

Adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvesting activities

The proposed project is planned to occur for eight weeks, starting May 1, 2021. This timing overlaps with caribou, geese, and waterfowl spring migrations through the area. It also overlaps with Inuit land activities in the spring including fishing, caribou hunting, geese hunting, and camping. The areas around and between White Hills Lake and the Thelon River are extremely important to Qamani'tuarmitut for these activities. The area around Quggiilik further north is also an important hunting and fishing area. There is already a lot of concern about the high usage of helicopters in and around the proposed area. More helicopter activity could further impact animals' migrations, movements, and health.

The BLHTO is concerned about the cumulative impacts of the already existing Meadowbank Mine, Whale Tail Pit Extension Project, All-Weather Access Road (AWAR), Whale Tail Extension Road, ongoing exploration activity, and the potential for increased exploration activity and mining developments in the future. The Government of Nunavut has released a report with findings that the Meadowbank AWAR and Whale Tail Extension Road are impacting caribou migrations, with a Zone of Influence that has expanded since the Whale Tail Extension Road was built. The proposed project will increase the cumulative impacts in the area around the existing mines and roads and could lead to even greater cumulative impacts in the future.

Recommendations on mitigation measures

The BLHTO does not support the current project proposal and does not offer any recommendations on mitigation measures.

Other matters of importance related to the proposed project

The prospecting claims are in an area that is a major travel route between Baker Lake and Gjoa Haven. The BLHTO is concerned that the project could impact these routes.

Most of the consultation that has occurred thus far has been with the Baker Lake Hamlet. The BLHTO expects companies to consult with the HTO, especially regarding issues that concern wildlife and Inuit harvesting activities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the BLHTO's concerns.

Sincerely,



Richard Aksawnee
Chairperson
Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization

¹ Boulanger, J., R. Kite, M. Campbell, J. Shaw, and D.S. Lee. 2020. Kivalliq Caribou Monitoring Program – Analysis of Caribou Movements Relative to Meadowbank Mine and Roads During Spring Migration. <https://www.nwmb.com/en/funding/nunavut-wildlife-research-trust/reports/2019-1/2-19-03-kivalliq-caribou-monitoring/8464-2-19-03-campbell-final-report-kivalliq-caribou-monitoring-nwmb/file>