



**Report Title:** The Nunavut Impact Review Board's 2020 Site Update Report for Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's *Meliadine Gold Mine Project* (NIRB File No. 11MN034)

**Project:** Meliadine Gold Mine Project  
**Project Location:** Kivalliq Region, Nunavut  
**Land Tenure:** Inuit Owned Land

**Project Owner:** Agnico Eagle Mines Limited  
Meliadine Mine Site  
Rankin Inlet, NU  
X0C 0G0

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**Cover Photograph:** 1) All Weather Access Road  
2) Saline Discharge Pipe  
3) Dust Monitoring Station  
4) Wildlife Crossing  
5) Hazardous Waste Storage

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) was established through Articles 10 and 12 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and is responsible for post environmental assessment monitoring of a Project in accordance with Part 7 of Article 12 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 135(4) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14 (*NuPPAA*).

## 1.1 Objective & Purpose of a Public Information Session

Pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement*, the *NuPPAA*, and the Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate 006<sup>1</sup>, the NIRB monitoring responsibilities include providing periodic updates regarding its Monitoring Program for the communities most affected by Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's (Agnico Eagle) Meliadine Gold Mine Project (the Project). These meetings are also to further ensure ongoing awareness of Project-specific terms and conditions and encourage effective participation throughout the Board's monitoring process. Public information sessions, including afternoon open houses and evening sessions, were held in Rankin Inlet on August 24 and 25, 2020. A summary of the comments and concerns received from community members during the public information sessions is provided within and form a part of the NIRB's monitoring program.

## 1.2 Objectives & Purpose of Site Visits

In accordance with the Terms and Conditions as set out in the amended Meliadine Project Certificate<sup>1</sup> in accordance with Section 12.7.2 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and s. 135 (3) of the *NuPPAA* the NIRB is responsible for the establishment of a monitoring program for the Project, which includes conducting periodic site visits. The objective of the NIRB's site visits are to determine whether, and to what extent, the land or resource use in question is being carried out within the predetermined terms and conditions of the NIRB's Project Certificates issued.

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health restrictions, the NIRB was unable to conduct a site visit in 2020 and therefore was unable to visually inspect activities occurring related to the Projects and assess compliance to the requirements of the Project Certificates. This year, to ensure parties are kept up to date at site, the NIRB has developed a Site Update Report based on discussions, updates, and photos provided courtesy of Agnico Eagle.

# 2 MELIADINE GOLD MINE SITE VISIT

## 2.1 Meliadine Gold Mine Project Overview

The Meliadine Gold project involves the construction and operation of a gold mine located in the Kivalliq Region, approximately 25 kilometres (km) north of Rankin Inlet on Inuit-owned lands. There are five (5) separate deposits that the Proponent plans to develop in a phased approach. Phase 1 is focused on the Tiriganiaq deposit, which will include two (2) open-pits and one (1) underground mine. Phase 2 will include development of four (4) other deposits along with a spur

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<sup>1</sup> Public Registry No.: 323212

road to allow access for development of the Discovery deposit in 2024 and twinning of the All-Weather Access Road (AWAR).

The mine site is comprised of a camp, associated mining infrastructure and the Tiriganiaq underground mine which move into operations in 2019. Additional Project infrastructure is located at the Itivia Harbour in the Hamlet of Rankin Inlet and consist of barge unloading facilities, a laydown storage and marshalling area, a 37.5 million litre (ML) fuel tank farm and the Saline Water Discharge tank. The Itivia Harbour area is connected to the mine site with a private bypass road which allows mine-related traffic from Itivia to bypass the community before connecting to the AWAR. The approximately 24 kilometre (km) long AWAR connecting the bypass road to the mine site is restricted to all-terrain-vehicle access only by the public but will be opened to all public traffic for Phase 2 of the project which includes expansion of the AWAR to two-lane with appropriate turn offs.

