



Training Workbook for ABEKS Community Monitors 2020-2021



Photo credit: Amanda Teel

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1. INTRODUCING ARCTIC BORDERLANDS TO PEOPLE

Short Version:

Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society began in 1994 as a partnership between arctic community councils, co-management groups, scientists and government agencies, to engage local experts in long-term ecosystem monitoring.

Long Version:

Background

- For a long time, northern communities have wanted the environmental knowledge of their elders and people who spend a lot of time on the land to be gathered. People want this information used to watch and measure changes in the environment.
- Local people also want to know and understand what scientific researchers do in their area.
- In 1994, Joan Eamer (Head, Ecosystem Health, Northern Conservation Division, Environment Canada) organized a meeting in Dawson with many different agencies and organizations to establish a new monitoring program, the North Yukon Ecological Knowledge Co-operative. This initiative was to be linked to the new national Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN). The program's geographic focus was defined as the range of the Porcupine caribou herd and includes regions of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Alaska.
- At the meeting, people identified the 3 main issues that should be the focus of the Co-op's ecological monitoring: climate change, contaminants, and regional development. Participants also decided that an important part of the Co-op should be to bring together science and local/traditional knowledge.
- The meeting participants also created decision guidelines: go slow, keep it simple, be relevant, think long-term, and economize. The guidelines are still important as the Co-op grows.
- By 1999, the Co-op had expanded its programs into Alaska and changed its name to the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society.
- Over the years, Co-op members have included representatives of co-management boards and councils, Inuvialuit and First Nation councils and government agencies, Canadian and U.S. federal and territorial government agencies, as well as academic and research institutions in Canada and the

United States. Participating communities include Arctic Village in Alaska, Old Crow in the Yukon, and Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, and Tuktoyaktuk and Fort McPherson in the NWT.

- Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society is a non-profit organization incorporated in the Yukon. It is a society with national status as a charitable organization. A Board of Directors, elected annually, manages its programming.

The Society has 2 parts:

1. It is a Community Monitoring Program that records local knowledge about the environment. Each year, community researchers interview local experts about fish, berries, caribou, other animal sightings, weather and other things (not all interviewees are expert in all topics). The local monitors are trained, and they must complete a specific number of interviews each winter.

2. It shares information from the database with resource managers, researchers and others upon request and approval from the communities involved.

In the past, the co-op has been involved in projects such as the Old Crow Plant Monitoring Project. Another project has looked at the condition of burbot livers. Data is currently being used to assess muskrat populations in the McKenzie Delta. Data use has to be approved by participating communities. Contact ABEKS to find out about new projects being developed.

Information is also shared among partners and communities after monitoring each year. Sometimes the co-op organizes gatherings for all participants and sometimes meetings are held in each individual community for all beneficiaries. People explain the results of programs and studies, and make decisions together about future programs and priorities. There is much talk about how to involve the community more. A major challenge is making sure that people in communities understand the purpose of the society, which is to make information provided by local experts available now and in the future for the benefit of the participating communities.

Methods

- There is an annual cycle for the Community Monitoring Program. In August to September
- an interviewer (Community Monitor) is hired in each community. In Canada this hiring is done with the assistance of the local Hunters and Trappers Committee or Renewable Resource Council. The Community Monitors usually gather in Inuvik for training to give all the monitors a chance to practice interview and data upload skills. This year, due to COVID 19 restrictions, training will take place by webinar. The Program Coordinator will walk participants through the steps to a good

interview and will send you away with a couple of assignments to help you get acquainted with the survey and other documents.

