

Environmental racism: health impacts and promising responses

Public Health 2017

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National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

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What is environmental racism?

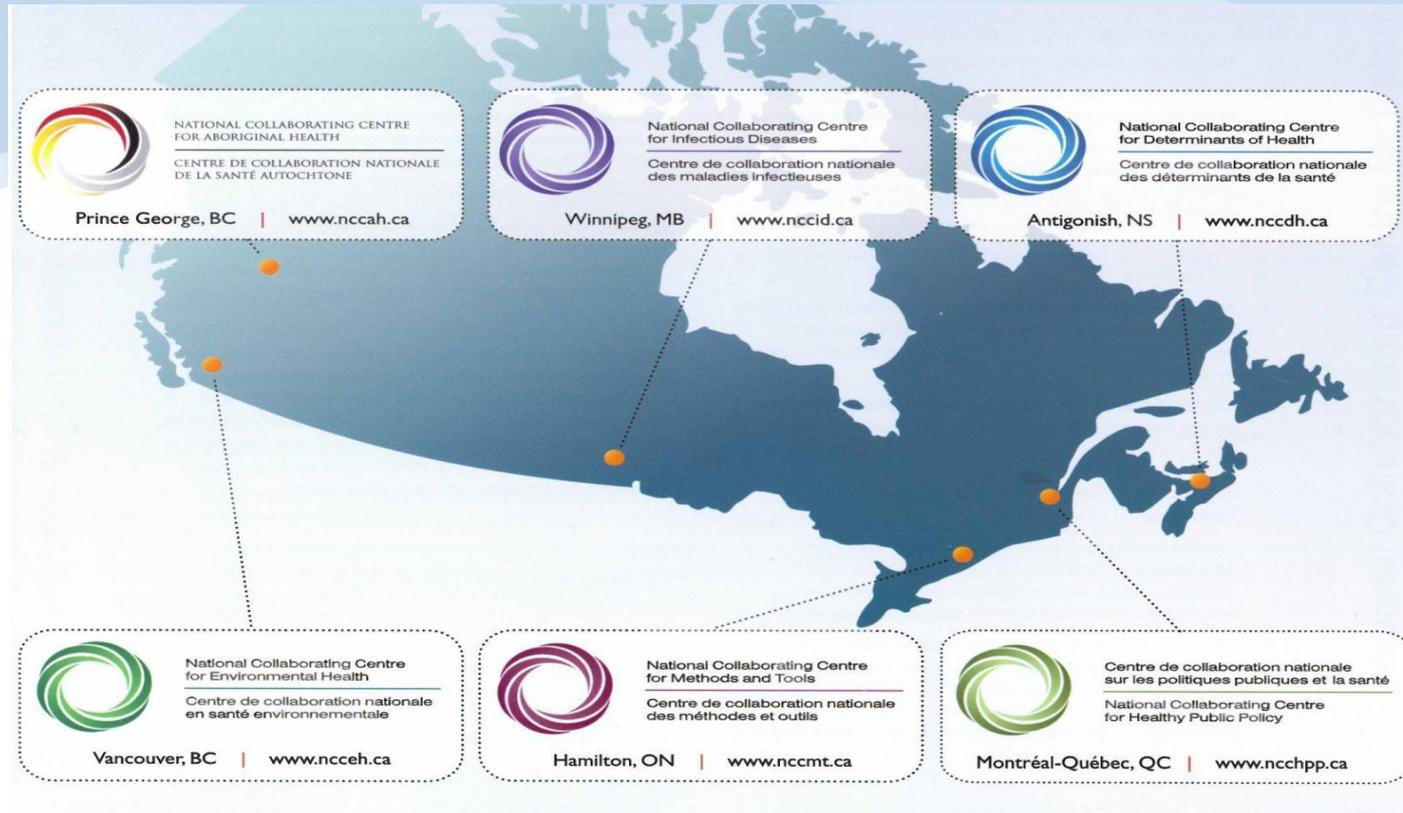
Environmental racism is the practice of disproportionately placing environmental hazards—such as industrial sites or landfills—near racialized communities.