In 2019 after an amendment process, the NIRB approved the addition of saline discharge of a portion of the saline effluent from the Tiriganiaq Underground Mine to Melvin Bay. In the open water season of 2019, Agnico Eagle began discharging saline effluent into Melvin Bay. Trucks transport saline effluent from the mine site to the Saline Water Discharge tank located at the Itivia Fuel Storage Facility where the saline effluent is pumped through a pipeline to an engineered diffuser located in Melvin Bay at a rate of 800 m<sup>3</sup>/day. The saline effluent transport and discharge into Melvin Bay only happen during the open water season and Agnico Eagle stores groundwater on site for the additional months.

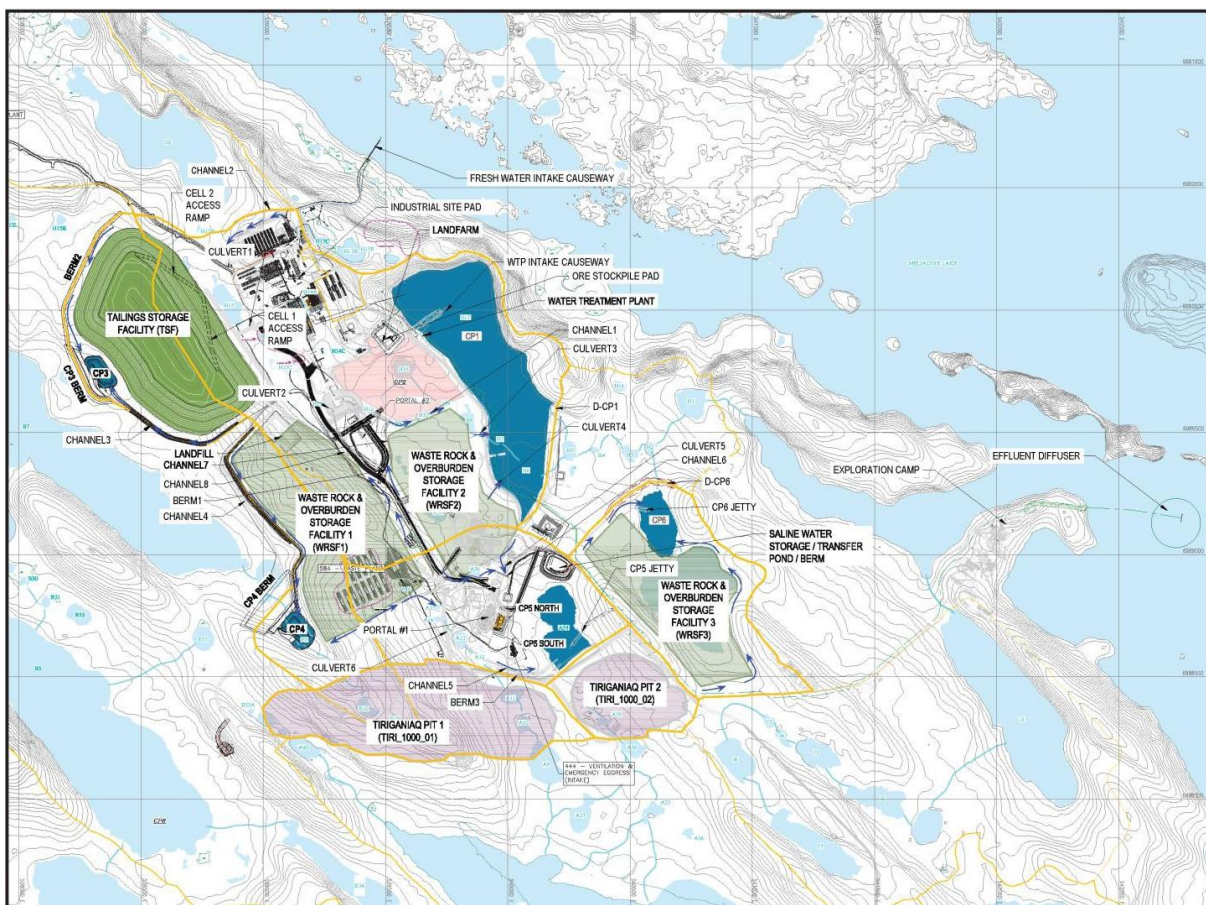
Due to higher than predicted saline effluent volumes inflowing into the underground mine, in 2020 Agnico Eagle requested to increase the volume of traffic transporting saline effluent and double the volume per day of effluent being discharged to Melvin Bay to 1,600 m<sup>3</sup>/day for the 2020 open water season. Agnico Eagle provided updated monitoring plans to mitigate and/or monitor any adverse impacts.