- The survey is long and covers many topics including mammals, berries, fish, birds, weather and how people are spending time on the land. People interviewed often share stories and observations outside of the survey questions and all of this information is recorded as well.
- People who are interviewed receive a gas voucher for 45L of gas as an honorarium. Fuel is very expensive in these communities and a gas voucher was chosen as a way to support people to get out on the land.
- The information from the interview sheets is entered into an online database. Even after more than 20 years, ideas on how best to summarize this information are still emerging. While some readers will want a summary about one species, others may want to look through the list of quotes to check for anything unusual. The purpose of documenting all of this knowledge is to improve decision making for Northern communities. It is up to participating communities to decide what to do with the data. This may take some time. Information is secure until ideas are developed.
- Local interviewers prepare oral and written reports to be presented at an ABEKS community gathering or at another community meeting. Gatherings are an important part of the co-op and are where communities can share information with each other and with managers, scientists, researchers and others. They are also where the co-op communities make decisions about the future of the co-op.

Arctic Borderlands Resources

Co-op data has contributed to many publications. Please check out the documents page on our website at:

<https://www.arcticborderlands.org/documents>

2. Who to interview

The Goal

Arctic Borderlands depends on the community to select local experts who have:

- been on the land in 2020 and previous years in this area *and*
- who are good observers *and*
- who know a lot about the land.

People who did not get out on the land much in 2020 are not suitable to interview

because they will have had few opportunities to know how the berries, caribou or fish are doing. Many elders who do not get out anymore are not the right people to interview, even though they know a lot.

Your Plan

Here is an example of how to organize who to interview. Numbers say how much someone might know about a subject.

Name Phone	On land much last year? (scale – 1 low - 5 is lots)	Knows a lot about... 1 is low, 5 is lots				Dates, times available	Interview done date, and ID number
		weather	caribou	fish	berries		
<i>Edna (example)</i> -7895	3	4	2	5	5	<i>Most afternoons after the 15th</i>	<i>January 24</i>
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							

There are few people who are “experts” in everything every year. Make your list so you interview 10 berry experts, 10 caribou experts, 10 fish experts and do 20 total interviews. Since people are out of town a lot you probably need **more** than 20 names. Don’t wait too long for the best expert to come back to town!

Please do not go to just one family so that people are happy with who was interviewed.

You can’t interview yourself but you can interview your partner if s/he should be on the list of the best people to interview.

You can interview couples. If they go out on the land separately, then interview them separately. If they go out together, then interviewing them together is best. Regardless, if they want to be interviewed together, then do the interview with both of them. **Remember, only one gas coupon per completed set of interview sheets.**

Records

The co-op wants to keep our promise that information will not be released or stored in a manner that allows an individual to be identified. **So: there should only be 1 copy of the sheet that shows the names and the interview ID numbers.**

Who to consult

Before you start interviewing it is important to review your list of names with the RRC or HTC in your community. Please confirm that these people were active on the land this past year. They do not have to live on the land all year long.

Consulting the RRC/HTC about your list helps you and Arctic Borderlands deal with any complaints from people who feel they should have been interviewed:

“Sorry, maybe next year, I had several people go over the list...we really needed to find some people who had been on the land a lot in 2020 and knew about fish...Thanks for telling me about your concern, maybe we will interview you next year.”

3. How to ask for an interview over the phone

Some words:

Hi Henry, this is Lester Gray, Walter's son. I am phoning to ask you if I can interview you sometime in October or November.

(pause). I will ask you about changes to caribou, fish, and berries you may have noticed this year. You don't have to tell me now- I will come over to your house or we can do the interview by phone when it is good for you.

It is for the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society. (pause) Your name will not go beside any comments in the report unless you consent. There are no questions about how many animals you harvested or where.(pause)

*The interview will take about an hour and I will give you a gas coupon for your time. **We can do the interview in person or over the phone.***

Would this be OK? (pause) Can I come to your house (or call you) Tuesday at 3:00? (pause). Ok, I will call just before I leave here.

Thanks a lot Henry.

Your words:(Every interviewer has their own style. Use this space to write your own introduction.)

4. What to take to the interview

Pens

Survey form

Tablet

Consent form

Camera (*This is optional. Please ask the interviewee for consent to take photos. They will be used in the report at the end of the season if they want their photos included.*)

Gas voucher

Gas receipt

Animal and plan ID books if available.

