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Contact Information:

Dr. Gary Wilson,
Co-ordinator
Northern Studies
Program
University of Northern
BC
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC
V2N 4Z9
Canada
1-250-960-5514
[email: wilsong@unbc.ca](mailto:wilsong@unbc.ca)

Northern Research Group Launched

Students at UNBC have launched an interdisciplinary network to share experiences and information about their northern research. The Northern Research Group (NRG) was initially proposed by Sonja Ostertag, a PhD. Candidate in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (see below). After sending an initial call for participation, she received 24 responses from both graduate and undergraduate students who are currently engaged in northern research and studies. The first meeting of the NRG will be held on Friday March 28, from 11-12 in room 1069 in the Administration Building.

Researcher Profile - Sonja Ostertag – Ph.D. Candidate, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies



plan to use a biomarker approach to assess neurochemical disruption associated with contaminant exposure in belugas.

I began my Ph.D. in September 2007 in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at UNBC under the supervision of Dr. Laurie H.M. Chan. For a very long time, I have been disturbed, yet strangely fascinated by environmental contaminants. As a Master's student at McGill University in Montreal, I became involved in a project investigating the effects of mercury on the central nervous system of beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*). This study is now the focus of my doctoral research, in which I

Although my research is primarily taking place at UNBC, my samples are obtained from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) in the Northwest Territories. Belugas are harvested in the summer in the ISR, and I am very fortunate to have received permission to collect samples from harvested whales. In 2006, I camped with two families in the ISR for one month to collect samples; during this time I learned many things about belugas and about the people who have been harvesting them for thousands of years. I greatly appreciate the hospitality and support of Inuvialuit hunters in the studies and sampling that our research team is carrying out. I am looking forward to learning more Inuvialuktun, mentoring youth from Tuktoyaktuk and breathing in the fresh Arctic air again this summer!

Networks and Research

The **Northern Research Network** aims to facilitate dialogue among researchers engaged in projects on the circumpolar North in the humanities and social sciences. It is a vehicle for building professional relationships, communicating funding and conference news, sharing resources, and disseminating information on fieldwork and academic writing. For more information contact Brad Martin Northwestern University research.north@gmail.com or visit the Northern Research Network website: <http://northernresearchnetwork.electrified.ca>

Research Permits and Licenses. Individuals conducting research in northern Canada may need one or more permits to conduct research on the Canadian North, including research conducted in Canadian Arctic waters and the Northwest Passage. For territorial research licenses and more information on this topic, please go to:

- * Yukon: <http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca>
- * Northwest Territories: <http://www.nwtresearch.com>
- * Nunavut: <http://www.nri.nu.ca>

Summer Internships

The Nasivvik Centre is pleased to announce its fifth call for applications for summer internships in Inuit environmental health. Application Deadline: Friday, April 18 2008. For more information and complete application details, contact:

Susie Bernier, M.Sc.

Directrice Exécutive/Executive director

Centre Nasivvik Centre (CDCARS Laval ACADRE)

2875, Laurier

Delta 2, Suite 600

Québec, Québec

G1V 2M2

T: (418) 656-4141, 46516#

F: (418) 654-2726

susie.bernier@crchul.ulaval.ca

www.nasivvik.ulaval.ca

Upcoming Events and Conferences

- * Sixth International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS VI) in Nuuk Greenland – August 22-26, 2008. Call for papers deadline: March 31, 2008. For more information see: <http://www.iassa.gl/icass6/icass6.htm>
- * Polar Tourism: A Tool for Regional Development, Kangiqsujaq, Nunavik (Quebec) – August 21-25, 2008. For more information see: <http://www.polar tourismnetwork.uqam.ca/>