See Photo 1 for an overview photo of the Meliadine Mine Site. [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#) provide a layout of the Meliadine Mine Site, and the marshalling facility at Rankin Inlet.

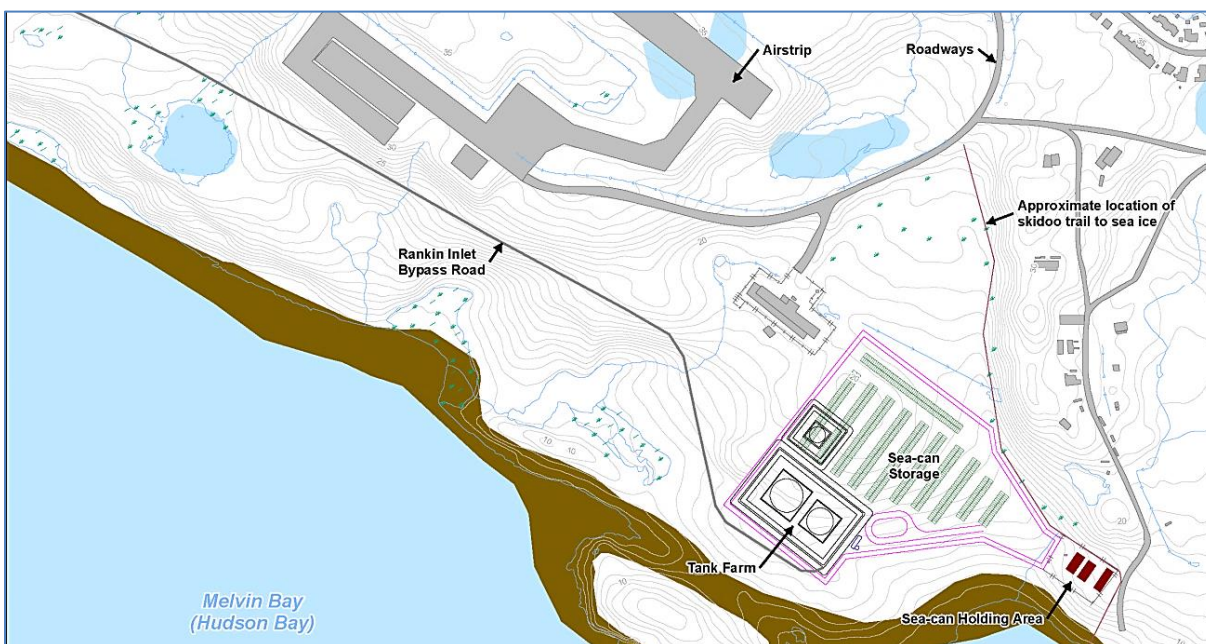


**Photo 1: Overview of Meliadine Mine Site**





**Figure 1: Meliadine Mine Site (from Agnico Eagle's 2018 Annual Report; Figure 1)**



**Figure 2. Overview of the Itivia site, bypass road, and community snowmobile trail.**  
**Source: Agnico Eagle's Roads Management Plan for Meliadine (March 2017).**



## 2.2 General Observations for Meliadine Mine Site

As previously stated, the NIRB was unable to conduct a site visit in 2020 due to COVID-19 Public Health restrictions; however, NIRB staff were able to observe a few project components from an appropriate distance while in Rankin Inlet for the community information sessions, this included making observations at Itivia Harbour and the All Weather Access Road from Rankin Inlet to the first gate house.

