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Husky Lakes Survey 2012 Proposed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway

James Gordon Jr.

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<u>Abstract</u>

This Husky Lakes camp/cabin owner information survey on the proposed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk all-weather road examined camp/cabin ownership, historical background, use and concerns regarding the construction and use of the highway. The survey was initiated to develop baseline information of camp/cabin stakeholders, which may be considered in the planning and development processes for the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk (Tuk) highway. Methods used in the survey included driving to Tuk on the week-ends in February and conducting interviews with the camp/cabin owners in their homes. The person to person survey was the most effective way to acquire the owner's opinion(s) on the proposed all-weather road along Husky Lakes. Meeting with them in their own environment created a relationship that was crucial to the success of the survey. Results are presented graphically; showing land-use, time of year occupied, uses for camp/cabin, types of animals harvested, history of the camp/cabin location, and if the construction of the all-weather highway will impact their camp/cabin location. The proposed highway has raised awareness of traditional land users, who considered both the proposed highway relative to camp/cabin locations in distance (kilometres km), and evaluated the proposed route and the alternative upland route from Husky Lakes.

The survey showed that the majority (64%) of interviewees foresaw that the highway would have no effect relative to their camp/cabin location. Many of the Inuvialuit believe the proposed highway will benefit everyone with minimum damage to the Traditional lands (Husky Lakes).

The survey indicated that 39% (of the 64%) who were in favour of the highway construction, stated they prefer the upland route, maintaining some distance away from Husky Lakes, thus, the proposition of an alternative route should be considered. The Inuvialuit, Federal and Territorial governments have many responsibilities to the Inuvialuit people in order for them to make the most informed decisions. The decision process for such a large scale development around Husky Lakes must also take into account that these are Traditional lands of the Inuvialuit and must be protected and preserved for our future generations.

Acknowledgements

To all the people who participated in my interviews, thank you. Thanks to the people of Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik who welcomed me into their homes and shared their stories and precious time. To all the individuals who shared their personal experiences of why this survey is so important to them regarding the traditional lands of Husky Lakes.

Thanks to Environment & Natural Resources instructor, Joel McAlister for all the advice and guidance during the past 18 months working and help in creating my survey. Thanks to Alice Graham for the encouragements and great ideas. I thank you both.

This survey would not be possible without support provided by Inuvialuit Regional Corporation; Community Development Division. Thank you Shannon O`Hara, Inuvialuit Research Advisor for making the week-end trips to Tuktoyaktuk possible, and making sure that the proper arrangements were made. Cathy Cockney (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre) for her guidance and Inuvialuit History Resources.

Thank you Ester for believing in me, providing support and showing me that nothing is impossible. Thank you for being a sounding board and of all the challenging times working on my Technical project. Having a partner that made the road trips to Tuk and making sure all is well at home, Thank you.



Figure 1: Beaufort Delta Area showing Husky Lakes.

Introduction

Husky Lakes, called *Imaryuk* in Inuvialuktun, is a semi-saline estuarine lake system in the Canadian Arctic. The lakes cover approximately 2100 square kilometres and are located east of Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories (Figure 1).

The land around Husky Lakes belongs to the Inuvialuit, the indigenous people of the area. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement affirmed Inuvialuit ownership of the land around the lakes and northwest to include Liverpool Bay and the Bathurst Peninsula (Figure 1).

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation holds the land in trust for the Inuvialuit people, and these lands are administered by the Inuvialuit Land Administration (ILA). The Inuvialuit hold surface rights to all these lands around Husky Lakes, and subsurface rights to a significant portion on the west shore nearest Tuktoyaktuk. The Inuvialuit own the land under Husky Lakes, although the federal government retains ownership of the water itself (ICLC, 1984).

Long ago, we used to distinguish ourselves from the other people around us such as the *Inupiat* (Alaskan Inuit), the *Qangmalit* (Eastern Inuit), and the *Itqilit* (Indians). The Inuvialuit have occupied the coastal area along the Western Arctic from *Qiqiktagyuk* (Hershel Island) to *Kilinuq* (Victoria Island) for as long as they can remember (GNWT-Education, 1991)

The knowledge of our history does not come to us from books. It comes from the Inuvialuit elders who told us stories about the past; our elders were given these stories from their elders. In this way, the stories and the teachings have been handed down from generation to generation.