5. How to start the interview

If you are interviewing in person, make sure you have your mask with you and assure the person you are interviewing that you will keep a 6' distance to protect their safety.

Leave the papers and stuff with your parka

Greet the person and family members and relax

Listen for any background noises like a TV, radio, or machine

After a while, ask *“is it ok to start”, “ will you sit here beside me so we can look at this together?”*

“can we make the tv or radio quieter please”

Clear a space on the table for the paper survey

Get your stuff and put it on the floor beside you

Get out the pens and put them on the table

Get out the papers and put them in a pile in front of you

“are you comfortable, can you hear me clearly, do you want to get a glass of water / tea / coffee?”

Check your outline, smile and explain what this is all about and how you appreciate their help

“please stop me anytime if you have a question or concern”

If you are using a tablet for data entry, explain what the tablet is for and show the interviewee how it works if they are interested

6. How to do the informed consent part

Permission to interview is very important. People must agree to being interviewed, they need to know how their information will be used, and how their name will be handled in any reporting. It is normal to feel nervous in this part of the interview, but take your time and help people understand what it is all about before handing them a pen and asking them to sign. Read the whole consent form to them and ask if they have understood everything. They sign two copies of the consent form. One they keep so they have a record of the interview in case they want to find out about it later. The other copy is for Arctic Borderlands. Take the first copy out of the survey and give it to them. The second will be stored securely with the paper surveys. Let them know that the information they provide will be confidential. Their name will not be used in any reporting unless they consent.

Interviewees have 14 days to change their minds about participation after they have been interviewed. Make sure they know this and point to the list of phone numbers for counselling services at the bottom

of the consent form in case the interview stirs up any uncomfortable feelings that they want support with.

7. How to end the interview if it is not working or you do not feel safe

Do not interview people who are rude, violent, or drinking. Pay attention to your safety. Here are some ideas of what you can say to end an interview if you do not feel safe:

“I have a bad headache coming on...sorry...I’d better come back in a day or two..”
“I have to get back now and finish my notes- they need to go out tomorrow- thanks anyway”
“It seems like things are getting busy here...That’s fine... We can finish this another day”

8. Tips for Great interviewing

- Everyone has their own style but if every interviewer asks questions in different ways, using different words, then the Co-op gets information that is difficult to make sense of. We can tell when the question was not asked right. In one case all the questions about changes in moose were answered with the number seen *“oh I guess I saw about 39 moose this past year...”*
Find your own style, but ask the questions as they are written down on the form.
- Have a positive attitude about the work because the people will put more effort into the interview.
- Tell them how important their information is and make sure to thank them for their contribution.
- **Do not let the person you are interviewing fill in the form.** If the interviewee asks to fill it in, say something like:

“I’m sorry, I have to do the writing in this interview, can I have the pen back please? It will take less time, I promise. I can read what I write down back to you if you want to make sure I wrote it down correctly.”

- Short breaks can help if the interviewee seems tired. You can always come back a second time to finish if they want you to.

- If the answer seems odd, then say what they said and then re read the question and pause:

“So I heard you say something about ants (pause)... Can you help me understand how this is about the differences in the berries this past year?”

- Avoid leading people to answer in a certain way...

BAD	Good
Few mosquitoes around this year, eh?	Were there more or less mosquitoes this year?
It was sure windy at my camp in the fall. Was it windy at your camp?	How was the wind this year down around your area? Strong, light, cold, hot?
With the late freeze up on the lakes did you notice that the black ducks stayed around longer?	Did the black ducks leave late or early? Why?

9. Things to do after the last question

Take a checklist to every interview to remind you of all of these things:

- ✓ Ask if there are any questions the interviewee would like to go back to.
- ✓ Fill out their name and the date on the gas coupon and ask them to sign a receipt that they received it.
- ✓ Remind the interviewee that the gas coupon has an expiry date.
- ✓ Tell them that the monitoring report will be available at the RRC or HTC office in March.
- ✓ Flip through the pages to be sure you did every question.
- ✓ Put all your papers into the envelope, your pens in your pocket.
- ✓ Look at the table carefully to check that you have everything.

