

Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) - Flin Flon / Creighton Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

November 19, 2008 – Flin Flon City Hall
Meeting #8

Attendance

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership					
Don Aasen Town of Creighton	X	Bev Hill NorMan Regional Health	X	Deb Odegaard FF&D Env't Council	
Robert Bratvold Creighton School Board		Tom Lindsey Steelworkers Union	X	Bill Pauley Flin Flon School Division	
Katie Garinger General Public		Charlene Logan MCRRHA	X	Dave Price Green Project	X
Ian Cooper HBMS	X	Barb Lyons General Public	X	Bill Hanson City of Flin Flon	X
Cheryl Hordal General Public		Christa McIntyre Healthy Flin Flon	X		

Guests / Other		
Sheldon McLeod (Facilitator) S.L. McLeod Consulting	Shirley Neault (Recorder) HBMS	Elliot Sigal (via telephone) Intrinsic Environmental
TAC Member (Observer) SK Government	Rob Winton HBMS	Dr. James Irvine Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region
Dr. Susan Roberecki (via telephone) MB Health and Healthy Living	Dr. Lawrence Elliott NOR-MAN Health Region	6 Public Observers

Introduction

- Facilitator Sheldon McLeod called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.
- A review of the draft notes of the previous meeting was conducted. The notes were approved.
- Action Items from the previous meeting were reviewed. The status of these action items is summarized in the tables at the end of these notes.

Member's Commentary – Community Feedback

- Each CAC member was given the opportunity to share what they are hearing in the community regarding the HHRA. Comments included:
 - A resident recently celebrated her 105th birthday. This signifies the health of our community.
 - A member was “shocked and dismayed” that HBMS is “spewing out more than before” and was also shocked at our mayor’s recent comments in the newspaper. The member went on to say, “We thought we were trying to make things better. Why are they getting worse?”
 - Another member indicated that there have been very few comments about the HHRA or the quality of the air or water in the area. The concerns seem to be regarding economics and not this.

Smelter Emissions

Reference Documentation – Smelter Emissions – CAC Meeting 2008-11-19

- Rob Winton, Assistant Smelter Superintendent provided a short presentation regarding the Smelter emissions. His presentation provided information regarding the regulations that the Smelter must meet, the ambient air monitors located throughout the community and the associated air quality

warnings, and a summary of the various means that information is communicated to the public. These include:

- Annual presentations to Health Flin Flon;
 - Air quality website and radio warnings;
 - Monthly air quality teleconference with MB Conservation;
 - Monthly SO₂ and particulate matter reports to MB Conservation and SK Environment;
 - Reports filed at the Flin Flon Public Library;
 - National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) reports to Environment Canada; and
 - Pollution Prevention (P2) status reports to Environment Canada
- Additionally, MB Conservation provides quarterly air quality reports derived from data from its one monitor in Flin Flon.
 - The presentation also included some graphs showing actual emissions per tonne of copper produced over the last 10 years. The highlights were:
 - The 2001 emissions were elevated due to the electrostatic precipitator (ESP) that was installed in 2000 not working completely as designed. Since repaired in 2001, it has operated well.
 - The 2007 emissions were slightly elevated because of increased production. The elevated emission levels appear worse when compared to 2006 because it was a shut-down year.
 - In 2006 a continuous emissions monitor (CEM) was installed in the stack. Prior to that year, emissions were calculated based on stack tests and operating factors. The measured data indicates that HBMS was over reporting its emissions in previous years.

Question: What are the differences between 2007 and 2005 emissions and how is HBMS' mercury target achieved?

Response: The mercury emissions in these two years are almost identical. As mercury travels with zinc, separation of zinc and copper in the Mill is key to meeting the Canada Wide Standard for Mercury (which, it is important to note is not a regulation but is rather a guideline). The Mill has made some process changes to improve its separation of zinc and copper.

Question: What will the HBMS mercury emissions in 2008 be and does domestic vs. purchased concentrate make a difference?

Response: Although the exact 2008 emission numbers year-to-date were not brought to the meeting, HBMS is on significantly better pace with respect to mercury emissions. The local concentrate has a higher mercury content than does the current purchased concentrate. There is a program in place to check purchased concentrate for environmental impact.

