



## COMMENT FORM FOR NIRB SCREENINGS

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) has a mandate to protect the integrity of the ecosystem for the existing and future residents of Nunavut. To assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the project proposal, NIRB would like to hear your concerns, comments and suggestions about the following project proposal application:

<b>Project Proposal Title:</b> <u>Turquetil-Esker Drilling Program</u>	
<b>Proponent:</b> <u>MPH Consulting Limited</u>	
<b>Location:</b> <u>Kivalliq Region</u>	
<b>Comments Due By:</b> <u>May 18, 2021</u>	<b>NIRB #:</b> <u>21EN009</u>

**Indicate your concerns about the project proposal below:**

<input type="checkbox"/> no concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> traditional uses of land
<input type="checkbox"/> water quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Inuit harvesting activities
<input type="checkbox"/> terrain	<input type="checkbox"/> community involvement and consultation
<input type="checkbox"/> air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> local development in the area
<input type="checkbox"/> wildlife and their habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> tourism in the area
<input type="checkbox"/> marine mammals and their habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> human health issues
<input type="checkbox"/> birds and their habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fish and their habitat	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heritage resources in area	

**Please describe the concerns indicated above:**

MPH Consulting Ltd. is proposing to conduct exploration activities in two areas west of Arviat: (1) the Esker Operational Area is located about 187 northwest of Arviat on the north shore of South Henik Lake; (2) the Turquetil Operational Area is located about 140km northwest of Arviat at the northwest end of Turquetil Lake. Proposed land use activities include the use of a camp site (Henik Lake), airstrip, helipads, fuel caches, laydown areas. Drilling activities will be carried out in both Esker and Turquetil Operational Areas.

A search of the Nunavut Archaeological Site Database indicates that hundreds of archaeological sites are recorded in the vicinity of the camp and proposed exploration areas, with a concentration of sites - including burial sites- near the Esker Exploration area, specifically on both shores of North and South Henik lakes. This however does not preclude the presence of unidentified sites or cultural features as to this day no systematic archaeological reconnaissance has been conducted in this area.

The project area may potentially yield significant archaeological/cultural resources as it is geographically located in an interconnecting system of rivers and lakes draining into Hudson Bay. The project is also located in prime caribou hunting ground that has been traditionally used (Dene and Inuit) and continue to be used extensively by Inuit of the Kivalliq. The narrows between North and South and Henik lakes is a well-known crossing along the migratory route of the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd. The large number of archaeological sites recorded in this general area is attesting to the intensity of use over several millenia.

In addition, the area is testimony of the 1957 Ennadai- Henik relocation during which Ahiarmiut experienced hardship and starvation. The places (sites) related to that event are Memory Places that hold



special significance to the survivors and future generations. Thus, the Department of Culture and Heritage considers that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there could be sites of archaeological/cultural significance on the lands affected by the current project (NA Article 33.5.12; 33.5.13).

**Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for this application?**

On the basis that no systematic archaeological surveys have been conducted in the proposed exploration areas and associated components (camp, airstrip) and that the presence and/or the potential for the presence of archaeological/heritage resources is extremely high, the Department of Culture and Heritage recommends that an archaeological program be initiated prior to any land disturbance activities in order to record archaeological/heritage sites and implement appropriate mitigation measures.

CH recommendations are the following:

1. A qualified archaeologist must apply for a Class 2 permit to conduct an archaeological field assessment of any areas subject to ground disturbance activities (camp and associated components, airstrip).
2. Assessment of drilling locations (50 m radius) and water hose to the closest water source intake; assessment of any sampling, prospecting, and all other locations where land disturbance activities are planned to occur.
3. No activities be conducted in the vicinity (50 m buffer zone) of any archaeological/historical sites. If archaeological sites or features are encountered, activities should immediately be interrupted and moved away from this location. Each site encountered needs to be recorded and reported to the Government of Nunavut Territorial Archaeology Office.

All archaeological and palaeontological sites in Nunavut are protected under the Nunavut Act. The Proponent must understand that it is their responsibility to ensure that no heritage resource sites are disturbed in the course of their activities. No person shall alter, or otherwise disturb an archaeological site, or remove any artifact from an archaeological site without the proper authorizations. Moreover, the building of inuksuit is not recommended.

**Do you support the project proposal? Yes ☒ No ☐ Any additional comments?**

Pending archaeological assessment.

**Name of person commenting:** Sylvie LeBlanc **of** Culture and Heritage  
**Position:** Territorial Archaeologist **Organization:** Government of Nunavut  
**Signature:** Sylvie LeBlanc **Date:** May 14, 2021