10. Tips for Entering Data

Entering the data can be intimidating if you're not comfortable on a computer, but it's pretty simple. The online form is the same as the questionnaire, just fill in the answers as you did when you did the interview.

In past years, youth monitors have asked for tablets so that data entry can be done during the interview. This will reduce the amount of time you spend doing data entry after the interviews and make it easier if you don't have internet access at home.

Each 'team' is assigned one tablet. It has a limited amount of data pre-loaded per month and has to be returned to Arctic Borderlands at the end of the season with all of the paper surveys. Here are the steps to using the tablet:

1. Decide who will fill in the paper survey and who will enter info onto the tablet. Both need to be done for each interview. The paper surveys allow us to check answers if they do not seem to be entered correctly into the database. The monitor leading the interview (asking the questions) should fill in the paper survey and the other monitor can use the tablet.
2. Explain to the person you are interviewing what the tablet is for and show them the screen if they are interested. Tell them that the answers are stored securely in an online database.
3. Log on to the database at:
<http://datapathsystems.net/CommunityEcosystem/2019/MainForm.html>. This is what you should see:

[Check database](#)

Name of Interviewer:

ID #: (write this number onto the paper survey form. If you are continuing from an interrupted form, type in the paper form number in this box so they may be connected together by their common ID number.)

Paper Survey Form # (should already be pre-written on the paper survey form)

Community Ecosystems Monitoring Interview Questions

Data in this survey refers to the year: 2019

Survey Date (date this survey was collected):

Name of Community/Region:

Name of Interviewee (person being interviewed):

Gender: Male Female

Interviewer initials:

4. Enter the name of the lead interviewer in the upper right corner.
5. The database will generate an ID # (upper left corner). Write this number on your paper survey.
6. Give your paper survey a number (1-20). Enter this number in the box under the name of the interviewer.
7. Fill in the rest of the form. It should look just like the paper survey.

Please note: the tablets should not be used for anything other than your work with Arctic Borderlands. Please do not store any personal information on the tablet.

IMPORTANT!

- If you make a mistake it can always be fixed!
- Make sure you fill in an answer for every question you asked; if they answered “Don’t Know” then check DK. If there’s no answer we’ll assume you didn’t ask that question.
- If you make a mistake record it and let the Administrative Coordinator know what the mistake was and which interview record number it was for – they will make sure it is corrected.
- Enter the complete interview all at once, you cannot come back to one that you’ve started.

- If there is an interruption (like a break in internet service) start the interview again with a new record number – and send a note to the Administrative Coordinator with the incomplete record number. They will make sure it is deleted from the database.

11. Things to do when you get home

- Staple the receipt for the gas coupon to the interview sheets.
- Prepare for your next interview by making sure you have all the papers in the right order.

12. What to do with the completed surveys and other materials

If your contract is with ABEKS, mail all completed surveys, other papers (a list of who is in any picture you take, your receipts, any left-over gas coupons, a copy of the list of names with the interview ID numbers and a record of your expenses if you paid for gas to interview people on the land. and tablet) to:

Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society
P.O. Box 33251
Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 6S1.

The Co-op will reimburse you for postage on your next payment. **You MUST provide a receipt to be reimbursed.** Write your address on the return address part. The postmaster will give you a

numbered piece of paper that you keep. This serial number is used to find the envelope if it gets lost in the mail. You can take a picture of it and email or text it to the Administrative Coordinator if you have a cell phone. Please make sure you don't lose the tracking number.

If your contract is with your RRC or HTC, bring all of the materials, including the tablet, to your RRC/HTC contact person and they will mail them for you.

