



		<p>One of the primary goals of the Program is to determine contaminant levels in Canadian Arctic caribou to determine if these populations remain healthy in terms of contaminant loads. Previously two caribou herds were monitored on an annual basis (Porcupine and Qamanirjuaq) and a third herd from North Baffin Island is now being proposed for the 2020-2021 funding period. The Program aims to collect tissue samples from a total of 20 individual caribou from each herd. Other herds may be considered in future years.</p> <p>The success of the inclusion of caribou contaminant data from the North Baffin herd relies on the participation of Pond Inlet hunters through the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization (MHTO) and a collaboration with the GN. Overall, the collaborative approach of this Program will facilitate the collection and tracking of caribou contaminant data at a regional level.</p> <p>Funding decisions are typically made by the NCP Management Committee in March on an annual basis. As of June 2020, no formal funding decisions have been made, in part due to delays associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the GN has cancelled and/or postponed all of its research initiatives because of COVID-19 until travel bans and physical distancing measures to avoid community transmission are lifted. It is thus presumed that the GN will not be able to collaborate on any research initiatives until such measures are lifted.</p> <p>As the co-leads wait for a positive funding decision, conversations continue to occur between Baffinland, and co-leads Gamberg Consulting and NWRC (the latest meeting occurring on May 27, 2020), and it is the intent of Gamberg Consulting and Baffinland to actively continue to seek the participation of the MHTO in the Program once funding is formally approved. Baffinland notes that</p>
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		<p>the application submitted in January 2020 included an in-person consultation meeting with the MHTO and led by Program co-lead Gamberg Consulting, during spring 2020 to gather input on the Program, pending a positive funding decision. Until COVID-19-related restrictions are lifted, an in-person meeting with Gamberg Consulting will not be feasible. Alternative plans are being explored should funding be approved.</p> <p>Regardless of the funding decision, Baffinland remains committed to contributing to collaborative regional initiatives aimed at collecting caribou samples from Pond Inlet hunters through the MHTO.</p> <p>Should physical distancing and travel restrictions not be lifted before the end of 2020, and that the GN is unable to resume its research initiatives, Baffinland will defer the pursuit of this initiative until 2021.</p>
General	<p>As per 2018-2019 Board Recommendation #6 the NIRB requested development and implementation of a Groundwater Monitoring and Baffinland committed providing information in the 2019 Annual report and What are the details of the planned expansion of the 2020 groundwater monitoring outlined in the 2019 Annual Report?</p>	<p>As indicated in the response in Appendix E of the 2019 Annual Report to the NIRB, Baffinland is in agreement that an expansion of the current groundwater monitoring program may be needed to gain a better understanding of natural groundwater chemistry at the Project Site.</p> <p>Details on the 2019 Groundwater Monitoring Program are provided in Section 4.6.5 (PC Condition 23) of the 2019 Annual Report, and Appendix G.5. Based on lessons learned to date regarding groundwater monitoring at the Site, Baffinland has committed to retaining expert support to evaluate the effectiveness of the current groundwater monitoring program and provide recommendations for expansion of the program and refine monitoring methodologies, where warranted. Consultants retained by Baffinland will complete a desktop review of available groundwater monitoring data, as well as available data regarding lithology and hydrogeology in the</p>

