



<b>GN: 01</b>	
<b>Department</b>	Culture and Heritage
<b>Organization</b>	Government of Nunavut
<b>Subject/Topic</b>	Archaeology
<b>References</b>	NIRB 126440 / 26TN024: Notice of Screening and Comment Request for Maverick Explorer Yachting Ltd.'s "MY Maverick Northwest Passage Transit 2026" Project Proposal
<b>CONCERNS</b>	
<p><b>Project Summary</b>  Maverick Explorer Yachting Ltd. proposes to undertake a small-scale Arctic tourism expedition through the Northwest Passage using the vessel <i>MY Maverick</i>. GN notes that the Project includes marine-based transit through Nunavut coastal waters, temporary guided shore landings, community visits, Zodiac operations, kayak operations, and Sea-Doo operations. The vessel would carry a maximum of 12 guests and 13 crew, for a total of 25 persons. GN notes that the Project itinerary identifies planned visits to heritage sites.</p> <p><b>Project-Specific Concerns</b>  GN notes that tourism activities occurring at heritage sites in Nunavut can result in impacts to sensitive cultural heritage resources. Immediate impacts may occur during individual site visits through inadvertent disturbance from foot traffic, unauthorized handling of artifacts or fossils, alteration of site features, or visitor movement through archaeological features. Cumulative impacts may also occur through repeated visitation over time, including degradation of site features and loss of site integrity.</p> <p>Cruise ship operators, tour operators, and organized visitor groups proposing to land visitors at heritage sites, including archaeological or palaeontological sites, in Nunavut must obtain authorization from the GN Department Culture and Heritage (CH) in the form of a Class 1 permit prior to conducting site visits. A Class 1 permit for heritage site visitation is a non-intervention permit and does not authorize the collection of artifacts or specimens, disturbance of site features, or alteration of a site in any manner. GN notes that the archaeological permit process for heritage site visitation addresses concerns related to site protection during visitor access, site condition monitoring and reporting, visitor conduct, accountability for site disturbance, and cumulative visitation pressure at heritage sites. GN further notes that the Proponent has submitted an archaeological permit application associated with the planned voyage.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
To ensure compliance with the <i>Nunavut Act</i> and the <i>Nunavut Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites Regulations</i> , GN recommends the following:	

- **Permit requirements for heritage site visitation:** Where Project activities include visits to heritage sites, the Proponent must obtain and comply with all applicable authorizations issued by CH, including any applicable permit conditions. Site visits must be limited to locations authorized through the CH permitting process, including any approved alternate sites, and should adhere to guidelines outlined in CH's *Class 1 Permit Guidelines and Regulations for Heritage Site Visitation* (2018). These guidelines provide specific direction on mandatory passenger briefings, group sizes, and on-site conduct required to preserve site integrity.
- **Site protection and buffers:** All heritage sites, including archaeological and palaeontological sites, in Nunavut are protected by law. CH recommends that no Project activities occur within a minimum 30 metre buffer of any known, suspected, newly recorded, or encountered archaeological or palaeontological site, unless the visit has been authorized by CH through a Class 1 permit and is conducted in accordance with permit conditions and approved site protocols. Where no CH authorization has been issued for a site, Project personnel, expedition staff, guides, guests, and crew must move away from the location and avoid the area.
- **Reporting accidental finds:** In the event heritage sites are encountered outside an authorized visit area, activities in the area of the find should cease immediately and move away from the location. The find should not be touched, moved, or removed. The site should be documented (including coordinates, date of discovery, description, and photographs) and reported to CH as soon as possible. Reports should be directed to the Territorial Archaeologist at (867) 934-2040 or [CHArchaeologyProgram@gov.nu.ca](mailto:CHArchaeologyProgram@gov.nu.ca).
- **General protections:** No alteration, disturbance, artifact/specimen collection, littering, or defacement of heritage sites (including graves, structures, and other cultural features and/or deposits) with graffiti may occur except where specifically authorized through the appropriate permitting process. The Proponent shall ensure all Project personnel, expedition staff, guides, passengers, and crew are informed of these legal obligations before any shore landing or heritage-site visit. To prevent site alteration, no person should move, stack, rearrange, or remove stones, artifacts, fossils, bones, wood, metal, or other materials found on sites. Special care should be taken in the vicinity of any graves or burial sites (marked or unmarked), where visitors should not sit, stand, or lean on graves or headstones. The construction of new cairns or 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 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.