

NOTES FROM WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

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The following provides a summary of the topics, points of discussion, and questions asked at the Workshop sessions.

- There is a need to promote the existing geochemical data for soils and other surficial media and suggest a “correct” protocol for collecting soil samples and generating new geochemical data.
- Consultants want to know what geochemical number they should use. Decisions need to be made.
- Consultants want to know what they can use for geochemical background that will be acceptable for risk assessments.
- Regulators need to define the geochemical dataset that will be used by consultants.
- Some consultants have major issues with CCME guidelines, where the acceptable element levels are close to detection limits.
- There are pros and cons for using systems of eco-classifications vs. regions based on bedrock lithologies or surficial materials for characterizing geochemical background. The base used will depend on the needs of the geochemical data user.
- Geochemical and related data need to be geo-referenced and available in GIS format to be useful. It can then be used in many different ways.
- The datasets related to geochemical background and soil quality regulations should be developed, based on expert knowledge, and include an explanation of the procedures used to derive them.
- There is a need to determine who will be the ultimate keeper of these data.
- It is recognized that providing national guidelines on background geochemistry is different than what is needed for risk assessments.
- Exposure to Human and Ecological Health may not relate to background in the C horizon – does it represent the conditions that biota are exposed to? How should we relate data for the C-horizon to exposure?
- What horizons or intervals for sampling are useable? Is the 0-30cm interval acceptable for background?
- What will the regulators accept? What protocol? How many samples? Horizon or depth-interval, or both?
- What are the steps forward?
 - Form a small working group to resolve these issues. Create a product (a working document). Initial document could be released as an open file in April. More data will be collected for Nova Scotia this year.
 - The long term objective is to create a scientifically defensible, robust database to use to create background, influence guidelines, and characterize regional/local background for risk assessments.