# BACK RIVER MINE

## TAILINGS MANAGEMENT PLAN V. 3.0

DATE
April 2025

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

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## DOCUMENT HISTORY

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| 0 | November 2015 | N/A | Supporting Document for Final Environmental Impact Statement; submitted to Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB). |
| 1 | October 2017 | N/A | Supporting Document for Type A Water Licence Application; submitted to Nunavut Water Board (NWB). |
| 2 | November 2020 | N/A | Revisions to address requirements and commitments of Project Certificate, No. 007, and Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831, and updated to reflect Type A Water Licence Amendment Application to the NWB. |
| 3 | April 2025 | N/A | Updated to reflect changes in operations to reflect the reintegration of the Echo Tailings Facility (TF) and Umwelt TF, and removal of Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) in alignment with the WMP (April 2022); submitted to the NWB. |

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ARD | acid rock drainage |
| As | arsenic |
| B2Gold Nunavut | B2Gold Back River Corp. |
| CDA | Canadian Dam Association |
| Cu | copper |
| Fe | iron |
| FEIS | Final Environmental Impact Statement |
| GCL | geosynthetic clay liner |
| HDPE | high-density polyethylene |
| ICRP | Interim Closure and Reclamation Plan |
| MAC | Mining Association of Canada |
| ML | metal leaching |
| Mt | million tonnes |
| NIRB | Nunavut Impact Review Board |
| NPAG | non-potentially acid generating |
| NWB | Nunavut Water Board |
| OMS | Operation, Maintenance, and Surveillance |
| PAG | potentially acid generating |
| PGA | peak ground accelerations |
| Project | Back River Project |
| QA/QC | quality assurance / quality control |
| ROM | run-of-mine |
| Sabina | Sabina Gold & Silver Corp. |
| TF | Tailings Facility |
| TMP or Plan | Tailings Management Plan |
| TSF | Tailings Storage Facility |
| TSM | Towards Sustainable Mining |
| WRSA | Waste Rock Storage Area |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

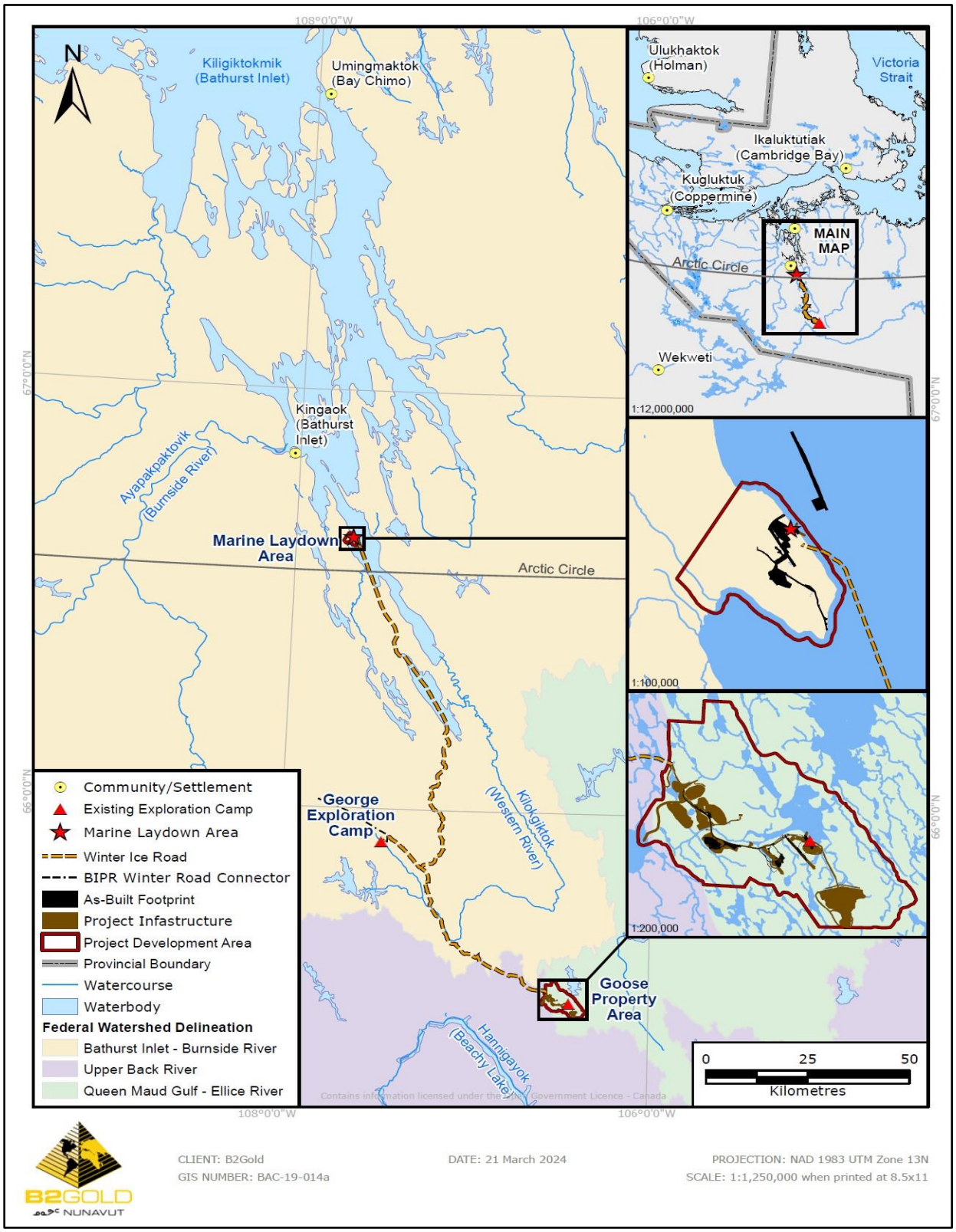
The Back River Project (the Project) is a gold mine owned by B2Gold Back River Corporation (B2Gold Nunavut) within the West Kitikmeot region of southwestern Nunavut. It is situated approximately 400 kilometers (km) southwest of Cambridge Bay, 95 km southeast of the southern end of Bathurst Inlet, and 520 km northeast of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The Project is located predominantly in the Queen Maud Gulf Watershed (Nunavut Water Regulations, Schedule 4).

