

# Addressing Historic and Present Concerns about the Former Port Radium Uranium Mine



Orlena Modeste, Deline First Nation



# Outline

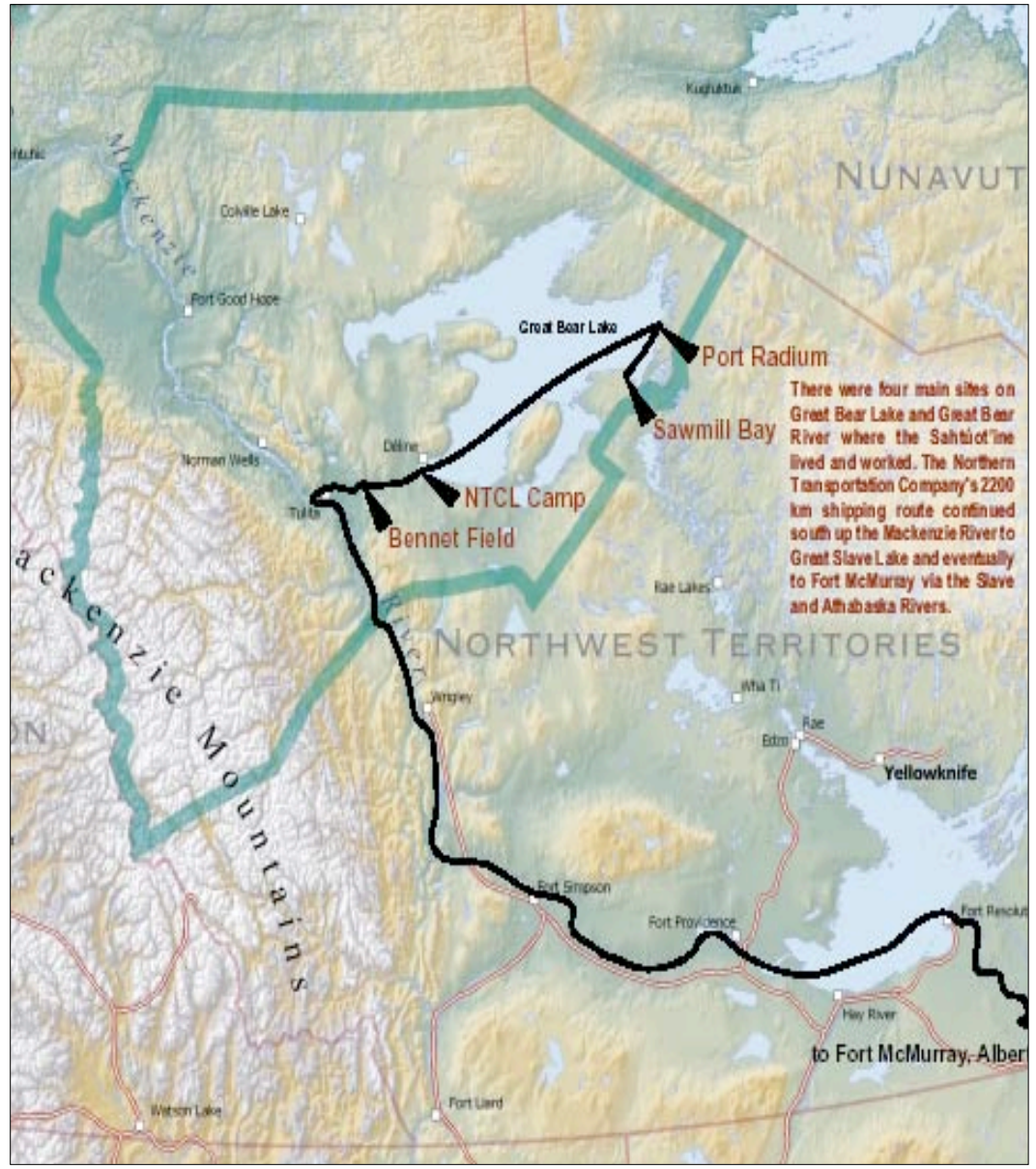
- The Sahtuot'ine (Bear Lake people)
- Port Radium Mine
- Canada Deline Uranium Table (CDUT)
- Action Plan Studies and Results
- Recommendations

# Sahtuot'ine (Bear Lake People)

“Since time immemorial we have lived around the shores of Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories, Canada. We have a unique and intimate relationship with our land, animals and water around Great Bear Lake.”



