

March 20, 2025

Nunavut Impact Review Board

Dear NIRB Committee Members,

I am attaching this letter to provide additional information regarding our submission to your committee. This submission is for NIRB screening, as required by the Canadian Wildlife Service in order to apply for our Migratory Bird Sanctuary Permit.

This submission relates to two daytrips to Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary in July of 2025. These are part of the Inuinnaït Heritage Project, which is a collaboration between the Pitquhirnikkut Ilihautiniq / Kitikmeot Heritage Society (PI/KHS), an Elder-run cultural organization in Cambridge Bay, and the University of Toronto. Our collaboration has been in place since 1999, reconstructing history in the area through Traditional Knowledge with Elders from Cambridge Bay (organized and conducted mainly by the PI/KHS), and archaeology (organized and conducted mainly by me, with Inuinnaït youth involved extensively each year). The primary objective of the proposed 2025 work in Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary is to record oral histories with several Inuinnaït Elders who spent their younger years here. Currently, Elders Mabel Etegiq, Mary Kaotalok, and David Kaosoni have expressed a strong desire to participate, and interviews will mainly be conducted by Emily Angulalik, Executive Director of the PI/KHS. The information will be used for PI/KHS programming. If there is time, we may record archaeological sites, but the Elders' interviews are the priority.

Project location and dates

Our work will take place in a limited area of the Ahiak Migratory Bird Sanctuary, near the mouth of the Perry River and at Innakhagvik (Perry Island). Please see the map in the application. We plan to visit with two daytrips on July 11 and 12, 2025. On each day we will spend approximately 5 hours in the Bird Sanctuary. If the 2025 project is a success, we also may return for two additional days in the summer of either 2026 or 2027.

Potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures

The main type of potential environmental impact will be disturbance of birds from the helicopter flights. To reduce these impacts, we will follow all Canadian Wildlife Service guidelines for flights, including avoiding areas with dense nesting sites and avoiding caribou. We will fly as little as possible while in Ahiak; the helicopter will be used to fly between interview locations, but will be shut down for most of the time. Also, our helicopter and pilot will be supplied by the Polar Continental Shelf Project; this helicopter will be the same one used for Canadian Wildlife Service goose banding at Ahiak, so the helicopter company and pilot will be aware of special procedures to be used in Ahiak.

Because these are daytrips, all garbage will be removed back to Cambridge Bay daily. Helicopter fuel will be cached at the CWS Perry River camp landing strip, alongside the other helicopter fuel used in annual goose banding operations. Empty fuel drums will be removed at the end of the summer.

Community consultation and involvement

This project was initiated by the PI/KHS, and represents Inuinnait research priorities. Over the years, we have collected Traditional Knowledge with Elders in many locations, but Perry River is a top priority. Many Elders grew up at Perry River, and wish to record their memories soon. A majority of the individuals on the helicopter flights will be Inuinnait from Cambridge Bay. The knowledge gained from these trips will be kept by the PI/KHS in Cambridge Bay, and used for public programming.

Permits

We have applied for three permits for this work:

- 1) Migratory Bird Sanctuary Permit, Canadian Wildlife Service.
 - Application submitted January 29, 2025.
- 2) Kitikmeot Inuit Association Land Use License Exemption.
 - Application submitted March 19, 2025.
 - The PI/KHS and Max Friesen have been receiving annual exemptions for this project since 2018.
- 3) Nunavut Archaeology Permit Class 2.
 - Application submitted January 31, 2025.
 - Max Friesen has been receiving permits for collaborative projects with the PI/KHS since 1999.
 - We do not expect to perform much archaeological work in Ahiak bird sanctuary (the archaeology permit is mainly for other activities near to Cambridge Bay). However, if time permits we may record sites in Ahiak. For example, Elders have described a goose drive consisting of stone walls and caches; if we have enough time, we will document it.

Funding

Our funding is mainly from two Federal Government agencies: The Polar Continental Shelf Project which supplies the helicopter hours and fuel, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council which supplied a grant to cover most other expenses. In addition, each year the Nunavut Government supplies funding for our three Inuinnait youth trainees.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be pleased to provide any additional information you may need.

Best regards,



Max Friesen
Department of Anthropology
University of Toronto
19 Ursula Franklin St.
Toronto, ON M5S 2S2
416-978-4505
max.friesen@utoronto.ca