.

APPROACH

Municipal hazardous waste sites in the following communities will be evaluated: Aklavik; Fort McPherson; Inuvik; Paulatuk; Sachs Harbour; Ulukhaktok; Tsiigehtchic; and, Tuktoyaktuk.

The evaluation will include a visit to each community by a hazardous waste contractor. During this visit an inventory of hazardous waste will be completed. This inventory will include cost estimates of removable hazardous waste and allow for communities to be ranked based on the risk presented by the hazardous waste.

Using this information, a workshop will be held with qualified professionals to complete a risk assessment for all the hazardous waste sites and to produce recommendations for future hazardous waste management options within communities. These recommendations will be aimed at avoiding hazards associated with climate change.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Information from the project will be used to produce an inventory of hazardous waste in each community, assessments of the risk climate change poses to each hazardous waste site and a ranking system to be used to identify which sites should be prioritized for removal. This information will also assist in refining best practices for future hazardous waste management to minimize risk due to climate change.

Significance

Climate change increases the risk of municipal hazardous waste being released into the environment. The Beaufort Delta and High Arctic are experiencing rapid climate warming resulting in thawing permafrost, slumping, and coastal erosion.

Partners

- Community Governments
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- NWT Association of Communities
- Northwest Territories Water Board
- Gwich'in Land and Water Board
- Government of the NWT, Municipal and Community Affairs
- Government of the NWT, Environment and Natural Resources

FOR MORE INFO

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