

The Society of High Prairie Regional Environmental Action Committee (Jule Asterisk, Regional Environmental Action Committee 2009)

Hazardous Waste: Hazardous to wildlife, even with "Best Available Technology" disposal

During a recent Research Project to determine the concerns of people living near a Hazardous Waste Incinerator, damaging information about local wildlife came to light.

The Swan Hills (Hazardous Waste) Treatment Facility (SHTC) has been incinerating hazardous wastes since 1987, 70 kilometres south of the Lesser Slave Lake in Northern Alberta. In 1996 and 1997, explosions in the incinerators released unmeasured amounts of PCB's into the surrounding area, above and beyond their allowable emissions.

Since that time, the Indian Regional Council, representing four local First Nations, has provided evidence of PCB contamination in First Nations individuals which is higher in those who consume traditional foods.

A health advisory was placed at 30 kilometres around the SHTC; within this "no-hunt zone", no traditional foods are to be consumed, including moose, deer, fish, berries, and herbs.

During the Research Project, anonymous callers contacted the researcher to have their concerns documented. Of the ten callers, five noted the "no-hunt zone." Concerns included the fact that a moose will travel up to 150 kilometres in any given year, and the most damaging concern was an account of a moose downed for food outside the zone which was full of "green bubbles."