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Department	Culture and Heritage (CH)
Organization	Government of Nunavut (GN)
Subject/Topic	Archaeological and Palaeontological Resources
References	NIRB 126444/ 26YN032: Notice of Screening and Comment Request for Institut National de Recherche Scientifique’s “Evaluation of the Deep Geothermal Potential of Iqaluit” Project Proposal
CONCERNS	
<p>Project Summary</p> <p>GN notes that the proposed Project is limited to short-duration, surface-based scientific research program to evaluate the geothermal potential of Iqaluit, Nunavut. The Project is proposed to occur within a 10 km radius from the City of Iqaluit, between July 23, 2026, and August 8, 2026. The screened project scope includes minor surface rock sampling of approximately 20–30 hand-sized samples using geological hammers, geological mapping of exposed rock outcrops, and systematic fracture surveys. The Project materials state that no drilling or excavation is proposed. GN further notes the Proponent’s commitment to avoid culturally sensitive areas, archaeological areas, burial sites, and locations of community importance.</p>	
RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>GN recommends that the Proponent implement the following general archaeological and palaeontological protections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site protection and avoidance: All heritage sites, including archaeological and palaeontological sites, in Nunavut are protected by law. The Proponent is responsible for ensuring that archaeological and palaeontological sites are not purposely or inadvertently disturbed by Project personnel, contractors, or field staff as a result of Project activities. GN recommends that Project activities avoid any archaeological or palaeontological sites that are known to the Proponent, identified through engagement or field observation, provided to the Proponent by CH, or encountered during Project activities. Proponents may contact CH to inquire about requesting previously recorded heritage (archaeological and palaeontological) site information through a Data Licence Request. GN recommends that no Project activities occur within a minimum 50 metre buffer of such sites, or greater where directed by CH. • Personnel awareness: CH recommends that the Proponent ensure all Project personnel, contractors, and field staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding heritage sites, artifacts, and fossils. This should include briefings explaining that no person shall alter, disturb, deface, collect, move, or remove any archaeological or palaeontological site, artifact, or fossil unless authorized through an appropriate CH-issued permit. The construction of inuksuit is not supported. 	

- **Chance finds:** If archaeological and/or palaeontological materials or features are encountered during Project activities, 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, description, photographs, and the date of discovery, and reported to CH as soon as possible. Work should not resume within the protective buffer area until direction is provided by CH.
- **Reporting accidental discoveries:** CH recommends that any accidental discovery report include, where available, the name and contact information of the person who made the discovery; the date of discovery; the nature of the object, fossil, or feature; a description of the site and any artifacts or fossils observed; photographs of the object, fossil, feature, and/or site; a GPS location; and any other relevant information. Reports should be directed to the Territorial Archaeologist at (867) 934-2040 or CHArchaeologyProgram@gov.nu.ca.
- **Scope changes:** Should the Project scope change to include ground altering activities beyond the screened scope, GN recommends that the Proponent contact GN-CH prior to undertaking those activities to confirm applicable archaeological and palaeontological requirements.

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.