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For the Reconsideration Process of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's “Meliadine Extension” Project Proposal

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Prepared for the Nunavut Impact Review Board

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September 2023

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Outline

- Mandate
- Relevant Acts and Scope of Review
- Technical Review and Recommendations
 - Groundwater Quantity
 - Permafrost
 - Mine Waste Management



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Mandate

- Natural Resources Canada is a federal department responsible for ensuring the country's natural resources are developed sustainably, competitively and inclusively.
- Natural Resources Canada is a science-based department, with nearly half of its employees being scientists, engineers or technicians.
- Natural Resources Canada scientists are conducting research on permafrost, groundwater, mine waste characterisation and management as well as environmental dispersal and effects associated with acid rock drainage and/or metal leaching.
- Natural Resources Canada also provides scientific support to organizations that advance knowledge in mine waste management, including in areas such as prevention and control of acid rock drainage and metal leaching, disposal technologies, mine water treatment.



Relevant Acts and Scope of Review

- Regulator for the *Explosives Act*:
 - Provision of licenses for the storage and manufacture of explosives
- Scientific Analysis Provided:
 - Groundwater Quantity/flow (hydrogeology)
 - Permafrost
 - Mine Waste Management



Technical Review: Groundwater Quantity

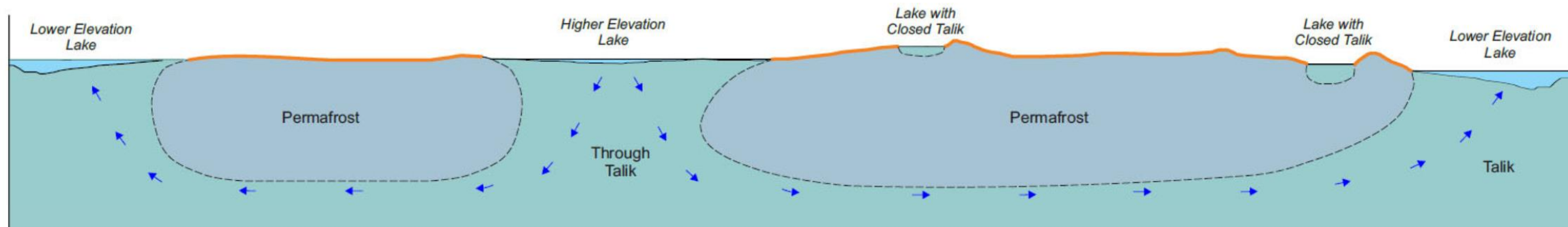
- Hydrogeological data are collected to characterize subsurface properties and groundwater conditions in order to develop an understanding of groundwater flow and interactions with surface waters.
- Groundwater models are used to help quantify and assess current groundwater conditions and predict those expected to develop as a result of mining and closure activities.
- Groundwater data and knowledge are essential for assessing impacts on groundwater quantity and quality, and groundwater interactions with surface waters.

Specific Issues Considered:

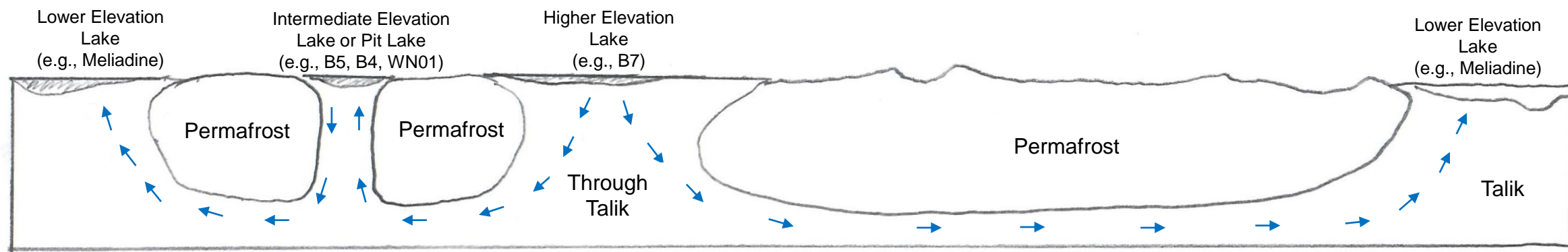
- Complexity of vertical groundwater flow through taliks and their monitoring
- Assessment of tailings and waste rock disposal in exhausted pits
- Assessment of closure and post-closure phases
- Effect of saline water storage in B7
- Groundwater flow basin near the Discovery underground mine
- Inclusion of grouting in hydrogeology model and groundwater inflow estimates