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NCC's for Public Health



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NCCDH interest in environmental racism

- Ongoing interest in racism and how it affects health
- Core planning member for CPHA plenaries on racism (2016, 2017)
- Let's Talk: Advocacy and health equity
- Learning from Practice: advocacy for health equity – environmental racism

LEARNING FROM PRACTICE:
ADVOCACY FOR HEALTH EQUITY + ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM



BACKGROUND

Advocacy is a vital role for public health practitioners in Canada. Engaging in advocacy helps us to build and capitalize on collective action to support systemic change, and offers significant potential to foster the conditions that support greater health equity in our communities.¹

There is no single way to design and implement advocacy to address health inequities. Selecting an approach depends on the local or broader context, practitioners' own philosophies or preferences for practice, and the dominant ideology within the organization.

Despite the wide variety of approaches that can be used in advocacy, there are some essential elements which include:²

- Clear, specific policy goals;
- Solid research and science base;
- Values based to fairness, equity, and social justice;
- Grass-based support through coalitions;
- Mass media used to set public agenda and frame issues; and
- Use of political and legislative processes for change.

This practice example was created by the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health with the director of the Environmental Inequities, Social Inequities & Community Health (EISCH) Project to demonstrate the application of advocacy in Canadian public health practice. Visit www.nccdh.ca for other documents on advocacy in the Learning from Practice series.



LET'S TALK
ADVOCACY
AND HEALTH EQUITY

PART OF THE LET'S TALK SERIES



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Our speakers

Ingrid Waldron, Halifax

**School of Nursing, Dalhousie University,
Director ENRICH Project**

Dorene Bernard, Sipeknekatik

**Social worker, long-time environmental activist particularly around
industrial waste & water quality issues**

Louise Delisle, Shelburne

**Playwright and author. Founder of the South End Environmental
Injustice Society. Researcher, Black women's health projects at
Dalhousie and McGill Universities.**

In Whose Backyard?