HHRA Update – Elliot Sigal, Intrinsic Environmental

Reference Documentation – Intrinsic - HHRA Update November 19, 2008

- An overview of the fish and berry study results was provided. The draft report is currently under review by the TAC. Highlights include:
 - All lakes exceeded environmental and drinking water criteria for mercury. All other concentrations of chemicals of concern from all lakes are below drinking water criteria.
 - Some exceedances of consumption guidelines for mercury were observed in fish from some lakes. The levels of other chemicals of concern are generally low.
 - The blueberries have very low concentrations of all chemicals of concern.
- The draft HHRA report should be to the TAC for review within the next two weeks.

Question: Have similar fish studies been done elsewhere?

Response: Yes, including previous fish studies in the Flin Flon area. Another specific area is in Sudbury. The Province of Ontario maintains a comprehensive database on most Ontario lakes for fish consumption guidelines. Each province has booklets describing lake and fish studies. A literature search could be conducted to provide some specific sites for reference purposes (see action #036)

Community Health Assessment

Reference Documentation – CR FF HS Assess Nov 19 2008

- The Medical Health Officers from Mamawetan Churchill River and NOR-MAN Health Regions were in attendance at the meeting and supported by the Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer from Manitoba Health and Healthy Living via telephone. They presented the results of a Community Health Status Assessment that the two Provinces have been working on as additional information to the overall HHRA. The assessment provides an overall health status of the populations of Flin Flon and Creighton over the last 10 years and compares the combined health of the residents against each of: NOR-MAN and Mamawetan Churchill River (MCR) Health Regions and the Provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A summary of the results are:
 - There is a higher mortality rate from respiratory disease among the older population but a lower rate for premature deaths.
 - Two statistical differences were noted in cancer rates. Both prostate and breast cancer rates are significantly lower in Flin Flon and Creighton compared to the larger regions. There are no statistical differences for any other type of cancer.
 - There is a higher incidence of premature death due to injuries in Flin Flon and Creighton.
 - The overall health status of the population is generally as good as or better than the provincial averages for most indicators studied.

Question: Have you shared this information with cancer and heart and stroke agencies because we seem to be healthier despite smoking, drinking and overeating?

Response: Yes, the Manitoba and Saskatchewan cancer agencies are aware of these results. However, please keep in mind that there are other factors that influence overall health of a community. Several of these are positive factors (e.g. education, employment, housing, etc.). It is difficult to address causes because there are so many factors that may or may not contribute to overall health. The bottom line is that it looks like this is a healthier community than in previous years and positive influences seem to outweigh negative ones.

Question: Have these types of studies been done elsewhere?

Response: Yes, but details were not available.

Comment: Indications are that the number of smokers in the community is going down. If you smoke, you are often outside alone smoking when at a social function around town.

Comment: Stress is another factor that may contribute to overall health.

Comment: Injuries appears to be the area where we need to focus.

Question: Were the numbers of miscarriages included in the study?

Response: No, the age category of less than one includes still births but not miscarriages. Information in this regard is often relative to proximity to health services, which would make it difficult to do. In any event, it would require a separate study.

Peer Review Process

- An update on the peer review selection that is being managed by the TAC was provided:
 - A request for proposal (RFP) is currently being reviewed by the TAC members and the RFP should be tendered in the next few weeks.
 - Advice is being provided by TAC members as to where and how to advertise the RFP.
 - The peer review should start in March.

Public Engagement

- The members were reminded to continue coming up with ideas to engage the public at large (see action #032).

#	Action	Responsibility	Target Date	Status
027	Forward comments or concerns from SK residents on possible precautionary soil improvement plans that MB Conservation was looking at in FF, as would relate to similar work in SK to SK Environment	CAC Members	2008-07-31	2008-02-27, new 2008-04-24, ongoing 2008-06-17, ongoing 2008-09-10, ongoing 2008-11-19, Complete
030	Distribute snow and drinking water reports to the CAC	Alan Hair / Shirley Neault	2008-07-02	2008-06-17, new 2008-09-10, ongoing 2008-11-19, Complete (posted on website)
032	Offer suggestions for engaging the public when the final report is ready	CAC Members	2008-10-15	2008-06-17, new 2008-09-10, ongoing 2008-11-19, ongoing
034	Provide dying grass information to MB Conservation personnel and they will look into the issue	Deb Odegaard	2008-09-19	2008-09-10, new 2008-11-19, Complete
035	Let Sheldon know if you are interested in becoming a TAC observer	CAC Members	2008-09-30	2008-09-10, new 2008-11-19, Complete
036	Conduct a literature search to provide specific sites of other fish studies	Elliot Sigal	2008-11-24	2008-11-19, new

**NEXT MEETING: Tentatively Thursday, January 29, 2009 from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: FF City Hall**