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News Release

New Brunswick Energy Institute Awards Baseline Water Quality Research Project to Canadian Rivers Institute.

Fredericton, August 14, 2014 – The New Brunswick Energy Institute (NBEI) announces it has selected the Canadian Rivers Institute (CRI) to study surface water conditions in areas of New Brunswick with the highest potential for shale gas development.

“The goal of this project is to understand the chemical, physical and biological conditions in surface waters before oil and gas development,” says Dr. David Besner, Chair of the New Brunswick Energy Institute. “This baseline information will improve our ability to assess potential changes to surface water during or after development and it will address some important questions New Brunswickers have about shale gas exploration.”

The study will provide the groundwork for evaluating possible impacts of shale gas development on surface water by mapping the inflows of groundwater to adjacent streams and by characterizing current baseline water quality and aquatic species in areas of the province most likely to be of interest to shale gas developers. The CRI research team will also develop and test methods to monitor potential contaminants from shale gas development, such as methane levels in streams, as they are critical for long term monitoring programs and for identifying impacts on surface waters should development proceed in the future. All the findings will be made available to the public.

“We are pleased to have been selected to conduct this important research for New Brunswick,” said Dr. Allen Curry, the lead researcher on the successful team. “It’s the second study award CRI has received from NBEI and confirms that New Brunswick is home to some of the most qualified scientists in Canada when it comes to understanding potential impacts of natural resource development on our waters.”

“The Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) of NBEI evaluated several proposals before selecting the Canadian Rivers Institute,” said Dr. Besner. “In this case our conflict-of-interest policy required that three SAC members recuse themselves given their associations with UNB, which is the home of the CRI. For this reason, NBEI Research Fellow, Dr. Cathy Ryan, University of Waterloo, provided external reviews of the proposals. We are confident we have chosen a well-qualified team for this project, with the added benefit that they are familiar with our local geography.”

The research will commence in September 2014, with most of the field study to be done in 2015 and results to be published in 2016. It will cost approximately \$350,000 (CDN).

University scientists on the research team include Dr. Allen Curry (CRI), Dr. Kerry MacQuarrie (CRI), Dr. Wendy Monk (CRI), Dr. David Armanini (CRI), and Dr. Olivier Clarisse (Université de Moncton). They will be joined by UNB and First Nations students, who will expand the local capacity in this type of research that can then be applied to future energy development in New Brunswick.



The New Brunswick Energy Institute is an independent organization that works impartially to provide New Brunswickers with factual information relating to New Brunswick's energy future.

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