These stories from *linglilraani* (a long time ago) are about how our people hunted and survived on this land. Our ancestors were curious and inventive. They constantly searched for new ways of doing things to make their life more secure. Thus, they became very knowledgeable about the land and ways of hunting and trapping.

The Land of our Inuvialuit ancestors was rich and varied. There were many geographically distinct areas with their own kinds of animals and plants. There were

mountains through which the Porcupine caribou herd passed. There were deep coastal channels through which the bowhead whales would pass each year. There were vast deltas which were home to countless species of small fur-bearing game and fowl. And of course there was the stretch of coast, rich with sea mammals and fish. Each area had its own group of Inuvialuit. They tended to stay within their area to camp and hunt, and in doing so they gradually gained expertise in their territory.

Within the Inuvialuit territory they travelled in small groups, often just one family consisting of a mother, father, grand-parents and children. When hunting in areas where non-Inuvialuit were known to be, they travelled in large groups for protection. Often the men would travel together leaving women and children behind in safer camps (GNWT-Education, 1991).

Each family had its own temporary camp locations. If hunting was good and there was excess food, the meat would be stored in caches near the camp. The caches were marked with stone or driftwood cairns so they could be located even under conditions of drifting snow.

During the best hunting times, camp sizes would grow. When the game moved on, so would the people. The Inuvialuit knew where and when to hunt each kind of animal. Usually, families located themselves at a base camp. They would come and go on hunting trips from there. Some base camps were small, like the ones around Atkinson Point. Others like *Kitigaryuit* were large, having hundreds of families during the summer. (GNWT-Education, 1991)

As the Inuvialuit travelled around the territory to hunt, they were welcomed with hospitality by other Inuvialuit. When others travelled to their camps, they reciprocated the hospitality. They depended upon each other for accurate information about the terrain and hunting in each of the areas (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Inupiat and Inuvialuit gathering together.

Kitigaryuit was the largest and most permanent camp known to the Inuvialuit. It was from this area at different locations that the beluga whale hunts were carried out. Beluga whales were a great source of food for the people living along the coast. Instead of moving around to small isolated camps, people started to live and stay longer at different times of the year. Spring was great for fishing; in the fall when the herring started their annual runs and during this time there were plenty of caribou to harvest and cache which would be done to secure a food supply for the coming months. With many people around, whale hunts provided the opportunity to harvest large amounts of muk-tuk over the summer months.

They built ice houses in several different locations to store the many types of food caught during the spring and summer (Figure 3). Spring run-off from the Mackenzie River and surrounding areas, flooded the area around *Kitigaryuit* providing many types of drift wood for fuel and construction materials. Inland creeks also provided plenty of fresh water to supply the many people who lived in the area.



Figure 3: East Whitefish Whaling Camp (ice-house nearby)

Most families returned to *Kitigaryuit* to trade and gather information for different hunting and fishing spots. Families met with different groups of Inuvialuit, which created opportunities to arrange marriages between hunting groups, mixing and sharing the cultural ways of the Delta people.

When a man wanted to marry someone in a large camp, he would start leaving food outside the future wife's parent's home. This was to prove to the father of the bride, that the young man was capable of taking care of his future wife. Having the ability to hunt beluga whales, kill caribou and provide different types of food showed that his future wife was going to be taken care of. After they had been accepted as a young couple, they lived with the bride's parents until they could eventually move on.

In the spring time, the people would walk from the coast to the inland toward *Imaryuk*, Husky lakes. This migration created a twenty-two kilometre traditional trail which had many lakes, fishing creeks, and camping spots that enabled them to make the two day trek to their favourite camping areas (Figure 4). Markings along the trail were remembered such as; *Tatchit Qaudjvik* (first of many lakes) Point #2 and *Tiktaaliqtuuq* (where you can find loche) Point #4, which made the route easier and quicker to travel by (Figure 4). Food such as fresh caribou meat, lake trout, and geese, were harvested along the trail and berry picking was done in the fall; a plentiful time of the year (GNWT-

Education 2011).

