



NIRB File No.: 15YN037
Parks Canada File No.: 29439
NPC File No.: 148616

August 2, 2017

Ryan Harris
Parks Canada
1800 Walkley Road
Ottawa, ON K1H 8K3

And

Munju Ravindra
Parks Canada
P.O. Box 278
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Sent via email: ryan.harris@parks.gc.ca and munju.ravindra@pc.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Parks Canada's "HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation" and "Visitor Experience at the Erebus Wreck Site" Project Proposals

Dear Ryan Harris and Munju Ravindra:

On July 4, 2017 through July 17, 2017 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received referrals for projects related to Parks Canada's (PC) "HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation" project proposal. As a result of the projects being related but not integrally linked, the NIRB is currently assessing both projects and is providing the proposals for parties comment together, but will be considering each proposal separately. Due to the proposal containing activities that are sufficiently related to previously assessed activities under NIRB file number **15YN037**, the NIRB views these project proposals as an amendment to the previously screened project and has assigned this proposal with this previous file number. Please reference this file number in all future related correspondence. A summary of the previously screened project activities can be found in **Appendix A**.

Project No. 1

On July 4, 2017 the NIRB received a referral to screen PC's "HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation" project proposal directly from Parks Canada pursuant to section 167 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act* (NuPPAA). On July 17, 2017 the NIRB received correspondence from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission) related to PC's "HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation" project proposal noting

that the project occurred outside of an area with an applicable regional land use plan for the establishment of a temporary camp outside of the national historic site (under NPC's jurisdiction).

Project No. 2

On July 12, 2017 the NIRB received a referral to screen PC's "Visitor Experience at the Erebus Wreck Site" project proposal from Parks Canada pursuant to section 167 of the NuPPAA. The NIRB notes that the proposed project is located within the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site and pursuant to subsection 70(1) of the NuPPAA, the NPC conformity determination process does not apply.¹

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada* (Nunavut Agreement) and section 87 of the NuPPAA, the NIRB has commenced screening of these projects.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed "HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation" project (formerly "Underwater Archaeology and Biology Study of the Wreck of HMS Erebus") and "Visitor Experience at the Erebus Wreck Site" project is located within the Kitikmeot region, approximately 125 kilometres (km) southwest of Gjoa Haven and 250 km southeast of Cambridge Bay at the Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site of Canada. The scope of activities previously approved for the ongoing archeological and research activities (NIRB File No. 15YN037) has been included within **Appendix A**.

Project Scope No. 1

The Proponent intends to conduct archaeological and research activities that continue to document the HMS Erebus to understand the story of the Franklin expedition and its relationship with Inuit history for the area. The program is proposed to take place from August to September 2017.

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

- Select, construct, and decommission a temporary camp site from three (3) possible sites required to support ongoing dive and archaeological assessment operations;
- Personnel, water, and supplies transported to and from site via twin otter with tundra tires from either Cambridge Bay and/or Gjoa Haven;
- Use of zodiacs to transport project staff to and from the dive site as well as functioning as a diving platform;
- Transport, temporary storage, and use of up to 400 litres of gasoline, stored within fuel containment berm;

¹ Subsection 70(1) states: This Part and the broad planning policies, priorities and objectives, the specific planning objectives and any land use plan, established under this Part, do not apply in respect of a park that has been established or to a historic place that has been designated under the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* and is administered by the Parks Canada Agency.

- Sewage, combustible, and non-combustible wastes stored in sealed plastic drums for appropriate disposal in Gjoa Haven or Cambridge Bay;
- Continue development of video and photo documentation of the site including 3D photogrammetric modelling and recording;
- Continue mapping of artefacts and features of the HMS Erebus:
 - Complete cleaning of Upper Deck
 - Select test excavations including artefacts mapping and collection;
 - Partial disassembly and/or consolidation of upper deck structure of the HMS Erebus;
 - Continuation of use of ROV and inspection cameras to explore interior spaces;
- Establishment of 3D reference points and baselines system consolidation and extension;
- Establish a reburial site for artefacts being recorded and reburied; and
- Ongoing hiring of local community members to assist on project site and in communities.

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. The NIRB notes that the proposed “Visitor Experience at the Erebus Wreck Site” is being screened concurrently with this project; however, it is not considered as part of this project. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening Project No. 1 based on the scope as described above.

Project Scope No. 2

As a pilot project jointly proposed by Parks Canada and Adventure Canada, Adventure Canada would offer passengers from its Ocean Endeavour cruise transiting the Northwest Passage an opportunity to view the Erebus wreck snorkelling from the surface. Parks Canada would be monitoring and providing safety support the excursion in order to better understand the impacts and required mitigation should the activity be offered to visitors of the site in following years. The program is proposed to take place September 2017.

