



**SCREENING DECISION REPORT
NIRB FILE No.: 26YN013**

NPC File No.: 151026

April 7, 2026

Following the Nunavut Impact Review Board’s (NIRB or Board) assessment of all materials provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of Institut National de le Recherche Scientifique’s “Changing winters and ecosystem health of Arctic lakes” is not required pursuant to Article 12, Section 12.4.4(a) of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 92(1)(a) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (NuPPAA)*.

Subject to the Proponent’s compliance with the terms and conditions as set out in below, issued in accordance with s. 92(2)(a) of *NuPPAA*, the NIRB is of the view that the project proposal is not likely to cause significant public concerns, and it is unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental and social impacts. The NIRB therefore recommends that the responsible Minister accepts this Screening Decision Report.

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REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The primary objectives of the NIRB are set out in Article 12, Section 12.2.5 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and are confirmed by s. 23 of the *NuPPAA*. The purpose of screening is provided for under Article 12, Section 12.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 88 of the *NuPPAA*.

As set out under Article 12, Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 92(1) of the *NuPPAA*, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide its written report the Minister indicating one of three options:

- (a) a review of the project is not required;
- (b) a review of the project is required; or
- (c) the project should be modified or abandoned.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & THE NIRB ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On February 11, 2026, the NIRB received a referral to screen Institut National de le Recherche Scientifique’s “Changing winters and ecosystem health of Arctic lakes” project proposal (NIRB File No: 26YN013) from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s Public Registry by using any of the following search criteria or www.nirb.ca/project/126347

- Project Name: Changing winters and ecosystem health of Arctic lakes
- NIRB File No.: 26YN013
- NIRB Application No.: 126347

Table 1: NIRB’s Assessment Process

Date	Stage
February 11, 2026	Receipt of project proposal and positive conformity determination (North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan) from the Commission.
February 11, 2026	Pursuant to s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> the NIRB requested the Proponent complete an online application to address information required for Screening
February 17, 2026	Receipt of online application from Proponent
February 26, 2026	Scoping pursuant to s. 86(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
February 26, 2026	NIRB conducted an inclusion or exclusion of scope
March 5, 2026	Public engagement and comment request (which included draft terms and conditions) was issued in English with translations provided once available
March 26, 2026	Receipt of public comments
April 7, 2026	Issuance of Screening Decision Report

1. Project Scope

Location	Qikiqtani region, Tugaat Lake, east of Milne Inlet, approximately 110 kilometers southwest of Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet). The project lies within the Eclipse Sound Watershed
Objective	The objective of the proposed research program is to assess how changing winter conditions influence lake habitat, freshwater food webs, and Arctic char

	health at Tugaat Lake, including consideration of potential turbidity and metal exposure in light of nearby mining activities.
Timeline	May 20, 2026, to August 31, 2029, multi-year, seasonally recurring project

As required under s. 86(1) of the *NuPPAA*, the Board accepted the scope of the project as set out by Institut National de le Recherche Scientifique’s in the proposal. The scope of the project proposal includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

▪ **Undertakings, Works and Activities**

- The Proponent will conduct seasonal lake-based research at Tugaat Lake during the 2026-2027 field seasons, with up to three site visits per year (winter, spring, and summer)
- Activities would include deployment and retrieval of a temporary instrument mooring anchored with a rock bag, ice drilling using a handheld auger and collection of water and biological samples.
- Arctic char harvested through regular Inuit subsistence fishing would be temporarily sampled for scientific measurements and tissue analysis prior to being returned for consumption. No fish would be harvested specifically for research.
- Equipment would include two snowmobiles (winter), one helicopter (summer access), one zodiac boat with Yamaha outboard engine (summer), and a portable generator.

▪ **Fuel & Equipment Servicing**

- Fuel would be used for snowmobile, boat and helicopter operations.
- Up to 800 litres of fuel would be stored during winter for snowmobile refueling in approved containers. No long-term fuel storage is proposed.
- Up to twelve 12-kg of propane cylinders would be used during winter to keep tent warm.
- Small volumes of preservatives (Lugol’s solution, formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, HCl, H2SO4) would be transported in pre-loaded sample containers. No bulk chemical mixing is proposed on site.

▪ **Camp**

- Temporary field camps would be established during site visits. No permanent infrastructure is proposed.

