



Nunavut Impact Review Board Site Visit Report

Meliadine Gold Mine Project

Agnico Eagle Mines Limited

NIRB File No. 11MN034



August
2023

Report Title: The Nunavut Impact Review Board's 2023 Site Visit Report for Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's *Meliadine Gold Mine Project* (NIRB File No. 11MN034)

Project: Meliadine Gold Mine Project
Project Location: Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Land Tenure: Inuit Owned Land

Project Owner: Agnico Eagle Mines Limited
Meliadine Mine Site
Rankin Inlet, NU
X0C 0G0

Proponent Contact: Sarah Savoie, Environment General Supervisor
Anne-Laurence Paquet, Compliance Coordinator
Jade Robitaille, Compliance Counselor

Telephone: (819) 759-3555

Monitoring Officers: Emily Koide, Technical Advisor III
Phone: (867) 983-4612; email: ekoide@nirb.ca
Leah Klaassen, Technical Advisor II
Phone: (867) 983-4603; email: lklaassen@nirb.ca

Site visit date: July 26-27, 2023

Report prepared by: Emily Koide

Photos by: NIRB Staff

Cover Photograph:

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) was established through Articles 10 and 12 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and is responsible for post environmental assessment monitoring of a Project in accordance with Part 7 of Article 12 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 135(4) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14 (NuPPAA).

This report provides a summary of the comments received from community members during the Community Information Session held on July 25, 2023, and the NIRB's 2023 Site Visit of Meliadine Gold Mine Project that took place on July 26 and 27.

1.1 Meliadine Gold Mine Project Overview

The Meliadine Gold Mine Project (the Project) operated by Agnico Eagle Gold Mines' (Agnico Eagle) involves the construction and operation of a gold mine located in the Kivalliq Region, approximately 25 kilometres (km) north of Rankin Inlet on Inuit-owned lands. There are five (5) separate deposits that the Proponent plans to develop in a phased approach, as well as a camp and all associated mining infrastructure, including facilities for waste, water, and fuel management. A barge unloading facility, laydown storage and fuel tank farm, are located at Itivia Harbour in Rankin Inlet, which is connected by an approximately 25 km all-weather Access Road (AWAR) and Bypass Road that goes around the hamlet.

The Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 006 has undergone two (2) amendments to manage saline effluent (salty groundwater) from the Tiriganiaq Underground deposit. The first amendment was to include trucking of saline effluent along the AWAR to Itivia Harbour and discharge into Melvin Bay at a rate of 800 m³/day. The second amendment (Waterlines Amendment) was to construct and operate two (2) waterlines along the AWAR to transport and discharge Saline Effluent at a rate of up to 20,000 m³/day.

Meliadine Modifications

Title (Years Active)	Project Dashboard	Modification
Meliadine Gold Mine (2015-2022)	www.nirb.ca/project/124106	The original Meliadine Assessment and all information regarding the trucking of saline effluent from the mine site to Itivia Harbour.
Waterlines Amendment (2022-present)	www.nirb.ca/project/125515	Transport the saline effluent via waterlines.

[Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#) provide a layout of the Meliadine Mine Site, and the marshalling facility at Rankin Inlet.

Agnico Eagle has a current amendment Proposal with the NIRB for assessment that includes: wind turbines, additional underground mining, changes to fuel waste and water management, in-pit disposal, and increased mine life. Information related to this proposal was not included in the site visit and information can be located at www.nirb.ca/project/125684.

