

Water Resources Division
Qimugjuk Building
P.O. Box 2200
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November 9, 2001

Ms. Rita Becker
Licensing Administrator
Nunavut Water Board
P.O. Box 119
Gjoa Haven, Nunavut
X0B 1J0

Your file - Votre référence

NWB3COR

Our file - Notre référence

Dear Ms. Becker:

Re: Two Rivers to be Tested for *E. Coli*

In response to your request for comments dated November 6, 2001, the Water Resources Division has considered the letter written by Mr. Angootealuk and has the following general recommendations.

Determining the source of *E. Coli* in the two water bodies will be a difficult task since the water bodies are flowing and the *E. Coli* most likely stems from a natural source, namely the faeces of wild animals. *E. Coli* bacteria are commonly found in the intestines of animals and humans thus, the presence of *E. Coli* in water is an indication of recent animal waste or sewage contamination. During rainfalls, snow melts, or other types of precipitation, *E. Coli* may be washed into creeks, rivers, streams, lakes, or groundwater. A water sample from such a water source that does not have *E. Coli* present may give the false impression that the water is entirely safe to drink. There is always a possibility of *E. Coli* contamination and if these waters are to be used for drinking or food preparation, the most effective means of avoiding contamination is disinfection. The water can be treated using chlorine, ultra-violet light, or ozone, all of which act to kill or inactivate *E. Coli*.

Testing for *E. Coli* can likely be conducted with the assistance of the Government of Nunavut, Department of Health and, possibly, the hospital laboratory in Rankin Inlet. Alternatively, sterile bottles are supplied by the Taiga Laboratory in Yellowknife when their services are contracted for the bacteria analysis (phone 967-669-2788).

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Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (867) 975-4548 or by e-mail at johnsonmi@inac.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Michelle Johnson
Kitikmeot/Kivalliq Regional Coordinator