Tatchit Qaudjvik	2
Angmaluqtuq	3
Qipin'nguk	4
Amittuq	5
Itibliq	6
Suqunuk	7
Tiktaaliqluuq	8
Qimiaryuq	9
Qimilik	10
tunmairaaluk	1
Itipliryaaq	12
Pappilaaq	13
Inulik	14
Nanmaquqtisautdjvik	1
Piturariag	1(
•	



Figure 4: Imaryuk Traditional Trail

Permafrost

Permafrost is defined as the thermal condition in soil or rock of temperatures below 0 degrees Celsius which persists over at least two consecutive winters and the intervening summer; moisture in the form of water and ground ice may or may not be present (Figure 5; Stuart, 1986). Each material in this thermal condition may be described as perennially frozen, irrespective of the water and ice content (Johnson, 1981).



Figure 5: Permafrost exposure and collapse caused by road construction.



Figure 6: Scaring of the land from highway construction.

Permafrost depends on the activity of a negative heat balance (below freezing) at the top half of the permafrost layer (Stuart, 1986). The top layer starts to melt above the permafrost during the summer; this is where the vegetation starts to penetrate the soil horizon one and a half to three feet in depth. Vegetation will protect the permafrost underneath the different biological layers, acting as an insulator and soil stabilizer. Vegetation cover protects the permafrost (below) from the direct warming action of the sun and erosion from running water (Stuart, 1986). If the soil or vegetation layers are removed or damaged, erosion may start, exposing the permafrost layer, initiating melting and inducing scaring (Figure 6). Land which is sloped or at different angles of exposer, may increase the impact of surface runoff and impede drainage (Figure 7), which may cause drastic changes in the surface environment (Stuart, 1986).

All over the Delta, seismic lines have been left behind from past exploration, with site recovery taking many years to re-establish vegetation and have the land return back to "normal" (Figure 6). This long period of recovery shows how fragile the active layer cover is, and how difficult it is to restore balance in the permafrost regime.

Road Construction

The proposed all weather highway planned destination is Tuktoyuktuk, with all wayside services expected to be available upon completion. The lay of the land which includes lakes, creeks and different types of terrain will have many interesting topographic limitations and environmental impact(s) which may influence highway location and methods of construction. Unstable slopes that have natural mass wasting may pose further long-range problems in building and maintaining the highway (Johnston, 1981). Erosion and slope instability, top soil damage and vegetation cover reduction, both introduced from construction, may be long-term environmental impacts for which mitigation should be considered during project planning and building processes.

Building culverts and other man-made features after moving the shallow active layer may alter the various drainage patterns found in the tundra. Ditching methods predominantly used to create/control drainage patterns in the south, however, in the north, these conventional types of drainage altering procedures may be inadequate,

requiring alternative methods to reduce or minimize these factors. Groundwater which is not normally found in permafrost soils may also become concern when the permafrost is altered or exposed during construction (Johnson, 1981).

Water build-up in the soil substrate, combined with peat bog and muskeg saturation, which when exposed to freezing temperatures, may create ice (wedges) sheets that potentially could damage the road bed and hinder construction. Many road beds in the north have problems with stability, but after time with relentless maintenance, may finally settle and stabilize (Figure 7; Stuart, 1986).





One of the most important aspects of road construction is the availability of gravel fill (Figure 8). Making roadbeds with sandstone material have been shown to be very susceptible to frost action and can cause damage or disturbance during road building. If road bed materials have high moisture contents, erosion may occur, undermining road bed stability; therefore stockpiled material must have time to drain and reduce moisture content before being used. Silt and clay materials are not used extensively in bed construction because they absorb and retain moisture, causing increased problems with erosion. Today, road bed design procedures ask for a minimal clearing of vegetation at the ground level, and a top layer free of moisture, to depths of at least four feet thick before any road construction can take place (Johnston, 1981). Earlier efforts in northern road construction which have not taken these factors into consideration have revealed that extensive damage may lead to large scale repairs or cause re-routing of the highway (Figure 6).



Figure 8: Gravel borrowing pit along road construction.