Conceptual permafrost and groundwater flow model



Source: Appendix G5, Summary of Hydrogeology Existing Conditions, Dec 2021



NRCan, 2023

- Intermediate elevation lakes with through talik can receive groundwater flow from upslope lakes *and/or* provide groundwater flow to downslope lakes, with implications for in-pit disposal

Seepage from/to in-filled pits/pit lakes

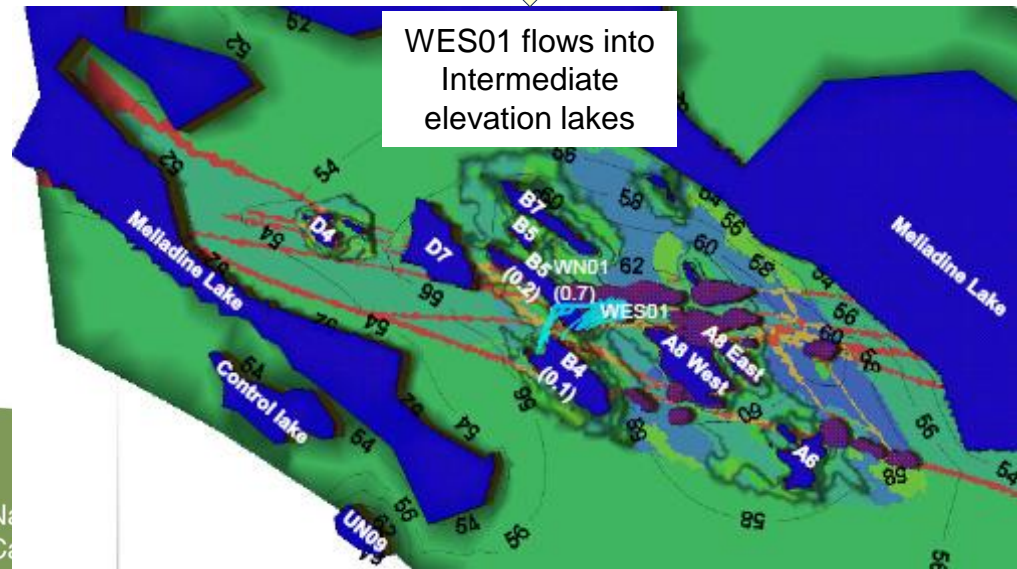
Table 2: Predict Contact Seepage Discharge from In-filled Pits to Downgradient Surface Water Lakes and Pit Lakes

Value	Unit	WES01	WES04	WES05	WN01	PUM01	PUM03	DISC
Pit Bottom Elevation	m asl	-10	30	-45	-65	25	-5	-75
Backfill Material ^(a)	-	Tailings	Tailings	Tailings	Tailings	Tailings	Tailings	Waste Rock
Backfill Elevation ^(a)	m asl	50	54	47	44	47	49	16
Underlying Underground	-	present	not present	not present	present	present	present	present
Post-closure Pit Lake Elevation ^(b)	m asl	62.5	63	63.6	58.3	58.7	60.3	67
Receptor and Predicted Contact Water Flux using Numerical Groundwater Model	m ³ /day	Lake B4 – 0.1 Pit Lake WN01 – 0.7 Lake B5 – 0.2 (total contact water seepage – 1)	Meliadine Lake – 0.2	Meliadine Lake – 4.1	No Pit Lake Discharge. Groundwater discharges to Pit Lake. Total Discharge to Pit Lake – 93.7.	Lake B4 – 0.02	No Pit Lake Discharge. Groundwater discharges to Pit Lake. Total Discharge to Pit Lake – 2.0.	Meliadine Lake – 0.6 Lake UN1 – 0.8 Lake CH1 – 1.0 Lake CH5 – 0.4 Lake UN3 – 0.03 (total contact water seepage 2.8)
Travel Time (first arrival of contact water seepage) Using Numerical Groundwater Model ^(b)	Years	Lake B4 – 450 Lake WN01 – 70 Lake B5 – 70	Meliadine Lake – >1000	Meliadine Lake – 275	not applicable	Lake B4 – 650	not applicable	Meliadine Lake – >1000 Lake UN1 – >1000 Lake CH1 – >1000 Lake CH5 – >1000 Lake UN3 – >1000

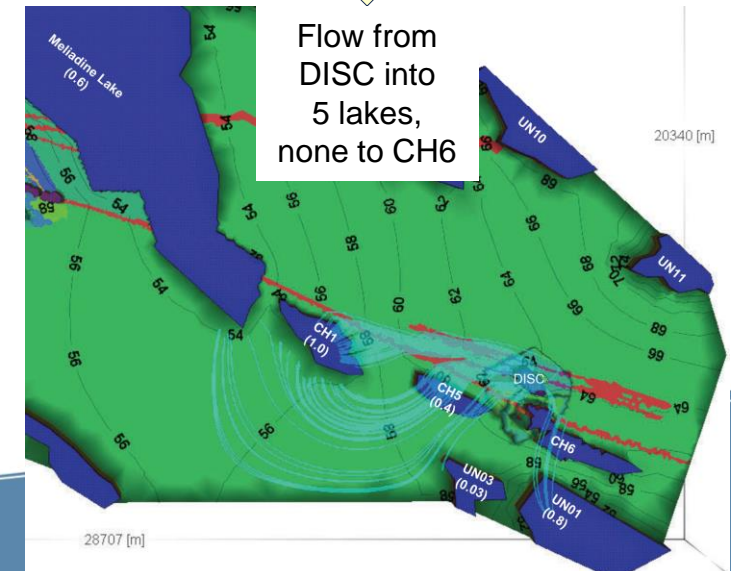
(a) From Lorax 2022.

(b) Travel times do not include time to develop open talik conditions below the pits. Actual travel times may be faster than predicted as a result of how the faults are incorporated in the model (see Section 3.0).

Source: WSP Technical Memo, Reference no. 22524250-972-TM-Rev1-6000, May 05, 2023



Flow into Pit Lake WN01, an in-filled pit with an intermediate elevation



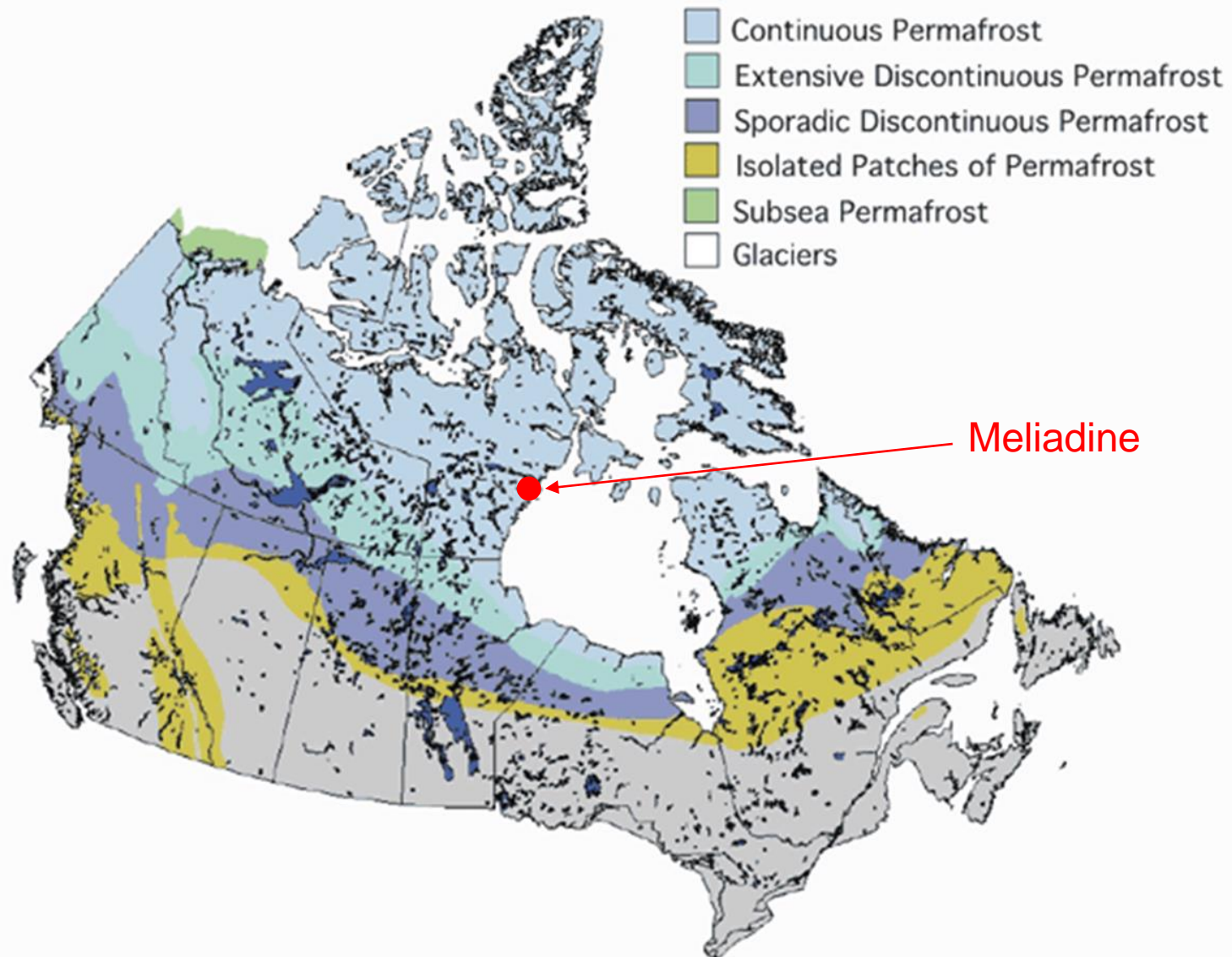
Technical Review: Permafrost

- Knowledge of permafrost is required to minimize the impacts of the project on the environment, and the impacts of the environment on the project.
- Knowledge of distribution of permafrost and unfrozen ground (talik) is essential for determining groundwater flow pathways.

Specific Issues Considered:

- Thermal modelling- To support design of Mine Waste Storage Facilities
- Ground thermal regime in the project area
- AEM response to Commitment 19 (Thermal modelling of temporary water storage in pits)
- AEM response to Commitment 42 (In-pit deposition alternative and disposal study)





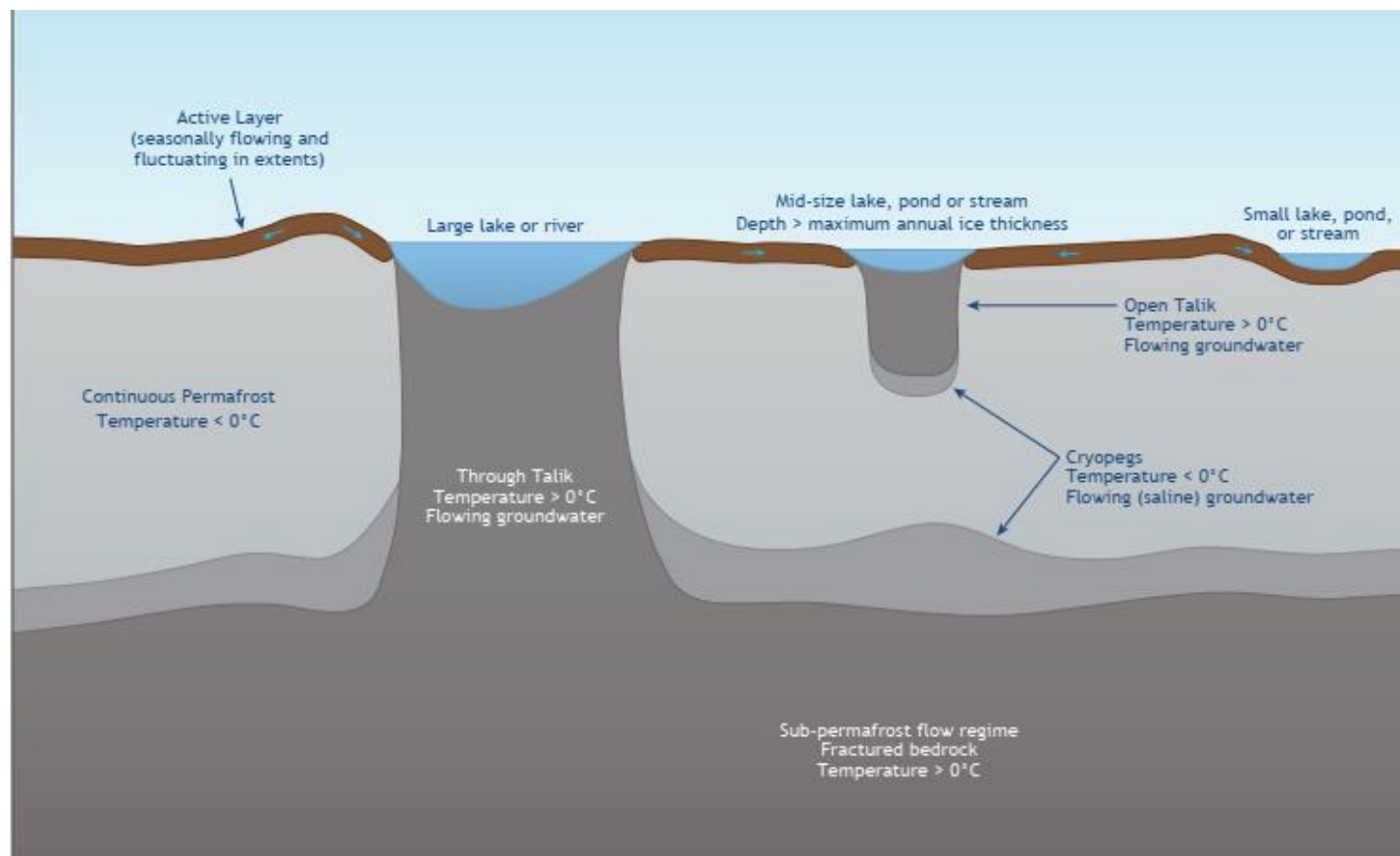
Geologic Survey of Canada,
Natural Resources Canada



