



NIRB File No.: 18YN013

Related to NIRB File No.: 07YN019

NPC File No.: 148696

INAC File No.: N2006N0028

April 9, 2018

Anthony Zerafa
McGill University
3600 Avenue du Parc, Apt. A2601
Montréal Québec H2X 3R2

Sent via email: anthony.zerafa@mail.mcgill.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for McGill University's "Biodiversity and Microhabitat Association of Terrestrial Arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, in the High Arctic" project proposal

Dear Anthony Zerafa:

On March 2, 2018 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received a referral to screen McGill University's "Biodiversity and Microhabitat Association of Terrestrial Arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, in the High Arctic" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan.

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 *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the NIRB has commenced screening this project proposal and has assigned it file number **18YN013**.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On March 2, 2018 the NIRB requested that the Proponent complete the online application form through the NIRB's public registry system and ensure, pursuant to subsection 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, that the information provided be sufficient to determine the scope of the project activities being proposed and that sufficient information has been provided to commence screening. Following a preliminary completeness check of the proposal as submitted, the NIRB determined that the proposal did not contain the necessary information for the NIRB to carry out its screening and on March 16, 2018 requested that the Proponent provide the Board with the additional information in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal.

On April 3, 2018 the NIRB received the required additional information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed “Biodiversity and Microhabitat Association of Terrestrial Arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, in the High Arctic” project is located within the Qikiqtani region, approximately 382 kilometres (km) northwest from Grise Fiord and approximately 528 kilometres (km) northeast from Resolute Bay. The Proponent intends to establish a baseline understanding of High Arctic microhabitat associations of terrestrial arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island across both spatial and temporal gradients. The program is proposed to take place from July to September 2018 and again in 2019, with the goal of becoming a long-term annual monitoring program.

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

- Use of a Twin Otter for travel between Resolute Bay and the McGill Arctic Research Station (MARS);
- Accommodation and use of facilities for five (5) personnel at the MARS¹, a seasonally occupied, permanent research camp located on central Axel Heiberg Island;
- Use of hyperspectral camera, mounted on an aerial drone, for imaging of tundra terrain, and cataloguing and mapping microhabitats within the study area;
- Collection of soil samples;
- Collection of terrestrial arthropods with the use of six (6) pitfall traps within each microhabitat;
- Use of 4.5 Litres of chemicals to preserve arthropod specimens; and
- Access to local research sites on foot; and
- Collection of wastes during field studies with appropriate disposal at the MARS Facility.

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project 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 Name: Biodiversity and Microhabitat Associations of Terrestrial Arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, in the High Arctic
- NIRB File No.: 18YN013
- Application No.: 125286

¹ The McGill Arctic Research Station (MARS) was established in 1960 and has been used as university-operated research station in the high Arctic for different research projects.

The documents received include:

- *NPC Screening Referral and Conformity Determination*
- *NPC Application and Conformity Questionnaire*
- *NIRB's Online Application Form*
- *Non-technical Project Proposal summary in English and Inuktitut*
- *Map showing location of McGill Arctic Research Station (MARS)*
- *McGill Arctic Research Station Spill Contingency Plan*
- *Future Consultation Plans*
- *Environmental Impacts Summary Report*
- *Preliminary Flight Logistics*

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 McGill University's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **April 30, 2018**.

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; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing 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 Name: Biodiversity and Microhabitat Associations of Terrestrial Arthropods on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, in the High Arctic
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