The Project is comprised of two main areas with an interconnecting winter ice road (WIR): Goose Property and the Marine Laydown Area (MLA), which is situated along the western shore of southern Bathurst Inlet, as shown in Figure 1.1-1. The majority of annual resupply is completed using the MLA and an approximately 160 km long WIR interconnecting these sites seasonally when needed.

The Tailings Management Plan (Plan or TMP) outlines the approach for managing and monitoring tailings produced at the Back River Project. No tailings will be generated at the MLA.

The TMP is a living document that is to be updated upon changes in related regulatory requirements, management reviews, incident investigations, changes to facility operation or maintenance, and environmental monitoring results, best practice updates or other Mine specific protocols during construction and through to Mine closure. Any updates will be filed with the Annual Report submitted under the Type A Water License 2AM-BRP1831 (the License) and Project Certificate No. 007 (the Project Certificate) issued by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB).

## Figure 1.1-1 Back River Project Overview



# 2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The TMP is one of the documents that forms part of the Waste Management Program developed for the Project. This plan describes B2Gold Nunavut's approach to managing tailings that will be produced in the development and operation of the Project.

The scope of the Plan covers operational procedures, implementation of environmental protection measures, and monitoring and reporting of the effectiveness of mitigation. The purpose of the Plan is to: outline procedures and processes for Construction and Operations of the Project as proposed, meet relevant laws and regulations, mitigate potential adverse environmental effects, and monitor potential mitigation measures for success.

The Plan applies to the Construction and Operations phases of the Project during which time tailings will be produced and has relevance to the Closure and Post-Closure phases as tailings will be permanently stored at the Goose Property. Progressive reclamation, as well as the closure and reclamation of tailings Facilities (TFs), is addressed in detail in the Interim Closure and Reclamation Plan (ICRP). Water management related to TFs is addressed in the Water Management Plan (WMP).

The mine plan for the Project includes the Echo TF, Umwelt TF, and Llama TF. This mine plan omits the Goose Main TF and Tailings Storage Facility (TSF), a purpose-built tailings management facility at site.