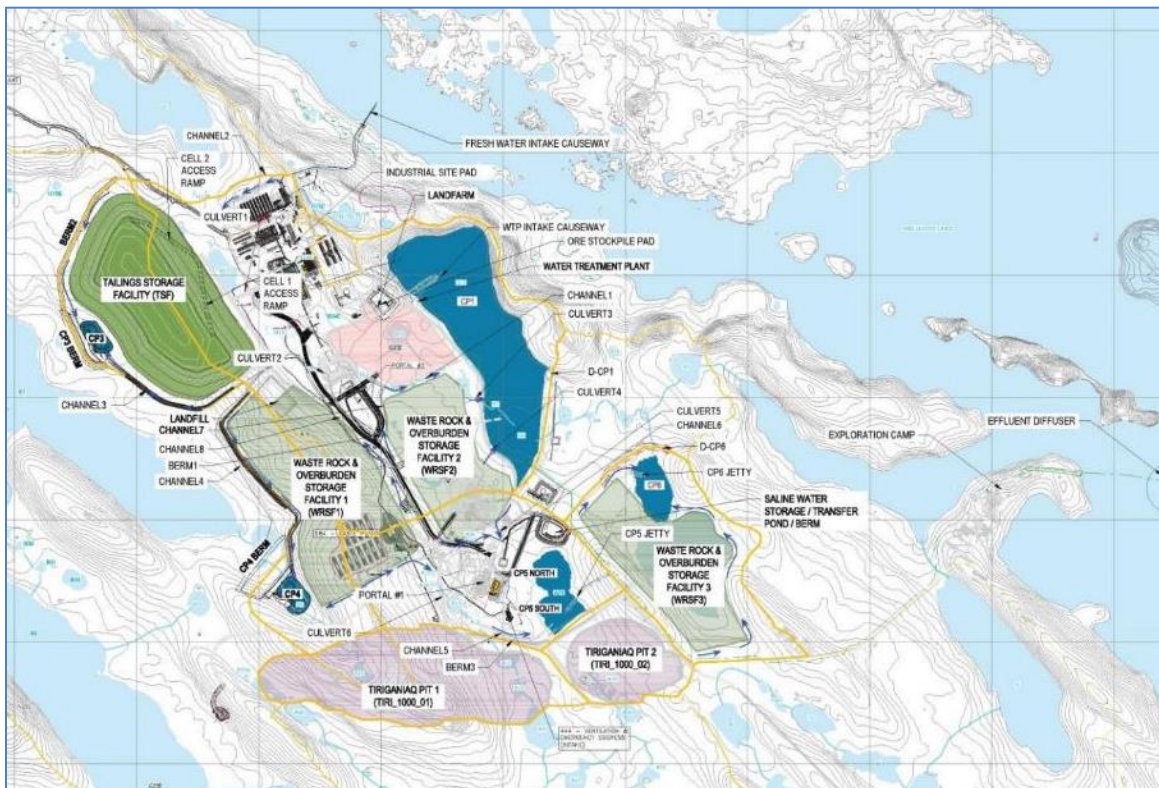


Figure 1: Meliadine Mine Site (from Agnico Eagle’s 2018 Annual Report; Figure 1)

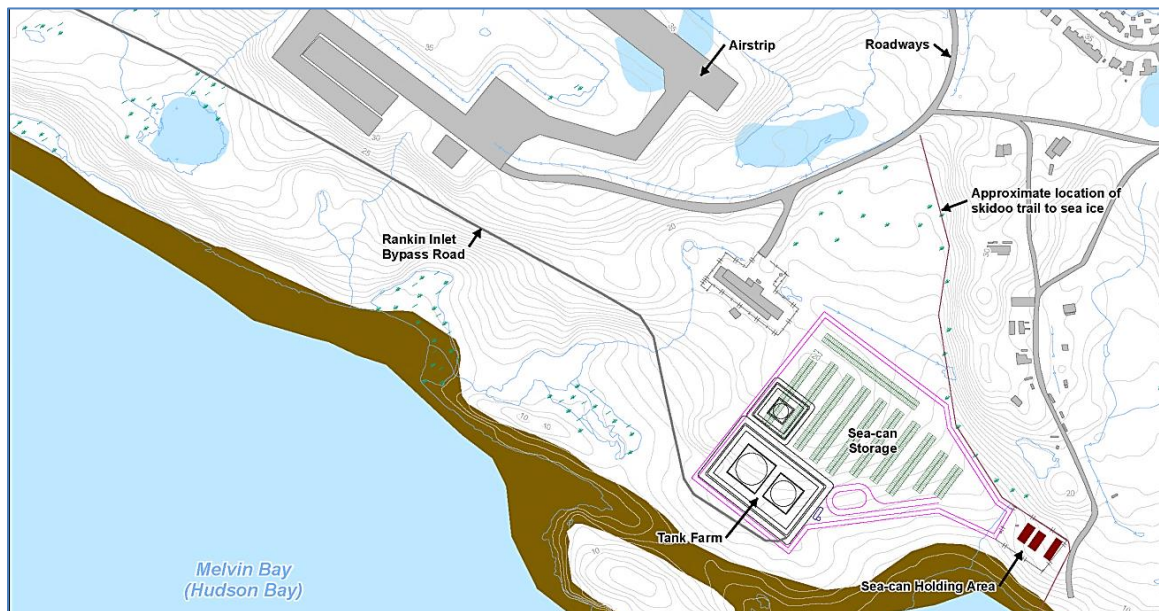


Figure 2: Overview of the Itivia site, Bypass Road, and community snowmobile trail.
Source: Agnico Eagle's Roads Management Plan for Meliadine (March 2017).

2 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

2.1 Objective & Purpose of a Public Information Session

Pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement*, the *NuPPAA*, and the Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 006, the NIRB monitoring responsibilities include providing periodic updates regarding its Monitoring Program for the communities most affected by Agnico Eagle's Meliadine Gold Mine Project. The NIRB held a Community Information Session to discuss updates to the Board's monitoring of the Project and to collect community comments, questions, and concerns to form an important part of the NIRB's monitoring program. A summary of the Community Information Sessions is provided in Section 2.3.

2.2 Advertisements

The NIRB advertised the meeting through radio, poster, and online through Facebook in Rankin Inlet both in English and Inuktitut in the month prior to the meeting.

2.3 Meeting Materials

The following materials were provided at the public meeting:

Document	Public Registry No
The NIRB's PowerPoint presentation (in English and Inuktitut)	346626
Comment Forms (in English and Inuktitut)	N/A
2021 Socio-Economic Highlights	346975

Copies of the above listed consultation materials can be obtained from the NIRB's online Public Registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125515.