# Location



# Port Radium Mine



# Deline Approaches Canada about Concerns

COLUMN ONE

## A village of widows shares its sorrow

*Nobody told the Dene men the uranium ore they carried was dangerous.*

ANNE McILROY  
*The Globe and Mail, D'Ince, NWT*



G4 The Edmonton Journal, Friday, June 12, 1998

Canada

## Dene tell ministers story of 'village of widows'

Uranium used in Hiroshima, Nagasaki bombs continues to kill Deline Indians, committee hears

JANICE TIMBETTS  
THE CANADIAN PRESS  
Ottawa

At 53, Joe Blondin is considered an elder in his remote Dene community where so many men have succumbed to cancer.

Villagers believe the disease is linked to government-sponsored mining of radioactive radium and ura-

The report implied the federal government is responsible for an unknown number of radioactive-related deaths as well as 1.7 million tonnes of radioactive waste dumped in Great Bear Lake, Canada's fifth-largest lake.

The Eldorado mine was initially a private venture when it opened in the 1930s, but later became a Crown corporation, producing the uranium used in



mented cases and counting, including another death last week.

But villagers say they began in the 1970s that men were before their time. Today they clear majority of residents are v and children.

"Over the last 25 years, we've nothing but cancer," said Batai feel our animals, our fish, our w our water is all contaminated, hurts us in turn because we at sumers of these elements."

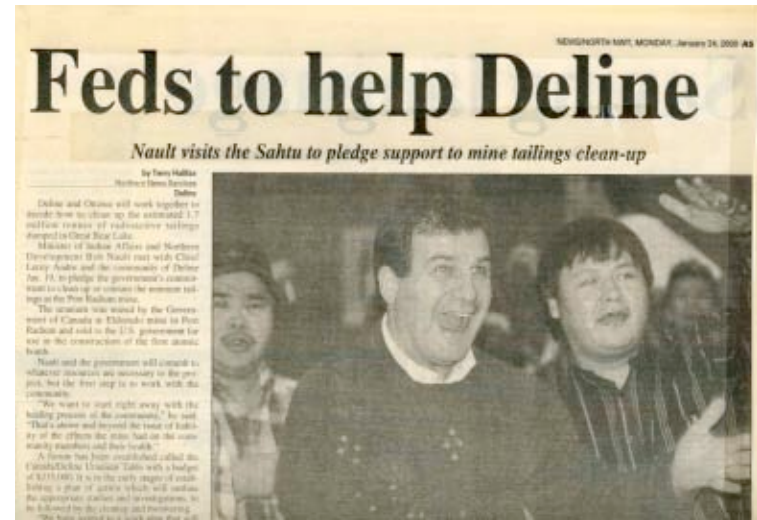
A 1985 report by the Na Research Council, as well as e

# Canada Deline Uranium Table (CDUT) Action Plan



# Action Plan

- Objectives consisted of:
  - Health of Deline people.
  - Environmental health
  - Mine facts
  - Healing