During construction, crews should try to maintain bed areas with ground cover vegetation to protect surface layers during clearing, and have moisture free gravel or rock available for overburden, filling to a depth of at least four feet, to reduce erosion problems (Johnson, 1981).

Along the highway route, many different construction sites will have high densities of heavy equipment that may damage the top active soil layers. Soil compaction can cause rutted access roads or severe (in some cases permanent) compaction damage along the right-of- ways during highway construction. Proper construction and mitigation measures along the right-of-ways at the toe of the roadbed and ponding areas, combined with erosion evaluation may reduce many of these impacts during construction (Kimball, 1975).

Replacing the natural surface vegetation by creating cut banks and placing natural insulation on the ground should be part of the construction process. Restoration of the right-of-way by observing surface settlement and natural everyday erosion may allow successful re-vegetation of indigenous species, returning the area to a more natural state. If areas of limited cover or vegetation are damaged, such as moss or lichen habitat types, restoration using the same species should be considered.

The rationale of this paper was to develop a survey of the Husky Lakes camp/cabin owners on usage and occupancy. The objectives of the survey were to gather information to determine the occupants usage, opinions and to express concerns (if

any) of the proposed all-weather road (from Inuvik to Tuk) built through their Traditional lands.

Methods & Materials

Licensing and Permits

Research Licensing and Permits were applied for and reviewed in accordance with the *NWT Scientists Act.* Application procedures were followed according to: Doing Research in the Northwest Territories- A Guide for Researchers. (Aurora Research Institute, 2011). Regulations and requirements were accessed at <u>http://www.nwtresearch.com//licensing</u> with a copy of the application and licencing authorization found in Appendix C.

Interviewees

Subjects were interviewed at their homes, the majority of which were interviewed in Tuktoyaktuk. The sampling/interview times consisted over 3 weekends (Feb. 10, 2012 to Feb. 25, 2012) to complete the occupant questionnaires. Information and data were collected orally and transcribed, with written answers based on the questionnaire (Appendix A). Information was compiled and analyzed based on a sample size of 28 participants (n = 28). Prior to the interviews, all participants agreed to sign a consent form (Appendix B).

This research was designed as a survey in the form of a questionnaire which collected camp/cabin user information on the time of year camps were occupied; what they were

used for; the types of animals harvested and, the history of the cabin/camp location. The final question was proposed in conjunction with a map of Husky Lakes. The interviewee was asked to locate their cabin/camp position in reference to where the Inuvik - Tuktoyaktuk highway route was proposed in the Husky Lakes area. The 28 interviewees who participated in the research, used maps of the Husky Lakes area to calculate the approximate distances from their respective Husky Lakes cabin/camp positions relative to the proposed highway route. The rationale for this question design was to give the interviewees a regional perspective and calculate approximate distances from their respective cabins/camps to the proposed highway.

Results

Graphic representation of the data was utilized to visually interpret the basic information collected from the results of the interviews. All cabin/cabin users interviewed in the Husky Lakes area used their respective camps in the spring (100%). The second most actively occupied season was winter, with 59% occupancy, followed by fall and summer at 37% and 30% occupancy rates respectively (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Interviewee response values to questionnaire: Question #1

The major interest in the Husky Lakes area was fishing with all users (100%) participating in the activity. During the winter, hunting (70%) mainly with skidoos was the primary activity conducted by the interviewed camp/cabin owners. Recreational activity use occurred in 41% of the interviewed cabin/camp owners (Figure 10), while 22% practiced various miscellaneous uses; usually related to fun and/or leisure.



Figure 10: Interviewee response values to questionnaire: Question #2.