13. How to make graphs for the community monitor report

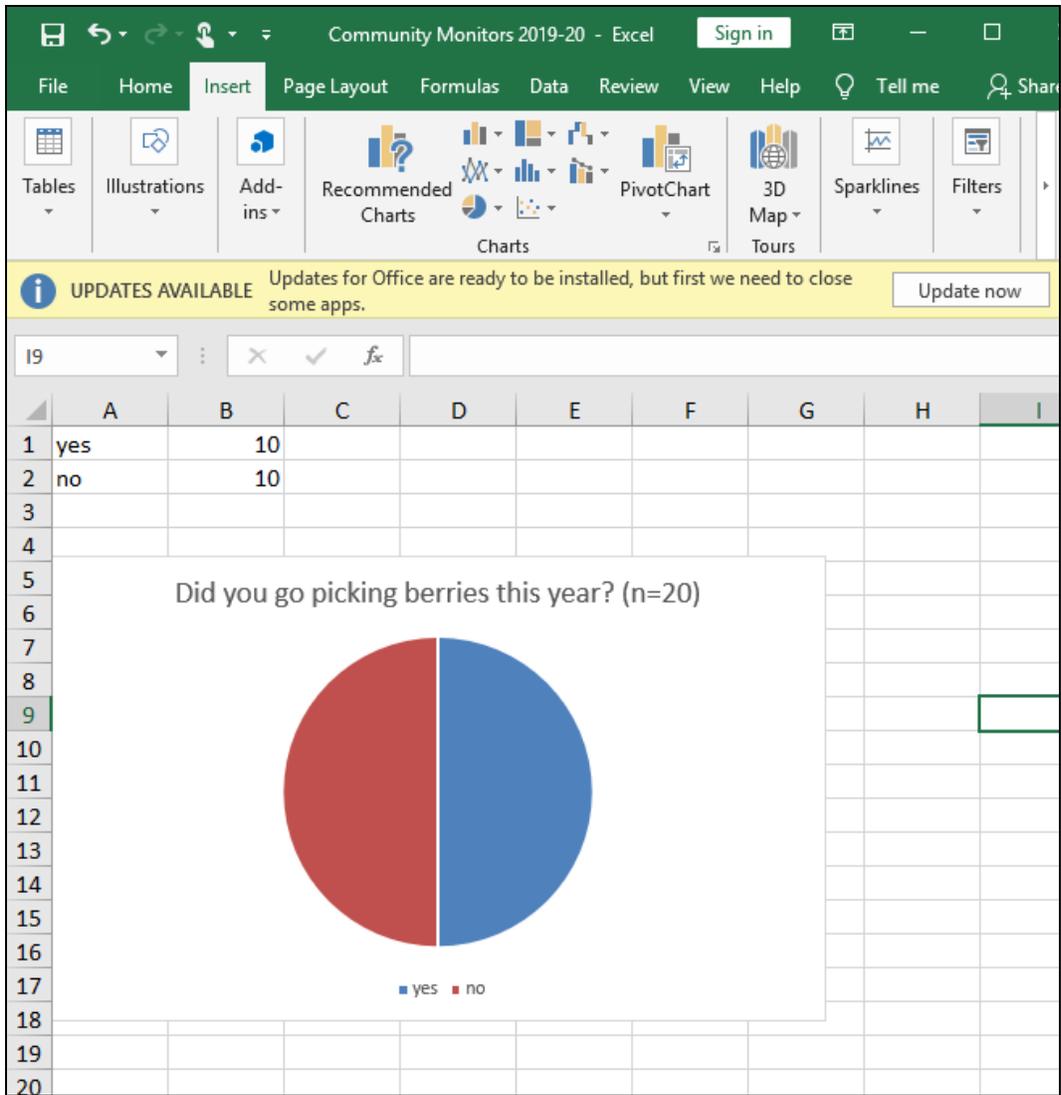
The ABEKS database is very large and can be complicated to work with, depending on what information is being examined. Over the years, researchers have used the database to do complex calculations and to look at relationships between things like weather and caribou body condition and the health of muskrats in the McKenzie Delta. These are examples of how academic researchers can work with the data to answer questions for communities. There are also simple things that can be done to present information to communities and others interested in finding out what the co-op is doing. This year we will work on simple ways of showing what interviewees said in each community.

