

Pacific Ridge Exploration Ltd.
Baker Lake Intervention
2BE-KAZ Kazan Falls Project Uranium Exploration Plan
Nunavut Water Board

Orin Durey
P.O. Box 38
Baker Lake, Nunavut X0C 0A0
(867) 793-2389
do440@ncf.ca

There are many different exploration projects planned for the area surrounding Baker Lake. Some are large--some are small. They all deserve detailed consideration so that there is no long-term negative impact on the Land, its people, and the wildlife. Pacific Ridge Exploration Ltd.'s original proposal to build its main drill camp right at Kazan Falls, inside the Piqqiq Fall Caribou Crossing National Historic Site (FCCNHS), would negatively affect the National Historic Site and contravene the Agreement that was signed by Parks Canada, INAC, the Hamlet of Baker Lake, and the Inuit. There remain questions as to the advisability of drilling the 694 Zone targets inside the Piqqiq FCCNHS. It is also not clear how Pacific Ridge will adhere to the Caribou Protection Measures (CPM) and Caribou Protection Areas (CPA) in the Piqqiq FCCNHS.

Where the Nunavut Water Board (NWB), Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC), Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) and the Kivalliq Inuit Association/Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (KIA/NTI) either do not sufficiently vet projects that affect Baker Lake or approve projects that negatively impact Baker Lake, the Hamlet of Baker Lake will assess the impact of those projects itself and act accordingly.

After a decade of archaeological and anthropological research including oral history of the Piqqiq site, the people of Baker Lake determined to somehow protect the site and its unique cultural heritage and caribou crossings. With this goal in mind, in 1998 the Piqqiq Fall Caribou Crossing National Historic Site (FCCNHS) was established. Included in the "Fall Caribou Crossing National Historic Site: Conservation and Preservation Report" by the Harvaqtuuq Historic Site Committee was funding to establish the Baker Lake Inuit Heritage Centre (BLIHC). David Webster was its first Director. The Baker Lake Inuit Heritage Centre continues to be the Manager of the Piqqiq FCCNHS and facilitates annual monitoring of the Site, including a Guardian Monitoring Programme. The Plan reflects the cultural and heritage concerns of the people of Baker Lake for the caribou and ancestral places around Thirty Mile Lake, 65 km southeast of Baker Lake. The roots of the establishment of the Piqqiq FCCNHS go back a generation to 1979 and the famous precedent-setting court case, "Hamlet of Baker Lake vs. the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development". This case stopped the mineral exploration companies from continuing some of their worst practices, including harassing caribou with helicopters. Some people argue that this case was the seed of an idea that the Inuit could petition the federal government to create an Inuit territory of their own. This was also the case that established the precedent in Canadian law leading up to the Delgamuquw decision of 1997 that the original people of an area have fundamental defined comprehensive rights to the Land and its wildlife and that their oral history is primal to those rights.

I myself have transported exploration geologists and federal inspectors to the Bissett Lake area to view

the core racks that still stand showing the work done there in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. We have also viewed archaeological tent rings and other phenomena on the Bissett Lake shore. I have also conducted air patrols of the Piqqiq FCCNHS as recently as June 2006, as well as landing inside the Site at the only designated landing strip, right next to the original proposed drill camp. There are a couple dozen abandoned fuel drums and other drill equipment about 5 km south of Kazan Falls. These are assumed to be the drill targets of the 694 Zone from the 1960's and 1970's. Until an accurate survey of the Piqqiq FCCNHS has been done and exact coordinates for the 694 Zone have been determined, there will likely continue to be questions from the exploration community regarding jurisdictional overlap of the Site and the proposed drill targets.

I have spoken with KIA Lands over the last couple of years about creating an abandoned fuel drum database for just these sorts of sites. KIA Lands is certainly in favour of just such a database but there is no funding to establish it. There are drums and abandoned drill equipment on the Land all over the Kivalliq, every place where companies have explored for uranium, gold and diamonds. Any company that proposes to do new drilling in this region should be required to clean up nearby drilling messes left over from the last uranium exploration boom a generation ago.

During the past quarter-century since Pacific Ridge's 694 Zone was last explored, no company has expressed any concern about the mess that was left after the last uranium exploration boom. No company sought to maintain any long-term relationship with the community nor claim to the uranium riches that everybody knew still resided in the ground there. There has been little success in convincing respective governments and land use agencies the desirability of cleaning up that mess of abandoned fuel drums and drill equipment in the 694 Zone. Now that the price of uranium has doubled over the past year and increased ten-fold since 2000, the modern equivalents of the uranium exploration companies of the 1960's and 1970's have shown eagerness to pick up where their predecessors left off 25 years ago, without having to pay any price for uranium that sits archived forever in the Kazan Basin.

Baker Lake's concern centres around the 694 Zone and the company's original plans to establish its main drill camp on the shores of the Kazan River immediately above Kazan Falls, inside the Piqqiq FCCNHS, in contravention of the Piqqiq FCCNHS Agreement. In addition, Baker Lake is concerned about the failure of INAC to enforce the INAC CPM's which prohibit the establishments of camps within 10 km of any caribou river crossing and the cessation of exploration activity when caribou are present. Pacific Ridge is using a caribou CPM map from 1996. The last INAC-funded caribou survey of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Herds was 1994. The INAC data is so out of date as to be unusable.

If all the proposed exploration and construction goes ahead, Baker Lake will soon be overwhelmed by the numbers of exploration camp and mine construction personnel passing through the village. Cumberland Resources' Meadowbank gold mine has already started construction on the all-weather road to the mine and has hired a dozen people from Baker Lake to augment the dozen Nuna Logistics crew flown in to start the road.

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