Photo 1: Community Information Session

2.4 Summary of the Meliadine Public Information Session

The NIRB hosted the information session which consisted of an open house at 3:00 p.m. and an evening session at 7:00 p.m. located at the Siniktarvik Conference Centre in Rankin Inlet, with simultaneous interpretation into Inuktitut offered. The meetings were open to all members of the public with refreshments and snacks provided. The total attendance for the sessions was: 12.

During the evening session, the NIRB gave a PowerPoint presentation that included discussion of the NIRB process with a focus on the NIRB's Monitoring Programs; an update on the Project, including an overview of the Meliadine Project activities and key components; and events and/or issues identified through the project specific monitoring programs. The presentation concluded with a summary of the NIRB's processes for Agnico Eagle's "Meliadine Extension" Project Proposal and how community members could participate in the upcoming Public Hearing.

Both written and verbal comments were accepted at the meeting. The public was encouraged to ask questions which were recorded by the NIRB staff. These comments help the Board identify items that need to be addressed or considered throughout the NIRB's monitoring program for the Project. A summary of the comments heard from community members is provided below:

Comments
Meliadine Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The flags on the site disrupt the caribou - I saw that caribou wanted to cross the road but they didn't cross because of the flags - the posts have been more effective. They should use the posts in Baker Lake.• People who have cabins on the lake are seeing drifts of dust.• Agnico Eagle has been promising to build a dock on Meliadine Lake but we haven't seen it yet, we want the dock for private use• The Kivalliq Inuit Association was doing a tour and we saw how big pit 1 [Tiriganiaq] has gotten in the course of a year.• The mine's plan to freeze their waste underground does not take into account the effects of climate change on future generations.• Will NIRB monitor the bird habitat once the windfarm is up and running?• What does non-traditional land use mean?• Could the NIRB force the Government of Nunavut to give the caribou collar data?• There are lots of non-enforceable actions on the Project Certificate, why can't NIRB enforce this?• Who is on the Terrestrial Advisory Group committee?
Waterlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When will they start building the waterline?• Will they cover the waterline with gravel?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Caribou herds will not cross pipes, I've seen caribou around the Hamlet stop and not cross black pipes.• Agnico Eagle should cover the waterlines with peat moss because it will be more natural for the caribou.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The Hamlet left a pipeline not covered with moss and the caribou wouldn't cross it.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The mine has lots of moss. • How big are the waterlines pipelines? • Agnico Eagle should excavate beside the road to hide the waterline. • We depend on the land for hunting, it's important that the waterline not leak and destroy the land. • We want our grandkids to experience the land the way that we do without saltwater flooding on the land.
Socio-Economic Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the socio-economic criteria talk about only people at site, or are we talking about all Nunavummiut? • Does the NIRB have a socio-economic specialist? • People who grew up here are destitute and poor while southerners come up here and get rich, they buy nice machines, the Inuit feel hopeless when they see this. • Message from an Elder: "Those that are desperate are silent" - their voices are not heard as much as rich southerners. • It is unfair to have rich southerners on socio-economic committees. • Seven young men ended their lives recently, is mental health considered in our assessments of socio-economic? • Everyone passes the buck with these issues and refers to the land claim, but we never get direct answers about these issues. • Are the standards at the mine site Quebecois standard or Inuit standard? People at the mine site talk about how they feel like they are in Quebec when they are at site. • Leaders don't believe that there are racial issues at the mine and won't admit it. • You see the odd Inuktitut sign or report, but everything should be available in Inuktitut. • When the mine opened, they talked about hiring Inuit up to 70%, now they are only at ~20% after many years of operations - why hasn't it reached that quota? • People who are going to work don't understand what it entails to work away from home. • Inuit should have more supervisory roles instead of entry level. • Agnico Eagle should report whether or not their community donations are considered tax write-offs
Freshwater Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface contact water - how do they determine when the wastewater is sufficiently purified? • Should we be concerned with the levels of arsenic in the ponds and in Meliadine Lake? • Arsenic levels near Discovery pit were high but that area is high in arsenic. • CIRNAC said that there's arsenic all over Nunavut. • All the chemicals like arsenic that they bury are going to enter our drinking water once permafrost melts. • Did cancer rates go up in Baker Lake after the gold mine opened?
NIRB Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the NIRB ever said "no" to something that Agnico Eagle has asked to do? • If I want to harvest clay from the land, do I have to go through NPC/NIRB?
Meliadine Extension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mine should purchase carbon credits instead of building a windfarm.