B2Gold Nunavut highlights that, with the continued advancement in detailed engineering and market considerations, the previously approved deposits and infrastructure, including the Goose Main TF and TSF, may be reintegrated into the mine plan at a later date. B2Gold Nunavut will update the TMP as outlined in Part B, Item 17 of the Type A Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831 Amendment No.1. Should B2Gold Nunavut choose to reintegrate the Goose Main TF and TSF, all closure activities and approaches outlined in this Plan would be maintained for the closure of these components. Additionally, a notice of modification prior to the disposal of waste would be provided to the NWB (per 2AM-BRP1831; Part B, Item 17) and would include information on: waste disposal quantities, volumes, disposal timing, maximum pit capacity, effects to pit closure, and appropriate mitigation and monitoring plans. Any necessary plans that may need updating, including this TMP, would also be updated.

## 2.1 RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

The TMP is to be implemented in conjunction with various other management, mitigation, and monitoring plans for the Project. Plans that have relevance to the TMP include:

- Environmental Management and Protection Plan;
- Water Management Plan;
- Waste Rock Management Plan;
- Interim Closure and Reclamation Plan;
- Aquatic Effects Management Plan;
- Air Quality Monitoring and Management Plan; and
- Thermal and Geotechnical Monitoring Plan *(in prep.).*

The following reports and studies have also informed the development of this Plan:

- Tailings Management System Design Report (Sabina 2017a, Appendix F-4);
- Waste Rock Storage Area (WRSA) Design Report (Sabina 2017a, Appendix F-3);
- Geochemical Characterization Report (Sabina 2017a, Appendix E-3);
- Water and Load Balance Report (Sabina 2022);
- Site Wide Water Management Report (Sabina 2017a, Appendix F-1);
- Multiple Accounts Analysis, submitted during FEIS Information Requests (Sabina 2016);
- Back River Project: Considering Climate Change in Tailings Storage Facility and Waste Rock Storage Areas Closure Strategy (Sabina 2017b, Appendix V4-3D); and
- Peer Review of the Back River Project Waste Rock and Tailings Closure Strategy (Sabina 2017b, Appendix V4-3E).

This plan is based on the tailings management system design report submitted as part of the Water Licence submission package (Sabina 2017a, Appendix F-4), which includes the following design details:

- Site description, including topography, geology, climate, permafrost, hydrology, hydrogeology, and seismicity;
- Tailings management system concept, including storage requirements, and tailings physical and geochemical properties;
- Operation of the mined-out open pits used as TFs; and
- Closure and reclamation of the TFs.

# 3. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

The TMP has been prepared to comply with existing regulations and follow the applicable guidelines provided by the federal government and the Government of Nunavut.

Specific legislation, regulations, and guidelines related to waste rock management in Canada, and specifically within Nunavut, are summarized in Table 3-1.

The Project is also bound by the requirements of Project Certificate, No. 007, and Type A Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831, and various land use permits. B2Gold Nunavut will also be bound by the terms and conditions of its land use permits issued by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association for Inuit Owned Land.

In addition, B2Gold Nunavut commits to meeting the requirements of the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) Initiative. A component of the TSM Initiative is adherence to the TSM Tailings Management Protocol, which includes the following elements:

- Development of a tailings management policy and commitment (either as a stand-alone policy or as part of an overall environmental policy);
- Development of a tailings management system;
- Assignment of accountability and responsibility for tailings management;
- Conducting an annual tailings management inspection; and
- Preparation of an Operation, Maintenance, and Surveillance (OMS) Manual.

B2Gold Nunavut will also refer to the following Guidance Documents during Project development:

- TSM Tailings Management Protocol (Mining Association of Canada [MAC] 2019a);
- A Guide to the Management of Tailings Facilities (MAC 2021a);
- A Guide to Audit and Assessment of Tailings Facility Management (MAC 2011);
- 2013 Canadian Dam Safety Guidelines (Canadian Dam Association [CDA] 2013);
- 2014 Application of Dam Safety Guidelines to Mining Dams (CDA 2014); and
- Developing an Operation, Maintenance, and Surveillance Manual for Tailings and Water Management Facilities (MAC 2021b).

**Table 3-1 Applicable Legislation to Waste Management in Nunavut**

| Acts | Regulations | Guidelines |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal** | | |
| *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA; 1999) | | |
| *Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act* (2002) | Nunavut Water Regulations (2013) | |
| *Territorial Lands Act* (1985) | Territorial Land Use Regulations (CRC, c.1524)<br>Northwest Territories and Nunavut Mining Regulations (CRC, c.1516) | Implications of Global Warming and the Precautionary Principle in Northern Mine Design and Closure (BGC 2003) |

| Acts | Regulations | Guidelines |
|---|---|---|
| *Fisheries Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14) | Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations (SOR/2002-222) | |
| **Territorial – Nunavut** | | |
| *Nunavut Environmental Protection Act* (1988) | Spill Contingency Planning and Reporting Regulations (R-068-93) | Canada-Wide Standards for Petroleum Hydrocarbons (PHC) In Soil (CCME 2008) |
| *Mine Health and Safety Act* (SNWT (Nu) 1994, c.25) | Mine Health and Safety Regulations (R-125-95) | |

# 4. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

## 4.1 TAILINGS PRODUCTION AND STORAGE

Approximately 18.2 Mt of tailings will be produced over the 14-year Operations Phase. Tailings will be deposited subaqueously with spcial consideration depending on seasonality of deposition. The tailings management strategy has been developed based on the principle of maximizing the use of open pits for tailings storage. To that end, tailings will be stored in mined-out open pits as soon as the pits are available for tailings deposition.

The Echo Open Pit is being mined in advance of Process Plant operation and tailings deposition, with ore staged at the Ore Stockpile at the Process Plant site. Once mining operations in Echo Open Pit are completed, tailings will be deposited in this open pit (called the Echo TF) for approximately 4 years. Tailings deposition will then transition to the mined-out Umwelt Open Pit (called Umwelt TF) for approximately 7 years and then the mined-out Llama Open Pit (called Llama TF) for approximately 3 years. A summary of the estimate tailings deposition timing and volumes by TF is provided in Table 5.1-1.

**Table 5.1-1 Back River Project Tailings Facility Locations and Estimated Volumes**

| Location | Timeline (Year and Quarter) | Tailings (Mt) | Tailings ($Mm^3$*) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Echo Tailings Facility (TF) | Y1, Q2 to Y4, Q4 | 4.46 | 3.19 |
| Umwelt TF | Y4, Q4 to Y11, Q2 | 9.86 | 7.04 |
| Llama TF | Y11, Q3 to Y14, Q2 | 3.80 | 2.72 |
| **Total Project** | **Y1, Q2 to Y14, Q2** | **18.13** | **12.95** |

Notes:
* The tailings dry density is 1.4 $t/m^3$.

As permitted under Water Licence 2AM-BRP1831, other site effluent will also be directed to these facilities, including effluent from the WRSAs and Ore Stockpile, saline water and contact water collected at the Project site, as well as sewage and effluent from other facilities that do not meet their discharge criteria.

After tailings deposition transitions from Echo TF to Umwelt TF in Year 4, the Echo TF will be converted to a WRSA (namely, Goose Main WRSA), with waste rock from the Goose Main Open Pit used to cover the in-pit tailings. Once tailings deposition is completed in Umwelt TF and Llama TF, these facilities will receive a water cover at Closure to create pit lakes, with water treatment of in-pit water as required to allow for passive discharge to the environment.

### 4.1.1 TAILINGS PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Physical properties of the tailings include the following:

- Solids Content – Year 1: 46% solids (by weight);
- Solids Content – Year 2 to Year 14: 58% solids (by weight);

- Tailings Solids Specific Gravity: 3.1;
- Dry Density: 1.4 t/$m^3$;
- Plasticity: non-plastic; and
- Particle size ($P_{80}$): approximately 50 µm.

### 4.1.2 TAILINGS GEOCHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Tailings geochemical characterization confirms that tailings will be PAG and metal leaching (ML; Sabina 2017, Appendix E-3). The projected lag to onset of acid generation of exposed tailings is anticipated to be greater than 10 years in site-specific conditions; nonetheless, tailings will be managed to reduce the potential for acid rock drainage (ARD) and manage ML. Tailings in the TFs will be deposited subaqueously, then receive either a permanent NPAG waste rock or water cover at Closure, which will prevent acidic conditions from developing. Tailings may be deposited into the supernatant pond depending on seasonal temperature conditions to promote subaqueous disposal and avoid ice entrainment/pipeline freeze-up. The deposition will be capped via the supernatant water pond or via permanent NPAG waste rock cover at Closure.

Process water discharged as supernatant water with the tailings has the potential to contain elevated metal concentrations, including arsenic (As), copper (Cu) and iron (Fe). There is currently no planned discharge of tailings supernatant water during Operations. Should a controlled discharge be required during Operations, B2Gold Nunavut will develop Temporary Tailings Effluent Discharge Plan that will be submitted 120 days prior to release as required by Part F, Item 16, of the Water Licence 2AM-BRP1831 and as discussed in Section 8.

B2Gold Nunavut commits to test a mixture of tailings and water treatment plant sludges to evaluate the potential for remobilization of arsenic from this material. Tests will be conducted in the first year that water treatment plant sludges are produced. B2Gold Nunavut commits to provide their proposed testing method to the KIA for review and approval prior to initiating these tests, and B2Gold Nunavut will provide the results of the testing in the annual monitoring report.

## 4.2 TAILINGS FACILITIES IN OPEN PITS

The Project will utilize three exhausted open pits as TFs during Operations; namely, Echo TF, Umwelt TF, and Llama TF. The following sections provide an overview the design basis, construction and operation, and closure for TFs.

### 4.2.1 TAILINGS FACILITY DESIGN BASIS

The design of the TFs has incorporated the following requirements:

- Applicable Legislation and Guidelines;
- Control, collection, and recovery of tailings process water and runoff water from within the TF for recycling to the Process Plant as reclaim water;
- Integration of the TF into the overall mine site water management requirements;
- Designing for closure;

- The inclusion of appropriate freeboard allowance for ice entrainment, storm water management, wave run-up, and other contingencies; and
- The inclusion of monitoring features for all aspects of the facility.

### 4.2.2 TAILINGS FACILITY CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION

The open pits will be readily convertible to store tailings and will operate similar to conventional above-ground tailings storage facilities.

Tailings will be primarily deposited subaqueously in the mined-out open pits by using multiple spigot discharge points. This discharge location within the TF will be changed over the duration of tailings deposition so that an approximately level tailings surface is created. For Echo TF and Umwelt TF that will provide a source reclaim water for ore processing, a reclaim floating or submersible pumping systems will be located within each TF during its operation to pump supernatant water contained in the TF to the Process Plant for reuse.

Water from the Umwelt TF and Llama TF will be treated through recirculation during the Operations and will continue into Closure until discharge limits have been achieved. This water treatment will be recirculation treatment, with water withdrawn from each TF, treated, and then discharged back into the same TF. Based on the Water and Load Balance Report (Sabina 2022), TF water treatment will continue into Closure until discharge limits have been achieved. See the WMP for additional details.

### 4.2.3 TAILINGS FACILITY CLOSURE

Closure approach and activities are described in the ICRP. In general, closure of the TFs will begin as progressive reclamation while the facilities are still in operation.

For Echo TF, the supernatant water will be reclaimed in the Process Plant and then waste rock from open pit developments will be used to cover the tailings surface. PAG waste rock will be placed over the tailings, and the entire PAG surface, whether PAG waste rock or tailings, will receive a final NPAG waste rock cover at least 5 m thick. This cover will provide protection of the tailings from the active layer and promote permafrost aggradation into the tailings to maintain frozen conditions in the tailings in the long term, which will prevent acidic conditions from developing.

The Umwelt TF and Llama TF will begin closure once tailings deposition in these locations cease. The TFs will be filled to a maximum of 5 m below their overflow elevations to provide sufficient storage for water to passively accumulate in the TFs to form a permanent water cover, which is deemed sufficient to limit resuspension of tailings solids due to wave action, surge following storm events, and ice scour and will prevent acidic conditions from developing. Water treatment in Umwelt TF and Llama TF is expected to include recirculation treatment during Operations as these pits fill, and water treatment during Closure to allow for eventual passive discharge to the environment. Details on water storage capacity of TFs and water treatment is provided in the WMP. The TFs may also be used to store non-hazardous waste from the final mine closure activities; further details are provided in the ICRP.

# 5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES

## 5.1 EFFLUENT DISCHARGES

Supernatant water contained in TFs will be reclaimed and reused in the Process Plant and discharges from TFs are not possible until the pits have passively filled as part of intended closure.

Water treatment details, reclaim rates, discharge criteria, and Post-Closure discharges from the TF are discussed in the WMP and the ICRP.

## 5.2 DUST MANAGEMENT

The possible sources of dust related to tailings management during Construction, Operations, and Closure include:

- Wind erosion of fine particles from the tailings surfaces; and
- Placement of closure and capping layers.

Dust suppression measures typical of the current mine practices and consistent with best management practices, will be used through TF design, operation, and closure activities to control dust.

After the operational life of the Echo TF, waste rock will begin being placed over tailings, which will limit the amount of time that tailings could be susceptible to wind erosion.

Dust is not expected to be an issue during the operation and closure of Umwelt TF and Llama TF as these facilities will maintain a permeant water cover during Operations and Closure, and as such, no wind erosion is anticipated.

# 6. MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Routine inspections of the TFs during the operations and closure of these facilities will include:

- Regular monitoring of the tailings disposal;
- Regular monitoring of the tailings supernatant water level;
- Grab sampling of tailings and treatment sludges as they are produced to confirm the potential for remobilization of arsenic from these materials remains within predicted levels; and
- An annual geotechnical inspection of all TFs will occur as per the Type A Water License (2AM-BRP1831; Part I, Item 10).

All testing will be completed in a certified laboratory and appropriate quality assurance / quality control measures will be applied.

Additional details on monitoring frequency, inspection plans, mine site water quality monitoring, and receiving water quality monitoring is provided in the WMP.

Details on TF monitoring during Closure is provided in the ICRP.

## 6.1 REPORTING

Environmental reporting will be conducted as defined in permits, approvals, and authorizations relevant to mine waste management, with the primary regulatory instrument governing mine waste management for the Project being the Type A Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831.

Monitoring results will be reported in the annual reports filed with the NIRB and the NWB. Results of water quality or waste monitoring required under the Water Licence will be reported monthly and/or annually to the NWB, in accordance with the requirements of Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831.

# 7. CONTINGENCIES, MITIGATION, AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The mine design, including the TF design, has been carefully prepared taking into consideration the vast database of site characterization data gathered for the Project, coupled with rigorous engineering analysis. Where data was limited, conservative assumptions were consistently applied. While there is a high level of comfort that the plans are viable and realistic, it is understood that mining activities are by nature inherently uncertain. Therefore, additional mitigation or adaptive management measures may be required as an outcome of monitoring activities described in Section 7. These measures may include changes to TF development as a result of operational, engineering, and/or environmental monitoring. Any additional mitigation or adaptive management measures that is found to be required will be implemented in a timely manner.

Possible tailings scenarios contingency strategies are outlined Table 8-1. Additional details on Echo / Goose Main WRSA closure and waste rock management contingency strategies are provided in the Waste Rock Management Plan.

**Table 8-1 Tailings Management Contingency Strategies**

| Possible Scenario | Contingency Strategy |
|---|---|
| The total volume of tailings might be greater than expected. | There is contingency built into the TSF capacity and additional capacity is available in the open pits to accommodate greater volumes of tailings. |
| The slope of the tailings surface might be different than expected. | Additional tailings discharge (spigot) points may be considered, or discharge points may be changed more frequently. |
| The tailings dry density may be different than expected. | Less dense tailings will occupy more space; however, additional capacity is available in the open pits. The Goose Main TF and/or the TSF could be incorporated in the mine plan for additional tailings storage. |
| The tailings material might oxidize faster than expected. | Some additional water treatment may be required until the tailings freeze. |

The Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to incorporate any lessons learned, major changes to facility operation or maintenance, and environmental monitoring results. Any updates will be filed with the Annual Report submitted under the Type A Water Licence, 2AM-BRP1831.

This plan represents an adaptive approach to understanding the effects of the Project on the landscape and the species that live there. In this context, the TMP is part of a continually evolving process that relies not only on the efficacy of data collection and analytical results, but is also dependent on feedback from the communities, government, Indigenous groups, and the public. Having an adaptive and flexible program allows for appropriate and necessary changes to the design of monitoring studies, and the mitigation and monitoring plans.

Should contingency measures be implemented in the form of using other open pits as TFs (i.e., Goose Main Open Pit) or constructing the purpose-built TSF, B2Gold Nunavut intends to provide the NWB at least 60 days notice prior to the disposal of waste in the TFs and will present the following information: waste disposal quantities, volumes, disposal timing, maximum pit capacity, effects to pit closure, and appropriate mitigation and monitoring plans.

Should temporary discharge be required from a TF to the environment for any reason, a Temporary Tailings Effluent Discharge Plan would be submitted to the NWB at least 120 days prior to this discharge, as required by Part F, Item 16, of the Water Licence 2AM-BRP1831. This plan would include the following: justification for temporary discharge; volume, rate, and quality of discharge; final discharge point and characteristics of the receiving environment; proposed effluent quality limits; and mitigation options to avoid future discharges.

# 8. REFERENCES

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