

GN # 01	
Department	Environment
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Spill Response
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apex Geoscience. Spill Prevention and Response Plan for the Aston Bay Property (Also Known as the Storm Property Nunavut, Canada). (October 2025). • Environmental Protection Act Spill Contingency Planning and Reporting Regulations, R-068-93.
IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUE	
<p>The Government of Nunavut (GN) has identified several issues and opportunities for improvements concerning Aston Bay Holdings/APEX Geoscience Ltd.'s (the Proponent) Spill Prevention and Response Plan for the Aston Bay Property/Storm Project (SPRP/ Spill Plan). The issues and opportunities for improvement described by the GN below are intended to reduce the potential environmental impacts of the project and enhance the Spill Plan's alignment with relevant legislation.</p>	
IMPORTANCE TO REVIEW AND SUPPORTING RATIONALE	
<p>The GN has identified the following issues and opportunities for improvement:</p> <p>Issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 4(2)(a) of the Spill Contingency Planning and Reporting Regulations R-086-93 (Regulations), enacted under the <i>Environmental Protection Act (R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.E-7 (Nunavut))</i>, states that a spill contingency plan for a facility must contain the following information: "...the name, address and job title of the owner or person in charge, management or control;". The Proponent's SPRP provides some of this information, but does not include an address (e.g., Page 7). 2. The Regulations state that a site map of the location of the facility must be included in the spill contingency plan. However, a map is not included in the Proponent's Spill Plan. 3. Section 7(1) of the Regulations states that the person responsible for preparing a spill contingency plan shall review the plan annually. However, the Proponent's Spill Plan does not specify that this action must be carried out annually. <p>Opportunities for Improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The GN acknowledges that the Proponent's Spill Plan includes an itemized list of resources that will be included on site generally and within spill kits (e.g., pages 12 and 13). However, the Spill Plan does not indicate the procedures for replenishing spill kit materials. 	
REQUEST(S)/RECOMMENDATION(S)	

With respect to their Spill Plan, the GN requests that the Proponent undertake the following actions:

1. Provide the full address of the owner, person in charge, management or control.
2. Provide a site map of the location of the facility.
3. Include the requirement for reviewing the spill plan annually under Section 3 Roles, and who will be responsible for undertaking this action.

The GN also recommends that the Proponent:

1. Identify who will conduct an inventory of the response and clean-up equipment, and be responsible for replenishing spill kit materials after a spill occurs.

GN # 02	
Department	Environment
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Triggers for Suspension of Operations – Caribou Mitigations
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aston Bay Holdings. Revised NIRB Application for Screening #126245 Aston Bay Property or Storm Project. (January 2025) • Apex Geoscience. Environmental Management Plan for the Aston Property (Also known as the Storm Property Nunavut, Canada). (October 2025)
IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUE	
<p>The Proponent’s Environmental Management Plan for the Aston Bay Property/Storm Property (Environmental Management Plan) presents conflicting information about the protection and mitigation measures for caribou. These inconsistencies could hinder the staff of the Aston Bay Storm Project (Project) from effectively implementing the required measures.</p>	
IMPORTANCE TO REVIEW AND SUPPORTING RATIONALE	
<p>Section 2.2 Air and Noise Quality of the Environmental Management Plan states: <i>“All activities, including drilling, will cease if sightings of caribou are within 10 km.”</i> (Page 3)</p> <p>Meanwhile, Section 4.1.3. Caribou Mitigation and Monitoring of the Environmental Management Plan states: <i>“In the event cows/calves come within 10 km of camps or work areas, operations will be suspended...”</i> (Page 9)</p> <p>and further that, <i>“Activities will be suspended should pregnant cows, cows with young calves, or concentrations of caribou (50 or more) approach within 1 km of drilling operations. Activities will not resume until all of the caribou have moved out of the area.”</i> (Page 10)</p> <p>This creates a clear discrepancy in the threshold triggering the suspension of operations. Section 2.2 commits to halting all activities when any caribou are within 10 km, whereas Section 4.1.3 applies a much narrower 1 km threshold limited to pregnant cows, cows with calves, or groups of 50 or more individuals.</p> <p>Such conflicting thresholds are likely to confuse the implementation of the Environmental Management Plan and do not provide wildlife monitors with clear, actionable direction. These inconsistencies increase the risk of delayed activity suspension, insufficient protection measures for caribou, or non-compliance with the Proponent’s own mitigation commitments.</p>	
REQUEST(S)/RECOMMENDATION(S)	
<p>The Government of Nunavut recommends the Proponent:</p>	

1. Revise the Environmental Management Plan so that all activities are suspended when any caribou are within 10 km of the project activities.

GN # 03	
Department	Culture and Heritage
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Archaeology
References	NIRB 126245/25EN077: Notice of Screening and Comment Request
CONCERNS	
<p>Project Summary</p> <p>The Proponent proposes to renew and amend existing authorizations to continue and expand mineral exploration activities on northern Somerset Island. Proposed amendments include, but are not limited to, an increase in camp capacity (from approximately 40 to 65 persons), establishment of an additional water source, increased fuel storage, use of a marine landing area to support annual sealift, and a significant increase in drilling activities (from approximately 15,000 m to 25,000 m).</p> <p>The Government of Nunavut (GN) acknowledges that the Proponent has previously engaged qualified archaeologists to conduct archaeological assessments of specific Project components within the Storm Project area in 2024 and 2025. GN notes, however, that these assessments were component-specific and do not clear the expanded footprint or all new and amended Project components proposed under the current renewal and expansion.</p> <p>GN notes that a review of the Nunavut Archaeological Sites Database indicates that archaeological sites have been previously recorded within the broader regional landscape. The absence of recorded sites within specific portions of the proposed Project footprint does not preclude the presence of additional, as yet undocumented archaeological resources.</p> <p>Based on landscape-level considerations, including proximity to lakes and waterways, existing shorelines, coastal margins, raised beach features and former shorelines, the presence of eskers, ridges, and other raised landforms, and established regional travel and land-use patterns, and in light of the absence of prior field-based archaeological assessment for much of the expanded Project footprint, GN considers that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there could be sites of archaeological significance on the lands affected by the Project, pursuant to Article 33.5.12 of the <i>Nunavut Agreement</i>.</p> <p>Project-Specific Concerns</p> <p>GN notes that the proposed Project includes activities involving ground disturbance, which constitute potential impacts to archaeological resources. Activities requiring archaeological assessment include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Expansion and Infrastructure: Placement of additional camp structures, infrastructure, laydown areas, fuel storage areas, water supply infrastructure, or associated works beyond areas previously assessed. • Trails, Access, and Overland Travel: Development or use of new terrestrial access routes or trails for the movement of personnel, equipment, fuel, or waste, including winter access routes where terrestrial landforms are accessed. 	

- **Exploration Activities:** Drilling and associated activities, including drill pads, sumps, water lines, staging areas, and geological sampling where ground disturbance occurs.
- **Aviation:**
 - Use of unprepared terrain for fixed-wing aircraft landings and take-offs; and,
 - Any helicopter landing areas that are planned, identified, or intended for repeated use in support of Project activities.
- **Marine Landing Area:** Construction and use of a marine landing area to support sealift operations, including associated terrestrial staging, laydown, loading and unloading areas, and access routes.
- **General:** Any other Project activities involving terrestrial ground disturbance occurring outside areas previously subject to archaeological assessment conducted under a permit issued by CH.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CH recommends that NIRB include the following project-specific Terms and Conditions in the Screening Decision Report to ensure compliance with the *Nunavut Act* and the *Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations*:

1) Requirement for Archaeological Assessment (Proponent responsibility)

The Proponent shall retain a qualified archaeologist eligible to hold a Class 2 Nunavut Archaeologist Permit to conduct an archaeological impact assessment of all Project activities involving ground disturbance.

- Archaeological assessment shall be completed prior to the commencement of ground disturbance in the affected areas and under conditions that provide sufficient surface visibility for CH to accept the areas for proposed disturbance.
- The Proponent shall implement the recommendations of the qualified archaeologist, including avoidance, buffering, and/or mitigation measures, as applicable.

2) Adaptive Management for Multi-Year Exploration

Where Project components are modified, expanded, or relocated between or within field seasons, the Proponent shall ensure that archaeological assessment and permitting are completed prior to ground disturbance in any newly affected areas.

3) Aviation

- Off-strip fixed-wing aircraft landings on unprepared natural terrain shall not occur unless the landing areas have been archaeologically assessed prior to use.
- Helicopter landing areas that are planned, identified, or intended for repeated use in support of Project activities shall be archaeologically assessed prior to use.
- Opportunistic, single-use helicopter landings supporting foot traffic only may proceed only where no ground disturbance occurs.

4) Standard Protective Measures

- **Site protection:** All heritage sites (archaeological and palaeontological) in Nunavut are protected by law. No Project activities shall occur within 50 metres of any known or suspected heritage site. The Proponent must understand that it is their responsibility to ensure that no heritage sites are disturbed during the course of Project activities.
- **Chance finds:** If archaeological and/or palaeontological materials or features are encountered, all activities shall cease immediately within the 50 metre buffer area. The site shall be documented (including coordinates, description, and photographs) and

reported to CH, and work shall not resume within the buffer area until direction is provided by CH.

- **General protections:** No alteration, disturbance, artifact removal, littering, or defacement of archaeological sites is permitted. No collection or disturbance shall occur unless authorized through the appropriate permitting process. The Proponent shall ensure that all staff and contractors are informed of these legal obligations. The construction of inuksuit is not supported.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Under the *Nunavut Act*, the *Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations* provide for the protection, care, and preservation of archaeological and palaeontological resources. The Department of Culture and Heritage (GN-CH) is the Designated Agency responsible for the administration of the archaeological and palaeontological permitting system, in close coordination with Inuit land claim partners, including the Inuit Heritage Trust (IHT), which serves as the Designated Organization under Article 33 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. All archaeological and palaeontological sites in Nunavut are protected by law. It is illegal to search for, survey, excavate, alter, or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site without a valid permit issued by the Government of Nunavut.