



NIRB File No.: 20YN002
NPC File No.: 149257

February 11, 2020

Dr. Jules Blais
University of Ottawa, Department of Biology
30 Marie-Curie Private
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5

Sent via email: jules.blais@uottawa.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for University of Ottawa’s “Long Term changes in bird populations near Cambridge Bay based on lake sediment records” project proposal

Dear Dr. Jules Blais:

On January 20, 2020 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen the University of Ottawa’s (U of O) “Long Term Changes in bird populations near Cambridge Bay based on lake sediment records” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable 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 **20YN002** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On January 20, 2020 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 January 27, 2020 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed “Long Term Changes in bird populations near Cambridge Bay based on lake sediment records” project is located within the Kitikmeot region, up to 300 kilometres (km) south-east from Cambridge Bay. The Proponent intends to conduct research near migratory bird colonies to determine the stability of the bird populations and the effects of past climate change. The program is proposed to take place from June 2020 to July 2022.

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

- Travel by all-terrain vehicle to sites near Cambridge Bay;
- Travel by Twin Otter or helicopter to sites located further afield from Cambridge Bay;
- Collection of lake sediment samples using a sediment corer;
- Use of accommodations and facilities at existing field research station at Karrak Lake for;
- Use of facilities and accommodations at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station as needed.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

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. However, the NIRB notes that this project proposal will be using existing facilities at Karrak Lake research station and any activities associated with the research station would be required to abide by existing authorizations.

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/125503.

The documents received include:

- *Nunavut Planning Commission Screening Referral Letter;*
- *NIRB Project Application; Environment and Climate Change Canada Letter of Support;*
- *Ahiakmi Munariqatigiktut Katimayit Letter of Support; and*
- *Statement of Community Involvement.*

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 U of O’s project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **February 21, 2020**.

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, 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/125503.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact Cory Barker at (867) 983-4607 or cbarker@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Cory Barker, M.Sc.
Technical Advisor II
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

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

cc: Distribution List
Geoff Clark, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Service
Amy Robinson, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment

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. Jules Blais (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.: 149257), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, January 27, 2020).
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

Waste Disposal/Incineration

4. The Proponent shall keep all garbage and debris in bags placed in a covered metal container or equivalent until disposed of at an approved facility. All such wastes shall be kept inaccessible to wildlife at all times.

Wildlife - General

5. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
6. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
7. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
8. 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 and Raptors Disturbance

9. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone¹ appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
10. The Proponent shall minimize activities during periods when birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance such as migration, nesting and moulting.
11. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl by three (3) kilometres.
12. The Proponent shall ensure its aircraft avoid excessive hovering or circling over areas where bird presence is likely.

¹ Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb.

Aircraft Flight Restrictions

13. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife, and avoid flying directly over animals.
14. The Proponent shall restrict aircraft/helicopter activity related to the project to a minimum flight altitude of 610 metres above ground level unless except during landing, take-off or if there is a specific requirement for low-level flying, which does not disturb wildlife or migratory birds.
15. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft maintain a vertical distance of 1000 metres and a horizontal distance of 1500 metres from any observed groups (colonies) of migratory birds. Aircraft should avoid critical and sensitive wildlife areas at all times by choosing alternate flight corridors.
16. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft/helicopter do not, unless for emergency, touch-down in areas where wildlife are present.
17. The Proponent shall advise all pilots of relevant flight restrictions and enforce their application over the project area, including flight paths to/from the project area.

Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance

18. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration.
19. The Proponent shall cease activities that may interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskox, until the caribou or muskox have passed or left the area.
20. The Proponent shall not block or cause any diversion to caribou migration, and shall cease activities likely to interfere with migration such as movement of equipment or personnel until such time as the caribou have passed.

Restoration of Disturbed Areas

21. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment upon abandonment.
22. The Proponent shall complete all clean-up and restoration of the lands used prior to the end of each field season and/or upon abandonment of site.

Other

23. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.
24. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
25. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.