Organizing Against
Environmental Racism
in Nova Scotia



Objectives

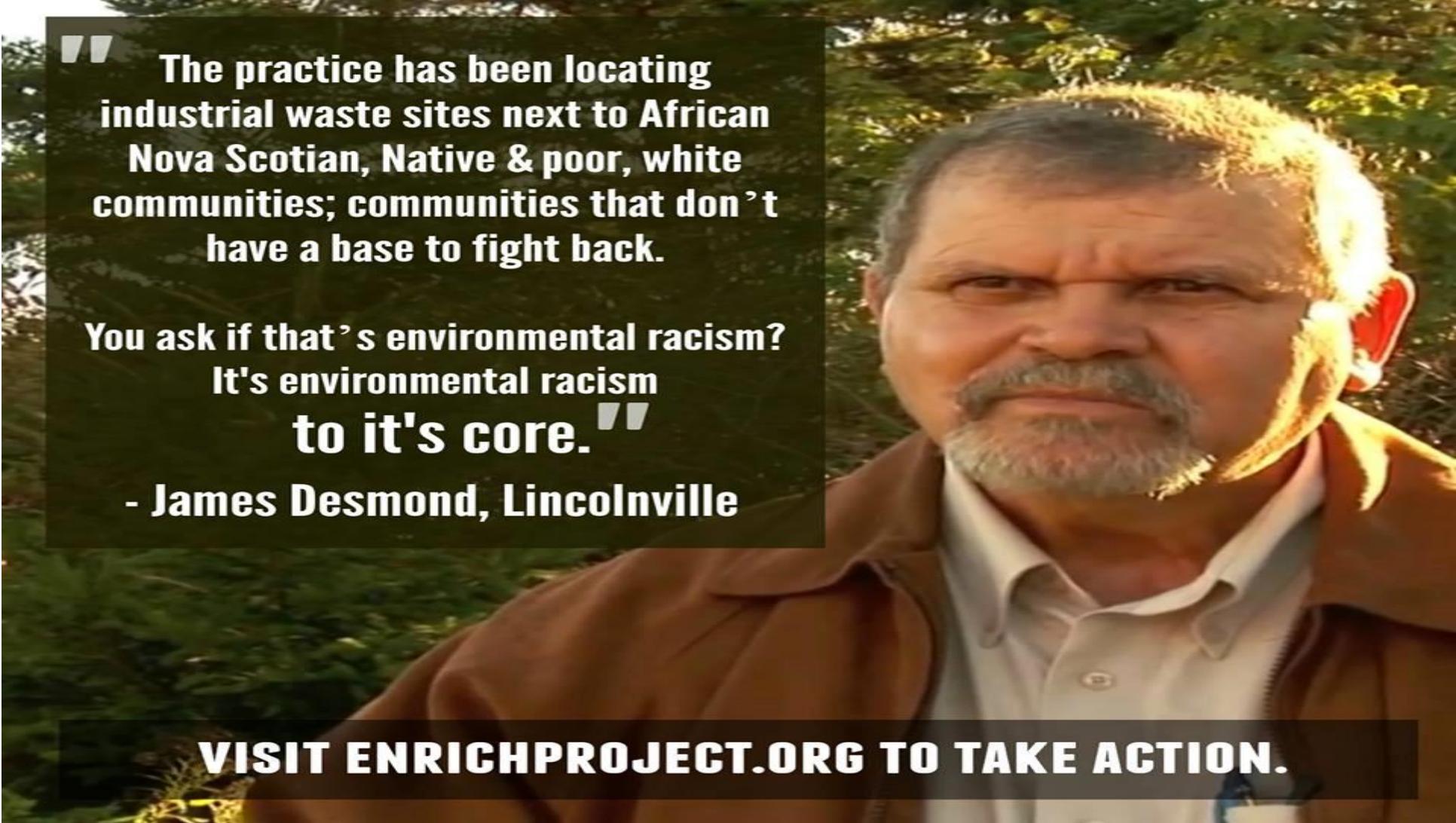
- Define environmental racism, explain its structural base, and provide examples of its manifestation in Nova Scotia
- Examine the health impacts of environmental racism in Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities
- Learn about work to bring attention to and significantly reduce environmental racism in Nova Scotia
- Discuss possible public health advocacy responses to existing or proposed industrial projects near communities of colour

Ingrid Waldron, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Nursing
Dalhousie University



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“ The practice has been locating industrial waste sites next to African Nova Scotian, Native & poor, white communities; communities that don’t have a base to fight back.

**You ask if that’s environmental racism?
It’s environmental racism
to it’s core.”**

- James Desmond, Lincolnville

VISIT ENRICHPROJECT.ORG TO TAKE ACTION.

#SacredWaterWarriors



NO PIPELINES

No to Pipelines



PLEASE
BOIL THIS
WATER BEFORE
DRINKING AND
COOKING











CANCER

**Stop Environmental Violence:
On the Land and our Bodies**

#NoKXL

#EnvironmentalViolence



Environmental Stressors

Toxins

Disaster

Chemicals

Pesticides

Noise

Pollutants

Workplace

Lighting

Privacy

Electromagnetic waves

Temperature

Clutter

Traffic

Waiting

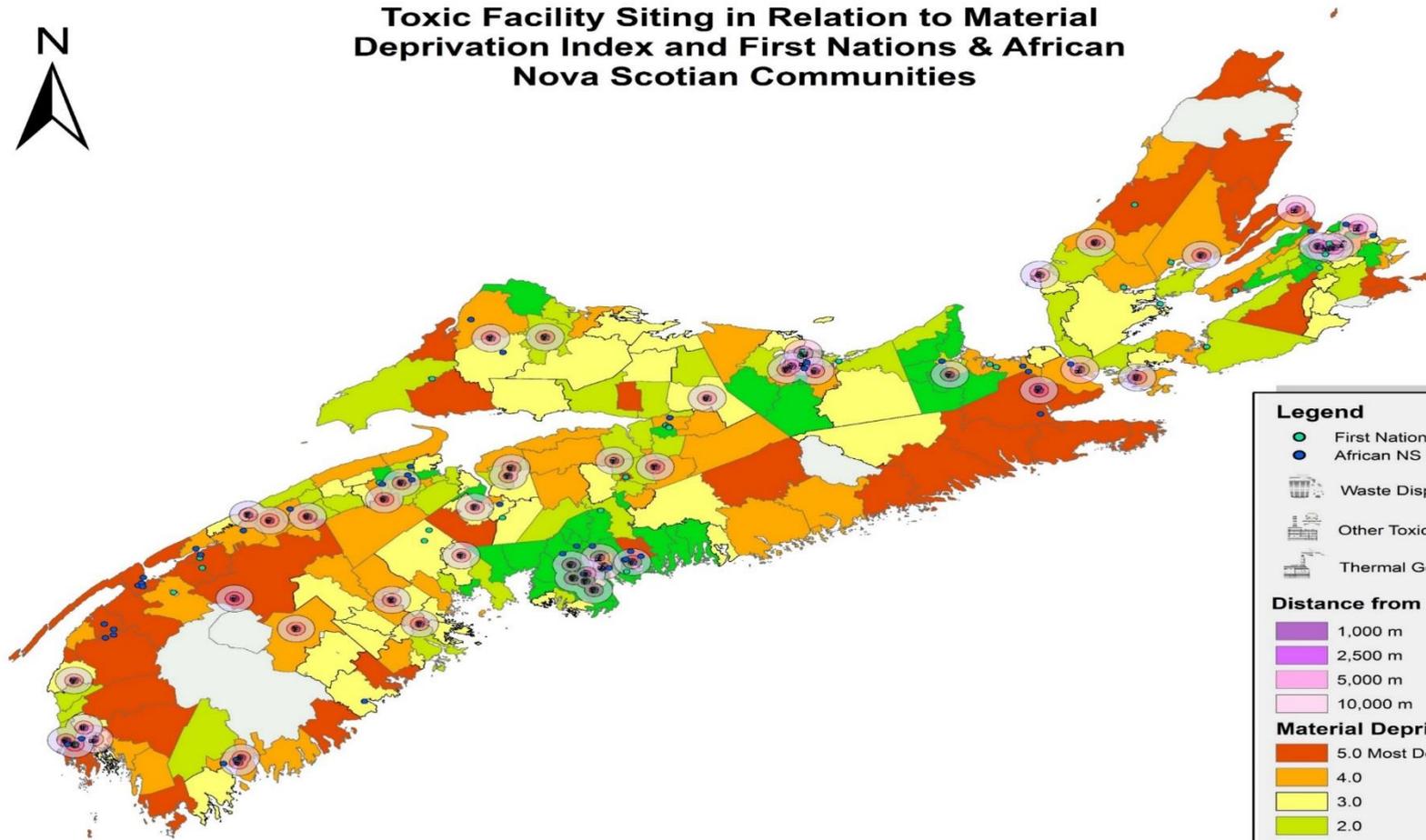
*ENRICH's Multi-Pronged Approach:
Addressing Environmental Racism in Nova Scotia*







Toxic Facility Siting in Relation to Material Deprivation Index and First Nations & African Nova Scotian Communities



0 25 50 100 Kilometers

Legend

- First Nations Communities
- African NS Communities
- ☒ Waste Disposal Sites
- ☒ Other Toxic Industries
- ☒ Thermal Generating Stations

Distance from Toxic Facility

- 1,000 m
- 2,500 m
- 5,000 m
- 10,000 m

Material Deprivation Scale

- 5.0 Most Deprived %
- 4.0
- 3.0
- 2.0
- 1.0 Least Deprived %
- No Data



NOVA SCOTIA

Government of Nova Scotia





INVITING YOUTH TO MOBILIZE THROUGH ART

Mi'kmaw & African Nova Scotian Youth (Ages 15-26)

Why you should take part?

It is an opportunity to create art about issues of environmental racism in your community

Your art will gain exposure through various forms of social media as well as an art gallery

Many cash prizes to be won

Upon filling out a reimbursement form, you will be compensated for any costs of supplies or equipment necessary to create your art

1 Create your Art



2 Take a photo or video of your art



3 Email it to us at timetocleartheair@gmail.com by the deadline ****MARCH 23rd****



College of Sustainability
partnered with:

ENRICH

&





**Ecology
Action
Centre**





CALL TO ACTION!

