



**SCREENING DECISION REPORT  
NIRB FILE No.: 25YN053**

Commission File No.: 150803

October 27, 2025

Following the Nunavut Impact Review Board’s (NIRB or Board) assessment of all materials provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Movement and genetics of whales in the Canadian Arctic using satellite telemetry, tissue biopsies, and photogrammetry” 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(s) accepts this Screening Decision Report.

**OUTLINE OF 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 June 11, 2025, the NIRB received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Movement and genetics of whales in the Canadian Arctic using satellite telemetry, tissue biopsies, and photogrammetry” project proposal (NIRB File No: 25YN053) from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable 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/126202](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126202).

- Project Name: Movement and genetics of whales in the Canadian Arctic using satellite telemetry, tissue biopsies, and photogrammetry
- NIRB File No.: 25YN053
- NIRB Application No.: 126202

**Table 1: NIRB’s Assessment Process**

Date	Stage
June 11, 2025	Receipt of project proposal and referral from the Commission
June 11, 2025	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
June 20, 2025	Receipt of online application from Proponent
July 14, 2025	Request(s) to Proponent for additional information in order to carry out screening pursuant to s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
July 16, 2025	Proponent responded to information request(s) and provided additional information
July 22, 2025	Scoping pursuant to s. 86(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
July 24, 2025	Public engagement and comment request (which included draft terms and conditions) was issued in English with translations provided once available
August 15, 2025	Receipt of public comments

Date	Stage
September 5, 2025	Pursuant to Article 12, Section 12.4.5 of the <i>Nunavut Agreement</i> and s. 92(4) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> , an extension to the 45-day timeline for the provision of the Board's Report was requested from the Minister of Fisheries
October 27, 2025	Issuance of Screening Decision Report

## 1. Project Scope

<b>Location</b>	Kitikmeot and Qikiqtani regions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gulf of Boothia: 50 kilometers northeast of Taloyoak; and,</li> <li>○ Cumberland Sound: immediately south of Pangnirtung.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective</b>	The Proponent intends to better understand narwhal and beluga whale population estimates from aerial surveys, and to monitor behaviour, habitat use and movements in the Canadian High Arctic.
<b>Timeline</b>	Three (3) to four (4) weeks in total from June to November 2026

As required under s. 86(1) of the *NuPPAA*, the Board accepted the scope of the project as set out by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the proposal. The scope of the project proposal includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

- Marine-based research activities targeting beluga whales in Cumberland Sound and narwhal and possibly bowhead whales in the Gulf of Boothia for three (3) to four (4) weeks from June to November 2026:
  - Drone-based photogrammetry using remotely piloted aircraft to photograph and record videos, and collect blow samples;
  - Remote tissue biopsy sampling using custom crossbows, air rifles, and drone-deployed darts to collect biopsy tissue from individuals; and,
  - Movement monitoring using GPS satellite tags deployed by drone to adult whales.
- Logistics in the Cumberland Sound:
  - Personnel to include two (2) local hires;
  - Use of small boats to transport personnel and equipment to marine areas within the sound;
  - Lodging at community accommodation in Pangnirtung; and,
  - use of approximately 2050 litres of fuel for boat operation.
- Logistics in the Gulf of Boothia:
  - personnel to include two (2) Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff and two (2) to four (4) local hires;
  - use of all-terrain vehicles to transport personnel and equipment to and from camp, and small boats for daily excursions to areas within the bay from camp;
  - establish, use and demolish of temporary field camp within an existing Inuit hunting camp in Lord Mayor Bay;
  - use of approximately 2050 litres of fuel for boat operation and 16 litres for camp use;
  - use of less than 300 cubic centimetre water from surface waters for camp use;
  - dispose of greywater near campsite and human waste at facilities; and,

- all garbage/waste would be removed at the end of the program and returned to Taloyoak for proper disposal.

## 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 August 15, 2025, the NIRB received comments from the following interested parties:

**Table 2: Comments Received**

Commenting Party	NIRB Doc ID No.
Government of Nunavut	357100
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	357074
Transport Canada	357078
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	357094

### *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 “Movement and genetics of whales in the Canadian Arctic using satellite telemetry, tissue biopsies, and photogrammetry” project proposal:

#### **Government of Nunavut**

- Had no comments or concerns to raise.

#### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**

- Had no comments to raise.

#### **Transport Canada**

- Noted concerns regarding regulatory oversight related to drones and that the Proponent is aware of the potential requirements under Canadian Aviation Regulations.

- Provided a list of references and guidance materials on Remotely Piloted Aircraft on the use of drones for the project proposal.

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

- Had no comments or recommendations to raise; however, pointed out regulatory requirements that might be applicable to the project, including:
  - DFO’s protective measures for fish and fish habitat and standard codes of practice; and,
  - the Proponent Duty to Notify DFO if they have caused, or are about to cause, the death of fish by means other than fishing and/or the harmful alteration, disruption, or the destruction of fish habitat.

**4. 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.

**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"> <li>▪ The physical footprint of the proposed project components is 50 square kilometres (km), defined by a 5-km radius surrounding the small vessel for use in the marine waters, where the drone is deployed above the marine area, and the temporary camp.</li> <li>▪ The proposed project would take place within habitats of far-ranging marine and terrestrial wildlife such as narwhal, beluga, bowhead, and killer whales, seals, walrus, barren-ground caribou, muskox, arctic hare, arctic fox, snowy owl, raptors, seabirds, and Species at Risk such as Cumberland Sound beluga and Polar Bear.</li> </ul>
The ecosystemic sensitivity of that area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No specific areas of ecosystemic sensitivity have been identified by the Proponent within the physical footprint of the proposed project.</li> </ul>

Factor	Comment
The historical, cultural and archaeological significance of that area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No specific areas of historical, cultural and archaeological significance have been identified by the Proponent within the physical footprint of the proposed project.</li> </ul>
The size of the human and the animal populations likely to be affected by the impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed project is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts to local human and animal populations.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▪ A zone of influence of up to 5 km from the most potentially-disruptive project activities was selected for the NIRB's assessment.</li> <li>▪ With adherence to the relevant regulatory requirements and application of the mitigation measures recommended by the NIRB, no significant residual effects are expected to occur.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>▪ Table 4 is a list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. The Board recommended terms and conditions along with mitigation measures designed with consideration for the potential for cumulative effects in the Board Views section.</li> </ul>
Any other factor that the Board considers relevant to the assessment of the significance of impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Although no public concerns were raised during the public commenting period, the NIRB notes that the close proximity of the proposed activities to the community of Taloyoak and Pangnirtung, and that the areas outside the community may be used by residents for recreational/traditional pursuits could potentially contribute to public concern developing.</li> <li>▪ No other relevant factors were identified; however, see below for Regulatory Requirements mandating mitigation and/or reporting.</li> </ul>

## 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 *Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-28.8/>).
3. The *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-7.01/>), the *Migratory Birds Regulations* ([https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,\\_c.\\_1035/index.html](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1035/index.html)), and the *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations* ([https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,\\_c.\\_1036/index.html](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1036/index.html)).

4. The *Species at Risk Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/s-15.3/>). Attached in **Appendix A** is a list of Species at Risk in Nunavut.
5. The *Wildlife Act (Nunavut)* and its corresponding regulations (<http://www.canlii.org/en/nu/laws/stat/snu-2003-c-26/latest/snu-2003-c-26.html>).
6. The *Nunavut Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-28.6/>) The Proponent must comply with the proposed terms and conditions listed in the attached **Appendix B**.
7. The *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/t-19.01/>) and the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations* (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/tdg/clear-tofc-211.htm>).
8. The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.31/>).
9. The *Aeronautics Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-2/>) and the *Canadian Aviation Regulations* (<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/acts-regulations/regulations-sor96-433.html>).
10. The *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-12/>) and the *Arctic Shipping Safety and Pollution Prevention Regulations* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-286/index.html>).
11. The *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-10.15/>).
12. The *Marine Liability Act* (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-0.7/>).
13. The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-22/>).

#### **Other Applicable Guidelines**

14. Environmental Guidelines for the General Management of Special and Hazardous Waste, Government of Nunavut, Revised October 2024 (<https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2024-05/Hazardous%20Waste%202023-03.pdf>).

