



NIRB File No.: 21YN014
NPC File No.: 149481

March 18, 2021

Kethra Campbell-Heaton
University of Ottawa
60 University Private
Ottawa, ON
K1N 8Z4

Sent via email: kcamp109@uottawa.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for University of Ottawa’s “Instability of Permafrost Landscapes from Climate Change and the Hydrological Implications to High Arctic Watersheds” Project Proposal

Dear Kethra Campbell-Heaton:

On February 26, 2021 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen University of Ottawa’s (U of O) “Instability of Permafrost Landscapes from Climate Change and the Hydrological Implications to High Arctic Watersheds” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (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 **21YN014** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On February 26, 2021 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 March 8, 2021 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125593.

Project:	Instability of Permafrost Landscapes from Climate Change and the Hydrological Implications to High Arctic Watersheds				
Region:	Qikiqtani (North Baffin)				
Location:	Eureka High Arctic Weather Station				
Closest Community:	Grise Fiord	Distance (approximate)	400 kilometres (km)	Direction	North
Summary of Project Description:	The Proponent intends to understand the impact thawing permafrost has on two watersheds in the high Arctic.				
Project Proposed Timeline:	May 2021 to August 2024				

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

- Using multiple portable instruments to sample atmospheric, soil and water quality within the study area;
- Accommodations at the PEARL research station near the Eureka Weather Station.

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.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125593 and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination*
- *Commission Application and Questionnaire*
- *NIRB Online Application*
- *Project Description*
- *Non-Tech Summary in Inuktitut*

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 **March 29, 2021**.

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/125593.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4622 or motokiak@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Mia Otokiak
Junior Technical Advisor
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
Richard Dwyer, Nunavut Water Board
Stephen Williamson-Bathory, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute

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. University of Ottawa (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 149481) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, March 8, 2021). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

Waste Management

6. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.

Wildlife – General

7. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
8. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
9. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
10. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

11. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
12. 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.
13. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
14. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.

Road and Ground Disturbance

15. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles unless the ground surface is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles without rutting or gouging. Overland travel of equipment or vehicles must be suspended if rutting occurs.

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

16. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.
17. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
18. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.

Other

19. 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.
20. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
21. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.

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.