All Cabin/camp owners in the study practiced fish harvesting. While 63% of the residents hunted caribou and geese with harvesting based on availability and opportunity during the different seasons (Figure 11). Elders who participated in the survey stated that they "remember days when Beluga was easily harvested", with 11% of the camp/cabin owners participating in opportunistic harvesting when the whales become caught in areas where there is a rapid freeze and formation of surface ice at Husky Lakes (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Interviewee response values to questionnaire: Question #3

Camp/cabin ownership data revealed that only 22% of camp/cabin locations were handed down from parents/grandparents, with the majority of camps/cabins (78%) being relatively new, established within the Husky Lakes area (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Interviewee response values to questionnaire: Question #4

Of the 28 owners surveyed, 68% of the interviewees stated that the road will not have any effect on their Traditional hunting area; however 39% of the 68% who felt that the highway will not impact their camp/cabin areas, stated that they preferred the alternate "upland route" keeping the highway far away from Husky Lakes. The majority of the interviewees (19 of 29) were in favour of the proposed highway. Approximately two-fifths (of 68%) of the survey sample that were in favour of the proposed highway preferred the (alternative) upland route. Opposition to the construction of the allweather road was tabulated to be 10 of the 29 occupants surveyed or 36% of the sample (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Interviewee response values to questionnaire: Question #5

Discussion

As shown by the survey, springtime at Husky Lakes was and still is a favourite season and busy time for the Inuvialuit of the area. In the past many small family groups would spread out and find their own "favourite" summer camps. Today more permanent dwellings occupy many different locations on Husky Lakes landscape. The main harvesting activity in the Husky Lakes area was determined to be fishing, with all camp/cabin residents participating. Trapping and harvesting varied in intensity during different times of the year. The traditional trail still provides a corridor to the coast and the community of Tuktoyaktuk (Figure 4). In winter, many trappers moved inland towards the tree line for top quality fur animals such as muskrat, foxes and wolverines.



Figure 14: Goose nest with eggs near Liverpool Bay

Swans, geese and ducks nest (Figure 14) and have their young around Liverpool Bay and the area known as the "fingers" (Figure 1). The huge caribou herds and the domesticated reindeer use the Husky Lakes area in the fall and spring when migration starts. These are good times for gathering fresh caribou meat and fish which are prepared and stored away for the long approaching winter.

The 32% that oppose construction of the highway expressed concerns over what would happen once the highway was completed. They stated that once the highway was open to the public (all year) there would be increased impacts from traffic (noise, dust, pollution) and tourists. Interviewees also were concerned with access to the area, and the increased probability of theft. Items such as fuel, tools and hunting equipment were of primary concern. It was expressed that increased traffic will also increase the potential of garbage being deposited along the highway route. With year-round access, there may be a promise of new residents trying to establish dwellings around Husky Lakes. This increase in density may also increase cumulative pressures (impacts) on flora, fauna, land and water of these Traditional lands.

The Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway will create increased demands for resource development permits, land permits, hunting and fishing rights, parks and many other road-dependent activities. Our Inuvialuit, Federal and Territorial governments will face many detailed development criteria such as planning, environment assessment, zoning, allocation and regulations for building, operation and maintenance of the proposed highway.

Priorities to cabin/camp owners with cultural ties to these valuable areas must be respected. Although, many impacts of the highway may be irreversible, mitigation and good planning should be of the utmost importance. If the project does go ahead, the Inuvialuit will have to live with these drastic changes to the Husky Lakes forever.

Traditionally Husky Lakes was used to gather and store food for the long upcoming winters. Establishing special fishing and hunting areas were very important to the Inuvialuit people. Using the traditional *Imaryuk* trail which took several days to travel may become something of the past. Once the proposed highway is built, positive and negative arguments will no longer matter, the majority of interviewees that took part in the survey, clearly stated that they wanted the highway built.

Conclusion

This survey indicates that Husky Lakes is generally occupied during the spring, with fishing being the main food harvested. In the fall, caribou and geese are harvested to stock up on the long coming winter. In winter Husky Lakes access is relatively easy with snowmobiles. Trapping and harvesting various wildlife species are traditional occupations which usually occur throughout the cold hard winter months, and passed down from one generation to the next. During the summer, access can only occur by air. However, it costs money to fly out to Husky Lakes, which may be a primary reason.

The Proposed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk All-Weather Highway will change the Inuvialuit traditional grounds forever. The interviewees expressed concerns regarding increased traffic of people and vehicles and they felt that the all season highway may create dramatic changes on the calving grounds of caribou, because of an increase in harvesters and potential damage to untouched traditional grounds. The highway and construction of the highway may speed-up climate change impacts on permafrost integrity and flora species richness. Contrary, to these concerns; food will be cheaper in Tuktoyaktuk, long term maintenance will provide jobs for highway crews and, the people of Tuk will have the opportunity to use the traditional grounds during the summer season.

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Appendix A

Name:		
Cabin Location: Latitude:	Longitude:	
General Location:		
	Please check all that apply	
When is your camp/cabin occupied during the year?	⊖ spring	◯ Summer
	◯ fall	⊖winter
What is your camp/cabin used for?	⊖Hunting	◯ Fishing
	ORecreational	Other
What types of animals are harvested at your Camp/ca	ahin?	
what types of animals are narvested at your earry/a	Caribou	⊖ Geese
	⊖ Fish	○ Beluga
	Other	
What is the history of your camp/cabin location?	 Newly established Handed-down from parents- grandparents 	
	Other	
How do you think the Proposed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktul camp/cabin?	k All-Weather Highw	ay will affect your
Comments:		
The information contained herein and attached is confidential and the prop	erty of James Gordon Jr. an	d the interviewee. If you are

The information contained herein and attached is confidential and the property of **James Gordon Jr.** and the interviewee. If you are not the intended recipient, please be advised that viewing this message and any attachments, as well as copying, forwarding, printing, and disseminating any information related to this survey is prohibited, and that you should not take any action based on the content of this survey and/or its attachments. Please note that the views and opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the college. No liability is accepted for any consequences arising from this survey. This survey is intended only for the person to who it is addressed.

<u>Appendix B</u>

Interview Consent Form

<u>Husky Lakes Cabin Owner Information Survey on the Proposed Inuvik to</u> <u>Tuktoyuktuk All Weather Road</u>

This research will collect information on cabin ownership, historical background, use and concerns upon the construction and use of the Inuvik to Tuk Highway

Project Objective: To develop baseline information of cabin stakeholders, which may be used in the planning and development processes for the Inuvik to Tuk Highway.

39 Cabin Owners on Husky Lakes (Please see attached list of names).

 James Gordon Jr. [2nd Year Student in Environment & Natural Resources Technology Program (ENRTP) at Aurora College in Inuvik, NT]

Your rights: I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to participating in an interview for the project. I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that my information will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified. If I wish to, I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and there will be no consequences.

I want my identity to be non-confidential , OR	
I want my identity to be confidential	
I give permission for [audio and/or video] recordin	g
I give permission for a copy of the [audio and/or vi the community, with the Inuvik or Tuktoyaktuk Hur	deo] tape to be left securely in ters and Trappers Committee
I would like to receive a copy of James Gordon's Te	chnical Report
NAME (please print):	_
Signature:	Date:
Signature of witness:	Date:
Contact Information <u>Researcher</u> : James Gordon [james.gordon@myauroracollege.ca; (867) 777 <u>ENRTP Instructors</u> : Joel McAlister [Jmcalister@auroracollege.nt.ca; (867) Alice Graham [Agraham@auroracollege.nt.ca; (867) 777-7832]	-6388]) 777-7821]

Appendix "C"

Licence No. 15039 File No. 12 410 910 March 27, 2012

2012 Northwest Territories Scientific Research Licence

issued by:

Issued to:

Affiliation:

Funding:

Team Members:

Title:

Objectives:

Dates of data collection: Location: Aurora Research Institute - Aurora College Inuvik, Northwest Territories

Mr. James Jr Gordon Aurora College Student P.O. Box 2981 Inuvik, NT X0E-0T0 Canada Phone: (867) 777-6388 Email: james.gordon@myauroracollege.ca

Aurora College Student

Joel McAlister

Husky Lakes Cabin Owner Information Survey

To find out when, what, historical background, and animals are harvested at Husky Lakes camp/cabin area; and to explore how the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk All-Weather Highway affects their camp/cabin locations.

Intended Dates of Data Collection: January 16, 2012 to June 16, 2012

Husky Lakes - all cabin owners

Licence No.15039 expires on December 31, 2012 Issued in the Town of Inuvik on March 27, 2012

Pippa Seccombe-Hett, Director, Aurora Research Institute