▪ **Waste Management**

- Minor quantities of non-hazardous waste will be generated
- All waste would be removed from site and disposed of in accordance with applicable community and HTO directives.

2. Inclusion or Exclusion to Scoping List

The NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal; as a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

3. Public Comments and Concerns

As outlined in Table 1 above, notices regarding the NIRB’s screening of this project proposal were distributed to community organizations as well as to relevant federal and territorial government

agencies, Inuit organizations and other parties with a request for interested parties to provide the Board with any comments or concerns regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

On or before March 26, 2026, the NIRB received comments from the following interested parties:

Table 2: Comments Received

Commenting Party	NIRB Doc ID No.
Transport Canada	360203
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	360215

a. Summary of Comments and Concerns Received

The following provides a summary of the comments and concerns received by the NIRB in relation to the Changing winters and ecosystem health of Arctic lakes project proposal:

- **Transport Canada**
 - Indicated that the placement and mooring of scientific equipment in navigable waters are subject to the Canadian Navigable Waters Act (CNWA). The Proponent must determine whether the works qualify as “minor works” under the Minor Works Order using the Navigation Protection Program Project Review Tool. If criteria are not met, the Proponent must either apply for approval or follow the CNWA public resolution process.
- **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**
 - Identified the need for the Proponent to implement appropriate fuel management measures, including defined fueling locations, setbacks from waterbodies, spill prevention and response planning (including under-ice conditions), and proper storage and inspection of fuel.
 - CIRNAC also recommended the development of procedures for the safe handling of hazardous chemical preservatives, including secondary containment, access to Safety Data Sheets, and spill response measures.
 - Additionally, CIRNAC advised that the Proponent engage with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and consider Inuit knowledge, potential impacts to wildlife and culturally significant sites, and opportunities for local employment, training, and procurement.

4. b. Comments and Concerns with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge

No concerns or comments were received with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit or Indigenous and Community knowledge in relation to the proposed project. However, Inuit Qaujimaningit and Indigenous and community knowledge is incorporated into the terms and conditions recommended below based on information collected from prior and similar projects, data collected and mapped by the Commission, and other available sources.

5. Proponent’s Response to Public Comments and Concerns

Due to the comments, and questions received from parties, the NIRB provided an opportunity for the Proponent to respond. The following is a summary of the Proponent’s response to concerns:

- Not applicable

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF *NUPPAA*

In determining whether a review of the project is required, the Board considered whether the project proposal had potential to result in significant ecosystemic or socio-economic impacts. Table 3. The Board took particular care to consider Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge in carrying out its assessment and determination of the significance of impacts.

Table 3: Summary of the Board’s Assessment of Factors s. 90 *NuPPAA*

Factor	Comment
The size of the geographic area, including the size of wildlife habitats, likely to be affected by the impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed project would take place within habitats of far-ranging wildlife species such as migratory and non-migratory birds, arctic fox, arctic hare and Species at Risk such as Polar Bears. ▪ The impact on the geographic area, including wildlife habitat, is expected to be minimal and localized, as project activities are small in scale and limited to a small area, despite occurring within habitats used by wide-ranging species.
The ecosystemic sensitivity of that area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on available information, no designated areas of heightened ecosystemic sensitivity have been identified within the project footprint. While the area supports Arctic ecosystems and wildlife, there is no indication of elevated sensitivity; therefore, ecosystemic sensitivity is considered low.
The historical, cultural and archaeological significance of that area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The impact on historical, cultural, and archaeological areas is considered low. The area is important for Inuit subsistence fishing and has cultural value to the Mittimatalik community; however, project activities

Factor	Comment
	are small in scale and would be planned with the HTO to avoid disrupting these uses.
The size of the human and the animal populations likely to be affected by the impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on human and animal populations is considered low. The area supports Inuit subsistence fishing and local wildlife; however, activities are limited in scale, rely on fish already harvested through regular use, and will be coordinated with the HTO to avoid disruption.
The nature, magnitude and complexity of the impacts; the probability of the impacts occurring; the frequency and duration of the impacts; and the reversibility or irreversibility of the impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential zone of influence is limited to the sampling location and nearby access routes. Given the small-scale, localized, and non-invasive nature of activities, impacts are expected to be low in intensity, minimal in magnitude and complexity, and the probability of occurrence is low, and any effects would be temporary and fully reversible.
The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the project combined with those of any other project that has been carried out, is being carried out or is likely to be carried out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While several past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects have been identified in and around Pond Inlet, the majority are seasonal research activities or fixed-location infrastructure projects that do not spatially or functionally overlap with this project. Given its temporary, small-scale, and non-invasive nature, cumulative effects are not expected.
Any other factor that the Board considers relevant to the assessment of the significance of impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other relevant factors were identified; however, see below for Regulatory Requirements mandating mitigation and/or reporting.