The following sections briefly describe the major components and activities of the Meliadine Gold Mine Project in 2020 provided by the Proponent. Where applicable, the Monitoring Officers have noted compliance with specific terms and conditions of the Project Certificate.

### 2.2.1 Itivia Harbour

The following observations were made at the Itivia harbour:

- a) The NIRB staff observed that the Itivia site was busy with equipment and seacans being moved around (Photo 2).

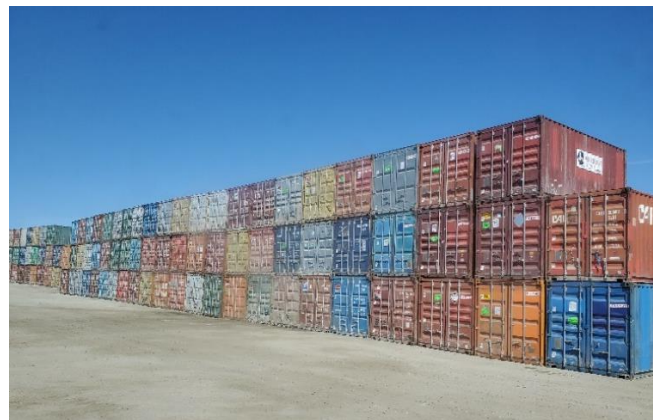


**Photo 2: Itivia Harbour**

- b) Itivia is shared between the community and Meliadine gold mine with laydown area for the mine separate from the community laydown area (Photo 3 and Photo 4).



**Photo 3: Community Barge Area**



**Photo 4: Meliadine Gold Mine Laydown Area**



- c) Agnico Eagle informed NIRB that the secondary containment is functioning appropriately at the Itivia fuel farm (Photo 5).
- d) Three (3) seacans of spill response equipment are located on site (Photo 6).



**Photo 5: Itivia Fuel Tank Farm**



**Photo 6: Spill Response Equipment**

## 2.2.2 Bypass Road

The following observations were made through Agnico Eagle's photos along the Bypass road:

- a) The Bypass road had clear signage in both English and Inuktitut (Photo 7).
- b) There is a marked snowmobile crossing to allow access to Itivia Bay (Photo 8).
- c) The NIRB staff observed saline water trucks along the Bypass Road (Photo 9).



**Photo 7: Bypass Road**



**Photo 8: Bypass Road Snowmobile Crossing**



**Photo 9: Saline Water Truck**

### 2.2.3 All-Weather Access Road (AWAR)

The following observations were made along the AWAR either by staff or through Agnico Eagle's photos:

- a) The AWAR is a 25 km long road which connects the main mine site with the bypass road (Photo 10).
- a) The gatehouse near the community of Rankin Inlet maintains a log of mine related traffic and passing all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). A sign has been put up on the gatehouse notifying community members that the mine site is currently in isolation due to Public Health restrictions. Agnico Eagle stated that a detached operations protocol is in place which requires any worker traveling south of the gatehouse to be on a list of approved workers and instructs workers to avoid interaction with community members (Photo 11, Photo 12).
- b) Signage marks bridge crossings and states speed limits over the bridge (Photo 13, Photo 14).
- c) Emergency spill response seacans are located at all bridge crossings (Photo 15).
- d) Agnico Eagle noted that quarry and esker reclamation along the road was not done in 2020 as it was completed in 2019 (Photo 16).
- e) The Proponent indicated that there are no wildlife crossings on the AWAR, as the embankment gradient is gradual enough not to impede crossing.



**Photo 10: AWAR**





**Photo 11: Gatehouse**



**Photo 12: Isolation Sign for COVID-19**



**Photo 13: Bridge Crossing**



**Photo 14: Signage Marking Bridge and Speed Limit**



**Photo 15: Emergency Spill Response Seacan**



**Photo 16: Quarry at Kilometre 27**



#### 2.2.4 Exploration Camp and Infrastructure

- a) Agnico Eagle noted that the exploration camp is still in use with a capacity of 144 persons (Photo 17).
- b) Screening (sorting out coarse-grained material) at the exploration camp landfarm took place during summer 2020 (Photo 18).
- c) The fuel tanks containing sewage sludge had a small berm built around them as secondary containment. Agnico Eagle indicated that they are evaluating shipping the empty fuel tanks off site (Photo 19).



**Photo 17: Exploration Camp**



**Photo 18: Landfarm B**



**Photo 19: Fuel Tank Farm**

### 2.2.5 Mine and camp infrastructure

- b) Waste Rock Storage Facilities have not been completed but are actively being used.
- c) Agnico Eagle noted that the temporary sorting pad at Landfarm A had not been used for soil screening in 2020; however, it was used as a temporary sorting area for hazmat material (Photo 20, Photo 21).
- d) Oil is separated from the hydrocarbon contaminated soil at the landfarm (Photo 22).
- e) The Tailings Storage Facility is dry stack tailings (Photo 23, Photo 24).



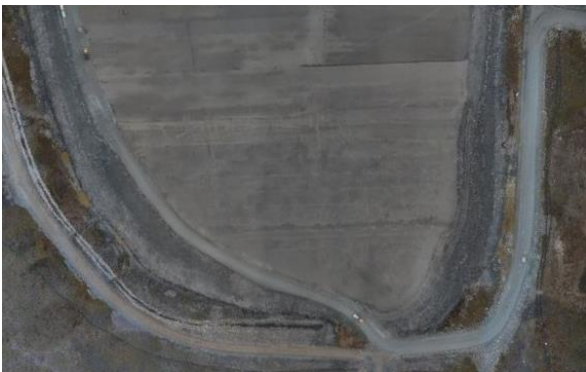
**Photo 20: Landfarm A**



**Photo 21: Landfarm and Temporary Sorting Pad**



**Photo 22: Oil Separator**



**Photo 23: Tailings Storage Facility Aerial**



**Photo 24: Tailings Storage Facility**



- f) The water management strategy includes use of containment ponds to handle contact water and treated groundwater. Dikes are surveyed monthly (Photo 25 and Photo 26).



**Photo 25: D-CP1**



**Photo 26: D-CP5**

- g) In 2019 Agnico Eagle was unable to drawdown on CP-1 due to high Total Dissolved Solid levels, therefore requiring an emergency water licence amendment in 2020 to allow discharge into Meliadine Lake. Agnico Eagle informed the NIRB that in response increased monitoring is occurring with development of a Water Quality Monitoring Optimization Plan and three (3) additional continuous monitoring probes were added for internal data collection at the Meliadine Lake diffuser (Photo 27). One (1) was lost during ice break up.



**Photo 27: Additional monitoring at Mel-13**





**Photo 28: Incinerator**

h) During the 2019 site visit<sup>2</sup> the NIRB staff were informed that Agnico Eagle had issues with the building that houses the incinerator overheating during incineration. To remediate this the incinerator doors are kept closed except during summer when a steel grating is used to keep wildlife out while the door is open to allow heat to escape (Photo 28).

i) The landfill is not fenced but Agnico Eagle noted that a gate was installed to control access (Photo 29).



**Photo 29: Landfill Access Gate**

j) Waste is sorted at landfill and signage is present to ensure proper waste sorting. Agnico Eagle notified the NIRB that labelling and inspection of waste sorting was improved in 2020 as compared to the 2019 site visit (Photo 30 and Photo 31).



**Photo 30: Waste Sorting**



**Photo 31: Improved Waste Sorting Signage**

<sup>2</sup> Public Registry ID: 327076

- k) In 2019 the NIRB staff were informed that the landfill was at capacity<sup>3</sup>. In 2020 Agnico Eagle has implemented a campaign to improve wood segregation (Photo 30). Wood and steel were removed from the landfill to improve compaction. A backlog of seven (7) seacans of food waste was also shipped off site.
- l) Agnico Eagle noted that a campaign was also introduced to improve hazmat segregation with implementation of a seacan approval system. The Proponent monitors to ensure hazmat seacan doors are kept closed and are inspected regularly (Photo 32).
- m) A cyanide storage pad was constructed (Photo 33).
- n) No animal deterrents are placed at the landfill.



