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News Release

Water Quality Study Released

November 23, 2017

Fredericton, NB ----- A major research project on surface water conditions in areas of New Brunswick with the highest potential for shale gas development was released today by the New Brunswick Energy Institute and the Canadian Rivers Institute (CRI), the New Brunswick based group that carried out the study.

“The study was launched in August 2014 with the goal to understand the chemical, physical and biological conditions in surface waters before any oil and gas development occurred,” according to Dr. David Besner, Chair of the New Brunswick Energy Institute. “While there is a government mandated moratorium in place, the Institute felt it was vitally important to continue this important research by the Canadian Rivers Institute. We firmly believe this baseline information will improve our ability to assess potential changes to surface water during or after development and it addresses some important questions New Brunswickers have about shale gas exploration,” Dr. Besner said.

“This report provides an assessment of ecosystem conditions across the upper Kennebecasis and Pollett River watersheds, with baseline data describing water quality and biological communities,” according to Dr. Michelle Gray, Science Director for the Canadian Rivers Institute. “The studies identified clear patterns of temperature and water quality throughout these watersheds that were linked to groundwater inputs and the age of underlying bedrock geology, resulting in natural changes in the species that are present.”

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“Assessment of water quality in areas with high shale gas potential must consider the natural differences in water quality and species that occur in freshwaters, as a result of local geology. Moreover, the approach we developed can be used for other forms of resource exploration and development,” Dr. Gray concluded.

“We are pleased to have done this important research for New Brunswick,” said Dr. Gray. “Our team of scientists from the Canadian Rivers Institute at the University of New Brunswick, in partnership with the Université de Moncton, have generated information that will be valuable for assessing changes in these systems as a result of resource development.”

“This represents the most detailed assessment to date of some of our aquatic ecosystems, and the data will be useful in our understanding of our present environment and future changes,” Dr. Besner concluded.

The study is publicly available from the New Brunswick Energy Institute website
<https://www.nbenergyinstitute.ca>

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For information or comment on the study:

Michelle Gray, PhD

Science Director, Canadian Rivers Institute

Assistant Professor, UNB Forestry & Environmental Management

506-451-6866

Mgray1@unb.ca