



**NIRB File No.: 19YN040**

*Associated with NIRB File No.: 18YN036*

NPC File No.: 149058

*Associated with NPC File No.: 148869*

September 3, 2019

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

*Sent via email: [ryan.harris@canada.ca](mailto:ryan.harris@canada.ca)*

**Re: Notice of Screening for Parks Canada’s “RV David Thompson Eastern Arctic Operations 2019” Project Proposal**

Dear Ryan Harris:

On July 29, 2019 the NIRB received a referral to screen Parks Canada’s (PC) “RV David Thompson Eastern Arctic Operations 2019” 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 s. 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 **19YN040**.

#### INFORMATION REQUEST

On July 29, 2019 the NIRB requested that the Proponent complete the online application form through the NIRB’s public registry system and ensure, pursuant to s. 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, that sufficient information is provided to determine the scope of the project activities being proposed and commence screening.

On August 19, 2019 the NIRB received information from the Proponent, and 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 August 21, 2019 requested that the Proponent provide the Board with the additional information in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal. On August 22, 2019 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

**Project Scope:**

The proposed “RV David Thompson Eastern Arctic Operations 2019” project is located within the the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) and Kitikmeot regions and includes a marine vessel transiting through the Northwest Passage conducting research with stops in Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung. The Proponent intends to conduct non-intrusive scientific and archaeological marine survey operations along a selected route starting at Bellot Strait and transiting through Prince Regent Inlet and Lancaster Sound terminating at Pond Inlet with additional studies being conducted in Cumberland Sound. The program is proposed to take place from September 2019 to October 2022.

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

- Usage of research vessel, the RV *David Thompson* and diving platform, for research, transportation, accommodations and as a marine research platform for 10 personnel:
  - Storage and use of fuel (propane, diesel, gasoline) for vessel operation. Ship to ship refueling from Canadian Coast Guard ships;
  - Use of onboard reverse osmosis to supply domestic water needs;
  - Generation of combustible and non-combustible waste, to be either disposed of at Pond Inlet or stored on board to be disposed of at an approved facility;
  - Generation of grey water and sewage to be processed on board, disposal as per Canadian legislation;
- Use of a rigid hull inflatable boat and a zodiac fitted with outboard engines to support research activities;
- Conduct non-intrusive marine-based research activities along the Northwest Passage in or near:
  - Bellot Strait;
  - Prince Regent Inlet;
  - Lancaster Sound;
  - East coast of Baffin Island; and
  - Cumberland Sound (in the area of Kekerten Island and Black Lead Island).
- Marine research activities to include:
  - Use of multi-beam echosounder to survey along the route to collect bathymetric and seafloor topographic data (for seabed classification and habitat mapping purposes);
  - Use of a remote operated vehicle (ROV) to collect ecological features of interest,
  - Use of an unmanned autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) at select locations to collect information on ecological areas of interest
  - Use of vessel towed side scan sonar at selective locations to collect information on ecological areas of interest; and
  - Collection of water samples at surface and select depths for analysis at laboratory.
- Conduct archaeological investigations along the route:
  - Use of vessel towed sonar, ROV, and AUV to gain more specific (photo/video/laser scan) data on identified archaeological features;
  - Diving activities to observe artefacts;

- Continue to conduct scientific and archaeological research on the remains of a wooden sailing ship believed to be the wreckage of a British whaler in Maud Bight (previously screened under NIRB File No. 18YN036).
- Host community consultations in Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung to showcase select artefacts from the wrecks of the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror and to update communities on the progress of the work at those locations.

#### REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125481](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125481).

The documents received include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination*
- *NPC Application and Questionnaire*
- *NIRB's Online Application including:*
  - *a non-technical Project Proposal summary in English, Inuktitut, and French; and*
  - *map showing route through Northwest Passage*

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 PC project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **September 13, 2019**.

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.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at [info@nirb.ca](mailto: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/project/125481](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125481).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned by email at [kgillard@nirb.ca](mailto:kgillard@nirb.ca) or (867) 983-4619; or Francis Emingak via email at [femingak@nirb.ca](mailto:femingak@nirb.ca) or (867) 983-4616.

Sincerely,



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

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuktitut)  
Comment Forms (English, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Stephen Williamson Bathory, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Alexander Stubbing, Government of Nunavut – Culture and Heritage  
Sylvie LeBlanc, Government of Nunavut – Culture and Heritage  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Service  
Jane Chisholm, Parks Canada

**Appendix A**  
*Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions*

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

**General**

1. Parks Canada (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 149058) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, August 22, 2019; conformation of temporal scale, August 26, 2019).
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

**Wildlife - General**

4. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
5. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
6. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that all project personnel are made aware of the measures to protect wildlife and are provided with training and/or advice on how to implement these measures.

**Migratory Birds Disturbance**

8. The Proponent shall minimize activities during periods when birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance such as migration, nesting and moulting.
9. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl by three (3) kilometres.

**Vessel Based Activities**

10. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including waste water) or sediment into any marine waters, and shall manage wastes on board the vessel prior to final disposal at approved port facilities.
11. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel are properly trained in fuel and hazardous waste handling procedures, as well as spill response procedures. All spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of any amount must be reported immediately to the 24 hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.
12. The Proponent shall ensure that all staff are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat protection. This should include briefings on wildlife sensitivities and potential hazards, proper wildlife viewing techniques, and safety practices.

13. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals. Strategic positioning of vessels ahead of the path being traveled by mobile whales and waiting for the whales to pass is also prohibited.
14. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a Polar Bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with Polar Bears should be avoided if possible.
15. The Proponent shall ensure that all staff are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological sites that are encountered.
16. The Proponent is strongly advised to provide sufficient advance notice communities where a landing is planned as part of project activities.

**Other**

17. The Proponent should consult with local residents regarding their activities in the area and solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information that can inform project activities.
18. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
19. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.