**Photo 32: Hazardous Material Storage Area**



**Photo 33: Cyanide Storage Pad**

- o) In 2020, the NIRB was informed of a fire at the temporary landfill sorting area. The fire was extinguished with no injuries or damage to infrastructure. The burnt material was smothered with clean till and to avoid reignition will remain undisturbed for several months (Photo 34).



**Photo 34: Temporary Landfill Post Fire**

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<sup>3</sup> Public Registry No.: 327076





**Photo 35: Wildlife Pipeline Crossings**

p) Agnico Eagle stated that wildlife crossings have been established over waterlines at site (Photo 35).

q) Two (2) accommodation wings have been added to the Meliadine camp (Photo 36).



**Photo 36: Camp**

r) In 2019 the NIRB staff suggested reduction of single use plastic food containers to reduce waste<sup>4</sup>. In 2020, Agnico Eagle stated that although some food is still served in single use plastic, so underground miners can take lunches, a salad bar has been installed for above ground workers (Photo 37, Photo 38). Paper cups were temporarily brought back for COVID-19 Public Health related reasons.



**Photo 37: Cafeteria**



**Photo 38: Salad Bar**

<sup>4</sup> Public Registry No.: 327076



- s) Agnico Eagle indicated that new signage is in place for indoor waste segregation (Photo 39).



Photo 39: Indoor Waste Segregation

- t) Agnico Eagle has informed the NIRB that COVID-19 Public Health related updates have been implemented at site. Signage is present throughout the camp (Photo 40, Photo 41, Photo 42, and Photo 43), social distancing practices are enforced in the cafeteria (Photo 45) and a new hand washing station was installed (Photo 44), the gym has limited capacity, and high touch areas are cleaned twice daily.



Photo 40: Public Health Signage



Photo 41: Public Health Signage



Photo 42: Public Health Signage

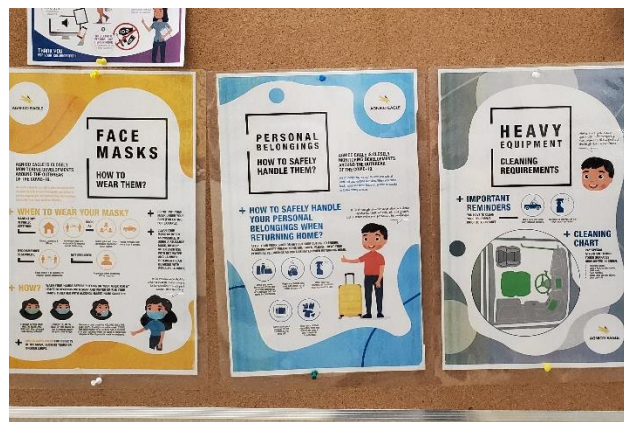


Photo 43: Public Health Signage





**Photo 44: Additional Handwash Stations**



**Photo 45: Cafeteria Social Distancing**

## 2.2.6 Site Updates Based on NIRB Project Certificate No. 006

### Condition 1: Air Quality Monitoring Plan and Condition 3: Dust Management and Monitoring Plan



**Photo 46: Dust Monitoring Station**

- a) Agnico Eagle informed the NIRB that additional dust monitoring stations were added along the AWAR (Photo 46).
- b) Partisol units, used to measure total suspended dust, have not been functioning for the majority of 2019 and 2020 and have yet to be installed.
- c) Calcium chloride was used as a dust suppressant along the AWAR and at site (Photo 47).



**Photo 47: Road After Dust Suppression**



### Condition 11: Noise Monitoring



**Photo 48: Noise Monitor**

- d) There are three (3) noise monitoring stations around the mine site and AWAR (Photo 48).

### Condition 25: Saline Water Management Plan

- e) Groundwater is stored within the saline ponds (Photo 49 and Photo 50).
- f) In 2020 increase saline water was trucked from the mine site to Itivia Harbour where it was transferred to the saline tank and discharge was doubled through the pipeline to a diffuser in Melvin Bay (Photo 51 and Photo 52).



**Photo 49: SP-2**



**Photo 50: Turbidity curtain at SP-3**





**Photo 51: Truck Unloading Station and Saline Tank**



**Photo 52: Saline Discharge Pipe**

#### **Condition 41: Reclamation and Re-vegetation**

- g) During the 2019 site visit, the NIRB staff were informed that some of the plots for the revegetation study with the University of Saskatchewan had been destroyed during the removal of soil from the quarry site. In 2020, Agnico Eagle has provided a photo update of the site which is now marked to prevent future incidents (Photo 53).



**Photo 53: Revegetation Study Plots**

## Conditions 61 & 74: Bird Deterrents



Photo 54: Snowy Owl Bird Deterrent

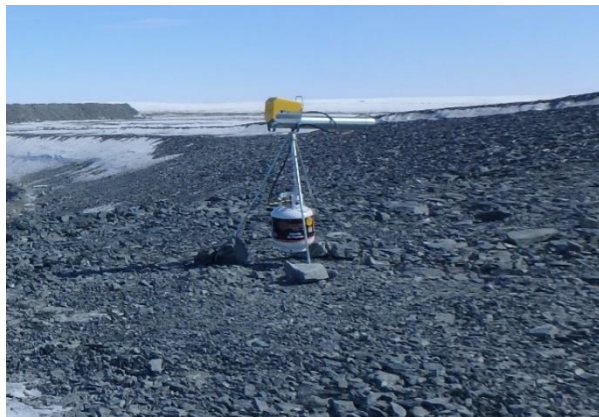


Photo 55: Bird Cannon



Photo 56: Kite Bird Deterrent

h) Bird deterrents, including snowy owl effigies for raptors, bird cannons for ravens, and bird kites are placed at the pits and landfarm. Agnico Eagle observed that the snowy owl effigies worked well to prevent raptors from nesting (Photo 54, Photo 55 and Photo 56).

## Condition 75: Predatory Attractants

- i) In its *2019 Annual Report*<sup>5</sup> Agnico Eagle stated there were 15 fox mortalities which indicate that the Meliadine mine site continues to be an attractant for predators and scavengers. As noted above, waste management on site has improved (Photo 57). Agnico Eagle stated that they have implemented site wide Sunday site clean ups to help manage debris around site. However, there continues to be no fencing or animal deterrents used at the landfill. The NIRB is aware that the contractors with Bearwise have been unable to travel to site as COVID-19 has limited the travel of personnel into Nunavut.



Photo 57: Waste Management

<sup>5</sup> Public Registry No.: 329745



### 3 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

The NIRB hosted information sessions which consisted of two (2) afternoon open houses, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and two (2) evening sessions starting at 7:00 pm, located in the Rankin Inlet Community Hall with translation into Inuktitut.

#### 3.1 Advertisements

The NIRB advertised the meeting through radio, poster, and online through Facebook in Rankin Inlet both in English and Inuktitut in the month prior to the meeting.

#### 3.2 Meeting Materials

At the public meeting, the following materials were provided by the NIRB:

Document	Public Registry No
The NIRB's PowerPoint presentation (in English and Inuktitut)	331259
Comment Forms (in English and Inuktitut)	N/A
Agnico Eagle pamphlet regarding the Meliadine Gold Mine Project (11MN034) Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment proposed amendment.	331435 331436
Agnico Eagle presentation regarding the Meliadine Gold Mine Project (11MN034) Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment proposed amendment.	331602
COVID-19 Public Health Information	N/A

Copies of the above listed consultation materials can be obtained from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/124106](http://www.nirb.ca/project/124106).

#### 3.3 Summary of the Meliadine Public Information Session

The NIRB's information sessions were open to all members of the public with a limit of 50 people per session due to Public Health restrictions. Limited individually packaged refreshments were provided to prevent contamination and all highly touched surfaces were thoroughly cleaned between sessions. All in attendance were asked to sign in and identify the community or organization they represented as well as provide their phone number for internal COVID-19 tracking purposes. The recorded attendance of all meetings was 52 people.

The NIRB gave a PowerPoint presentation that focused on the NIRB's monitoring programs and included an update on the Project, including an overview of the Meliadine Project activities and key components and events and/or issues identified through the project specific monitoring programs. The presentation also included material on the Meliadine Gold Mine Project Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment reconsideration. This section focused on the main project activities and locations as well as detailed the NIRB's process for the reconsideration concluding with a discussion as to how interested parties and community members could participate in the NIRB's processes

Written and verbal comments were accepted at the meeting as the public was encouraged to ask questions, and verbal comments were recorded by the NIRB staff on both the Meliadine Project monitoring and the reconsideration. These comments are summarized by NIRB staff below. Comments and questions helped the Board identify items that need to be addressed or considered throughout the NIRB's Meliadine Gold Mine monitoring program and reconsideration process.

**Comments directed to the NIRB:**

General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NIRB's Public Registry is not user friendly</li> </ul>

**Comments pertaining to the Meliadine Gold Mine Project:**

COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions regarding when Inuit and Nunavummiut employees will be allowed back on the mine site.</li> </ul>
All Weather Access Road
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the road is leading to easier hunting access by the community members which will put pressure on the community organizations to regulate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that increased numbers of community members are hunting due to accessibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern for community safety on the road when it is expanded for Phase 2.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that there is debris found along the AWAR.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confusion expressed on the number of trucks increased on the AWAR due to the increased saline discharge in the 2020 open water season.</li> </ul>
Air Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions on the total emissions at mine site.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns on a yellow cloud that can be seen at mine site every spring.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern expressed for amount of dust created on the AWAR.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that caribou walk through dust from AWAR and tailings dust.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions on dust make up sampling and testing.</li> </ul>
Water Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns regarding dark depositions found in the snow that melt into Meliadine Lake.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that dust suppressant is falling through the bridge to the river.</li> </ul>

**Comments Regarding the Meliadine Project reconsideration:**

General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Proposal needs to be in basic English so it is accessible for community members to read.</li> </ul>
Waterline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions regarding the waterline demonstration or experiment set up along the AWAR.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions on whether results from the above waterline experiment will be provided to the community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that caribou and muskox will not cross the waterline.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations that caribou are not crossing the town waterline which is smaller in diameter than the proposed project waterline.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns expressed for potential waterline leakage.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests that the waterline be covered.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that the water in the waterline will cause vibrations and disrupt caribou</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression that reduced traffic will lead to reduced production of greenhouse gasses.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on where the waterline connects at the mine site.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on whether the waterline will be present for the life of the Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Discharge to Melvin Bay</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on how the increased discharge will affect marine mammals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request for a fish net at the end of the diffuser</li> </ul>
<b>Socioeconomic</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on what the benefits Nunavummiut will be.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns on loss of hunting rights.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that jobs created will solely be for contractors from the South due to COVID-19 restrictions and specialty nature of the jobs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns expressed at job loss from removal of saline water trucking jobs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on whether impacts to traditional life and culture are taken into account.</li> </ul>
<b>Reconsideration Process</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request that all communities be involved in the process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request for further information for the definition of significant modification.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on how the Public Meetings will be held during COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions on how long it will take for the final decision.</li> </ul>

## 4 CONCLUSION

Overall, Agnico Eagle appears to be in compliance with the majority of the terms and conditions contained within the Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate No. 006. As noted in previous years, community members continue to express concerns about mine activity related dust. Although waste segregation continues to improve, scavengers remain attracted to the mine site.

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