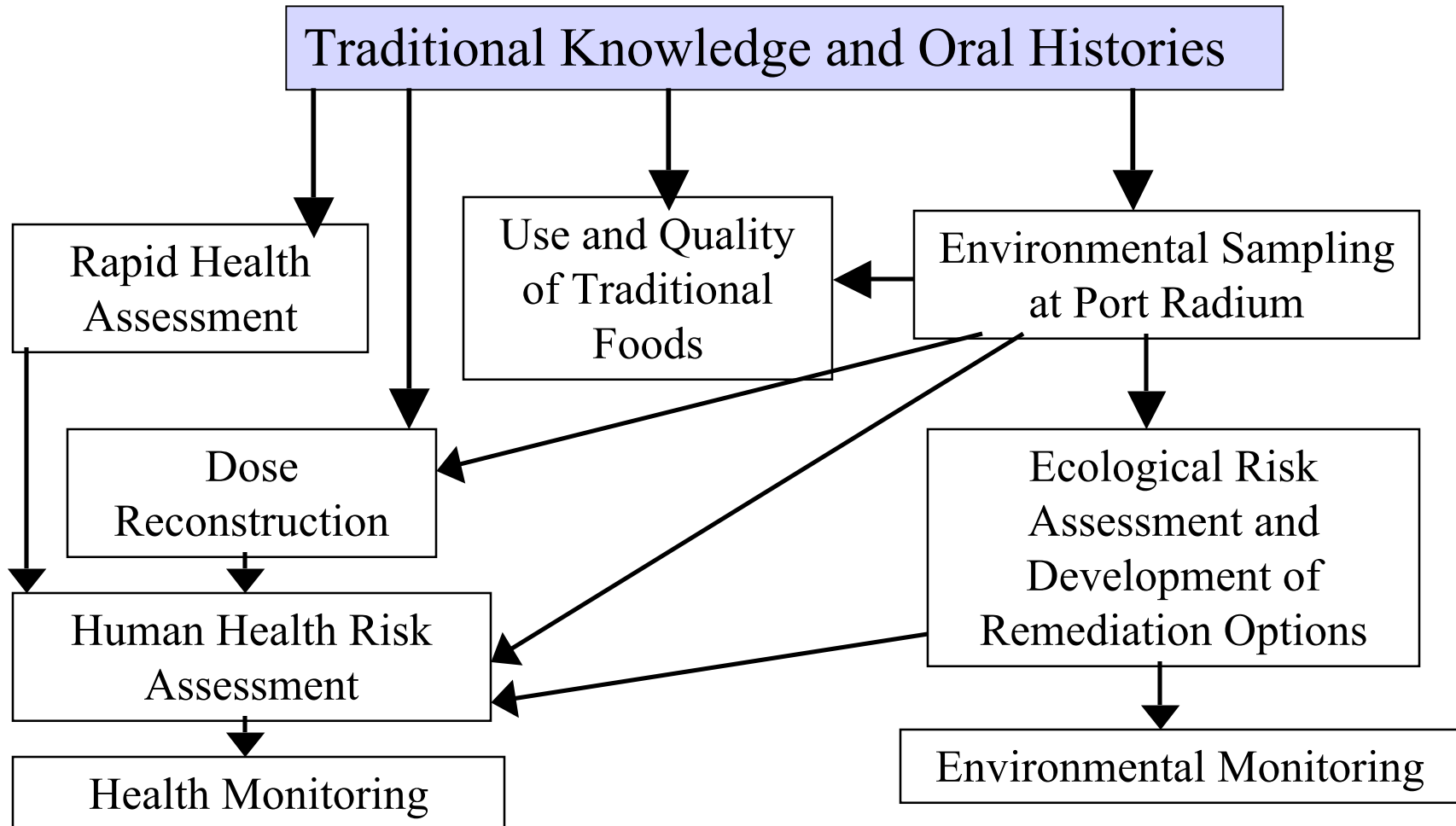
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## Ottawa to investigate charges it exposed Dene to radiation

THE CANADIAN PRESS  
Ottawa

without wearing protection.  
"It's just like flour," Baton said  
through a translator. "It just starts