SUPPORT BILL 1111

for Environmental Justice
in Nova Scotia







NGO

Non Governmental Organization

Thank
you

Environmental Racism: Health Impacts and Promising Responses

June 8, 2017



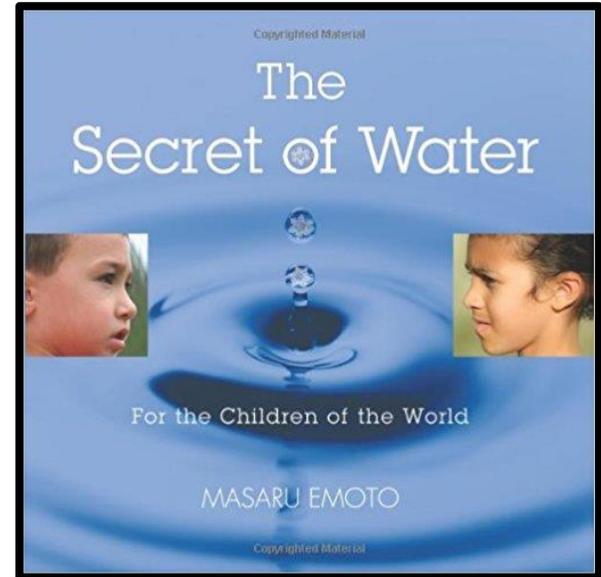
Dorene Bernard, MSW
Mi'kmaq Grassroots Grandmother,
Water Protector, Water Walker,
Coady Chair on Social Justice 2017



Indigenous Knowledge informs Western sciences to promote an understanding of our connection to and protection of Mother Earth.



Halifax Blue Dot 2014 – Water Ceremony at Point Pleasant Park



Dr. Masaru Emoto – The Secret of Water

“The growing international recognition of the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous and vulnerable people enhances the understanding that protecting the environment is as much about social justice as keeping eco-systems healthy”.

David Suzuki

Science Matters, Weekly column of Science and Environment from David Suzuki in the COAST March 24 –March 30, 2016.

Environmental Racism: Impacts to Physical Health in Indigenous Communities in Nova Scotia

- Industry impacts to our waters, lands and air, within or adjacent to First Nations communities and traditional lands
- Inadequate and substandard and outdated or non-existent water treatment and infrastructure
- High levels of stressors in practicing Treaty Rights, cultural responsibility in protecting the family, the water and environment for First Nations

Environmental Racism: Impacts to Mental Health in Indigenous Communities in Nova Scotia

- The historic, systemic racism and oppression against Indigenous people in Canada
- There is a direct correlation of the abuse of Mother Earth as a resource of industry and profit, and the way society views Indigenous women and girls.
- Dispossession of our lands and waters, impact our spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health.

Promising Practices Vs. Promises

- United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action
- Federal, Provincial and First Nations Governments are responsible to address environmental racism and change existing laws and create laws that respect our Treaty and true reconciliation
- Grassroots initiatives that promote our Peace and Friendship Treaties in NS and our work together to protect our environment

Shaw Resources Sand and Gravel Mine in Milford NS next to Indian Brook drinking water supply for over 50 years!





Mi'kma'ki Grassroots Grandmothers, Survivors of Residential School and allies Walk and Pray for the protection of our Shubenacadie River ecosystem!

**Promising Practices:
Grassroots people joining
alliances in support of
the protection of the
environment.**



Sipekne'katik Grandmothers and Mi'kmaq Warriors Water Protectors and Mother Earth Defenders



Jonathan Beadle, Pictou Landing protests Boat Harbour



NS Fishermen and landowners, Allies and Mi'kmaq at protest of the Alton Gas project.



Brentwood residents protests at Alton Gas Storage Cavern site.

Peace and Friendship Alliance NS



Peace and Friendship Alliance NS work together to promote a healthy environment, protect the water, air and lands and our resources for the benefit of all our relations (Msiit Nokoma), now and for our future generations

Mother Earth Protectors, Mi'kmaq and Allies, Academics and Grassroots are working together to stop the Alton Gas Project and address Environmental Racism in Mi'kmaki!