- How many wind turbines will there be in total?
- Does Agnico Eagle need to get approval from NIRB to build the wind turbines?
- Did they talk about solar panels instead of wind turbines?
- One of the concerns I have about wind turbines is the effects on the birds and animals.
- When you are right under a turbine you can't hear it, but when you move further away it becomes very loud, it sounds like a jet.
- I don't see any caribou cows near the wind turbines in Manitoba.
- They should put the wind turbines in the ocean.
- Have there been studies about wind turbines?
- We are finally getting snowy owls here in Rankin and if there are wind turbines they might go away.
- Are there 6 or 11 turbines? The information is confusing.
- I think the wind turbines are a bad idea for the caribou but a good idea for Agnico Eagle financials.
- If they're planning on expanding the mine, we should ask them to increase Inuit employment.
- Have they proposed a runway at site?

3 MELIADINE GOLD MINE SITE VISIT

3.1 Objectives & Purpose of Site Visits

The objective of the NIRB's site visit was to determine whether, and to what extent, the land or resource use in question is being carried out within the predetermined Terms and Conditions as set out in the amended Project Certificate as issued for the Meliadine Gold Mine Project, in accordance with Section 12.7.2(b) of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 135(3)(b) of the *NuPPAA*.

The observations resulting from this site visit shall, wherever possible, be incorporated into the measurement of the relevant effects of the Project, provide the information necessary for agencies to enforce terms and conditions of land or resource use approvals, and will be further used to assess the accuracy of the predictions contained in the project impact statements in accordance with Section 12.7.2 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and s. 135 (3) of the *NuPPAA*.

3.2 Overview of Site Visit

In preparation for the site visit, NIRB Monitoring Officers reviewed the following items: the Meliadine Project Certificate No. 006, Amendment 002; previous Site Visit Reports (where relevant); Agnico Eagle's 2022 Meliadine Gold Mine Annual Report and associated appendices, comments submitted by parties, and follow-up correspondence relevant to the monitoring of the approved Meliadine Gold Mine Project.

The 2023 Site Visit was conducted by the Monitoring Officers on July 26 to July 27, 2023, and included a tour of the site lead by Agnico Eagle staff, focusing on overall updates to the site and items related to Project Certificate No. 006. During the tour, NIRB staff and Agnico Eagle Staff also discussed the Meliadine Project in general as well as specific items related to the Project Certificate.

Areas observed by the NIRB staff are listed below:

Itivia Harbour:

- Laydown area and marshalling facility
- Fuel farm
- Saline discharge area
- Bypass Road
- Snowmobile crossings

All-Weather Access Road:

- Gatehouse
- Snowmobile crossings
- Bridges
- Emergency spill response seacans
- Road signage
- Waterline construction
- Dust monitoring stations
- Wildlife cameras

Meliadine mine site:

- Camp infrastructure
- Fuel tank storage areas
- Landfill and waste management areas
- Waste rock storage facilities
- Landfarm
- Tailings storage facility
- Incinerator
- Tiriganiaq 1 Pit
- Tiriganiaq 2 Pit
- Underground portal entrance
- Processing facility
- Exploration site
- Water intake area
- Water discharge Area
- Water treatment facilities
- Saline water ponds
- Contact water ponds
- Laydown areas
- Explosives storage
- Revegetation trial plots
- Air quality monitoring equipment
- Dust monitoring stations
- Blast monitoring equipment

3.3 Site Observations based on Project Certificate 006

The following table summarizes observations made during the Site Visit that pertain specifically to observable terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 006, Amendment 2.

T&C No.*	Topic	Site Observations
Air Quality		
1	Updated Air Quality Monitoring Plan	a) Air and partisol monitoring stations were functioning during the time of the site visit (Photo 38). b) NIRB staff observed the dust sampling transects along the AWAR (Photo 15) and at site. c) Speed limits were observed to be followed by Agnico Eagle employees.
2	Emissions Monitoring	
3	Dust Management and Monitoring Plan	
4	Air Quality – Incinerator Management Plan	NIRB saw the incinerator and the sorting of waste around the incinerator. The area was well organized, and no materials were piled at the facility. (Photo 28)

T&C No.*	Topic	Site Observations
Noise and Vibration		
11	Monitoring at Accommodation Sites	Noise monitors had been taken down by the time of the NIRB site visit. Agnico Eagle confirmed that they were set up in the spring of 2023.
Terrestrial Environment		
16	Erosion Management Plan	NIRB met with the consultant company mitigating and monitoring erosion from waterline construction. NIRB observed erosion management infrastructure still in place from spring freshet and appeared to all be functional.
17	Permafrost Integrity	Agnico Eagle and NIRB staff discussed how monitoring of permafrost is done on site and how to improve reporting.
19	Tailings and Waste Rock Monitoring Program	NIRB viewed the facilities and discussed with Agnico Eagle the current program for tailings and waste rock storage and monitoring of these facilities. (Photo 25 , Photo 29 , Photo 30)
Hydrogeology and Groundwater		
25	Groundwater Management Plan/Adaptive Management Plan	Agnico Eagle stated at site that saline effluent is pumped to Tiriganiaq 2 for storage and no discharge into Melvin Bay occurred in 2023. (Photo 21)
Hydrology and Sediment Quality		
28	Sediment and Erosion Management	NIRB met with the consultant company mitigating and monitoring erosion from waterline construction. NIRB observed erosion fences at site and along AWAR.
29	Water Infrastructure Monitoring	NIRB observed culverts around site and along the AWAR. Agnico Eagle noted that they will be replacing a few culverts along the AWAR as recommended by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
Freshwater Aquatic Environment		
31	Setbacks	During the 2023 Site Visit the NIRB did not observe any areas where quarries were too close to fish-bearing or permanent water bodies.
32	Site Drainage and Silt Control Plan	NIRB met with the consultant company mitigating and monitoring erosion from waterline construction. NIRB observes erosion management infrastructure still in place from spring freshet.
Vegetation		
36	Invasive Species	Current protocol to ensure that vehicles are not bringing in any invasive species to site is to inspect all vehicles prior to receiving at the barge in Quebec.

T&C No.*	Topic	Site Observations
37	Monitoring for Invasive Species	NIRB and Agnico Eagle discussed the current protocol for invasive species monitoring.
42	Closure and Reclamation Plan	<p>NIRB viewed the revegetation plot trials established by the University of Saskatchewan.</p> <p>Agnico Eagle noted that the trials ended in 2022 and the NIRB looks forward to seeing how the results will inform the reclamation plan.</p>
Terrestrial Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat		
48	Management of road access during caribou migration.	<p>As in previous years, Agnico Eagle discussed at site that it worked closely with the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Kangiqliniq Hunters and Trappers Organization to ensure mine traffic did not impact large aggregations of caribou.</p> <p>Agnico Eagle is using reflector poles without flagging along the AWAR during the summer to limit disturbance to caribou (Photo 8).</p>
54	Movement of Wildlife	<p>The AWAR is constructed to allow safe passage of caribou.</p> <p>The NIRB observed a wildlife crossing over a pipeline on site.</p> <p>Waterlines were being installed along the AWAR. (Photo 13, Photo 14) Agnico Eagle highlighted that no installation occurred during caribou migration. Waterlines were not yet covered as installation was just starting close to the mine site.</p>
Birds and Bird Habitat		
58	Awareness	<p>Agnico Eagle and NIRB staff discussed bird deterrents that were in place in 2023 including: bird cannon, beach balloons, and tarps to prevent nesting on stairs.</p>
59	Species at Risk	
61	Installation of nesting deterrents	
62	Protection of nests found with a buffer zone	
66	Bird Strikes	<p>During the time of the site visit no bird deterrents were in place as they were removed for the caribou migration and will not be put back in place until before the bird nesting season in 2024.</p>
72	Minimize impact to sensitive bird species	
74	Minimize impact of project activities on water birds	<p>As a barn swallow had nested in the Paste Plant, Agnico Eagle constructed a bird house on site as recommended by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Agnico Eagle noted that the Paste Plant was shut down until the young had fledged or left the nest.</p> <p>The NIRB staff and Agnico Eagle discussed the procedure for checking for bird strikes on marine vessels.</p>

T&C No.*	Topic	Site Observations
75	Minimize impact of predatory species on nesting birds	<p>Agnico Eagle stated that a wildlife audit was conducted in April 2023 to help improve deterrence of wildlife. The NIRB looks forward to seeing the results of this audit within the appropriate management plans.</p> <p>Agnico Eagle explained that the landfill (Photo 26) is checked weekly to ensure that no food waste is present that could attract wildlife.</p> <p>Wastes not in the landfill were sorted and secured in seacans or other closed containers for future disposal at southern locations. (Photo 27)</p>
Marine Environment		
77	Spill Prevention	As in previous years, spill kits were observed at various locations across the Project, including at road-side quarries, emergency sea cans on the side of the AWAR, and adjacent to fuel storage areas.
Education and Training		
95	Transferable skills and training	<p>The NIRB staff and Agnico Eagle discussed how to improve reporting on transferrable skills.</p> <p>The NIRB observed the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Fair and learned about safety training on site across each department.</p>
Population Demographics		
100	Survey of Nunavummiut Employees	Agnico Eagle discussed their Speak Up program where employees can submit anonymous comments on their work environment <i>etc.</i>
Accidents and Malfunctions		
123	Marine shipping-spill response equipment and training prior to project shipping	Agnico Eagle discussed their mock spill scenario training and spill equipment at Itivia Harbour which is checked before refueling occurs.
125	Measures to protect public and mine traffic on all Project roads including the AWAR.	<p>a) The manned gate on the AWAR was operational and recording traffic, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). All public traffic is required to check-in with the employee at the gatehouse prior to proceeding on the AWAR (Photo 9).</p> <p>b) The NIRB observed Agnico Eagle calling public ATVs on the radio so other vehicles would know of their presence and location.</p> <p>c) Road signs were posted in English and Inuktitut indicating access and safety requirements of AWAR.</p>

T&C No.*	Topic	Site Observations
		d) The NIRB observed speed limit signs along the AWAR.
130	Diffuser removal	Agnico Eagle confirmed that the current diffuser in Melvin Bay will be removed, currently planned to occur in 2025.
132	Terrestrial Advisory Group (TAG)	NIRB Staff and Agnico Eagle discussed the establishment of the TAG and the signing of the Terms of Reference and Memorandums of Understanding

3.4 Site Observation Photos

The following are observations made during the site visit and where observations are relevant to a specific term or condition, the term and condition will be referenced in after the observation. A summary of NIRB's observations included in [Appendix A](#) of this report.