The tablets are set up with Excel. This is a program that can be used to turn numbers into graphs. It has lots of built in formulas that help analyze information. For our purposes, all we need is two fields and a basic understanding of how to tell it to make a chart. Here is what to do:

1. Decide on three things that you want to tell your community about. Your RRC or HTC may want to help choose these topics. For example, you may decide to report on what people said about berries, fish and birds, or whether people hunted for caribou this year. You are not limited to 3 questions but please choose at least 3. Questions with yes/no answers are the easiest to represent as a graph.
2. Open excel on your tablet and choose a new sheet
3. Label each sheet with the information you are working on (right click on the sheet tab at the bottom of the page, choose rename from the drop-down menu and type in the name (example, "berries")
4. Start with one sheet. Click on box A1 and write "yes". Now click on box A2 and write "no".

5. Go through the surveys together and count how many people said they did pick berries. Enter this number beside “yes” (box B1). Count the number of people who said they did not pick berries and enter this number next to “no” (Box B2)
6. Highlight all for boxes by clicking on box A1 and dragging down to B2
7. Click on the ‘insert’ tab at the top of the page and choose a pie chart. There should now be a chart on the sheet.
8. Count how many people answered the question in total (should be B1 plus B2). This is your sample size (n-value) which is important to report when you are doing any scientific analysis
9. Click on “chart title” inside the chart and type “Did you go picking berries this year?” (n=_)
10. Include any key quotes by writing them in one of the boxes. You can also include your own observations of what people said. Example from 2018, “Most of the respondents went fishing this year, and nearly all of them were satisfied that the fish caught met their needs.”
11. Repeat this process for each question that you want to present as a graph.
12. Save the file with a good name, example: Aklavikgraphs2019
13. Email the file to arcticborderlands@gmail.com. Your graphs will be included in the community monitor report.

Here is how your Excel sheet will look if you have followed the steps:



14. How to do a great summary at a gathering or community meeting

Some years, ABEKS hosts community gatherings. Interviewees and monitors, RRC/HTC members, funders and researchers and other monitoring programs are invited to listen to the monitor summaries and to share information about other programs. In years when there is not a gathering, monitors are expected to present their summary to the RRC or HTC or at another community meeting.

Your summary will be in your own words. People will listen closely to what you say and may want to ask you a few questions.

Usually monitors talk about each section of the survey and highlight themes, quotes and stories (if consent was given by the interviewee) and any other information they found interesting. If this is your first gathering or community meeting you may be nervous and want to read out your summary. That is fine, and with experience you may be able to speak without reading your notes. The important part is to share your information.

Since you are summarizing what you heard the people you interviewed tell you about change in the interviews, not just what you saw changing on the land, it is helpful to keep some notes of the main points that people said on each topic during your interviews.

It is important to read over the surveys and write down these notes before you mail the interview sheets back.

You might set up your note taking so it looks like this, on a separate sheet of paper:

Topic (Go thru survey form...)	Main ideas	Anything unusual?	Key quotes
Time on the land			
Weather			
Berries			
etc			

If you set up your written report with paragraphs for each of these topics, it will be fast to write.

There are lots of community reports on the website that you can read to see how other interviewers have done them in the past. Your summary needs to be typed on a computer, and should be between 4 – 8 pages. When you are happy with the way it is written, send it by email to arcticborderlands@gmail.com in Word. Please do not send a PDF, JPEG or PNG file. The coordinator needs to be able to cut and paste the content into a new document which will be included in the final report and printed for all participants.

15. Who to phone for help

Heather Ashthorn is the administrative coordinator. Her number is (867)633-6770. If you get voice mail, leave a message and she will return your call. Heather will be checking in with each of you from time to time. If your contract comes through your RRC or HTC call your local RRC/HTC contact instead.

YOUR NOTES: