

Ministry's 1986 air quality report

Following are the results of the Ministry of the Environment's 1986 air quality report for Northwestern Ontario.

The report presents results from air quality monitoring, vegetation and soil surveys and snow sampling in several communities across the region.

Cadium levels

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is again warning hunters not to eat the kidneys and liver from moose, or the kidneys from deer because of high cadmium levels.

Cadmium is a heavy metal which can be toxic at high levels of exposure.

It occurs naturally at low levels in the ecosystem but may reach higher levels in some areas.

Cadmium accumulates in the kidneys and liver of some longer-living species such as moose and white-tailed deer.

Experiments have shown that very high concentrations of cadmium can cause kidney and liver damage in mammals.

"Cadmium levels in moose and deer are lowest in southwestern Ontario and highest in central Ontario," Natural Resources Minister Vincent Kerrio said.

"The reason for these regional differences is not yet known, but we're conducting further studies to find out why, and how cadmium gets into the ecosystem."

The World Health Organization has set a limit of 0.5 milligrams per week for human consumption of cadmium.

Extensive testing in Ontario has established that 300 grams (11 ounces) of liver from deer fawns may be consumed per week, according to WHO guidelines.

The ministry recommends that liver from older deer should not be eaten but that other moose and deer meat are safe for consumption.

Ministry researchers first discovered high cadmium levels in moose kidneys in 1984.

Since then, with the co-operation of Ontario hunters, more than 700 moose and 950 white-tailed deer have been tested across the province.

One trend that's been noted is that cadmium levels are generally higher in moose than in deer.

The ministry is involved in various co-operative studies with other government agencies and universities to determine the pathways of cadmium in the ecosystem.

Air quality studies in Northwestern Ontario focus on natural resource industries.

Emphasis is placed on monitoring progress in pollution control programs carried out under ministry control orders for the pulp and paper industry.

These control programs resulted in significant improvement in air quality in several communities in the late '70s and early '80s.

In 1986, air quality in several areas in the region showed little change from 1985. In other communities, there were minor improvements or declines.

New control orders or other abatement programs are being negotiated with industry to address situations where additional pollution controls are required.

10 of 11 exceed

Ten of 11 Northwestern

Ontario communities monitored experienced exceedences of provincial air quality guidelines in 1986, the Ministry of the Environment report states.

It indicates that air quality has generally improved in Dryden, remained unchanged in Atikokan, Balmertown, Kenora, Longlac, Red Rock, Terrace Bay and Thunder Bay, and worsened in Fort Frances and Marathon.

All communities except Atikokan recorded provincial air quality exceedences.

TRS (Total Reduced Sulphur) concentrations near the James River-Marathon Ltd. mill in Marathon exceeded the provincial guideline in 115 hours out of 7,427 hours tested.

This is up from 83 hourly exceedences in 1985. Process changes are currently underway to control this problem.

Terrace Bay

Total reduced sulphur was above the Ontario guideline in Terrace Bay for 72 hours in 1986 because of emissions from the local kraft pulp mill.

To achieve compliance with the TRS guideline by June 1989, as required in the current control order, process improvements will be implemented at the mill to reduce odour emissions.

Past surveys have shown that the Kimberly-Clark mill in Terrace Bay does not contribute to fallout of particulate matter in the adjoining townsites.

Therefore, the ministry's monitoring program is directed toward measurement of odour levels in the townsites and at three points where an effluent ditch from the mill crosses the trans-Canada Highway (work is now underway

to divert this ditch from beside the highway).

Odour levels

Average sulphation rates in 1986 were similar to results for preceding years.