3.4.1 Itivia Harbour



Photo 2: Laydown Area at Itivia Harbour.



Photo 3: The fuel barge actively filling the fuel tanks at Itivia Harbour.

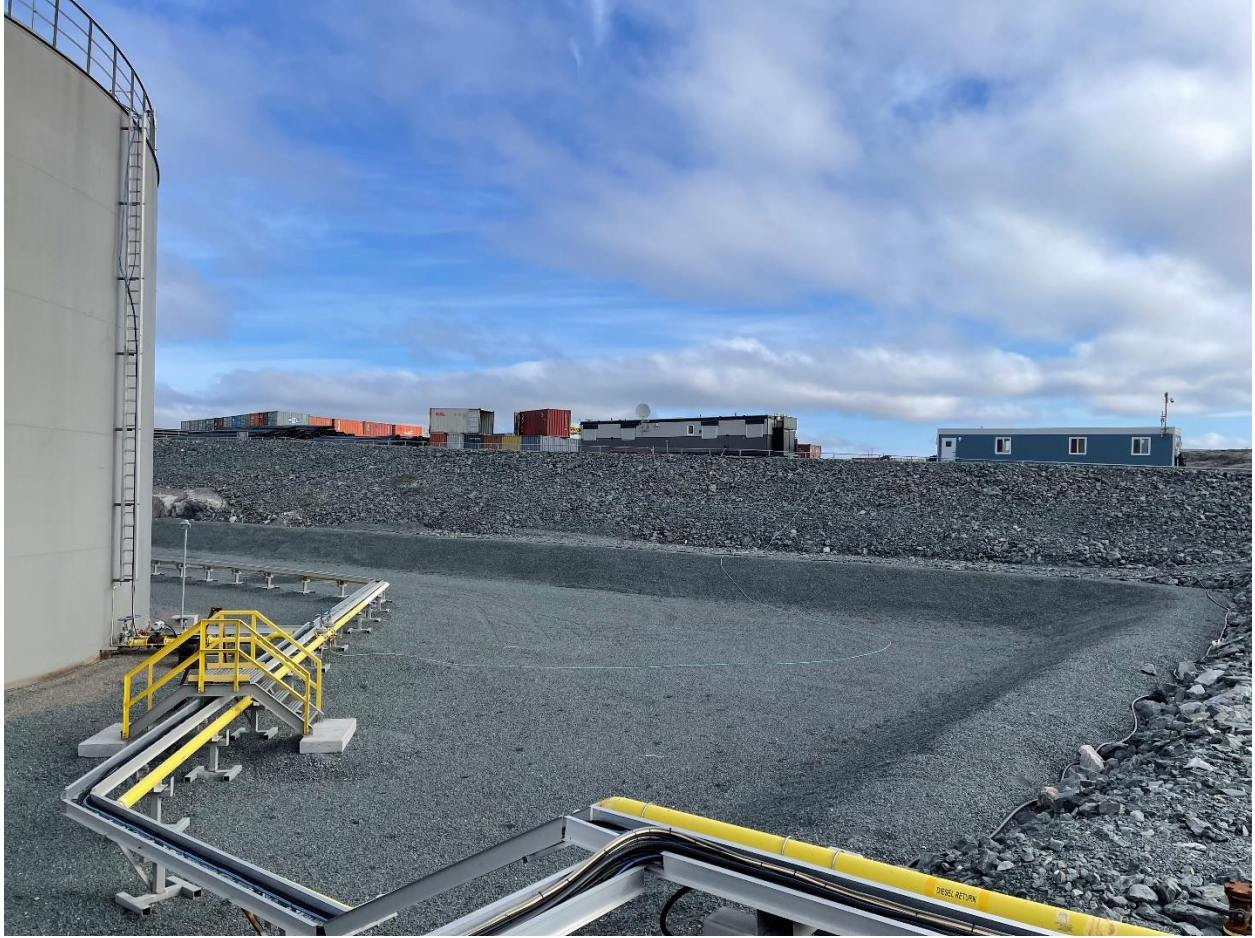


Photo 4: Fuel tanks at Itivia Harbour within secondary containment.



Photo 5: Saline effluent discharge connection for trucked saline effluent. No saline effluent was trucked or discharged into Melvin Bay in 2023.



Photo 6: Saline effluent discharge pipeline to the ocean diffuser in Melvin Bay, the seasonal connection to the saline effluent diffuser was not installed in 2023.



Photo 7: Signage indicating the private status of Bypass Road around Rankin Inlet.

3.4.2 All-Weather Access Road



Photo 8: All-weather Access Road marked by reflector poles.



Photo 9: Public Use Signage for All-weather Access Road.



Photo 10: Skidoo crossing.



Photo 11: Spill response seacans located at each water crossing location.



Photo 12: Borrow pit along the All-weather Access Road. No reclamation of eskers has started as they are all still in use.



Photo 13: Agnico Eagle constructing the bedding for the waterlines beside the All-weather Access Road.



Photo 14: Waterlines construction along the All-Weather Access Road starting near the mine site.



Photo 15: Dust monitoring transect along the All-weather Access Road.



Photo 16: Wildlife camera. Takes photos on a set schedule and as activated by motion. Photos are analyzed at the end of the program as part of monitoring.

3.4.3 Meliadine Mine Site



Photo 17: Overview of mine site top photo looking West and bottom looking East.



Photo 18: Portal for Tiriganiaq Underground. Actively being mined while the NIRB staff were at site.



Photo 19: Tiriganiaq pit 1 – 2022



Photo 20: Tiriganiaq pit 1 - 2023



Photo 21: Tiriganiaq Pit 2 - Being used for saline effluent storage.



Photo 22: Saline Pond 3 - used for saline effluent to be discharged to Melvin Bay. Currently not in use as no saline effluent is being discharged in 2023.



Photo 23: Containment pond 2 – Six (6) containment ponds on site collect site contact water.



Photo 24: Water treatment complex - contact water is treated to ensure licence parameters are met before discharge into Meliadine Lake.



Photo 25: Waste Rock Storage Facility 3 – Two (2) waste rock storage facilities on site.



Photo 26: Landfill - The landfill is checked to ensure no disposal of food waste.



Photo 27: Hazardous material storage area.

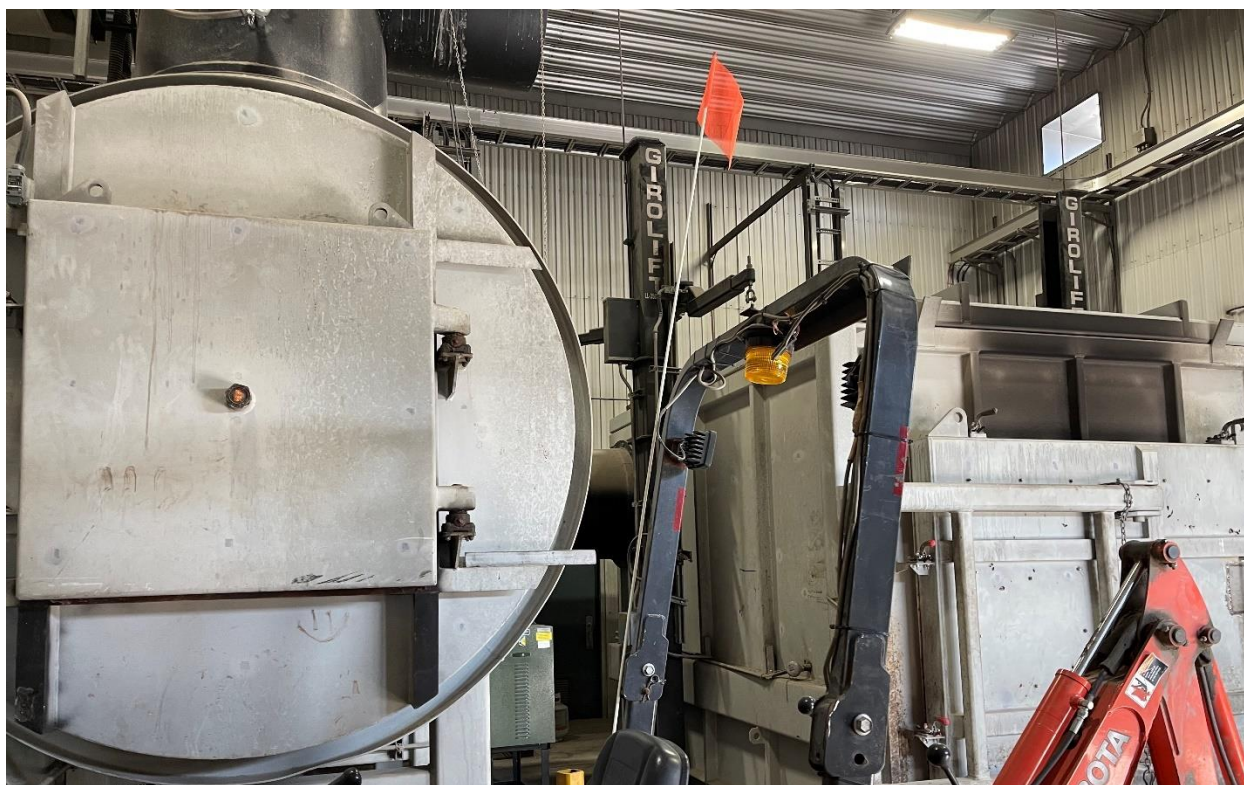


Photo 28: Incinerator.