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Permafrost



Source – Rescan, Sabina Gold FEIS submission to NIRB, 2017

- Although permafrost is continuous at Meliadine, unfrozen ground (talik) can exist beneath lakes.
- Through taliks beneath large deep lakes or pits provide unfrozen groundwater flow pathways between these lakes and pits, and also with mine workings below the continuous permafrost.



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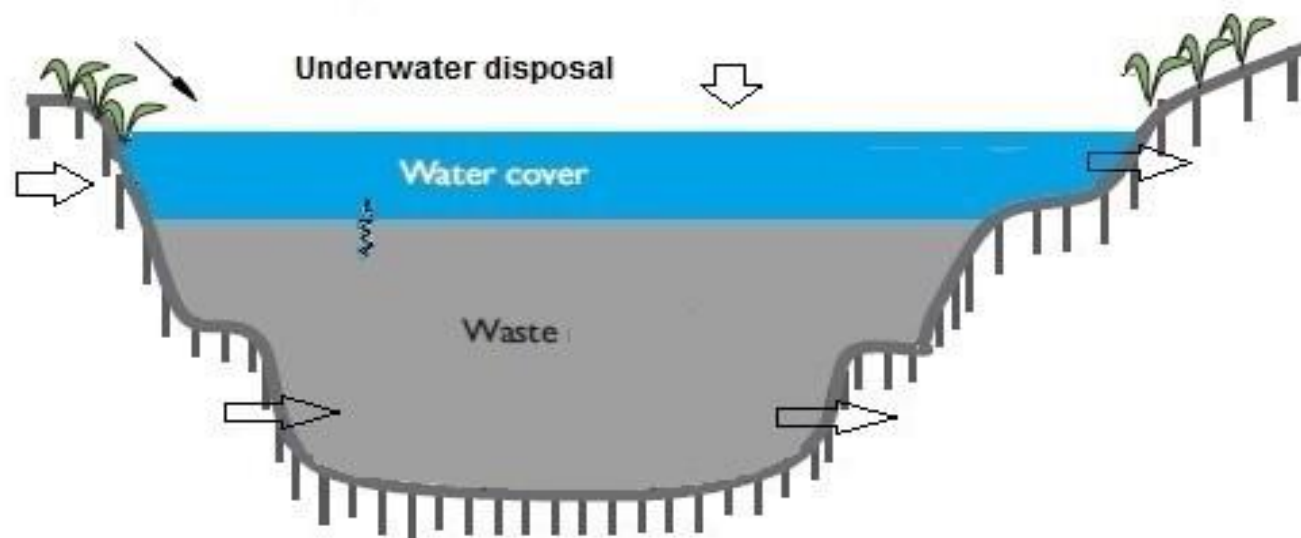
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Technical Review: Mine Waste Management

- Representative characterization of mine waste is essential to identify adequate management methods to limit the impacts to the receiving environment.
- Some mine waste presents acid rock drainage and arsenic leaching potential. Therefore, Natural Resources Canada recommends on-going laboratory and field characterization of mine waste.
- This characterization should be used to validate site water quality predictions and the proponent should adapt its mine waste management strategy accordingly.



Mine Waste Management: In-pit Disposal



- In-pit disposal under the water table reduces/eliminates:
 - acid rock drainage and metal leaching;
 - groundwater contamination if appropriately designed; and
 - maintenance of above ground dam structures.
- Natural Resources Canada recommends that acid rock drainage and arsenic leaching mine waste be placed in exhausted open pits to the extent practicable as recommended by Mine Environment Neutral Drainage 2.36.1 and 2.36.1b

Source: Pit disposal concept (adapted from Mine Environment Neutral Drainage report 2.36.1 "Review of in-pit disposal practices for the prevention of acid mine drainage – Case studies",) from [Subaqueous in-pit disposal – Mine Closure \(gtk.fi\)](#)



Questions?



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