**Evaluation of mercury levels in hair samples from women of child-bearing age in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida**

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| PERCH Project: Environmental Health Studies in Northwest Florida |
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The southeast, and in particular the Gulf Coast, experiences the highest levels of mercury deposition in the U.S., and the State of Florida has issued fish consumption advisories due to mercury levels on three freshwater fish (largemouth bass, bowfin, and gar) and multiple marine fish (cobia, barracuda, tuna, shark and mackerel). This task will entail analysis of hair samples from women in Santa Rosa and Escambia counties, FL, for mercury accumulation to assess their levels of exposure over the preceding months. The results of this study will be used to evaluate whether the higher mercury deposition rates that have been reported for the Gulf Coast are reflected by levels of mercury in the human population. There are currently no data available for the State of Florida that evaluate whether these high mercury levels pose a direct health risk to humans. Results of individual tests will be made available free of charge to each volunteer.

Types of Volunteers Needed: pregnant and non-pregnant women, 18–49 years of age, who have resided in the area for at least one year.

Types of Samples: Approximately 100 strands of hair will be collected from the scalp.

Sampling Area: Santa Rosa and Escambia counties

Point of Contact: Patricia Wilson, ARNP

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