Photo 29: Dry stack tailings storage facility. Agnico Eagle noted that new light sensors are being used to monitor dust from the tailings as well as the use of drones.



Photo 30: Ground temperature cables are placed in the tailings.



Photo 31: Landfarm A.



Photo 32: On-site fuel storage in secondary containment. Bird deterrents were removed for caribou migration.



Photo 33: Temporary ore storage pad.



Photo 34: Processing facility.



Photo 35: Tailings dewatering building.



Photo 36: Waterline laydown area.



Photo 37: Exploration camp. The exploration camp is not in use and has been cleaned up.

3.4.4 Site Monitoring Equipment



Photo 38: Partisol active air quality monitor.

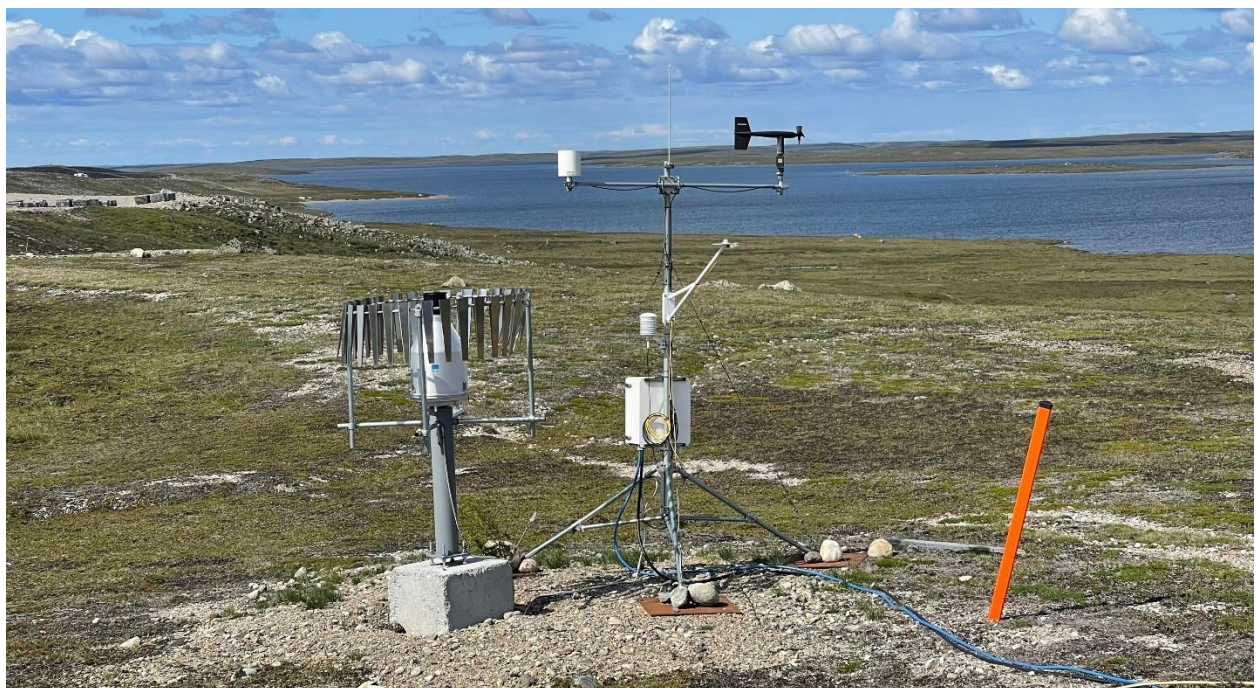


Photo 39: Meteorological monitoring.



Photo 40: Blast monitoring station.



Photo 41: Bird house built for a barn swallow which had nested inside of the Paste Plant as recommended by Environment and Climate Change Canada.



Photo 42: Revegetation study plots. The revegetation study ended in 2022 and Agnico Eagle noted they are looking at how results will inform reclamation.



Photo 43: Agnico Eagle has created a QR code for staff to report wildlife sightings on site.

3.4.5 Camp facilities



Photo 44: Inside waste sorting.



Photo 45: Activities for staff.





Photo 46: Games room.



Photo 47: Country foods kitchen.



Photo 48: Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Fair which was ongoing while NIRB staff were at site.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the observations made during this site visit, all Meliadine facilities continue to appear to be well managed, and generally are maintained with adequate environmental protection measures and procedures in place.

Overall, Agnico Eagle appears to be in compliance with the majority of the terms and conditions contained within the Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 006. The NIRB looks forward to the 2024 site visit which will include a follow up on the waterline installation and cover, and implementation of the results from the wildlife safety audit.

The observations made at the site visit and the comments heard from community members will inform the overall compliance of Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 006 and Board recommendations to be provided within the NIRB's *Meliadine Gold Mine 2022-2023 Monitoring Report*.

Prepared by: Emily Koide

Title: Technical Advisor III

Date: August 31, 2023

Signature:



Reviewed by: Kelli Gillard PAg, CTAJ

Title: Manager, Project Monitoring

Date: August 31, 2023

Signature:

