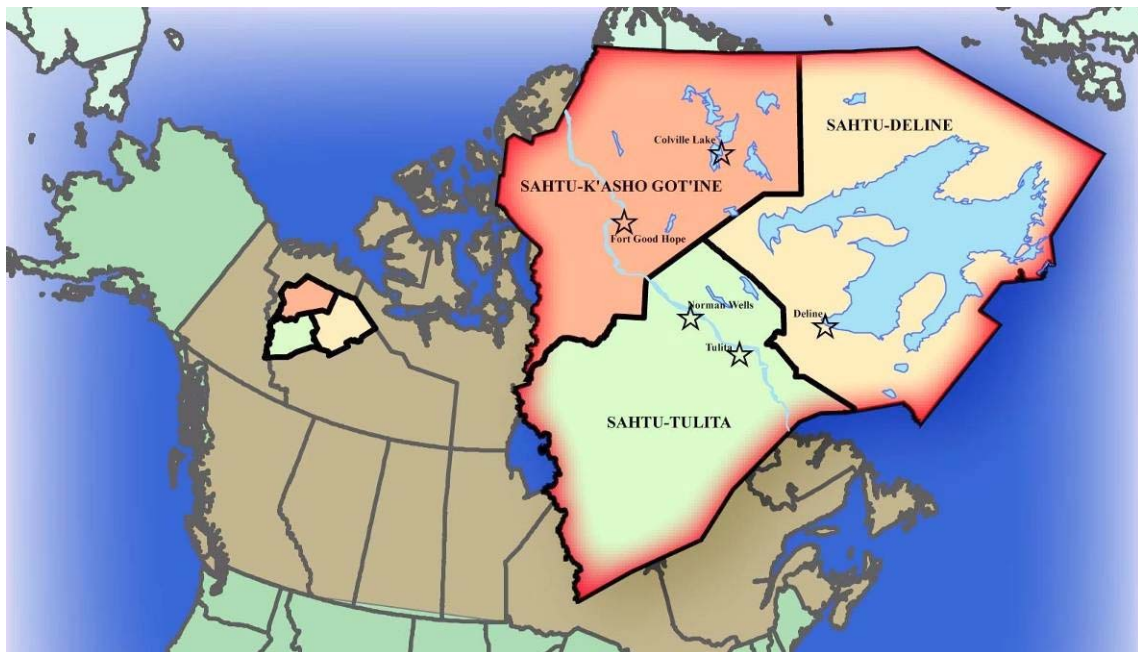


COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING OF WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HEALTH IN THE SAHTU

BACKGROUND

The Sahtu Settlement Area is the settled land claim area of the Sahtu Dene and Metis (1993). The Sahtu consists of five small communities with a combined population of 2326 (2001 census): Tulita (473), Deline (536), Fort Good Hope (549), Colville Lake (102), and Norman Wells (666). Subsistence harvest continues to be a mainstay of the region's economy; however, non-renewable resource exploration and development is now occurring at a rapidly growing pace as the NWT continues to have the fastest-growing economy in Canada.



The condition, health, and sustainability of wildlife populations is important for the economy of the Sahtu and elsewhere in the NWT, particularly for subsistence harvesters. Climate change, renewable and non-renewable resource development, and a greater human 'footprint' can impact wildlife populations, including the occurrence of disease, which directly impacts both wildlife and human health.

Our project - *Community-based monitoring of wildlife populations and health in the Sahtu* - was established during the winter of 2002/03 as an outcome of a workshop, co-hosted by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) and the Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development (DRWED), to identify needed research in the Sahtu under *The NWT Biophysical Study* in the face of current and future development. During the October 2002 workshop, participants repeatedly and clearly indicated that they wished to see youth better educated about local wildlife issues, that they wanted local harvesters to be more involved in at least some aspects of ongoing research, and that wildlife health was a key area of research. We have developed this project in response to those suggestions and will continue to modify it in response to feedback from students, RRCs, the SRRB, and community members.