

**Climate and Health E-News**

**Raising Awareness about Climate Change and Public Health in the Circumpolar North**

**No. 126, August 17, 2012**

**Circumpolar Climate Events Map** Click [here](#) to view this month's Google map. You can comment on our map [here](#), or visit our [archive](#).

**Norway's Arctic coastline hitting ecological tipping point**, *August 15, 2012*. Along rocky coastlines of the Arctic Ocean, a radical change is taking place, perhaps as profound as vanishing sea ice but less evident to the eye. Algae is being replaced by warmth and light-loving species. It might not seem like much, but algae form the base of ocean food chains, and the change is happening fast. Scientist from the University of Tromsø examined the rocky-bottomed subtidal zones of two Arctic fjords in the western Svalbard islands. Researchers have studied those fjords for more than three decades. As described in a recent publication in [Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences](#), they've become a very different place. [Wired](#)

**Common Parasite May Trigger Suicide Attempts: Inflammation from T. Gondii Produces Brain-Damaging Metabolites** *August 16, 2012*. New research in August edition of the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry adds to the growing work linking an infection caused by the Toxoplasma gondii parasite to suicide attempts. About 10-20 percent of people in the U.S. have Toxoplasma gondii in their bodies, but in most it is thought to be dormant. The findings suggest new opportunities to develop treatments tailored at a specific biological mechanism. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Potent human toxins prevalent in Canada's freshwaters** *August 14, 2012*. Nutrient pollution, one of the greatest threats to our freshwater resources, is responsible for the algal blooms that blanket our lakes and waterways in summer months. Large blooms of cyanobacteria ('blue green algae') can cause fish kills, increase the cost of drinking water treatment, devalue shoreline properties, and pose health risks to people, pets, and wildlife. Microcystin, a toxin produced by cyanobacteria, is present in Canadian lakes in every province, according to new research. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Mosquitoes likely to thrive in warmer Arctic** *July 27, 2012*. American researcher Lauren Culler, who's been studying and counting mosquitoes near Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, has discovered that mosquito larvae, which grow and develop in melt water ponds, mature faster in warm weather. This means mosquitoes have a better chance of leaving ponds before being eaten. The journal authors cited the prevalence of new and potentially deadly disease antibodies found in the blood of Alaskan bison, Dall sheep, snowshoe hare and Arctic fox which proves more northern animals are being exposed to southern diseases. [NunatsiaqOnline](#)

**Alaska's Arctic villages hit hard by climate change**, *August 7, 2012*. Fermented whale's tail doesn't taste the same when the ice cellars flood. Whaling crews in Point Hope Alaska store six feet of tail -- skin, blubber and bone -- underground from spring until fall. The tail freezes slowly while fermenting and takes on the flavor of the earth. But climate change, with its more intense storms, melting permafrost and soil erosion, is causing the ice cellars to disintegrate. Many have washed out to sea in recent decades. The remaining ones regularly flood in the spring, which can spoil the meat and blubber, and release scents that attract polar bears. [Washington Post](#)

**Video of the Week: 100 Alaska villages at risk from climate change** *August 27, 2009*. This two minute BBC news story reports on the challenges of permafrost thaw and erosion in Alaska communities, including Newtok the first community in Alaska to be re-located because of climate change. [YouTube](#)

Climate and Health E-News is received around the circumpolar north by people who are interested in climate change impacts and public health. For back issues click [here](#). To subscribe or unsubscribe, please click [here](#).

*Regards – Mike*

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***Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities***