

## **Appendix 35**

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# **Meadowbank 2025 Habitat Compensation Monitoring Report**

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**AGNICO EAGLE**

MEADOWBANK COMPLEX

**2025 HABITAT COMPENSATION MONITORING  
REPORT**

In Accordance with

DFO Fisheries Authorizations NU-0190, NU-03-0191.3, NU-03-0191.4 and  
14-HCAA-01046

Prepared by:

Agnico Eagle Mines Limited – Meadowbank Complex

March, 2026

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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According to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) *Fisheries Act* Authorizations (FAAs) NU-0190, NU-03-0191.3, NU-03-0191.4 and 14-HCAA-01046, Agnico Eagle maintains a Habitat Compensation Monitoring Plan (HCMP; Version 4, February, 2017) for the Meadowbank Mine to demonstrate whether fish habitat compensation features are constructed and functioning as intended. In 2025, monitoring according to the HCMP was required for two features.

### *R02 Spawning Pads Monitoring (FAA NU-0190)*

In 2009, a set of spawning pads was constructed in the R02 stream to create optimal spawning habitat for Arctic grayling. Stability of the feature continued to be visually confirmed in 2025, with berms and gravel/cobble substrate largely intact. This season, water depths met design criteria throughout the monitoring period. Water velocities tended to decline below the design range for spawning by late June, but remained within the range for rearing. Overall, structural criteria for success of the pads are considered to have been met, since they remain largely stable as designed 16 years post-construction.

Adult fish population data was not collected this year through hoopnetting, as discussed in advance with DFO. Continued use of the R02 reach by Arctic grayling without major changes in population structure has been well demonstrated historically. Visual surveys were conducted in 2025, but no adults were observed. Larval drift netting has also previously demonstrated ongoing use of the R02 reach for spawning activity, with hundreds of larval fish captured in most assessment years. In 2025, however, no larvae were netted at this location. It is noted that this outcome extended across multiple streams in other monitoring studies, and Agnico Eagle continues to assess opportunities for improvement in this program. However, for the first time after pilot testing, kick net sampling for eggs was conducted within the R02 spawning pads, and eggs (though limited in quantity) were observed on June 19, indicating ongoing use of this habitat for spawning. In the HCMP, no specific criteria for success are associated with fish use metrics for the R02 spawning pads.

Agnico Eagle will engage further with to DFO in 2026 to confirm the future monitoring plan for this compensation feature.

### *Dogleg Ponds Monitoring (FAA NU-03-0191.4)*

Dogleg Pond, NP-1, and NP-2 are adjacent ponds on the Meadowbank Mine site, which ultimately drain to Second Portage Lake. Construction of a diversion channel from NP-2 to NP-1 in 2013 was predicted to result in slightly increased water levels in these ponds and the opening of previously inaccessible fish habitat in NP-1. This year (2025) was scheduled as the final year of monitoring according to the HCMP, after which time success would be determined.

Surface area of these ponds was measured in 2021 and 2024 to determine whether predictions have been met. In both years, combined surface area across all three ponds exceeded the predicted total, and criteria for success are considered to have been met for this metric.

Connectivity for fish passage within the three channels between Second Portage Lake, Dogleg Pond, NP-1, and NP-2 was evaluated in 2021 and 2025 to inform the assessment of changes in fish access (discussed below). There are no criteria for success specifically associated with channel flow conditions in the HCMP, and no habitat value was assigned to these ephemeral waterways in the offsetting plan.

Fish presence surveys (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2025) and the weight of evidence to date suggests no major changes in the species assemblages inhabiting the three ponds have occurred following construction of the diversion channel. Small-bodied fish were identified in NP-1 (previously assumed fish-less) in some assessment years, but presence of lake trout and round whitefish has not been confirmed. These large-bodied species were predicted to gain access to NP-1, at least seasonally. Criteria for success for this metric are therefore not considered to have been met. Overall impacts on habitat offsets site-wide are small; habitat gains are reduced by 0.91 HU out of a total planned gains of 65 HU for the associated FAA.

Agnico Eagle will consult DFO to determine next steps.

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## SECTION 1 • INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND

In accordance with *Fisheries Act* Authorizations (FAAs) NU-03-0190, NU-03-0191.3, NU-03-0191.4, and 14-HCAA-01046, Agnico Eagle maintains a Habitat Compensation Monitoring Plan (HCMP; February, 2017) for the Meadowbank Mine to ensure that fish habitat compensation described in the site's No Net Loss and Fish Habitat Offsetting Plans is constructed and functioning as intended. This HCMP pertains to fish habitat compensation for losses associated with the Meadowbank Mine, including Second Portage Lake, Third Portage Lake, Phaser Lake, Vault Lake, and All Weather Access Road (AWAR) stream crossings. The relevant offsets are described in the following *Fisheries Act* Authorizations and associated no-net-loss or offsetting plans:

**FAA NU-03-0190:** Meadowbank Gold Project No-Net-Loss-Plan (NNLP), prepared by Azimuth Consulting Group Inc. – November 2006

- Losses and compensation for the AWAR stream crossings

**FAAs NU-03-0191.3 and NU-03-0191.4:** Agnico-Eagle Mines: Meadowbank Division No Net Loss Plan (NNLP) – October 15, 2012

- Compensation for losses in Second Portage Lake, Third Portage Lake, and Vault Lake

**FAA 14-HCAA-01046:** Agnico Eagle Mines: Meadowbank Division Fish Habitat Offsetting Plan: Phaser Lake – February, 2016 (draft)

- Offsetting for losses in Phaser Lake

Fish habitat offsets for the Whale Tail Mine are monitored and reported separately under the Fish Habitat Offsets Monitoring Plan for the Whale Tail Site (V2 June, 2021), and are not discussed here.

### 1.2 SUMMARY OF COMPENSATION FEATURES

In 2025, monitoring was required for the following two fish habitat compensation features at the Meadowbank Mine. A full description of all habitat compensation features from the above FAAs and their monitoring schedule are available in the Habitat Compensation Monitoring Plan (Version 4, February, 2017). Results of habitat compensation monitoring for any features not assessed in 2025 can be found in previous versions of this report.

### 1.2.1 R02 Spawning Pads (NU-03-0190)

Construction of the 110 km All Weather Access Road (AWAR) between the Hamlet of Baker Lake and the Meadowbank Mine was completed in the spring of 2008, under DFO Authorization NU-03-0190. Four AWAR crossings were found to impact fish-bearing streams, so habitat compensation was required to account for any potential reductions in productivity.

In 2009, a habitat compensation project consisting of four sets of gravel-cobble spawning pads (Figure 1) was constructed at crossing R02 according to design specifications that met biological criteria aimed at enhancing Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) productivity. The construction focused on creating high value spawning and nursery habitat to compensate for the loss of the low and medium value habitat affected by bridge abutment construction at the four crossings.

According to the HCMP, monitoring to assess the stability and successful utilization of the AWAR compensation feature (spawning pads) has been ongoing since that time.

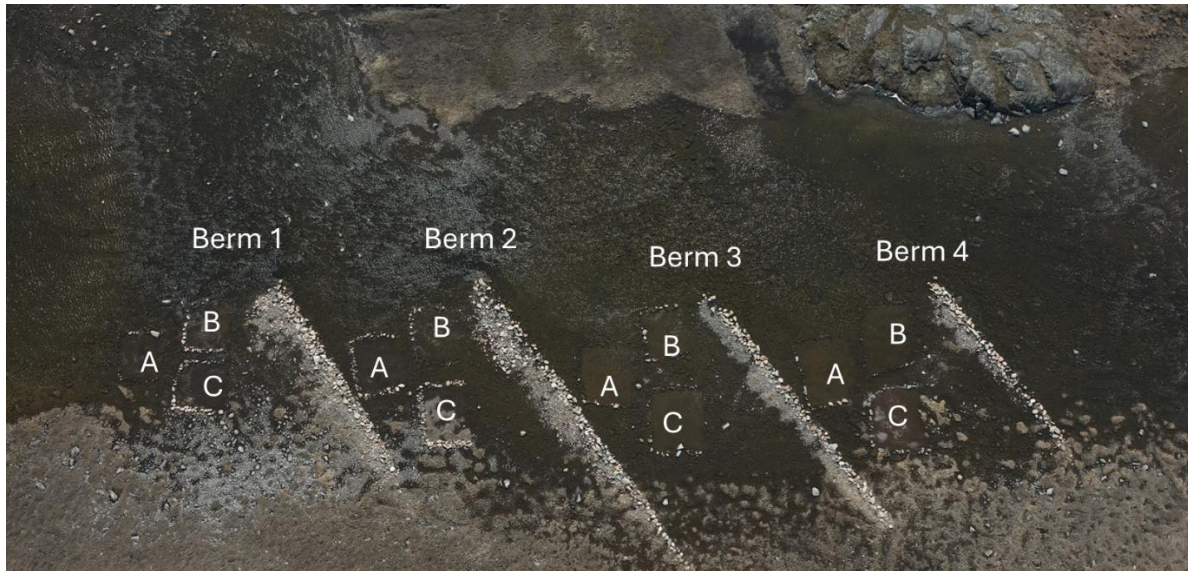


Figure 1. R02 spawning pads (aerial imagery collected by Agnico Eagle on June 23, 2025).

### 1.2.2 Dogleg Pond Enhancements (NU-03-0191.3)

Dogleg Pond and the “North Portage” ponds, NP-1 (historically also called Dogleg North Pond), and NP-2, were isolated natural ponds located near the waste rock area, just north of Second Portage Lake (Figure 2). Since drainage of NP-2 into Second Portage Lake became blocked by the Waste Rock Storage Facility on the northern edge of the TSF, a connecting channel was excavated (2013) to direct flow from NP-2 to NP-1, effectively increasing the drainage area of these ponds. The accompanying increase in pond surface area was estimated at 5% for Dogleg Pond, 15% for NP-1, and 5% for NP-2. Previously inaccessible

fish habitat in NP-1 was also predicted to become available for use by all fish species known to be inhabiting Dogleg Pond.

Ecological and structural monitoring for the Dogleg Ponds' surface area and access enhancement feature has been conducted since 2015. This season (2025) was the last scheduled year of monitoring, and achievement of criteria for success is discussed.



**Figure 2. Locations of Dogleg Pond, NP-1, and NP-2 at the Meadowbank Mine.**

*Image reference: Satellite imagery dated July 25, 2024; published by Google Maps, © 2026, accessed February 24, 2026.*

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

According to the associated FAAs, monitoring objectives for the Meadowbank fish habitat compensation features are as follows. These objectives are fulfilled according to the methods and schedule described in detail in Section 2, below, and in the HCMP.

#### **1.3.1 R02 Spawning Pads Monitoring Objectives**

Based on Condition 5.2 of DFO Authorization NU-03-0190, the objectives of the R02 spawning pads monitoring program are:

- Assess the stability and successful utilization of all compensation features during the spawning and nursery period for Arctic Grayling (Condition 5.2.1)

Additional FAA Conditions pertaining to monitoring of HADD sites were no longer required as per the 2014 HCMP Version 3 update (designed in consultation with DFO).

#### **1.3.2 Dogleg Ponds Monitoring Objectives**

Based on Condition 6 of DFO Authorization NU-03-0190.3, the objectives of the Dogleg Ponds monitoring program are as follows:

- Assess the stability and successful utilization of all fish habitat compensation features according to the methodology and schedule detailed in the Habitat Compensation Monitoring Plan
- Provide a photographic record before, during and after construction, during decommissioning and post-restoration to indicate that all works and undertakings have been completed according to the conditions of the Authorization and the NNLP

### **1.4 SCHEDULE OF MONITORING**

The complete schedule of monitoring events is detailed in the HCMP (Version 4; February, 2017). Monitoring was conducted in 2025 according to that program.

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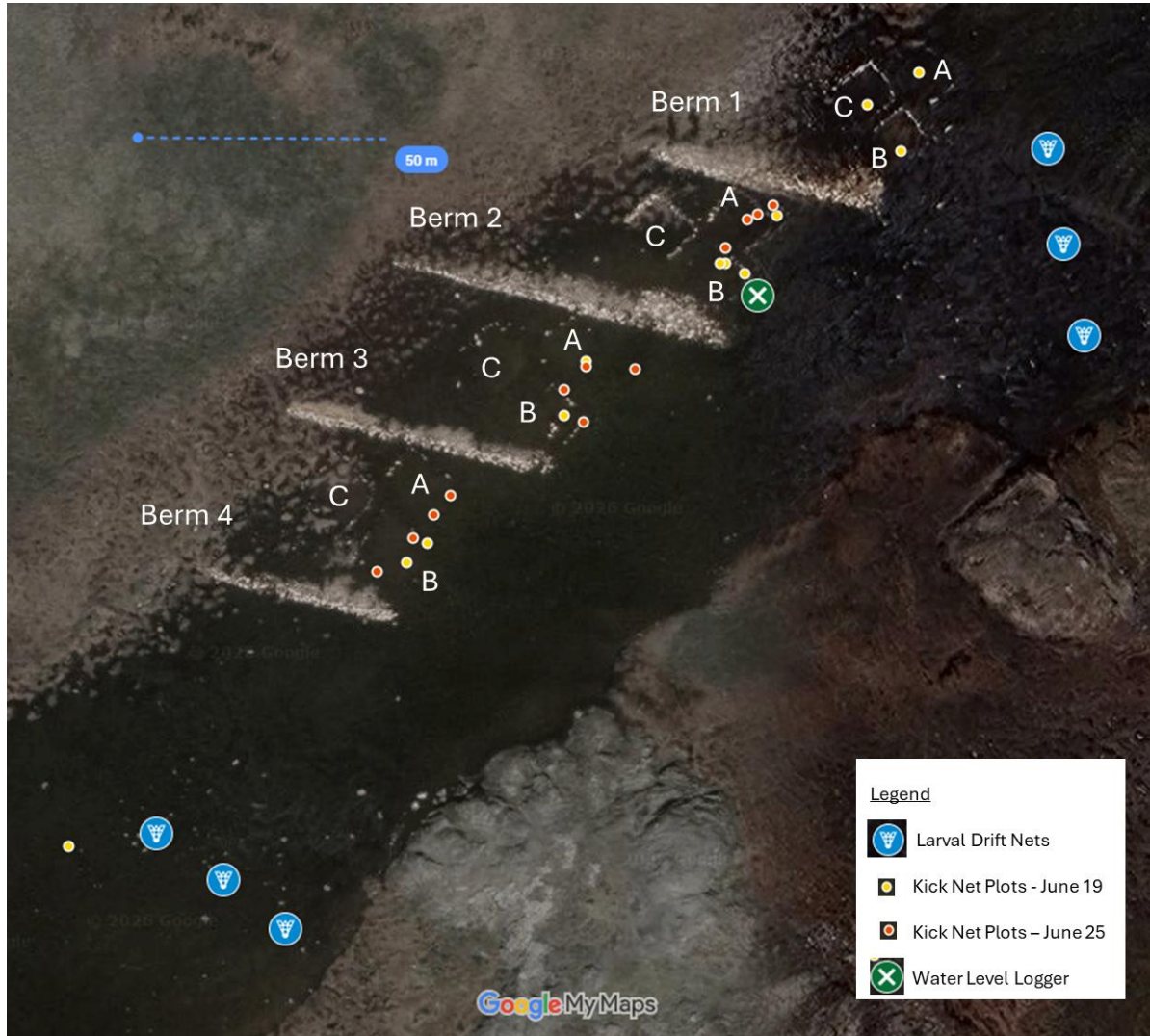
## **SECTION 2 • CURRENT-YEAR MONITORING METHODOLOGY**

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A complete description of the methods used to assess stability and successful utilization of the habitat compensation features according to the objectives of the FAAs is provided in the HCMP. Specific details (e.g. dates, locations) and any adjustments to standard methods in the reporting year's monitoring events are described below.

## 2.1 R02 SPAWNING PADS MONITORING

Monitoring locations in 2025 are shown in Figure 3 and described below.



**Figure 3. Monitoring locations at the R02 spawning pads in 2025.**

*Notes: Water flow direction is left to right (west to east). Kick net locations shown in yellow were surveyed June 19, and locations shown in red were surveyed June 25. Satellite imagery is dated July 25, 2024 as published by Google Maps ©2025; accessed December 11, 2025.*

### 2.1.1 Structure and Stability

Qualitative evaluation of the structure of the spawning pads is required during each monitoring event to determine whether design intent of this offsetting feature continues to be met. In 2025, the spawning pads were visually assessed to determine stability of the baffle berms and

spawning pad material. Any signs of significant movement of the berm material or spawning bed material were noted. Significant movement would be identified as any changes prohibiting the berms from functioning as intended to reduce water flow rates and improve spawning habitat in the constructed gravel area between the berms. These surveys were conducted on June 10, 2025.

During egg kick-net surveys on June 19 and 25, 2025 (Section 2.1.2.4), estimated proportions of substrate types for 1 m<sup>2</sup> plots within each spawning pad were also recorded, along with measurements of water depth and velocity. It is noted that these plots specifically targeted gravel substrate (i.e. not a randomized sample), so results are discussed here in that context.

## **2.1.2 Fish Use**

### **2.1.2.1 Water Temperature and Depth**

Water temperature and depth measurements support interpretation of fish population survey data. Historically, point measurements of water temperature and depth were recorded during site visits (daily to weekly). However in 2025, a water depth and temperature logger (Hobo Water Level Loggers U20L-04) was installed at R02 (Figure 3), along with a nearby barometric pressure logger (Monarch 5396-0321 Track-It logger; located at 64.4995957, -96.1266041). The level logger was placed mid-stream, and secured to rocks with zip ties. The barometric pressure logger was secured inside polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe for protection from the elements and installed at the shoreline. Water level and barometric pressure loggers were deployed from early June until mid-September. Water level was calculated from the loggers using equations from Ji (2008) and Freeze and Cherry (1979):

$$\text{Pressure } (P) = [\text{Water density } (\rho)] \times [\text{Force of gravity } (g)] \times [\text{Distance from logger to surface } (h)]$$
$$h = P / \rho g$$

### **2.1.2.2 Adult Fish Visual Surveys**

Visual surveys for adult fish were completed on June 10 by slowly wading at a safe depth along the length and width of each of the four sets of spawning pads. Duration of each survey was recorded. Incidental observations were also recorded during egg kick-net surveys on June 19 and 25, and during larval drift net checks between June 16 and July 13.

Use of underwater cameras was also scheduled as a form of visual survey. However, during testing just prior to the start of the season, the camera cases let in water and all cameras were rendered unusable. Without sufficient time to obtain replacements, the program was cancelled for this season.

### **2.1.2.3 Hoopnets**

Hoopnetting was not conducted in 2025, as agreed with DFO prior to this field season (in-person meeting, May 2025).

#### **2.1.2.4 Egg Surveys**

While egg surveys are not part of the regular monitoring program, kick-netting for Arctic grayling eggs was conducted at R02 in 2025, since this method was in use for baseline surveys for a proposed new set of spawning pads at nearby stream R06 (reported separately).

Kick-net surveys were conducted by gently agitating substrate by foot throughout plots of known area (1 m<sup>2</sup>) upstream of a net positioned on the streambed. Material captured within the net was photographed and any eggs were enumerated in the field and released to the site of collection.

The surveys at R02 were conducted on June 19 and 25, during the estimated egg incubation window (discussed more in Section 3.1.2). On each date, 12 individual plots were evaluated (Figure 3).

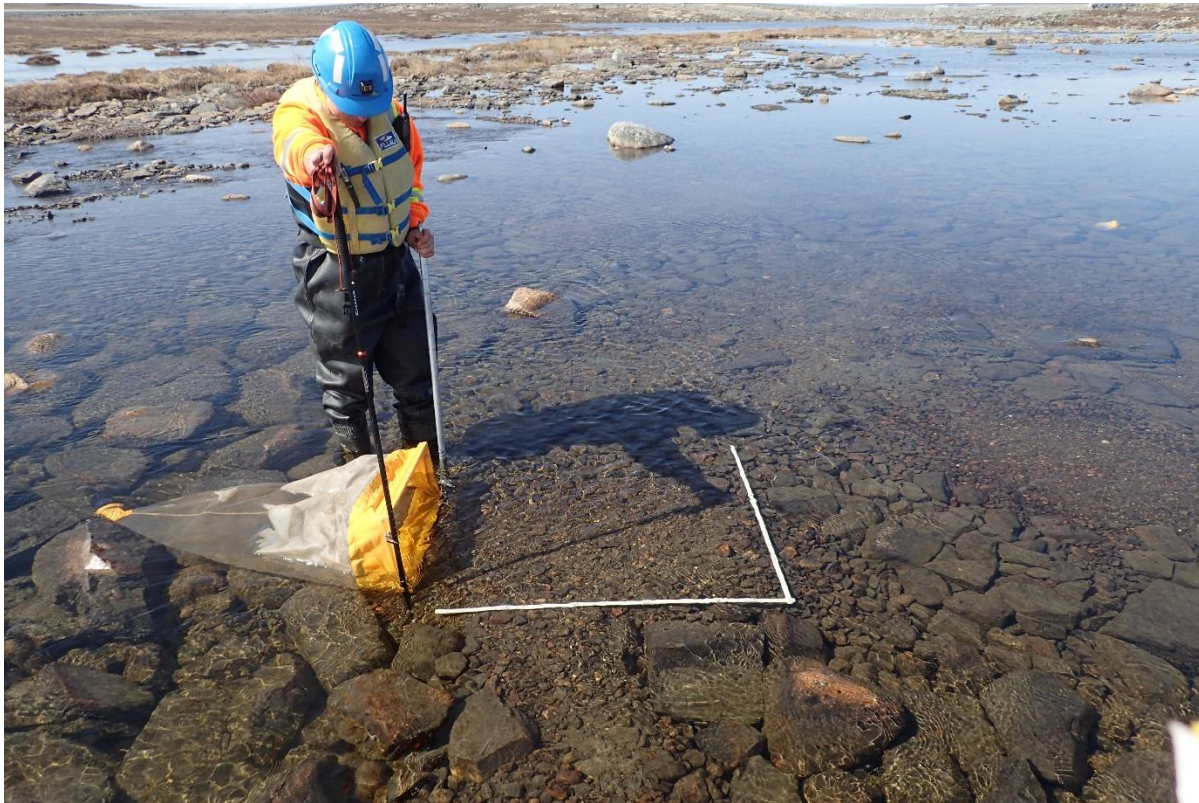
For the June 19<sup>th</sup> surveys, a custom-made fan-style net was used to catch material kicked up in the plots (Figure 4). For June 25<sup>th</sup> surveys, drift nets were used for this purpose (Figure 5). In both cases, the net was set on the downstream side of the plot while substrate throughout was disturbed by foot

Supporting data collected at each plot included:

- Plot ID & coordinates
- Water temperature (once per field visit)
- Mid-water column velocity
- Water depth
- Substrate proportions within the plot
- Incidental visual observations of any fish in the vicinity of plots



**Figure 4. Custom net made for egg kick sampling, used at the R02 location on the first sampling date (June 19, 2025).**



**Figure 5. Use of drift net for egg kick surveys conducted on June 25, 2025 (photo is not from the R02 location).**

#### **2.1.2.5 Larval Drift Nets**

Larval drift netting has been conducted at the R02 location in every historical monitoring event (Section 3.1.2.4). In 2025, larval drift netting proceeded in a manner similar to previous years. In total, 6 larval drift nets (DT) were set at R02 from June 16 through July 13, 2025 (Figure 3). Three nets (DT A1 - A3) were upstream of the R02 habitat compensation area, and three nets (DT B1 – B3) were immediately downstream. Larval drift nets consisted of a rectangular metal frame (61 x 31 cm) that funnelled into a 0.5 mm nitex mesh bag. Attached at the back of the nitex bag was a Nalgene®-type container where the drift was collected. The frames were submerged at least halfway under water (as water levels permitted) and secured by rebar poles on each side. Drift nets were initially checked every two to four days, until July 7 when they were then left unchecked for one week, prior to removal on July 13.

## **2.2 DOGLEG PONDS MONITORING**

Locations of monitoring for the Dogleg Ponds are shown in Figure 6 and described below.



**Figure 6. Locations of surveyed connecting channels (arrows) and delineation of shorelines for the Dogleg Ponds.**

*Image reference: Satellite imagery dated July 25, 2024 (published by Google Maps, © 2025, accessed December 10, 2025).*

### **2.2.1 Structure and Stability**

Design intent of the offsetting features for the Dogleg system are monitored to confirm whether construction of the diversion channel from NP-2 to NP-1 is increasing the wetted area of the three ponds as predicted, and to confirm the potential for fish movement, especially between Dogleg Pond and NP-1. Scheduled monitoring includes surveys to determine surface area of each pond, and a visual assessment of flow conditions in channels, to determine connectivity for fish.

#### **2.2.1.1 Surface Area**

In 2021, complete bathymetric surveys were conducted by a consulting bathymetry firm (Trout Hydrography Inc.) in all three ponds in mid July or early August. Surface area and pond depth

were reported, and both showed changes in line with assumptions of the offsetting plan, namely an increase in surface area by 5 or 15%. Surface area was evaluated again for this report using publicly available satellite imagery published through Google Maps and collected on July 25, 2024 (Figure 6).

#### **2.2.1.2 Connectivity**

Visual surveys of connecting channels were conducted on June 13, 2025. Agnico Eagle technicians and a consulting fisheries biologist evaluated the length of each connecting channel for flow conditions and provided a commentary on potential suitability for fish movement. Channels were also re-visited and photographed in late August.

### **2.2.2 Fish Use**

#### **2.2.2.1 Angling**

To confirm presence of large-bodied fish species, angling was performed in the Dogleg ponds by Agnico Eagle technicians between August 14 and September 9. A total angling effort of 62 line hours (h) was completed across the three ponds.

All fish were caught using a jigging method with a small jigging spoon with barbless hooks. All fish caught by angling were recorded, and the majority were weighed, measured, floy-tagged below the dorsal fin, and released. To minimize stress, each fish was processed quickly and then released, by holding underwater until it was able to swim away on its own. No mortalities occurred.

#### **2.2.2.2 Underwater Camera**

Underwater camera monitoring has been used historically to demonstrate fish presence within this system and was planned for 2025. However, during testing just prior to the start of the season, the camera cases let in water and all cameras were rendered unusable. Without sufficient time to obtain replacements, the program was cancelled for this season.

## **SECTION 3 • RESULTS**

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### **3.1 R02 SPAWNING PADS MONITORING**

This was the 10<sup>th</sup> post-construction monitoring event for the R02 spawning pads since they were built in 2009. According to the current FAA, monitoring is required to continue every two years until decommissioning of the AWAR.

Results for the 2025 season are provided below, with historical context from previous years' HCMP reports (e.g. Agnico Eagle, 2022, 2024). Agnico Eagle anticipates further discussion with DFO in 2026 on the future of this monitoring program, so a review of criteria for success is included in Section 4.1.

### 3.1.1 Structure and Stability

Visual observations in 2025 indicated that conditions within the constructed spawning pads generally remain as designed (Golder, 2007). Design criteria were developed based on literature review and local observations, and aimed to create high-value habitat consisting primarily of 90% gravel substrate, with water velocities in the range of 0.1 - 0.2 m/s, and water depths 0.2 - 0.4 m/s. These conditions were considered suitable for both spawning and early development (Table 1). Spawning pad design recommendations indicated that these conditions should ideally persist from approximately early June through late July to accommodate an estimated two to three week spawning period and a potential further three week incubation and swim-up period. Final designs recognized variation in flow rates over that period would occur, including greater depths and velocities at peak discharge.

**Table 1. Summary of design criteria for spawning and rearing habitat for Arctic grayling.**

Life Stage	Substrate	Water Velocity	Water Depth
Spawning	10 % cobble, 90% gravel	0.1 – 0.2 m/s	0.2 – 0.4 m
Rearing	33% boulder, cobble, gravel	0 – 0.1 m/s	0 – 0.8 m
<i>Golder (2007); Appendix A, Table 2.</i>			

Observations for the berms on June 10, 2025 were as follows (see berm ID in Figure 3).

Berm 1: All pads and berm structure is sound. Velocity is suitable for spawning.

Berm 2: All 3 pads and berm are noted to be in good condition. Velocity good aside from shore side of farthest west pad, where vegetation growth was occurring.

Berm 3: All 3 pads and berms are noted to be in good condition. Velocity is very low, heavy buildup of fines present excepting the left edge of pad A.

Berm 4: Increased velocity is present, partially due to a gap in the berm. Flow conditions are suitable for spawning.

During subsequent kick-net surveys within the spawning pads on June 19 and 25, 2025 (Section 3.1.2.3), supporting habitat data was collected, including substrate type, water depth, and velocity (Table 2). Surveyed plots were 1 m<sup>2</sup> and located within the spawning pads themselves (area within the U-berms). Specific plot locations were selected to target suitable spawning substrate, in order to optimize potential of finding fish eggs, so locations are not considered a random sample.

In most kick-net plots in 2025, gravel had eroded somewhat compared to the 90% design criteria, but gravel and cobble combined continue to dominate substrate classes (Table 2). Throughout both surveys, water depths (0.1 – 0.6 m) remained within or near the design range (0.2 – 0.4 m/s), as further discussed using level logger data in Section 3.1.2.1. Water velocity was optimal through June 19, and tended to decline below the design range by June 25, but conditions remained consistent with those identified for rearing habitat (Table 1), which is expected to be the dominant life stage by early July.

General visual observations of spawning pad integrity have been conducted during every monitoring event historically, without significant changes noted. Quantitative surveys of substrate proportions within each spawning pad were conducted and reported in 2023. Briefly, gravel and small cobble combined continued to form on average 90% of substrate with surveyed plots. Across all plots, average substrate types consisted nominally of: 1% sand/silt/clay, 33% small gravel, 45% large gravel, 12% small cobble, 7% large cobble, and 2% boulder.

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**Table 2. Water depth, water velocity, and proportion of substrate types in egg kicknet survey plots (1 m<sup>2</sup>) within spawning pads 1A – 4C at the R02 location.**

Date		19-June-2025											
Berm # - Pad ID*		Upstream of Berm 4 <sup>^</sup>	2-B	2-B	1-B	4-B	4-B	3-B	3-A	2-B	2-A	1-C	1-A
Water Depth (m)		0.20	0.30	0.50	0.50	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.32	0.60	0.10	0.10	0.13
Water Velocity (m/s)		0.40	0.20	0.40	0.10	0.13	0.10	0.15	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.15	0.19
Substrate (%)	Veg/Organics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0
	Gravel	80	80	20	30	80	80	65	60	30	40	60	20
	Cobble	20	20	80	70	15	20	35	0	70	60	30	80
	Boulder	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
	Bedrock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Date		25-June-2025											
Berm # - Pad ID*		4-B	4-B	4-A	4-A	3-B	3-B	3-A	3-A	2-A	2-A	2-A	2-A
Water Depth (m)		0.5	0.38	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.32	0.25	0.29	0.50	0.10	0.15	0.13
Water Velocity (m/s)		0.07	0.18	0.10	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03
Substrate (%)	Veg/Organics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gravel	70	100	50	70	80	80	90	50	100	100	100	100
	Cobble	20	0	50	30	20	20	10	50	0	0	0	0
	Boulder	10	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Bedrock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Size classes: sand/silt/clay (<2 mm); gravel (2 – 64 mm); cobble (64 – 256 mm); boulder (> 256 mm) *Location of the kick net plot, identified by berm # (1, 2, 3, 4) and spawning pad ID (A, B, C) as shown in Figure 3. <sup>^</sup> Reference location with naturally occurring gravel substrate.													



**Figure 7. Looking out from shore along one of the baffle berms at the R02 spawning pad area (June 10, 2025).**



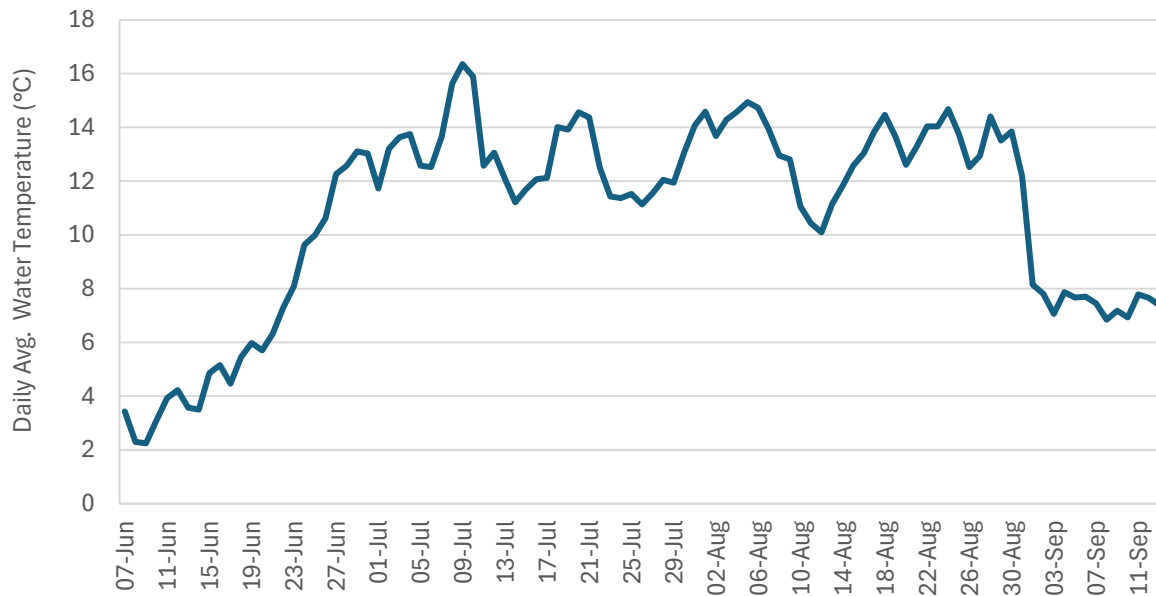
**Figure 8. Looking towards shore at the R02 spawning pad area, showing vegetation growth within one of the spawning pad U-berms (June 10, 2025).**

### **3.1.2 Fish Use**

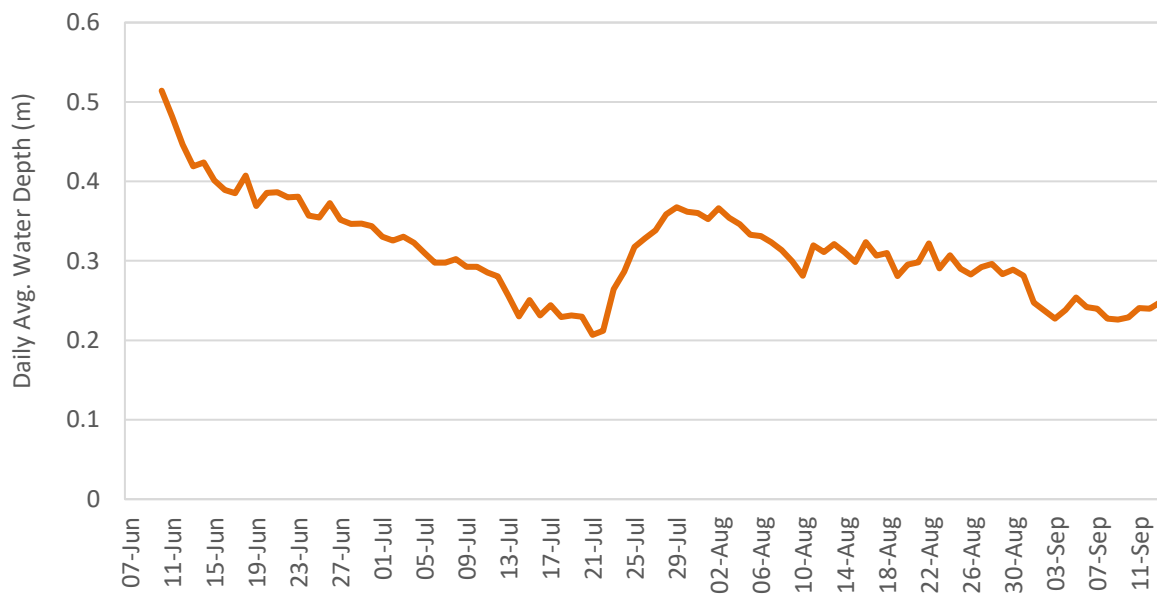
#### ***3.1.2.1 Water Temperature and Depth***

Water temperature was recorded hourly by temperature loggers, along with in-water and barometric pressure for calculation of water depth, as described in Section 2.1.2.1. Daily averages for the 2025 season are presented in Figures 9 and 10.

As discussed in Section 3.1.1, design recommendations for water depth were 0.2 – 0.4 m from ice-off until late July. The final design document (Golder, 2007) recognized that greater depths would occur at peak flow. Conditions in 2025 matched these indicators (Figure 10).



**Figure 9. 2025 daily average water temperature in stream R02, from hourly in-water temperature logger records.**



**Figure 10. 2025 daily average water depth in stream R02, from hourly data logger records.**

*Notes: Barometric pressure was measured to 0.1 psi, which translates to a margin of error of approximately 7 cm of water depth. A significant rainfall event occurred on July 22-23.*

### 3.1.2.2 Adult Fish Visual Surveys

This was the first attempt at formalized visual surveys for adult fish in the R02 spawning pads. No fish were observed during these surveys at R02 in 2025 (Table 3). No incidental observations of adult fish were recorded during subsequent kick net or larval drift surveys.

Of note, adult Arctic grayling exhibiting spawning behaviours were observed at two nearby streams (R05 and R06-T4) during the first visual surveys at those locations on June 7 and 9, when average daily water temperatures were 2.5 and 2.8°C, respectively.

**Table 3. Dates, duration, and number of observers conducting formal adult fish visual surveys at R02 in 2025.**

Date	Water Temperature <sup>^</sup> (°C)	Spawning Pad Area (Berm ID*)	# Observers	Duration per Observer (min)	Distance per Observer (m)	Number of Fish Observed
June 10, 2025	3.1	1	2	8	75	0
		2	2	10	96	0
		3	2	7	87	0
		4	2	8	70	0

<sup>^</sup>Water temperature is daily average from in-stream logger.  
<sup>\*</sup>Spawning pad ID location shown in Figure 3.

### 3.1.2.3 Egg Surveys

Across all 24 kick net surveys conducted at R02 in 2025, fish eggs were found in one plot (Table 4). Habitat conditions in this plot did not differ significantly from others evaluated (Table 1).

**Table 4. Kick-net observations and supporting information for fish egg surveys at the R02 location in 2025.**

Date	Water Temperature (°C)	# Plots w eggs / Total # plots	Total # Eggs
June 19, 2025	6.0	1 <sup>^</sup> /12	17
June 25, 2025	10.0	0/12 <sup>*</sup>	0

Water temperature is daily average from in-stream logger.  
<sup>^</sup>Eggs were found in spawning pad 1-C (Table 2 and Figure 3)  
<sup>\*</sup>A custom fan-style net was used on June 19, and a larval drift net was used on June 25 to collect material kicked up during surveys (Figures 4 and 5).

#### **3.1.2.4 Larval Drift Nets**

In 2025, R02 drift nets were set on June 16, which is slightly earlier than many previous years (Table 5). However, no fish larvae were captured and nets were ultimately removed on July 13. This lack of catch also occurred in 2023, and is a significant change from previous monitoring years, when larvae have always been caught immediately upon study initiation, and hundreds have been observed during the study period (e.g. 2,176 larvae in 2021; Table 5).

To help evaluate why this may have occurred, various lines of evidence were considered including study dates, air and water temperatures, ice-off dates, literature-derived life-history characteristics, and observations from other local monitoring programs. Study dates in 2025 were extended compared to 2023 and generally similar to many previous years. The literature suggests that spawning occurs at a minimum water temperature of 4°C, incubation requires 13 to 18 days under an average temperature of 8.8°C during that time, and larvae emerge from the gravel 3 – 5 days post-hatch (Stewart et al. 2007). In 2025, therefore, nets were planned to be left in-stream from at most 16 d after ice-off and until an 18-d rolling average temperature of 8.8°C was reached, plus at least 7 days. Based on 2025 water temperature records, this would have been from approximately June 15 until July 9. Nets were ultimately left until July 13.

It is noted that ice-off at R02 for the purposes of fish migration is considered to have occurred around May 30 in 2025. However the movement of fish upstream under ice at this location has been suspected in previous years, as spent Arctic grayling have historically been observed immediately upon setting of hoopnets, which occurs as soon as streams are wadable. In addition, spawning activity was readily observed in other nearby streams as soon as surveys began in 2025 (June 7-9), when average daily water temperature was less than 3°C. Evidently, in this area, Arctic grayling spawning does occur at somewhat lower water temperatures than suggested in the literature. Nevertheless, it is considered unlikely that spawning, hatch, and drift could have occurred earlier than initiation of larval drift monitoring at R02 in both 2023 and 2025, given life history characteristics from the literature and the range of dates and water temperatures over which larvae have been observed in previous years. In 2025, larval drift netting was also conducted in two other nearby streams where adult spawning behaviour and large quantities of eggs were directly observed, and no larvae were netted in those locations either. For R02 itself, eggs (though limited in quantity) were observed within the spawning pads on June 19 (see Section 3.1.2.3), and the larval drift netting extended beyond a reasonable incubation time from this date, according to the literature.

Agnico Eagle continues to evaluate the larval drift monitoring methods and associated data to identify opportunities for improvement in this program moving forward.

**Table 5. Historical set dates and total catch of fish larvae for drift nets at the R02 location.**

Year	Earliest Date In	Last Date Out	Max # Traps	# Fish Larvae
<i>Pre-construction</i>				
2005	29-Jun	17-Jul	1	0
2006	24-Jun	19-Jul	2	56
2007	23-Jun	29-Jul	7	327
2008	21-Jun	16-Jul	8	158
<i>Post-construction</i>				
2009	24-Jun	07-Aug	9	508
2010	24-Jun	01-Aug	12	1,136
2011	22-Jun	17-Jul	12	1,831
2013	14-Jun	29-Jun	9	479
2015	18-Jun	17-Jul	12	2,272
2017	10-Jun	02-Jul	11	636
2019	13-Jun	15-Jul	12	2,536
2021	20-Jun	16-Jul	12	2,176
2023	17-Jun	7-Jul	12	0
2025	16-Jun	13-Jul	6	0

## 3.2 DOGLEG PONDS MONITORING

Following construction of the NP-2 to NP-1 diversion channel in 2013, 2025 was the last scheduled year of monitoring for the Dogleg Ponds compensation features, so historical data are included in the results discussion below, and achievement of criteria for success is evaluated in Section 4.2.

### 3.2.1 Structure and Stability

#### 3.2.1.1 Surface Area

The approved NNLP for the Meadowbank site (Agnico Eagle, 2012) projected increases in wetted area of 5% for Dogleg Pond, 15% for Dogleg North Pond (NP-1), and 5% for NP-2, due to construction of the connecting channel between NP-2 and NP-1 (Table 6). Baseline depths and surface areas for the 2012 NNLP were determined by a GIS consultant using bathymetric surveys conducted by Agnico Eagle engineering technicians in August 2010 and 2011, in conjunction with summer-season air photos (unknown date).

Bathymetric surveys in 2021 were conducted by a consulting bathymetry firm (Trout Hydrography Inc.). This evaluation used water depth and surface elevation measurements along with a terrestrial digital elevation model to map area and bathymetry of each pond. The

2021 bathymetric surveys were conducted on July 13 (NP-1), July 14 (NP-2), and August 4 (Dogleg Pond).

To provide an additional post-construction datapoint, publicly available satellite imagery collected on July 25, 2024 and published by Google Maps was used to delineate shorelines and calculate surface area for each pond (Figure 6).

For both assessment years and methods, pond area has increased compared to baseline measurements. For NP-1 and NP-2, surface area exceeds NNLN predictions for pond expansion. Surface area of Dogleg Pond exceeded the NNLN prediction in the 2021 assessment, but not in 2024. Meadowbank site records indicate that substantially more precipitation fell in the first half of 2021 (172 mm; January to July) compared to 2024 (50 mm), likely influencing measured water levels in these first-order streams and ponds.

Overall, it is recognized that analysis of the relatively small predicted changes in surface area between the baseline and post construction stage for these ponds is likely strongly influenced by interannual variability in water levels, as well as significant advances in remote imagery collection since the baseline assessment in 2010. Nevertheless, the available data indicates that NNLN assumptions for total surface area in these ponds post-construction have been met.

**Table 6. Baseline measured and post-construction predicted surface area for the Dogleg Ponds according to the 2012 NNLN, and post-construction measured surface area in 2021 and 2024.**

Location	Metric	2012 NNLN		Monitoring Results	
		Baseline	Post-Construction	2021	2024
Dogleg Pond	Area (ha)	21.2	22.2 (+5%)	22.3	21.6
	Max. Depth (m)	11	-	11.3	-
	Shoreline Elevation (masl)	-	-	133.5	-
NP-1 (Dogleg North Pond)	Area (ha)	3.2	3.7 (+15%)	3.8	3.7
	Max. Depth (m)	3.8	-	4.3	-
	Shoreline Elevation (masl)	-	-	135.4	-
NP-2	Area (ha)	8.7	9.1 (+5%)	10.2	10.2
	Max. Depth (m)	5	-	6.5	-
	Shoreline Elevation (masl)	-	-	139.9	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>35.5</b>

### **3.2.1.2 Connectivity**

In baseline studies for the Meadowbank Project as described in the 2012 NNLP, all three ponds were considered isolated with respect to fish movement in and out. None had a defined connecting stream channel, and flow was mainly sub-surface, except during freshet. Large-bodied fish populations were identified in Dogleg Pond (lake trout and round whitefish) and NP-2 (lake trout only), but none were found in NP-1. Small-bodied fish species were assumed present in Dogleg Pond and NP-2, but NP-1 was assumed to be fishless in the baseline scenario.

In the 2012 NNLP, it was predicted that following construction of the diversion channel, fish inhabiting NP-2 and/or Dogleg Pond would make use of better connectivity to access habitat in NP-1, at least seasonally. Habitat gains were associated with the use of NP-1 only, not the channels themselves.

As part of the program to monitor this access enhancement, the three connecting channels between Second Portage Lake, Dogleg Pond, NP-1, and NP-2 were visually assessed for their suitability in permitting fish passage in 2021 and 2025. By the time of the first assessment in 2025 (June 13), all three channels had at least one section with limited or no connectivity for fish. Conditions were drier in late August. The connection between Second Portage Lake and Dogleg Pond was identified as a boulderfield with only interstitial flow on June 13, and limited to no connectivity for small-bodied fish (Figure 11). Dogleg Pond to NP-1 had good flow on June 13 except at the outlet, where there was limited to no connectivity for small-bodied fish (Figure 12). NP-1 to NP-2 was dry in sections, and not passable to fish (Figure 13).

This differs from the previous evaluation in 2021 when water levels were higher and all three channels were considered likely passable to large-bodied fish at least during and post-freshet, with the connection remaining for small-bodied fish between Second Portage Lake, Dogleg Pond (Figure 11), and NP-1 throughout the open water season. These observations are likely due to interannual variability in precipitation and evaporation factors, as water levels were evidently higher during the 2021 season (Figure 11).



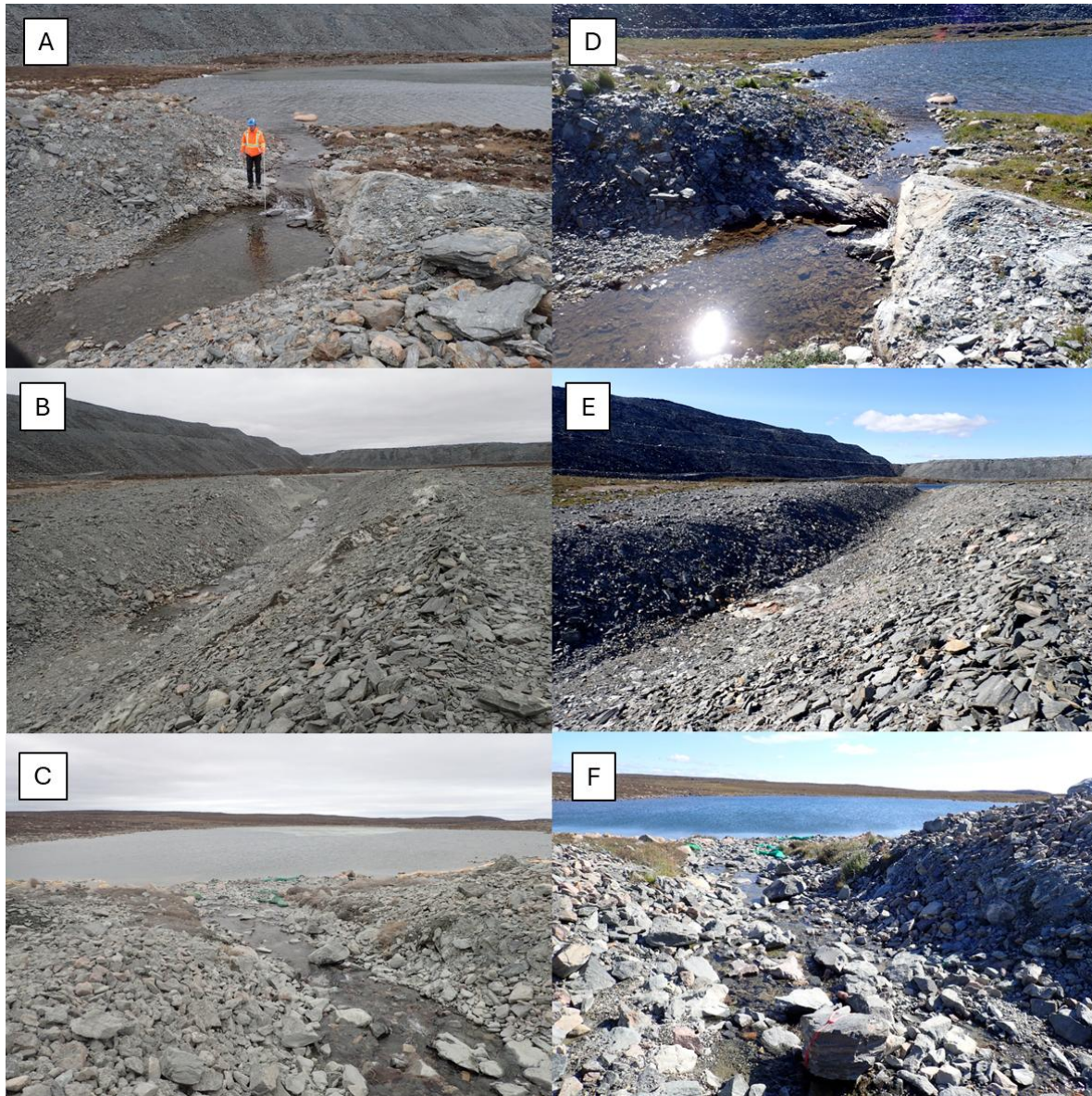
**Figure 11. Looking upstream from Second Portage Lake to Dogleg Pond in June and August, 2025 and August, 2021.**

*Note: No fish habitat value is assigned to this channel.*



**Figure 12. NP-1 to Dogleg Pond channel on June 13 (left) and August 16 (right), 2025.**

*A&C) Looking upstream towards the Vault Haul Road, with NP-1 just in front of the road embankment. B) Channel outlet to Dogleg Pond where connectivity deteriorates. D) Looking downstream towards Dogleg Pond. Note: No fish habitat value is assigned to this channel.*



**Figure 13. NP-1 to NP-2 channel on June 13 (left) and August 16 (right), 2025.**

*Note: No fish habitat value is assigned to this channel.*

### 3.2.2 Fish Use

As indicated in Section 3.2.1.2, both large and small-bodied fish species were predicted to gain access to habitat in NP-1 in the post-construction scenario. No changes to fish assemblages in NP-2 or Dogleg Pond were predicted. In 2025, fish use of all the Dogleg ponds (presence) was evaluated by angling in late August (Table 7). Lake trout and Arctic

char were found in Dogleg Pond, and lake trout were also found in NP-2. No fish were caught in NP-1.

**Table 7. Angling effort and fish capture for the Dogleg Ponds in 2025.**

Location	Date (2025)	# Anglers	Duration per angler (h)	Fish #	Species	Tag	Fork Length (mm)	Weight (g)
Dogleg Pond	08/23		4	1	LKTR	-	400	900
				2	ARCH	-	400	1200
	08/24		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/26		4	1	LKTR	-	415	700
				2	LKTR	-	400	700
				3	LKTR	-	420	800
				4	LKTR	-	415	700
08/27		1	-	-	-	-	-	
NP-1	08/21		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/24		4	-	-	-	-	-
	08/27		1	-	-	-	-	-
NP-2	08/14		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/15		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/16		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/19		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/20		1	-	-	-	-	-
	08/27		2	1	LKTR	-	-	-
				2	LKTR	-	-	-
	08/29	2	4	1	LKTR	-	360	500
				2	LKTR	-	415	700
				3	LKTR	-	400	550
				4	LKTR	-	400	500
				5	LKTR	-	400	750
				6	LKTR	-	340	500
				7	LKTR	-	420	700
				8	LKTR	484	310	500
9				LKTR	-	405	550	
10				LKTR	-	415	625	
11				LKTR	487	420	750	
12				LKTR	488	400	900	
13				LKTR	488	308	400	
14	LKTR	489	415	900				
15	LKTR	-	420	700				
08/30	2	2	1	LKTR	-	420	620	

Location	Date (2025)	# Anglers	Duration per angler (h)	Fish #	Species	Tag	Fork Length (mm)	Weight (g)
				2	LKTR	492	400	500
				3	LKTR	-	335	400
				4	LKTR	-	335	480
				5	LKTR	493	375	500
				6	LKTR	495	440	510
				7	LKTR	-	385	510
				09/09	2	1	-	-
<i>LKTR = lake trout. ARCH = Arctic char.</i>								

Results for all historical fish surveys are summarized in Table 8, along with 2012 NNLP assumptions for fish species presence.

For pond NP-2, no change in species composition was predicted. Lake trout only were found in baseline studies, and their presence was confirmed in post-construction HCMP monitoring.

Similarly for Dogleg Pond, no change in species composition was predicted. Lake trout and round whitefish were found in baseline studies, but lake trout and Arctic char were found in post-construction HCMP monitoring. Since no major change in access between Dogleg Pond and the adjacent Second Portage Lake is evident, and since baseline monitoring was conducted by gillnet while post-construction HCMP monitoring was conducted by angling, this difference may be an artifact of gear type rather than an actual change in species composition. If Arctic char and round whitefish along with lake trout are conservatively assumed present in both the baseline and post-construction scenario, net gains remain associated with changes in surface area only, as predicted for this pond.

For NP-1, a change in access was assumed in the offsetting plan under post-construction conditions, along with increased surface area (discussed in Section 3.2.1.1). By improving connectivity and increasing surface water levels throughout the three ponds, fish use of this previously fish-less pond was predicted, at least seasonally, including by lake trout and round whitefish from the adjacent NP-2 or Dogleg Pond. Through post-construction HCMP monitoring, presence of an unknown fish in NP-1 was confirmed in 2017, and small-bodied fish were observed in 2021 through underwater camera surveys, but to date, use by large-bodied fish has not been confirmed. Total effort was approximately 16 h of angling and 8 h of underwater video between 2017, 2021, and 2025 surveys combined. Criteria for success for this metric are therefore not considered to have been met. Implications in comparison to 2012 NNLP net gain calculations are discussed in Section 4.2.

**Table 8. Summary of fish species presence in the Dogleg Ponds as indicated in the 2012 NNLP (baseline measured and post-construction predicted), and as detected in post-construction field evaluations since 2015.**

Pond	2012 NNLP		Monitoring Results
	Baseline	Post-Construction	
Dogleg	LKTR, RNWH, (BURB, SLSC, NSSB)*	No change from baseline	2015: ARCH, LKTR 2017: ARCH, LKTR, unidentified 2019: None 2021: LKTR, unknown 2025: ARCH, LKTR
NP-1	None	LKTR, RNWH, (BURB, SLSC, NSSB)*	2015: NF 2017: 1 (unidentified) 2019: NF 2021: unknown (small-bodied fish) 2025: None
NP-2	LKTR (BURB, SLSC, NSSB)*	No change from baseline	2015: NF 2017: NF 2019: NF 2021: None 2025: LKTR
<p><i>LKTR = lake trout; ARCH = Arctic char; RNWH = round whitefish,                      *BURB = burbot; SLSC = slimy sculpin; NSSB = ninespine stickleback; these species were identified in field evaluations but were assumed present in NNLP calculations, where indicated.                      NF = not fished                      Note: All baseline studies were by gillnet, while the majority of post-construction assessments have been by angling and underwater camera.</i></p>			

## SECTION 4 • SUMMARY

### 4.1 R02 SPAWNING PADS

The intent of the constructed spawning pad feature, built in 2009, is to provide optimal conditions (flow rates, water depth, substrate) for Arctic grayling spawning in the R02 reach. According to the current HCMP, monitoring of this feature occurs every two years, and includes assessments of: stability (visual observations), adult fish population metrics (hoopnets), adult presence on the spawning pads (underwater video, angling), and evidence of reproduction (larval drift traps).

#### *Structure and Stability*

Stability of the feature continues to be visually confirmed. Some shifting of the spawning bed gravel seems to have occurred since construction in 2009, but gravel and cobble are still the

dominant substrate. Water depth met design criteria throughout the monitoring period. Water velocity declined below the spawning life stage design range by late June, but conditions did meet design criteria for rearing of fry, which is expected to be the dominant life stage by early July. To date, structural criteria for success of the pads are considered to have been met, since they remain largely stable as designed 16 years post-construction.

### *Fish Use*

Adult fish population data was not collected through hoopnetting in 2025, as discussed with DFO in May, 2025. However, continued use of the R02 reach by Arctic grayling without major changes in population structure has been well demonstrated historically (e.g. Agnico Eagle, 2022). Adult fish presence within the spawning berms has previously been observed through underwater camera methods, but cameras were not functional in 2025. Angling was not attempted due to low efficiency in past years. Visual surveys were conducted for the first time, but no adults were observed.

Larval drift netting has previously been used effectively to demonstrate ongoing use of the R02 reach for spawning activity, with hundreds of larval fish captured each year. However in 2025, no fish larvae were captured. It is noted that this lack of netting success extended across multiple streams in other studies. Agnico Eagle continues to evaluate methods and historical data to identify opportunities to improve the outcome of this program moving forward. However, for the first time after pilot testing, kick net sampling for eggs was conducted within the R02 spawning pads, and eggs (though limited in quantity) were observed on June 19, demonstrating ongoing use of this habitat for spawning.

In the HCMP, no specific criteria for success of the spawning pads are associated with fish use metrics. Currently, monitoring is planned to continue every other year until decommissioning of the AWAR crossing, according to Condition 5.2 of the FAA (NU-03-0190). Since the timeline for road decommissioning is now significantly extended compared to NNLP assumptions (est. 2018-2020), Agnico Eagle will continue to discuss the future of this program with DFO.

## **4.2 DOGLEG PONDS**

Construction of the diversion channel between NP-2 and NP-1 was planned to result in slightly increased water levels within three ponds, and the opening of previously inaccessible fish habitat in NP-1. In total, a net gain of 1.85 HUs was associated with these offsets. This season (2025) was scheduled as the final year of monitoring, after which time success would be determined.

### *Surface Area Increases*

Surface area of these ponds was measured during full bathymetric surveys by a consulting bathymetry firm in mid July or early August, 2021, and through analysis of satellite imagery

collected July 25, 2024. For both assessment years and methods, surface area of all three ponds has increased compared to baseline measurements. For NP-1 and NP-2, surface area also exceeded NNLP predictions for pond expansion (15 and 5%, respectively) in both years. Surface area of Dogleg Pond exceeded the NNLP prediction in the 2021 assessment, but not in 2024. Since precipitation in early 2024 was low compared to 2021, and since even under these conditions total surface area across all three ponds exceeded total predicted surface area in the 2012 NNLP, criteria for success are considered to have been met for this metric.

### *Connectivity*

Connectivity for fish passage within the three channels between Second Portage Lake, Dogleg Pond, NP-1, and NP-2 has been evaluated in 2021 and 2025 to inform the weight-of-evidence assessment for fish access enhancements (below). There are no criteria for success specifically associated with channel flow conditions in the HCMP, since no habitat value was assigned to these potentially ephemeral streams in the approved offsetting plan. In 2021, all three channels were considered likely passable to large-bodied fish at least during freshet, with the connection remaining for small-bodied fish between Second Portage, Dogleg Pond, and NP-1 throughout the season. However, in 2025, fish passage was considered unlikely or impossible for all three channels as of the first survey (June 13), highlighting the potential influence of interannual variability on connectivity within this first order system.

### *Fish Access to NP-1*

Fish presence surveys and the weight of evidence to date suggests no major changes in the species assemblages inhabiting the three ponds have occurred following construction of the NP-2 to NP-1 diversion channel. Small-bodied species have been found in NP-1, but the presence of large-bodied species has not been confirmed. Criteria for success for this metric are therefore not considered to have been met.

Overall, implications on net habitat gains site-wide are relatively small compared to total planned gains. Net gains associated with access to NP-1 for large-bodied fish were 0.91 HUs, which represents 1.4% of the total habitat gains that are ultimately planned to be achieved under the associated FAA (65.32 HU; FAA NU-03-0191.4).

As described in the HCMP, Agnico Eagle will consult DFO to determine next steps.

## **SECTION 5 • ACTIONS**

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The following actions are planned:

- Prior to the next monitoring event for the R02 spawning pads (2027), Agnico Eagle will engage with DFO to discuss the future schedule for this program.

- Agnico Eagle will also engage with DFO regarding habitat offset calculations for the Dogleg Ponds, since large-bodied species have not been confirmed to date in NP-1.

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