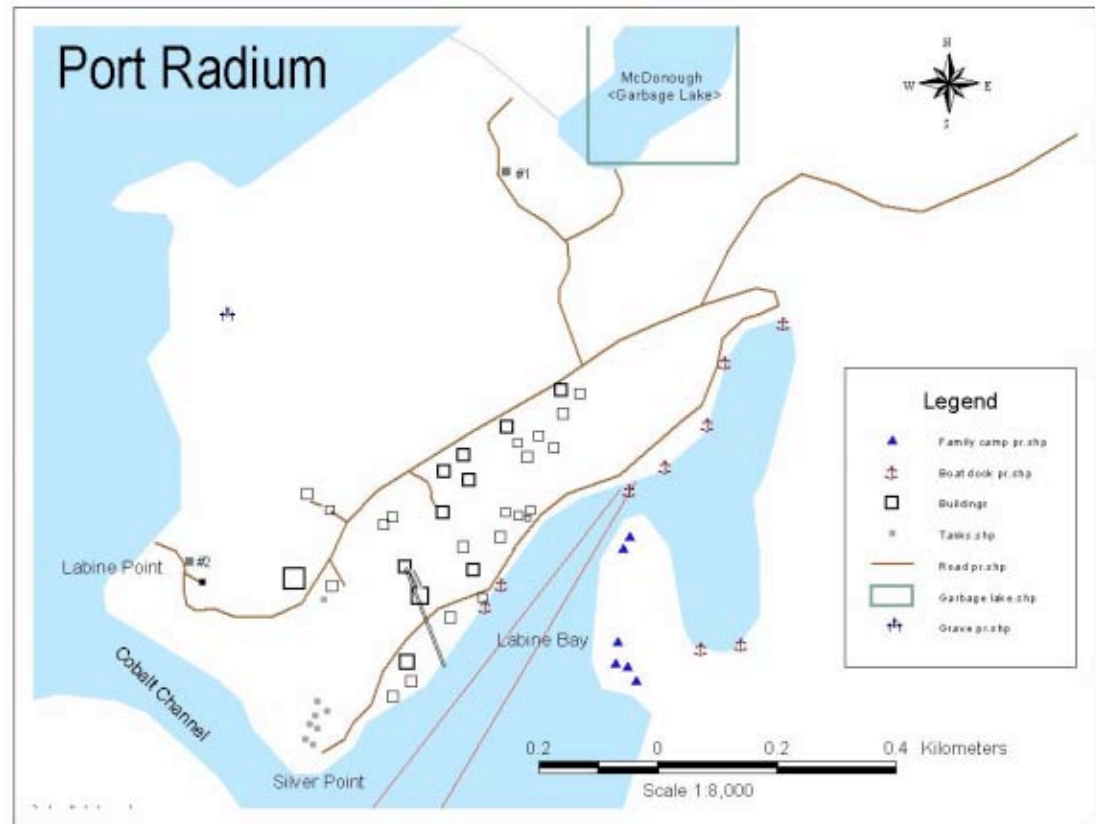
# Studies



# Traditional Knowledge and Oral Histories



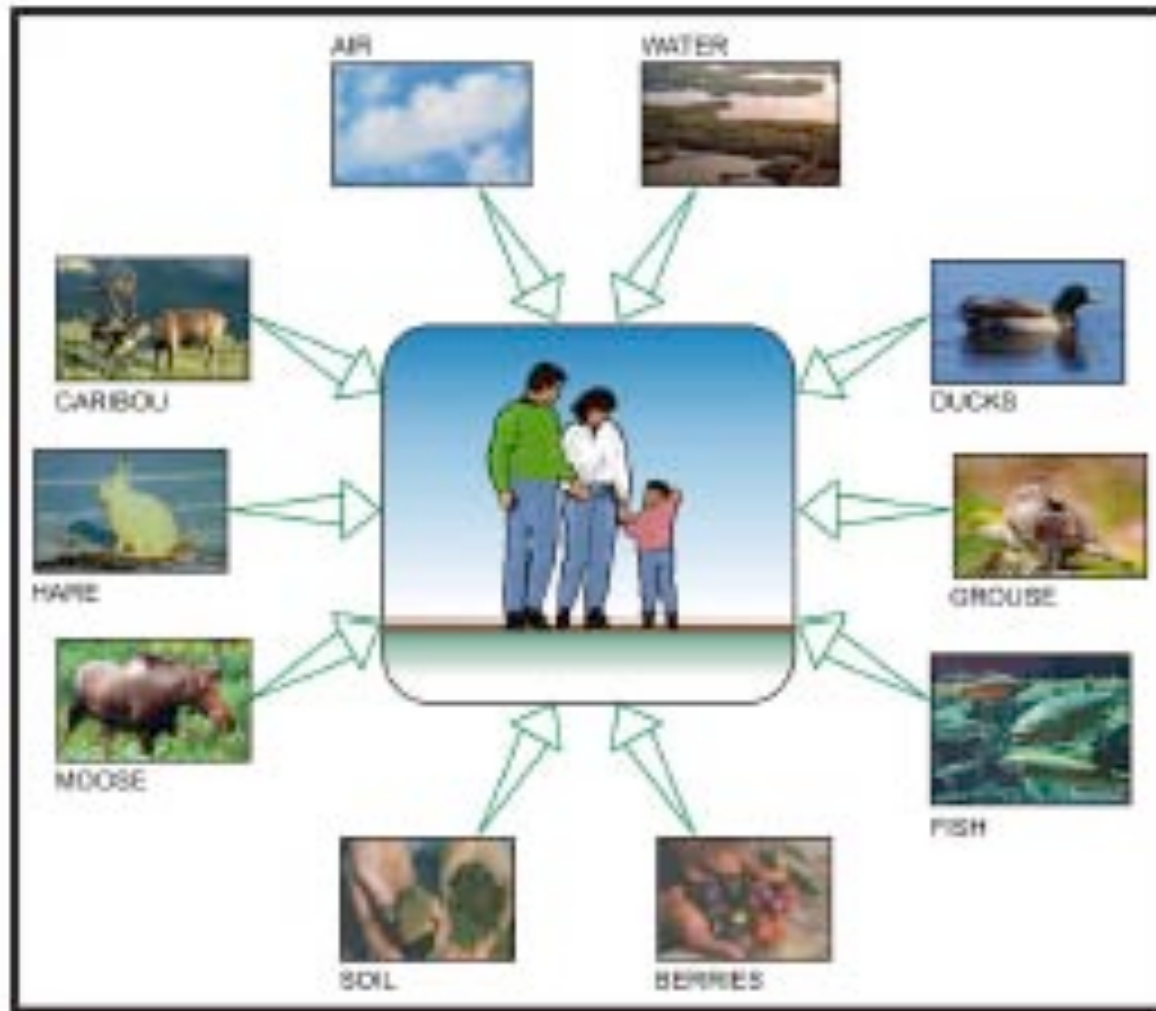
# Land Use Mapping



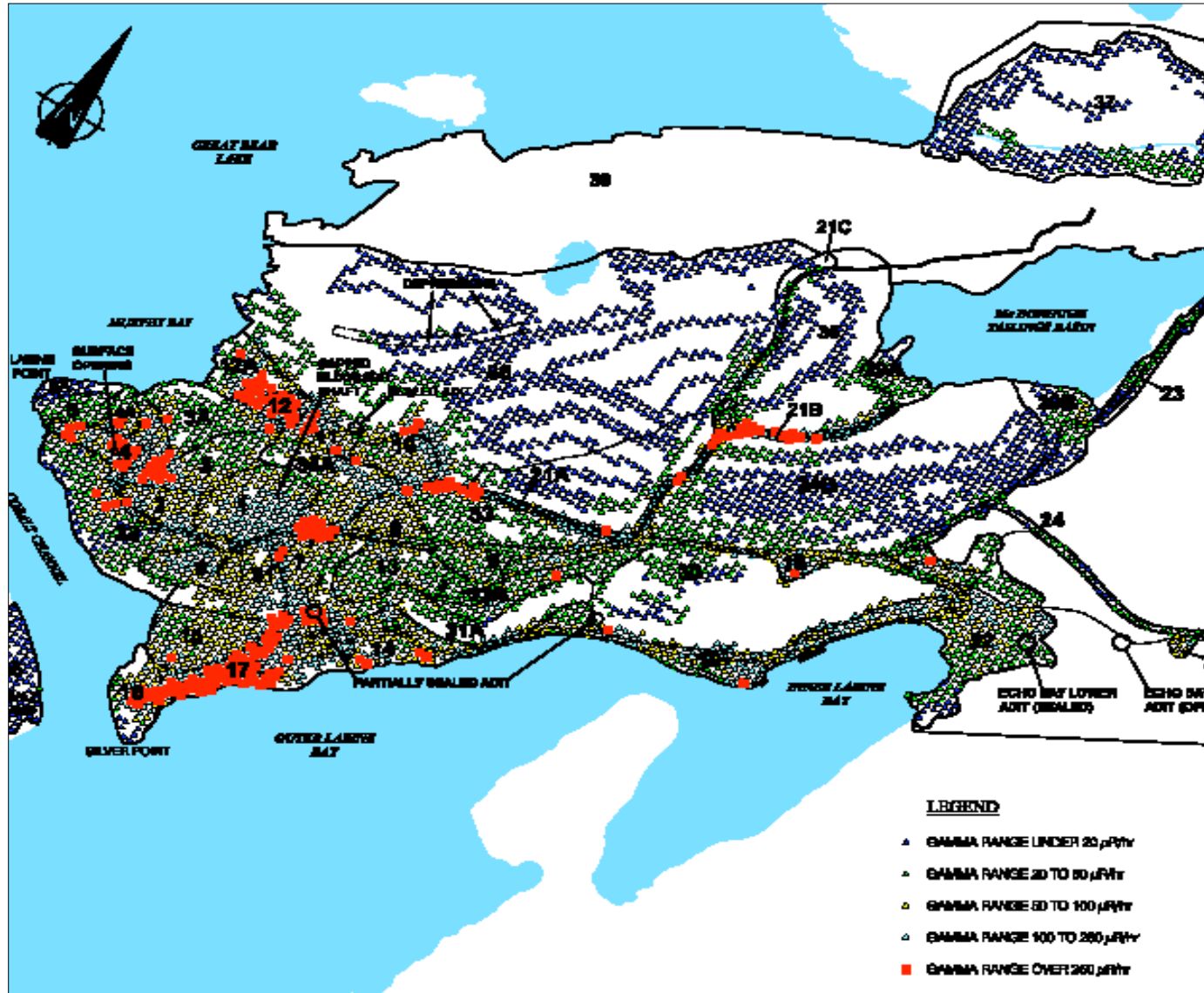
# Environmental Studies



# Human Health and Ecological Risks Assessment



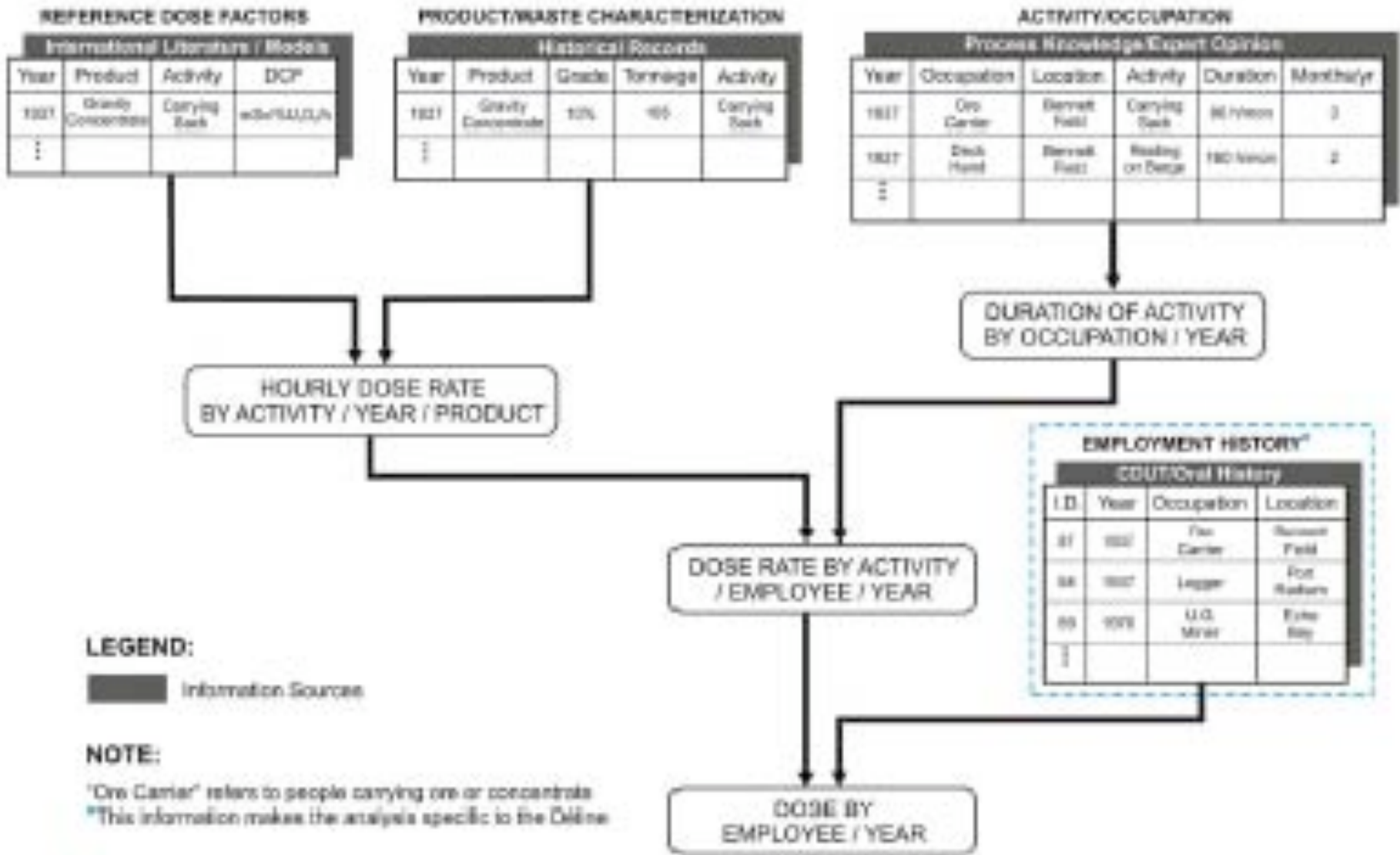
# Site Remediation Plan



# Health Assessments

- Results of the health system indicated:
  - Deficiencies with the Deline health care system
  - Social impacts of the mine (family structures, economic influences, lifestyles and reliance on medical facilities)
  - Fear and anxiety among Deline residents of the mine site and sites along the transportation route.

# Dose Reconstruction





# Epidemiology Feasibility Study

- Objective – to detect environmental factors that cause human disease
- Study was conducted on 35 workers
  - 10 of 35 would be expected to get cancer naturally (current country average)
  - 16% increase in cancer deaths caused by radiation dose (equivalent to 1.6 deaths)
- Full Epidemiological study could not be completed due to small population size

# Health Recommendations

- Improvements to the health care systems
- Mental health screenings and long term mental health services
- Implementations of programs to affirm cultural identity and social cohesion (between elders and youth)
- Further implementation of programs on cancer prevention, surveillance, detection, treatment and follow-up



# Conclusion



- The remediation of Port Radium is only the first step is addressing historic impacts the mine had on the environment
- Further work on addressing social, economic, cultural and health impacts is necessary to addressing the legacy issues of the Port Radium Mine site