Regulatory Requirements

The Proponent is also advised that the following legislation may apply to the Project:

Acts and Regulations

1. The *Fisheries Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-14/index.html>).
2. The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.31/>).
3. The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-22/>).

Table 4: Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Projects Considered

NIRB Project Number	Project Title	Project Type
<i>Present Projects – approved or in operation</i>		
23YA018	Arctic coastal and drifting ice processes and dynamics (project amendment)	Research (multi-year seasonal)
23UN047	Establishment of Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area	Other (multi-year)

NIRB Project Number	Project Title	Project Type
23YN068	Mary River Mine Fugitive Dust Research: Bridging Western Science, Industry Monitoring and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit	Research (multi-year seasonal)
08MN053	Production Increase Proposal Renewal	Mine (multi-year year- round)
<i>Past Projects</i>		
23YN039	Admiralty Inlet and Milne Inlet narwhal tagging and drone work	Research (one-year)
21YN024	Department of Fisheries and Oceans – Ecosystem Approach to Tremblay Sound (EAT) Program	Research (one-year)
23YN020	High Arctic Cetacean Survey 2023	Research (one-year)

VIEWS OF THE BOARD

In considering the above factors, the Board has identified the following and respectfully provides its views regarding whether or not the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts. The NIRB has also proposed terms and conditions that would mitigate the potential adverse impacts identified.

Ecosystem, wildlife habitat and Inuit harvesting activities:

Valued Component	Migratory and non-migratory birds, terrestrial wildlife, and Species at Risk
Potential effects:	Helicopter, zodiac, and snowmobile use may result in temporary disturbance to migratory and non-migratory birds, terrestrials' wildlife, and Species at Risk.
Nature of Impacts:	The potential impacts are considered to be limited due to infrequent and temporary activities, and any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent intends to minimize disturbance by avoiding calving and post-calving periods and areas, where practicable, and by limiting the duration and spatial extent of access and field activities.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Wildlife – General – 17 through 18 Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance – 19 through 20 Aircraft Flight Restrictions – 21 through 26

Valued Component	Fish and fish habitat, and aquatic environment.
Potential effects:	Project activities may result in minor, temporary disturbance to fish and localized disturbance to fish habitat during sampling and equipment installation, as well as short-term changes in water quality (e.g., turbidity). The project also addresses existing concerns related to fish

	health, including mercury levels; however, no increase in contaminants is expected.
Nature of Impacts:	Potential impacts are expected to be low in magnitude and localized due to the limited scale and duration of activities. Any effects on fish and fish habitat are expected to be temporary and fully reversible.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent intends to minimize disturbance by limiting fish sampling to small quantities during regular subsistence harvesting activities, utilizing experienced local harvesters, and implementing appropriate fuel handling practices to prevent contamination of the aquatic environment.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Watercourse/Waterbodies (including fresh and marine waters) – 6 Camps – 31 Marine Based Activities – 32 through 35

Valued Component	Vegetation, land, soils, terrain stability, permafrost
Potential effects:	Snowmobile and helicopter access may result in localized disturbance to vegetation and soils, including surface compaction and minor disruption to terrain and permafrost conditions.
Nature of Impacts:	The nature of impacts from snowmobile and helicopter access is expected to be temporary, localized, and reversible, consisting primarily of minor disturbance to vegetation and soils and limited effects on terrain stability and permafrost.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent would minimize disturbance to vegetation, soils, terrain, and permafrost by limiting ground disturbance, restricting travel to necessary routes, and reducing the duration and spatial extent of field activities.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Waste Management – 7 through 8 Fuel and Chemical Storage – 9 through 16 Road and Ground Disturbance – 27 Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas – 28 through 30

Valued Component	Public and traditional land use activities
Potential effects:	Project activities may result in temporary disturbance or interference with public and Inuit traditional land use activities, including potential interactions with wildlife harvesting in the area.
Nature of Impacts:	Potential impacts are expected to be low in magnitude and localized due to the limited scale and duration of activities. Any interactions with land use activities are expected to be temporary and reversible.
Mitigating Factors:	The Proponent intends to minimize interference with land use activities by conducting short-duration, localized field activities and considering available Inuit knowledge and land use patterns, where practicable.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas – 28 through 30 Other – 36 and 37

Socio-economic effects on northerners:

Valued Component	Employment hiring.
Potential effects:	Project activities may result in positive effects through short-term employment opportunities for local harvesters.
Nature of Impacts:	Impacts on employment are positive, temporary, and limited, providing short-term work for local harvesters.
Mitigating Factors:	No mitigation measures are required, as effects on employment are positive in nature.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	Other – 38

Technological innovations for which the effects are unknown:

- No specific issues have been identified associated with this project proposal.

Administrative Conditions:

To encourage compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and assist the Board and responsible authorities with compliance and effects monitoring for project activities, the following project-specific terms and conditions have been recommended: 1-5.

In considering the above factors and subject to the Proponent’s compliance with regulatory requirements and the terms and conditions necessary to mitigate against the potential adverse environmental and social effects, the Board is of the view that the proposed project is unlikely to cause significant public concern and its adverse ecosystemic and socioeconomic impacts are unlikely to be significant, or are highly predictable and can be adequately mitigated by known technologies.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT-SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Board is recommending the following specific terms and conditions to apply in respect of the project:

General

1. Institut National de le Recherche Scientifique (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 151026) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, February 17, 2026). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies’ permits or licences as required for this project.

5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

Water courses/Water bodies (including fresh and marine waters)

6. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including wastewater) or sediment into any water body. The Proponent should have in place an Emergency Spill Response Plan that is approved by the appropriate authorizing agency(ies).

Waste Management

7. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.
8. The Proponent shall dispose of all combustible wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. All non-combustible wastes from the project site shall be removed to an approved facility for disposal.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

9. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body and environmentally sensitive areas as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. The materials shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment.
10. The Proponent shall use adequate secondary containment or a surface liner (e.g., self-supporting insta-berms and fold-a-tanks) when storing barreled fuel and chemicals at all locations.
11. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
12. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
13. The Proponent shall have a Spill Contingency Plan in place at all fuel storage or transfer locations and shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available.
14. The Proponent shall follow the authorizing agencies' direction for management and removal of hazardous materials and wastes (e.g., contaminated soils, sediment and waste oil).
15. The Proponent shall ensure that wildlife deterrent systems are utilized at the time of a spill incident in order to avoid wildlife (terrestrial or marine) and migratory birds from being contaminated
16. The Proponent shall ensure that all spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of 100 litres or more must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

Wildlife – General

17. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
18. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

19. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
20. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone¹ appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.

Aircraft Flight Restrictions

21. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife and avoid flying directly over animals.
22. The Proponent shall plan flight paths that minimize flights over known habitat likely to have birds or concentrations of wildlife. Aircraft should avoid critical and sensitive wildlife areas at all times by choosing alternate flight corridors.
23. The Proponent shall restrict aircraft/helicopter activity related to the project to a minimum flight altitude of 610 metres (2,100 ft) above ground level except during landing, take-off or if there is a specific requirement for low-level flying, which does not disturb wildlife or migratory birds.
24. The Proponent shall avoid known concentrations of birds (e.g., bird colonies, moulting areas) by a lateral distance of 1.5 kilometre. If avoidance is not possible maintain a minimum flight altitude of 1,100 metres (3,500 feet) over these areas.
25. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft/helicopter do not, unless for emergency, touch-down in areas where wildlife are present.
26. The Proponent shall advise all pilots of relevant flight restrictions and enforce their application over the project area, including flight paths to/from the project area.

Road and Ground Disturbance

27. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles unless the ground surface is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles without rutting or gouging. Overland travel of equipment or vehicles must be suspended if rutting occurs

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

28. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.

29. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
30. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment

Camps

31. The Proponent shall not erect camps or store materials on the surface ice of lakes or streams, except that which is for immediate use.

Marine-Based Activities

32. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a Polar Bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with Polar Bears should be avoided if possible.
33. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
34. The Proponent shall suspend all project activities should any dead fish or wildlife (both marine and terrestrial), or any injured wildlife be observed during any works or activities in and around the marine waters. Activities may only be resumed on the recommendation of the authorizing agencies.
35. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.

Other

36. The Proponent should consult with local residents regarding their activities in the area and solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information that can inform project activities.
37. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
38. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible

OTHER NIRB CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the project-specific terms and conditions, the Board is recommending the following:

Change in Project Scope

1. Responsible authorities or Proponent shall notify the Nunavut Planning Commission and/or Parks Canada as appropriate, and the NIRB of any changes in operating plans or conditions, including phase advancement, associated with this project prior to any such change.

Copy of licences, etc. to the Board and Commission

2. The NIRB respectfully requests that responsible authorities submit a copy of each licence, permit or other authorization issued for the Project to the NIRB to assist in enabling possible project monitoring that may be required. Please forward a copy of the licences, permits and/or other authorizations to the NIRB directly at info@nirb.ca or upload a copy to the NIRB's online registry at www.nirb.ca.

Use of Inuit Qaujimaningit

3. The Proponent is encouraged to work with local communities and knowledge holders to inform project design, to carry out the project, and to confirm or validate the perspectives represented in publications, and reports as part of the project. Care should be taken to ensure that Inuit Qaujimaningit and local knowledge collected for the project is used with permission and is accurately represented.

Bear and Carnivore Safety

4. The Proponent should review the Government of Nunavut's booklet on Bear Safety, which can be downloaded from this link: http://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/bear_safety_-_reducing_bear-people_conflicts_in_nunavut.pdf. Further information on bear/carnivore detection and deterrent techniques can be found in the "Safety in Grizzly and Black Bear Country" pamphlet, which can be downloaded from this link: https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/safety_in_grizzly_and_black_bear_country_english.pdf.
5. There are polar bear and grizzly bear safety resources available from the Bear Smart Society with videos on polar bear safety available in English, French and Inuktitut at <http://www.bearsmart.com/play/safety-in-polar-bear-country/>. Information can also be obtained from Parks Canada's website on bear safety at the following link: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/d.aspx> or in reviewing the "Safety in Polar Bear Country" pamphlet, which can be downloaded from the following link: http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/~/_media/pn-np/nu/auyuittuq/pdf/shared/PolarBearSafety_English.ashx.
6. Any problem wildlife or any interaction with carnivores should be reported immediately to the local Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment Conservation Office (Conservation Officer of Pond Inlet, phone: (867) 899-8819).

Species at Risk

7. The Proponent review Environment and Climate Change Canada's "Environment Assessment Best Practice Guide for Wildlife at Risk in Canada", available at the following link: http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/policies/EA%20Best%20Practices%202004.pdf. The guide provides information to the Proponent on what is required when Wildlife at Risk, including *Species at Risk*, are encountered or affected by the project.

Migratory Birds

8. The Proponent review Canadian Wildlife Services' "Key migratory bird terrestrial habitat sites in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut", available at the following link: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/317630/publication.html> and "Key marine habitat sites for migratory birds in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories", available at the following link: <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/392824/publication.html>. The guide provides information to the Proponent on key terrestrial and marine habitat areas that are essential to the welfare of various migratory bird species in Canada.

9. For further information on how to protect migratory birds, their nests and eggs when planning or carrying out project activities, consult Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Incidental Take web page and the fact sheet “Planning Ahead to Reduce the Risk of Detrimental Effects to Migratory Birds, and their Nests and Eggs” available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/ec/CW66-324-2013-eng.pdf.

Heritage Resources

10. During the assessment, the NIRB has identified that no archaeology surveys have been conducted in the proposed project areas and that potential for the presence of archaeological resources is likely, therefore the Proponent shall contact the Department of Culture and Heritage to initiate a field archaeology assessment program prior to undertaking any land disturbance activities.

Aircraft Identification

11. The Proponent shall provide the community of the planned helicopter activities, including photo(s) of the helicopter to be used, approximate flight paths, plans and times as available prior to commencement of activities to ensure community members are aware of the planned activities.


Qikiqtani Inuit Association

12. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association impose strict mitigation measures and/or conditions upon the Proponent pursuant to the Inuit Owned Lands License in regard to fuel and chemical storage, drilling, water conditions, ground disturbance, and wildlife on Inuit Owned Lands.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board’s screening decision with respect to the Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique’s “Changing winters and ecosystem health of Arctic lakes”. The NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

Dated April 7, 2026 at Iqaluit, NU.



Albert Ehaloak, *Acting* Chairperson

Attachments: Appendix A: Species at Risk in Nunavut

APPENDIX A: SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT

Due to the requirements of Section 79(2) of the *Species at Risk Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 29 (*SARA*), and the potential for project-specific adverse effects on listed wildlife species and its critical habitat, measures should be taken as appropriate to avoid or lessen those effects, and the effects need to be monitored. Project effects could include species disturbance, attraction to operations and destruction of habitat. This section applies to all species listed on Schedule 1 of *SARA*, as listed in the table below, or have been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), which may be encountered in the project area. This list may not include all species identified as at risk by the Territorial Government. The following points provide clarification on the applicability of the species outlined in the table.

- Schedule 1 is the official legal list of Species at Risk for *SARA*. *SARA* applies to all species on Schedule 1. The term “listed” species refers to species on Schedule 1.
- Schedule 2 and 3 of *SARA* identify species that were designated at risk by the COSEWIC prior to October 1999 and must be reassessed using revised criteria before they can be considered for addition to Schedule 1.
- Some species identified at risk by COSEWIC are “pending” addition to Schedule 1 of *SARA*. These species are under consideration for addition to Schedule 1, subject to further consultation or assessment.

If species at risk are encountered or affected, the primary mitigation measure should be avoidance. The Proponent should avoid contact with or disturbance to each species, its habitat and/or its residence. All direct, indirect, and cumulative effects should be considered. Refer to species status reports and other information on the Species at Risk Registry at <http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca> for information on specific species.

Monitoring should be undertaken by the Proponent to determine the effectiveness of mitigation and/or identify where further mitigation is required. As a minimum, this monitoring should include recording the locations and dates of any observations of Species at Risk, behaviour or actions taken by the animals when project activities were encountered, and any actions taken by the proponent to avoid contact or disturbance to the species, its habitat, and/or its residence. This information should be submitted to the appropriate regulators and organizations with management responsibility for that species, as requested.

For species primarily managed by the Territorial Government, the Territorial Government should be consulted to identify other appropriate mitigation and/or monitoring measures to minimize effects to these species from the project.

Mitigation and monitoring measures must be undertaken in a way that is consistent with applicable recovery strategies and action/management plans.

Schedules of *SARA* are amended on a regular basis, so it is important to check the *SARA* registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) to get the current status of a species.

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Terrestrial Species at Risk¹	COSEWIC Designation	Schedule of SARA	Government Organization with Primary Management Responsibility²
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Common Nighthawk	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harlequin Duck	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harris's Sparrow	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Horned Grebe	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ivory Gull	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peregrine Falcon	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red Knot Islandica Subspecies	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red-necked Phalarope	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ross's Gull	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Porsild's Bryum	Threatened	Schedule 1	Government of Nunavut (GN)
Transverse Lady Beetle	Special Concern	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Dolphin and Union Population)	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Caribou (Barren-ground Population)	Threatened	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Torngat Mountains Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	GN
Grizzly Bear (Western Population)	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peary Caribou	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Polar Bear	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Wolverine	Special Concern	Schedule 1	GN
Atlantic Walrus (High Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
Atlantic Walrus (Central/Low Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Cumberland Sound Population)	Threatened	Schedule 1	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern High Arctic-Baffin Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Atlantic Cod (Arctic Lakes Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Fourhorn Sculpin (Freshwater Form)	Data Deficient	Schedule 3	DFO
Lumpfish	Threatened	No Schedule	DFO
Thorny Skate	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO

¹ The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for aquatic species.

² Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has a national role to play in the conservation and recovery of Species at Risk in Canada, as well as responsibility for management of birds described in the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA). Day-to-day management of terrestrial species not covered in the MBCA is the responsibility of the Territorial Government. Populations that exist in National Parks are also managed under the authority of the Parks Canada Agency.