

# Tracking Change...

## Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance

**Tracking Change...** is a new research initiative funded by the *Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada* and led by the University of Alberta, the Traditional Knowledge Steering Committee of the Mackenzie River Basin Board, the Government of the Northwest Territories and many other valued partner organizations. Over six years (2015-2022), the project will fund local and traditional knowledge research activities in the Mackenzie River basin and sister projects in the Lower Amazon and Lower Mekong River Basins, with the long term goal of strengthening the voices of subsistence fishers and Indigenous communities in the governance of major fresh water ecosystems. The project developed in recognition that river systems are important social, economic, cultural and ecological places that contribute to the well-being of communities in diverse ways. River peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples who have well developed fishing livelihoods can offer extremely valuable insights about long term (historic and current) patterns of social and ecological change and the interconnections between the health and dynamics of these river systems and that of river communities. Although based on oral traditions, this system of observation or “tracking change” is much like monitoring. Like those who live on Canada’s east and west coasts, the ability of Indigenous communities in the Mackenzie River Basin to maintain fishing as a livelihood practice is of social, economic and cultural importance to all of Canada; if this river system is not healthy, how can we be?

**Fishers have been tracking change in the same places, in the same ways, using the same signs & signals for many generations. Such traditional knowledge is key to our understanding of many kinds of issues resulting from resource development, climate change and other land uses. This tracking of change is not simply a technical process; people watch, listen, learn and communicate about change because they care about the health of the land and the health of their communities.**

[www.trackingchange.ca](http://www.trackingchange.ca)



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

For more information, please contact:

**Dr. Brenda Parlee**

*Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair*

*507 GSB, University of Alberta T6G2H1*

[bparlee@ualberta.ca](mailto:bparlee@ualberta.ca)

**Mackenzie River Basin Board Traditional Knowledge Steering Committee**

***Mackenzie River Basin Board Secretariat***

4th Floor, 5019-52nd St. - P.O. Box 2310

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

[don.pittman@ec.gc.ca](mailto:don.pittman@ec.gc.ca)