

# Independent Process Observer



**Sudbury  
Soils  
Study** | **Étude  
des sols  
sudburois**  
metals • health • environment  
métaux • santé • environnement

## Quarterly Report

### REPORT #14

Winter 2005 (October-December)

By Franco Mariotti

Four years ago, I assumed my role as the Independent Process Observer for the Sudbury Soils Study (SSS).

Since my last report, the Technical Committee of the Sudbury Soils Study has been and continues to be focused on reviewing draft documents and scientific processes. As a result, this quarterly report is somewhat shorter than usual.

Process Observer Reports are divided into two sections. The first section, ***Past Issues and Recommendations***, is intended to be an update on matters discussed in my previous report (#13). The second section, ***Current Issues and Recommendations***, deals with any new issues that have arisen since my last report.

### ***PAST ISSUES and RECOMMENDATIONS***

**1. ISSUE:** There have been no presentations and/or comments made by a member of the public at Technical Committee meetings for over a year. What more could the Technical Committee do to encourage public presentations at Technical Committee meetings?

I had made the following recommendation: *“The Technical Committee should advertise their willingness to accommodate members of the public wishing to make a presentation at a Technical Committee meeting. This should be done on the Sudbury Soils Study website and in the newsletter, UPDATE, as soon as possible.”*

**RESULT:** Visitors to the Sudbury Soils Study website are first greeted by a window that advertises future meetings of the Public Advisory Committee and the Technical Committee. These dates and times are followed by this message: *“Members of the public are welcome to attend Technical Committee meetings from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Anyone interested in making a presentation at a Public Advisory Committee meeting or*

The process observer for the Sudbury Soils Study is independent of any organization or group involved in the study. He is impartial and his role is to advise on matters related to the study's Human Health Risk Assessment and Ecological Risk Assessment processes, both of which are managed by the study's Technical Committee with input from the Public Advisory Committee. As the observer, Franco Mariotti is required to report to the public on the study process four times each year.

*Technical Committee meeting should email [questions@sudburysoilsstudy.com](mailto:questions@sudburysoilsstudy.com) or call 1-866-315-0228. The Technical Committee will also try to accommodate persons interested in making a presentation outside the public period at Technical Committee meetings, please contact the SARA Group."*

I would urge anyone interested in presenting to the Technical Committee to please consider this option.

**2. ISSUE:** The Technical Committee agreed to post a synopsis of decisions made at Technical Committee meetings on the Sudbury Soils Study website in lieu of actual minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I had urged the Technical Committee to ensure this happens as soon as possible. This action is an essential part of maintaining the transparent process of the Sudbury Soils Study.

**RESULT:** Synopses of Technical Committee meetings can now be found on the Sudbury Soils Study website under the following headings: click on **Technical Committee** and then click on **Process and Decision Summaries from Technical Committee Meetings**. From here one can access the notes.

**3. ISSUE:** The possibility of a delay in the public release in 2006 of the final reports of the Human Health Risk Assessment and the Ecological Risk Assessment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I did encourage the Ministry of the Environment to seriously consider the hiring of expert consultants (toxicologists), as needed, to ensure that draft reports are commented upon in a timely fashion, according to the pre-set schedule agreed upon by all Technical Committee members.

**RESULT:** At the December 8, 2005 Technical Committee meeting, the Ministry of the Environment representatives indicated to me that they were back on schedule reviewing draft reports, at that point in time. Their initial delay may have caused a four week extension at the most. In the end this may not be a significant delay, providing future reviews are done in a timely manner.

## **CURRENT ISSUES and RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. ISSUE:** The public was not notified that the location of the December 8<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee meeting was changed one week before it was scheduled.

**COMMENT:** The December 8<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee meeting was held at College Boreal instead of the usual location at Tom Davies Square. At the last minute, signs were posted at Tom Davies Square notifying interested parties of the change.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I would highly recommend the use of the Sudbury Soils Study website for notification of any last minute changes.

**2. ISSUE:** There are two vacant positions on the Public Advisory Committee. Should they be filled at this stage of the study?

**COMMENT:** There is one year left in the Sudbury Soils Study. At this point in the study, any new persons becoming members of the Public Advisory Committee would be unfamiliar with all that has taken place in the study thus far. Specifically they would not have been privy to the special speakers that have presented to the Public Advisory Committee nor would they have partaken in many of the discussions related to the study process or the scientific inquiries.

The question arises - would the Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference permit such a shortage? The Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference state in section 3.2: *"The composition of the committee shall be a maximum of twelve (12) members who live in the study area, including one member to represent each of the Whitefish Lake and Wahnapiatae First Nations communities."* This means that if Public Advisory Committee members so decide, then their committee may operate with the existing 10 rather than with the usual 12 members.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I think the Public Advisory Committee can carry on business as usual with the existing 10 members. At this late stage in the study, valuable time covering familiar issues would have to be spent bringing new members to the level of understanding shared by existing Public Advisory Committee members. Worse yet, if that time isn't spent educating new members, it may lead to suggestions being directed to the Technical Committee on issues already resolved.

Ultimately the decision to accept new Public Advisory Committee members lies with the existing members of the Public Advisory Committee.

**3. ISSUE:** After the Sudbury Soils Study is over, where will the scientific data be housed and how will the information be accessed by the public?

**COMMENT:** In the first year of the Sudbury Soils Study, members of the Technical Committee wisely decided that all of the scientific data from the Sudbury Soils Study would become public property and be housed in such a way that members of the public would have access to the data and its subsequent reports. At that time the suggestion was made that a partnership with Laurentian University be undertaken.

This issue was never resolved and became dormant until now. When the public sessions to disclose the final results for the Human Health Risk Assessment and the Ecological Risk Assessment are held later this year, the location of the soils study data should also be revealed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I urge the Technical Committee to revisit this issue to find a solution that will ensure this information is available to the public and future scientific research.

## **FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULES**

### **Technical Committee Meetings for 2006**

Boardrooms C/D Provincial Tower, 199 Larch Street

February 9

March 9

April 13

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

September 14

October 12

November 9

December 14

### **Public Advisory Committee Meetings for 2006**

Gold Room, Science North

January 17

March 21

May 16

July 11

September 12

November 14

If you have any questions regarding the SSS please contact our toll free number— (866) 315-0228 OR e-mail: [questions@sudburysoilstudy.com](mailto:questions@sudburysoilstudy.com)

## SUDBURY SOILS STUDY REPORT SCHEDULE

The schedule below is regarded by the TC as tentative since a variety of factors may delay reports. At this point no one can anticipate the response of the International Peer Review Team (TERA) which may or may not delay the final report.