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

<b>NIRB Project Number</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Project Type</b>
<b><i>Proposed Developments – undergoing assessment</i></b>		
06YN071	2025 scientific expedition onboard the research icebreaker CCGS Amundsen	Research
12YN037	Northern Boothia Peninsula Aeromagnetic Survey” Project Proposal, Kitikmeot Region	Research
25TN072	Adventure Canada 2026 Expeditions - Ocean Nova	Tourism
<b><i>Present Projects – approved or in operation</i></b>		
17XN021	Iqaluit Marine Infrastructure – Deep Sea Port	Infrastructure
25TN010	Roald Amundsen - Arctic Cruise 2025	Tourism
25YN024	DFO biopsy, tagging, acoustics, and drone work on walrus and beluga	Research
25YN051	Responses of Permafrost Microbial Communities to Climate-Driven Thaw	Research
<b><i>Past Projects</i></b>		

<b>NIRB Project Number</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Project Type</b>
12AN025	One Ocean Expeditions - Canadian Arctic Cruise Tourism aboard M/V Akademik Sergey Vavilov and M/V Akademik Ioffe	Tourism
17YN002	Toward a Sustainable Fishery for Nunavummiut	Research
17YN008	GEM-2 Boothia-Somerset: Integrated Geoscience Along the Northwest Passage	Research
17YN016	Northwest Passage Project 2017	Research
18YN029	URI Northwest Passage Project 2018 and 2019	Research
19TN032	MS Roald Amundsen: Northwest Passage In the Footsteps of Roald Amundsen, from Kangerlussuaq, Greenland to Nome, Alaska USA, 20 August to 11 September 2019, Voyage AMNWP1911	Tourism
19YN040	RV David Thompson Eastern Arctic Operations 2019	Marine Based Activities
22YN027	Response of Nitrogen Fixation in Lichens and Bryophytes to a Rapidly Changing Arctic Environment	Research
22YN045	CoMet 2.0 Arctic	Research
23UN006	Over the top: The northwest Passage Expedition	Tourism
23YN020	High Arctic Cetacean Survey 2023	Research
24YN012	OPP 2.0 Baseline Shoreline Mapping 2024	Research
24YN022	Bursting the Banks: Dealing with Flooding due to Climate Change in the Arctic Hamlet of Pangnirtung	Research
24TN024	Exploris One - Arctic Voyage - 2024	Tourism

#### 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:**

<b>Valued Component</b>	Terrestrial wildlife, migratory and non-migratory birds and their habitat
<b>Potential effects:</b>	<p>Potential adverse impacts to migratory and non-migratory birds and their foraging and moulting colonies, Species at Risk and terrestrial wildlife and their migratory routes from noise and visual disturbance associated from flying drones in the Cumberland Sound.</p> <p>Potential impacts from mobilizing materials to the camp site by all-terrain vehicles, setting up and using a temporary camp, and transportation of personnel to and from camp on a daily basis to the research sites.</p>
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	Cumberland Sound is in proximity to the Auyuittuq National Park, which offers important feeding and staging areas for seabirds and

	waterfowl. The potential impacts from flying drones and conducting the research activities is likely as it may cause stress to nesting birds. Additional project activities such as transport of research personnel to research sites via all-terrain vehicle or boats, could potentially disturb terrestrial wildlife and migratory birds with home range sizes habituated to the project area. However, the potential for impacts is considered to be limited due to infrequent and temporary activities and any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible or temporary only.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	Proponent proposes to employ drones only for carrying out marine-based activities and that the temporary field camp in Lord Mayor Bay will be mitigated by setting up within the footprint of an existing Inuit hunting camp.  The Board is recommending terms and conditions to minimize and mitigate potential adverse impacts to terrestrial wildlife and migratory birds.
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	Waste Management – 9 Fuel and Chemical Storage – 11 and 15 Wildlife General – 18 through 21 Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance – 22 through 25 Aircraft Flight Restrictions – 26 through 28 Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance – 29 through 31

<b>Valued Component</b>	Marine mammals and marine habitat, including Species at Risk
<b>Potential effects:</b>	Potential adverse impacts to marine mammals and marine habitat (e.g. local narwhal and beluga populations including Cumberland Sound beluga) and key critical habitat (calving, post-calving areas and migratory pathways) resulting from increased noise and/or physical disturbance associated with the research activities including the use of a drone and boat operation. Cumulative effects on marine wildlife and marine habitat could occur if multiple vessels are encountered in the same area.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	Potential adverse impacts on local narwhal and beluga populations and potentially other marine mammals are likely to be low in magnitude, restricted to the zone of influence of 1 km around the project footprint for a period of 21 days at research sites, and is considered reversible. Project activities may for a short time, affect wildlife migration and foraging behaviour, and may temporarily affect habitat use. Due to the goal of the project to provide understanding of marine mammal stocks, behaviour, and movements in the select marine waters, the Proponent will be carrying out project activities in areas where these marine mammals aggregate, including during their traditional habitat or migration route. Further, the potential impacts from the deployment of drones or airguns near marine mammals is anticipated to be low in magnitude, and reversible in nature once the research activities are complete. However, as noted cumulative effects on marine wildlife and

	marine habitat could occur if multiple vessels are encountered in the same area.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	<p>Proponent proposes to follow Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s standard operating procedures. The Proponent also received support from the local hunters and trappers organizations for the carrying out of project activities.</p> <p>The Board notes that measures should be taken to avoid encounters with other vessels, where possible, to minimize adverse impacts to the marine wildlife, particularly in critical habitat, calving areas, and narrow migration corridors. The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure the project activities do not negatively affect marine wildlife and habitat.</p>
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	<p>Water courses/Water bodies – 8  Waste Management - 9  Fuel and Chemical Storage – 11, 13 through 15  Wildlife General – 18 and 19  Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance – 24 and 25  Aircraft Flight Restrictions – 26 and 27  Marine-Based Activities – 39 through 46</p>

<b>Valued Component</b>	Surface water quality, fish and fish habitat, soil and vegetation
<b>Potential effects:</b>	Potential adverse impacts to the aquatic environment, the terrestrial land and vegetation from the use of all-terrain vehicles to access research sites, storage and re-fuelling activities and the establishment of a temporary camp.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	The potential impacts are applicable to the areas where the temporary camp would be located and the trails used by the all-terrain vehicles. The probability of impacts occurring is considered to be low, with potential adverse effects anticipated to be low in magnitude, infrequent in occurrence and reversible in nature.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure the proposed project activities do not negatively affect the land, terrestrial vegetation, ground stability, and the aquatic environment. Further, the Board recommends the Proponent follows regulatory authorities’ guidance and engage community members to avoid, reduce and off-set the harm to freshwater fish and fish habitat.
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	<p>Water courses/Water bodies – 6 through 8  Waste Management – 9 and 10  Fuel and Chemical Storage – 11 through 16  Road and Ground Disturbance – 32 and 33  Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas – 34 through 37  Camps – 38</p>

<b>Valued Component</b>	Air quality
<b>Potential effects:</b>	Potential adverse effects to air quality from emissions during the operations of the community boat to access sampling sites, the setup and

	use of temporary camp, transport of personnel and to conduct research activities.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	The potential for impacts is considered to be limited due to infrequent and temporary activities and any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	The Board is recommending a term and condition to mitigate the potential project impacts to air quality.
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	Air Quality – 17

<b>Valued Component</b>	Public and traditional land use activities
<b>Potential effects:</b>	No specific concerns or impacts to public and traditional land use activities in the area have been identified.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	The potential for impacts is considered to be minimal due to the temporary and low-impact nature of the activities and any resulting impacts would be expected to be reversible.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	<p>The Proponent proposes to engage with the local Hunters and Trappers Association/Organization to avoid the timing of traditional land use activities on the island and offshore waters. Further, The Proponent plans to engage community members to determine the exact location of the research activities and during times to avoid creating obstacles to subsistence harvesting and other land use.</p> <p>The Board is recommending the Proponent engage with local residents if possible and practical, regarding planned activities in the area to ensure project activities are informed by available Inuit Qaujimaningit and that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities, and to ensure safety to the public.</p>
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	Waste Management – 9 Wildlife – General – 18 Other – 47 and 48

**Socio-economic effects on northerners:**

<b>Valued Component</b>	Economic impact, local business, and employment
<b>Potential effects:</b>	Potential positive impacts to the local communities resulting from the proposed research activities as the program would be hiring local community members to assist in the research activities. The Proponent also noted the use of local accommodation, potential expenditures in local business, and the potential of non-local workers purchasing arts and crafts from local artisans.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	The potential for socio-economic impacts could be positive to local business but would be likely short-term, low in magnitude due to the scale of the project activities. Negative impacts on community services are not likely.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	The Proponent anticipates positive economic benefits relative to the undertaking of the proposed project: using local services for boating,

	<p>using local accommodation services in Taloyoak and by employing local hires through the Hunters and Trappers Organizations in the communities of Taloyoak and Pangnirtung.</p> <p>The Board is recommending the Proponent continues to inform the communities of the research activities and ensure potential local hiring opportunities.</p>
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	Other – 47 and 49

**Significant public concern:**

<b>Valued Component</b>	<b>Public concern</b>
<b>Potential effects:</b>	No significant public concerns have been identified associated with this project proposal during the NIRB’s public comment period and in the proponent’s submission of engagement record as provided to date.
<b>Nature of Impacts:</b>	Each of the potential concerns were discussed in previous sections and the potential for impacts is considered to be minimal as long as the Proponent follow the recommended terms and conditions.
<b>Mitigating Factors:</b>	<p>The Proponent plans to continue to engage with the local Hunters and Trappers Association in the planning phase of the proposed project and demonstrated records of continuous engagement.</p> <p>The Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure that to the extent possible, the Proponent hire locally and access local services where possible, and to ensure planned activities in the area utilizes available Inuit Qaujimaningit.</p>
<b>Proposed Terms and Conditions:</b>	Other – 47 and 48

**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.

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

**General**

1. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (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.: 150803), to the Minister of Fisheries, and the NIRB (Online Application Form, July 17, 2025; Revised Application Form, July 22, 2025). 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**

6. The Proponent shall ensure that water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution. Small lakes or streams should not be used for water withdrawal unless approved by the appropriate authorizing agency.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that no disturbance of the stream bed, lakebed or the banks of any definable watercourse be permitted, except where deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.
8. 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**

9. 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.
10. 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**

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
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.

## **Air Quality**

17. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

## **Wildlife – General**

18. 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.
19. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
20. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
21. 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**

22. 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*.

23. 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 zone<sup>1</sup> appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
24. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
25. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.

### **Aircraft Flight Restrictions**

26. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife and avoid flying directly over animals, except for specific research activities.
27. 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.
28. 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.

### **Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance**

29. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration as identified by current land use plans in place and/or by Inuit Qaujimaningit.
30. The Proponent shall not locate any operation or undertake activities that could block or cause any diversion to migration of caribou or muskoxen.
31. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskoxen until such time as the caribou or muskox have passed.

### **Road and Ground Disturbance**

32. 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.
33. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles without prior testing the thickness of the ice to ensure the lake, river or stream is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles.

### **Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at [www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb](http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb).

35. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
36. 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.
37. The Proponent shall ensure that all disturbed areas are restored to a stable or pre-disturbed state using Best Available Technology Economically Achievable (BATEA) upon completion of work and/or abandonment.

### **Camps**

38. The Proponent shall ensure that all camps are located durable surfaces, such as gravel or sand that is consolidated and can withstand repeated, heavy use. Measures shall be put in place to prevent erosion, trail formation and damage to the ground.

### **Marine-Based Activities**

39. The Proponent shall, where practicable, coordinate with other vessels to minimize simultaneous vessel traffic in critical wildlife habitat areas allowing the wildlife to continue to use the habitat undisturbed.
40. The Proponent shall ensure that noise be kept to a minimum and shall refrain from making sharp or loud noises, blowing horns or whistles and shall maintain constant engine noise levels.
41. The Proponent shall not visit cliffs used by nesting and breeding birds during the late afternoon or early evening hours during the months of August and September.
42. When marine mammals appear to be trapped or disturbed by vessel movements, the Proponent shall implement appropriate measures to mitigate disturbance, including stoppage of movement until wildlife have moved away from the immediate area.
43. 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.
44. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
45. 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.
46. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.

### **Other**

47. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.

48. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
49. 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](mailto:info@nirb.ca) or upload a copy to the NIRB's online registry at [www.nirb.ca](http://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](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](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](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 with wildlife or any interaction with carnivores should be reported immediately to the local Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment Conservation Office,

Conservation Officer of Taloyoak, phone: (867)561-6231 and Pangnirtung, phone: (867)473-8953.

### 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](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 should 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](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/ec/CW66-324-2013-eng.pdf).

### Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, Unmanned Air Vehicles and Non-recreational Drones

10. The Proponent should review Transport Canada’s site on the rules for flying drones in Canada at <https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/aviation/drone-safety/new-rules-drones.html>.

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board’s screening decision with respect to the Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Movement and genetics of whales in the Canadian Arctic using satellite telemetry, tissue biopsies, and photogrammetry”. The NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

Dated October 27, 2025 at Iqaluit, NU.



Albert Ehloak, *Acting* Chairperson

Attachments: Appendix A: Species at Risk in Nunavut  
Appendix B: Archaeological and Palaeontological Resources Terms and Conditions for Land Use Permit Holders

## 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](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)) to get the current status of a species.

Updated: September 2024

<b>Terrestrial Species at Risk<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>COSEWIC Designation</b>	<b>Schedule of SARA</b>	<b>Government Organization with Primary Management Responsibility<sup>3</sup></b>
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

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for aquatic species.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

**APPENDIX B: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES TERMS AND  
CONDITIONS FOR LAND USE PERMIT HOLDERS**



**INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Culture and Heritage (CH) routinely reviews land use applications sent to the Nunavut Water Board, Nunavut Impact Review Board and the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. These terms and conditions provide general direction to the permittee/proponent regarding the appropriate actions to be taken to ensure the permittee/proponent carries out its role in the protection of Nunavut’s archaeological and palaeontological resources.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- 1) The permittee/proponent shall have a professional archaeologist and/or palaeontologist perform the following **Functions** associated with the **Types of Development** listed below or similar development activities:

	<b>Types of Development</b> (See Guidelines below)	<b>Function</b> (See Guidelines below)
a)	Large scale prospecting	Archaeological/Palaeontological Overview Assessment
b)	Diamond drilling for exploration or geotechnical purpose or planning of linear disturbances	Archaeological/Palaeontological Overview Assessment and/or Inventory and Documentation and/or Mitigation
c)	Construction of linear disturbances, Extractive disturbances, Impounding disturbances and other land disturbance activities	Archaeological/Palaeontological Overview Assessment and/or Inventory and Documentation and/or Mitigation

Note that the above-mentioned functions require either a Nunavut Archaeologist Permit or a Nunavut Palaeontologist Permit. CH is authorized by way of the *Nunavut and Archaeological and Palaeontological Site Regulations*<sup>4</sup> to issue such permits.

<sup>4</sup>P.C. 2001-1111 14 June, 2001

- 2) The permittee/proponent shall not operate any vehicle over a known or suspected archaeological or palaeontological site.
- 3) The permittee/proponent shall not remove, disturb, or displace any archaeological artifact or site, or any fossil or palaeontological site.
- 4) The permittee/proponent shall immediately contact CH at (867) 934-2046 or (867) 975-5500 should an archaeological site or specimen, or a palaeontological site or fossil, be encountered or disturbed by any land use activity.
- 5) The permittee/proponent shall immediately cease any activity that disturbs an archaeological or palaeontological site encountered during the course of a land use operation until permitted to proceed with the authorization of CH.
- 6) The permittee/proponent shall follow the direction of CH in restoring disturbed archaeological or palaeontological sites to an acceptable condition. If these conditions are attached to either a Class A or B Permit under the Territorial Lands Act Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada directions will also be followed.
- 7) The permittee/proponent shall provide all information requested by CH concerning all archaeological sites or artifacts and all palaeontological sites and fossils encountered in the course of any land use activity.
- 8) The permittee/proponent shall make best efforts to ensure that all persons working under its authority are aware of these conditions concerning archaeological sites and artifacts and palaeontological sites and fossils.
- 9) If a list of recorded archaeological and/or palaeontological sites is provided to the permittee/proponent by CH as part of the review of the land use application the permittee/proponent shall avoid the archaeological and/or palaeontological sites listed.
- 10) Should a list of recorded sites be provided to the permittee/proponent, the information is provided solely for the purpose of the proponent's land use activities as described in the land use application, and must otherwise be treated confidentially by the proponent.

## Legal Framework

As stated in Article 33 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)*:

*Where an application is made for a land use permit in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and there are reasonable grounds to believe that there could be sites of archaeological importance on the lands affected, no land use permit shall be issued without written consent of the Designated Agency. Such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. [33.5.12]*

*Each land use permit referred to in Section 33.5.12 shall specify the plans and methods of archeological site protection and restoration to be followed by the permit holder, and any other conditions the Designated Agency may deem fit. [33.5.13]*

## Palaeontology and Archaeology

Under the *Nunavut Act*<sup>5</sup>, the federal government can make regulations for the protection, care and preservation of palaeontological and archaeological sites and specimens in Nunavut. Under the *Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations*<sup>6</sup>, it is illegal to alter or disturb any palaeontological or archaeological site in Nunavut unless permission is first granted through the permitting process.

### Definitions

As defined in the *Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations*, the following definitions apply:

*“archaeological site” means a place where an archaeological artifact is found.*

*“archaeological artifact” means any tangible evidence of human activity that is more than 50 years old and in respect of which an unbroken chain of possession or regular pattern of usage cannot be demonstrated, and includes a Denesuline archaeological specimen referred to in section 40.4.9 of the Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement).*

*“palaeontological site” means a site where a fossil is found.*

*“fossil” includes:*

*Fossil means the hardened or preserved remains or impression of previously living organisms or vegetation and includes:*

- (a) natural casts;*
- (b) preserved tracks, coprolites and plant remains; and*
- (c) the preserved shells and exoskeletons of invertebrates and the preserved eggs, teeth and bones of vertebrates.*

### *Guidelines for Developers for the Protection of Archaeological Resources in the Nunavut Territory*

(Note: Partial document only, complete document at: [www.ch.gov.nu.ca/en/Archaeology.aspx](http://www.ch.gov.nu.ca/en/Archaeology.aspx))

### Introduction

The following guidelines have been formulated to ensure that the impacts of proposed developments upon heritage resources are assessed and mitigated before ground surface altering activities occur. Heritage resources are defined as, but not limited to, archaeological and historical sites, burial grounds, palaeontological sites, historic buildings and cairns. Effective collaboration between the developer, the Department of Culture, and Heritage (CH), and the contract archaeologist(s) will ensure proper preservation of heritage resources in the Nunavut Territory. The roles of each are briefly described.

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<sup>5</sup> s. 51(1)

<sup>6</sup> P.C. 2001-1111 14 June, 2001

CH is the Nunavut Government agency which oversees the protection and management of heritage resources in Nunavut, in partnership with land claim authorities, regulatory agencies, and the federal government. Its role in mitigating impacts of developments on heritage resources is as follows: to identify the need for an impact assessment and make recommendations to the appropriate regulatory agency; set the terms of reference for the study depending upon the scope of the development; suggest the names of qualified individuals prepared to undertake the study to the developer; issue an archaeologist or palaeontologist permit authorizing field work; assess the completeness of the study and its recommendations; and ensure that the developer complies with the recommendations.

The primary regulatory agencies that CH provides information and assistance to are the Nunavut Impact Review Board, for development activities proposed for Inuit Owned Lands (as defined in Section 1.1.1 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)*), and the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, for development activities proposed for federal Crown Lands.

A developer is the initiator of a land use activity. It is the obligation of the developer to ensure that a qualified archaeologist or palaeontologist is hired to perform the required study and that provisions of the contract with the archaeologist or palaeontologist allow permit requirements to be met; i.e. fieldwork, collections management, artifact and specimen conservation, and report preparation. On the recommendation of the contract archaeologist or palaeontologist in the field and the Government of Nunavut, the developer shall implement avoidance or mitigative measures to protect heritage resources or to salvage the information they contain through excavation, analysis, and report writing. The developer assumes all costs associated with the study in its entirety.

Through his or her active participation and supervision of the study, the contract archaeologist or palaeontologist is accountable for the quality of work undertaken and the quality of the report produced. Facilities to conduct fieldwork, analysis, and report preparation should be available to this individual through institutional, agency, or company affiliations. Responsibility for the curation of objects recovered during field work while under study and for documents generated in the course of the study as well as remittance of artifacts, specimens and documents to the repository specified on the permit accrue to the contract archaeologist or palaeontologist. This individual is also bound by the legal requirements of the *Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations*.