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following activities:

- Transport cruise ship passengers to and from the National Historic site via motorized vessel, in groups of up to 20 guests in shifts over an eight (8) hour day for a maximum of 200 visitors, supported by at least one (1) auxiliary boat for safety and emergency response.
- Use of two (2) small boats carrying 12 passengers to view the Erebus using bathyscopes;
- Additional viewing opportunities for guests by snorkelling at the surface with support from PC Underwater Archaeology Team; and
- Use of Parks Canada’s temporary camp as a staging area for activities, including guest support, changing, warming, and use of portable toilets for the day.

The NIRB notes that the proposed project activities as outlined above are being proposed by Parks Canada, in partnership with Adventure Canada, noting that cruise ship operations have been screened separately under NIRB File No. 06AN041. At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. The NIRB notes that the proposed “HMS Erebus Wreck Site Archaeological Investigation” is being screened concurrently

with this project; however, it is not considered as part of this project. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening Project No. 2 based on the scope as described above.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be obtained from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca by using any of the following search criteria:

Project No. 1

- Project Name: HMS Erebus wreck site archaeological investigation
- NIRB File No.: 15YN037
- Application No.: 125170

Project No. 2

- Project Name: Visitor experience at the Erebus Wreck Site
- NIRB File No.: 15YN037
- Application No.: 125166

The documents received include:

- *NPC Screening Referral and NPC Application*
- *Parks Canada screening referrals*
- *NIRB's Online Application Forms*
- *Non-technical Project Proposal summaries in English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun*
- *Maps noting location of proposed project activities*
- *Site Plans*

The NIRB will copy you on screening process related correspondence and upload related documents to the NIRB's online registry for public access. The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by Parks Canada's project proposals with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **August 14, 2017**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (please provide any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at info@nirb.ca, via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca by using any of the following search criteria:

Project No. 1

- Project Name: HMS Erebus wreck site archaeological investigation
- NIRB File No.: 15YN037
- Application No.: 125170

Project No. 2

- Project Name: Visitor experience at the Erebus Wreck Site
- NIRB File No.: 15YN037
- Application No.: 125166

If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4619 or at kgillard@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Kelli Gillard B.Sc., P.Ag.
Manager, Project Monitoring
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Distribution List
Jane Chisolm, Parks Canada
Karen Petkau, Parks Canada
Colleen Murchison, Parks Canada
Geoff Clark, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Wynter Kuliktana, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Alexander Stubbing, Government of Nunavut-Department of Culture and Heritage
Sylvie LeBlanc, Government of Nunavut-Department of Culture and Heritage
Tracey McCaie, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
Charlotte Lamontagne, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Attachment: Appendix A: Previously-Screened Project Proposals

Enclosures (6): Public Notice of Screening (English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun)
Comment Forms (English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun)

APPENDIX A: PREVIOUSLY-SCREENED PROJECT PROPOSALS

The original project proposal NIRB (File No. 15YN037), was received by the NIRB from Parks Canada on July 2, 2015 and was screened by the Board in accordance with Part 4, Article 12 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada* (Nunavut Agreement). On August 20, 2015 the NIRB issued a Nunavut Agreement 12.4.4(a) screening decision to the Minister of Environment, Government of Canada (now Minister of Environment and Climate Change) which indicated that the proposed project could proceed subject to the NIRB's recommended project-specific terms and conditions.

Parks Canada's (the Proponent) original "Underwater Archaeology and Biology Study of the Wreck of HMS Erebus" project was located in the Kitikmeot region, approximately 125 kilometres (km) southwest of Gjoa Haven and 250 km southeast of Cambridge Bay in the recently established Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site of Canada. The Proponent indicated that it intended to conduct an underwater archaeology exploration program from August to September 2015.

According to the previously screened project proposal, the scope of the project included the following undertakings, works, or activities:

- Transportation to the project site and accommodation for up to 19 personnel aboard the Arctic Research Foundation's (ARF) 35 foot motor vessel (MV) and 65 foot MV *Martin Bergmann*;
- Untethered SCUBA and surface-supplied diving operations conducted from Parks Canada's research vessel (RV) *Investigator* (33 feet) and two (2) rigid hull inflatable boats;
- Use of species sampling equipment and underwater cameras for benthic characterization study and photo documentation of project site;
- Deployment of underwater probe for water data collection with recovery after one (1) year;
- Use of aluminum grid references, water pump activated dredges and remotely operated underwater vehicles (ROV) for archaeological study and artefact recovery operations;
- Periodic resupply and waste disposal trips to Cambridge Bay;
 - All sewage, combustible and non-combustible wastes to be stored aboard the MV *Martin Bergmann* for appropriate disposal in Cambridge Bay or treatment through onboard septic systems;
- Hiring of three (3) Inuit community members to assist on project site and in communities.