Treaty Based Fishing Area at Treaty Truck House



Mi'kmaq grassroots women practice cultural responsibility to protect the water, the environment and Treaty Rights.



Environmental Racism in Shelburne

South End Environmental Injustice
Society



What we believe

- SEED and their supporters believe placement of the landfill stemmed from environmental racism.
- Located in a neighbourhood in which residents are mostly lower income and African-Nova Scotia, the site received garbage from the more affluent communities.



What we are doing

- SEED is working with faculty and student groups within the community and outside like faculty and student from Dalhousie, especially with Enrich and Dr Walden to investigate water quality, and soil and air pollution from the landfill, and associated health risks.



SEED

- We have established a group called the South End Environmental Injustice Society.
- We have now registered this group with the joint stocks and deeds as a non profit organization.
- We hold regular meeting with a executive board of 9



What are the fears now in the community

- increased rates of certain types of cancer, including, prostate, brain and leukemia, among people who live and lived near this landfill



One woman talks about the type of Cancer her family has endured

- Well for my health issues,

I had 2 cancers, thyroid and cervical. Unclear if those are related to the dump but... my rheumatologist (a doctor who specializes in autoimmune diseases / arthritic conditions) strongly believes my exposure to air and ground pollution from the dump led to my developing lupus.

I also had Graves's disease (autoimmune disease of the thyroid) before I had cancer. I now have Sjogren's disease, Celiac's disease, ankylosing Spondylitis, antiphospholipid syndrome, Reynaud's disease, Vasculitis - all of these are autoimmune.. my immune system attacking my stomach, spine, blood vessels, joints, etc. And.. , anemia of chronic diseases and chronic migraines.

My Mom's cancer is multiple myeloma and it's a cancer known to be linked with people exposed to military waste (from the navy base



The dump afire



Sometime the garbage got so high they set it
afire.



Burning

- While the burning was going on the rats would run and the men would be waiting with their guns to shoot what they could for fear they would enter the homes and then into the beds of children.
- This was a common practice nightly for some of us, that the beds had to be checked to make sure there were no rats in them.
- We could not open a window on the days they were burning because the smoke would fill the house it would linger for days.



Cloths could not be hung out because of the smoke



Children often played at the dump



Sometime the garbage got so high they set it
afire.



The smell was so pungent it made you sick to your stomach



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The fire

- The fear the fire would come through the woods and burn us out



What we have done

- We have taken pictures and presented them to the Nova Scotia Environment which resulted in a demand to the town of Shelburne to clean up the mess that was on the site causing environmental issues



What has happened

The dump is now closed and will remain closed to all waste



What we have done

- Met with Town Council
- Met with Municipal Council
- We have work with Environment Nova Scotia
- We have registered ourselves with Joint stocks and deeds



What we have done

- We have managed to have the dump closed permanently
- We have document testimony about living near the dump.



Issues

- The environmental issues are still the same the dump has not been cleaned up but we have convinced the town council that it is in the best interest of the community having the dump closed. This has been done.



Small group discussion: 10 minutes

- Get together in small groups (3-5 people)
- Share your knowledge of environmental racism in your area
- Share examples of how public health has helped raise awareness / responded
- Discuss how public health **could** get involved
- Pick one example to share with the larger group

Share highlights of small group discussions

There's Something in the Water:

Environmental Racism & the Politics of Waste
in Mi'kmaw & African Nova Scotian Communities

Dr. Ingrid Waldron

Associate Research Scholar, Healthy Populations Institute
Faculty of Health Professions, Dalhousie University
Director, Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities &
Community Health Project ENRICH)

All are welcome! Light lunch provided!

FRIDAY, MARCH 24

12:30

Room AT 216

Atrium Building



What can public health do?

- Talk about environmental racism
- Reach out to health authorities & medical officers of health.
- Conduct a health (equity) impact assessment
- Create relationships with community organizations
- Educate



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@NCCDH_CCNDS #sdoh #healthequity



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