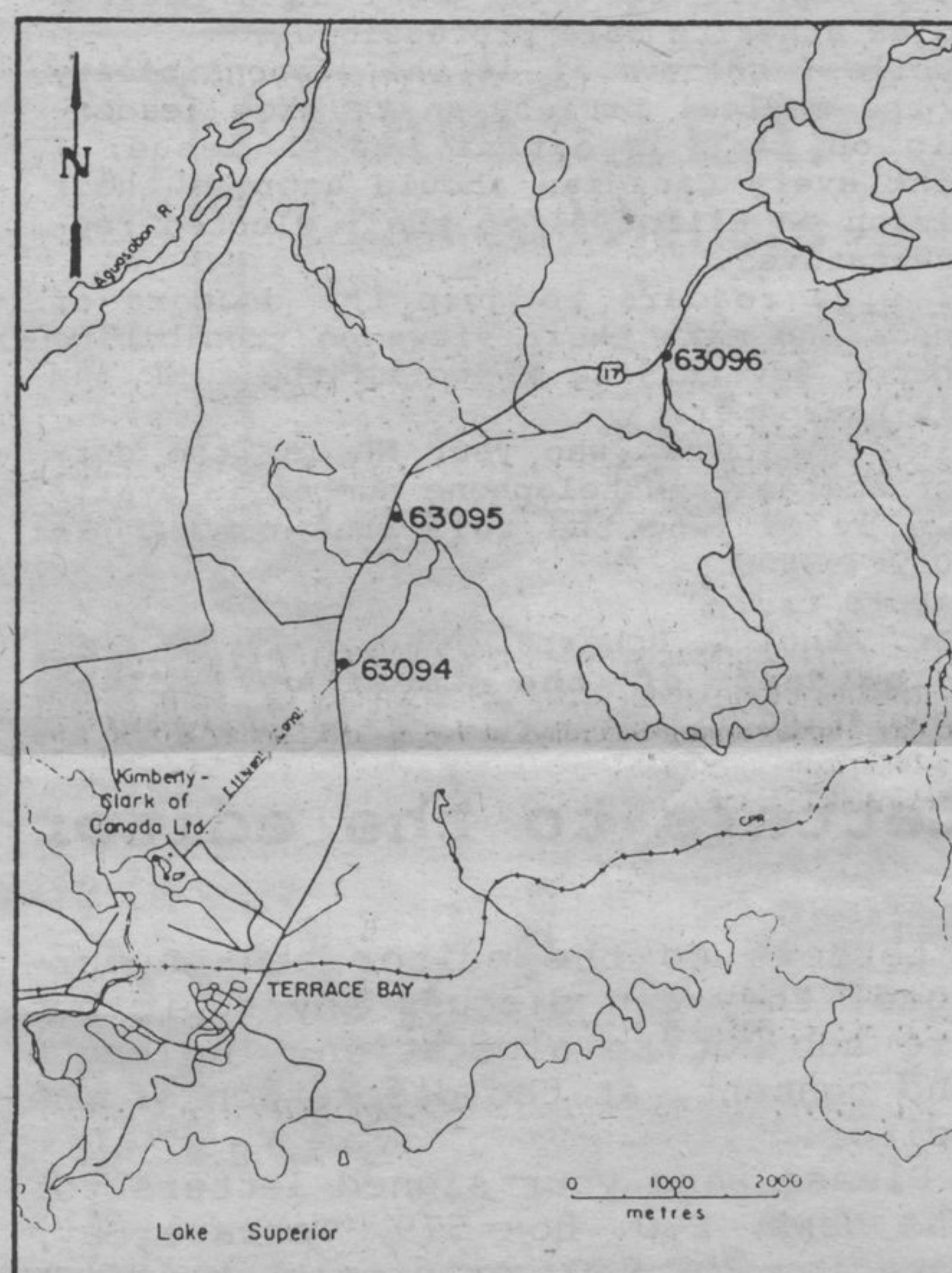
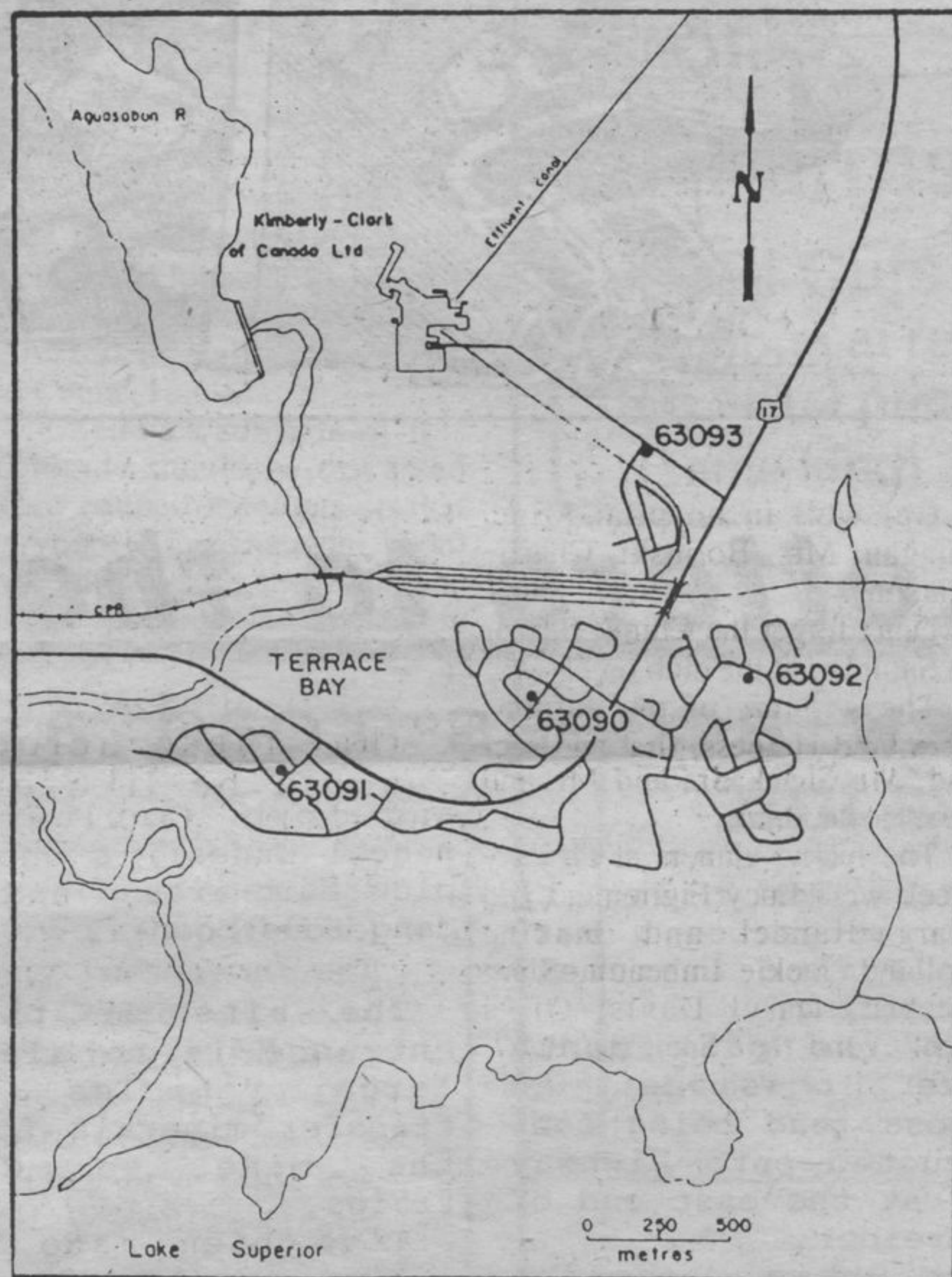
TRS data showed that, during 1986, there were 72 hourly readings above the provincial guideline of 27 ppb at the ministry's monitoring site.

The maximum hourly average was 155 ppb. The 1986 results were similar to those for 1985.

TRS data for the ministry's monitor are continuously telemetered to the mill.

Under a new control order, Kimberly-Clark will be putting process improvements in place to reduce odour emissions.

The control order calls for compliance with the TRS guideline by June, 1989.



Air monitoring sites for K-C in Terrace Bay



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