### **Types of Development**

In general, those developments that cause concern for the safety of heritage resources will include one or more of the following kinds of surface disturbances. These categories, in combination, are comprehensive of the major kinds of developments commonly proposed in Nunavut. For any single development proposal, several kinds of these disturbances may be involved

- *Linear disturbances: including the construction of highways, roads, winter roads, transmission lines, and pipelines;*
- *Extractive disturbances: including mining, gravel removal, quarrying, and land filling;*

- *Impoundment disturbances: including dams, reservoirs, and tailings ponds;*
- *Intensive land use disturbances: including industrial, residential, commercial, recreational, and land reclamation work, and use of heritage resources as tourist developments.*
- *Mineral, oil and gas exploration: establishment of camps, temporary airstrips, access routes, well sites, or quarries all have potential for impacting heritage resources.*

### **Types of Studies Undertaken to Preserve Heritage Resources**

**Overview:** An overview study of heritage resources should be conducted at the same time as the development project is being designed or its feasibility addressed. They usually lack specificity with regard to the exact location(s) and form(s) of impact and involve limited, if any, field surveys. Their main aim is to accumulate, evaluate, and synthesize the existing knowledge of the heritage of the known area of impact. The overview study provides managers with baseline data from which recommendations for future research and forecasts of potential impacts can be made. A Class I Permit is required for this type of study if field surveys are undertaken.

**Reconnaissance:** This is done to provide a judgmental appraisal of a region sufficient to provide the developer, the consultant, and government managers with recommendations for further development planning. This study may be implemented as a preliminary step to inventory and assessment investigations except in cases where a reconnaissance may indicate a very low or negligible heritage resource potential. Alternately, in the case of small-scale or linear developments, an inventory study may be recommended and obviate the need for a reconnaissance.

The main goal of a reconnaissance study is to provide baseline data for the verification of the presence of potential heritage resources, the determination of impacts to these resources, the generation of terms of reference for further studies and, if required, the advancement of preliminary mitigative and compensatory plans. The results of reconnaissance studies are primarily useful for the selection of alternatives and secondarily as a means of identifying impacts that must be mitigated after the final siting and design of the development project. Depending on the scope of the study, a Class 1 or Class 2 Permit is required for this type of investigation.

**Inventory:** A resource inventory is generally conducted at that stage in a project's development at which the geographical area(s) likely to sustain direct, indirect, and perceived impacts can be well defined. This requires systematic and intensive fieldwork to ascertain the effects of all possible and alternate construction components on heritage resources. All heritage sites must be recorded on Government of Nunavut Site Survey forms. Sufficient information must be amassed from field, library and archival components of the study to generate a predictive model of the heritage resource base that will:

- allow the identification of research and conservation opportunities;
- enable the developer to make planning decisions and recognize their likely effects on the known or predicted resources; and

- make the developer aware of the expenditures, which may be required for subsequent studies and mitigation. A Class 1 or 2 permit is required.

**Assessment:** At this stage, sufficient information concerning the numbers and locations of heritage resources will be available, as well as data to predict the forms and magnitude of impacts. Assessments provide information on the size, volume, complexity and content of a heritage resource, which is used to rank the values of different sites or site types given current archaeological knowledge. As this information will shape subsequent mitigation program(s), great care is necessary during this phase.

**Mitigation:** This refers to the amelioration of adverse impacts to heritage resources and involves the avoidance of impact through the redesign or relocation of a development or its components; the protection of the resource by constructing physical facilities; or, the scientific investigation and recovery of information from the resource by excavation or other method. The type(s) of appropriate mitigative measures are dictated by their viability in the context of the development project. Mitigation strategies must be developed in consultation with, and approved by, the Department of Culture and Heritage. It is important to note that mitigation activities should be initiated as far in advance of the construction of the development as possible.

**Surveillance and monitoring:** These may be required as part of the mitigation program.

*Surveillance* may be conducted during the construction phase of a project to ensure that the developer has complied with the recommendations.

*Monitoring* involves identification and inspection of residual and long-term impacts of a development (i.e. shoreline stability of a reservoir); or the use of impacts to disclose the presence of heritage resources, for example, the uncovering of buried sites during the construction of a pipeline.