



NIRB Application for Screening #125885

Evaluation of the Deep Geothermal Potential of Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada

Application Type: New

Project Type: Scientific Research

Application Date: 2/14/2024 1:51:38 PM

Period of operation: from 0001-01-01 to 0001-01-01

Proposed Authorization: from 0001-01-01 to 0001-01-01

Project Proponent: Ysaline Bacon
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DETAILS

Non-technical project proposal description

English: Non-technical Summary

1.1 Project Title: Evaluation of the Deep Geothermal Potential of Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada

1.2 Lead Researchers and Affiliation: Pr. Jasmin Raymond, Dr. Mafalda Miranda, Ysaline Bacon

1.3 Research Questions: We aim to assess the deep geothermal potential of Baker Lake at the request of the Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC). Our goal is to complement Respec's geothermal exploration project for QEC by addressing the following questions: Can the geothermal resources beneath Baker Lake meet the community's heating and electricity needs? Are the deep geothermal resources in Baker Lake obtainable at a competitive cost? To answer these questions, we plan to conduct fieldwork, laboratory analyses, numerical modelling, and life-cycle cost analysis. These cost-effective tools will provide a preliminary assessment of Baker Lake's deep geothermal potential.

1.4 Research Objectives: This project aims to assess Baker Lake's geothermal potential by identifying key parameters that need more information to mitigate future risks. Objectives include studying local geology, characterizing thermophysical properties of rocks, evaluating geothermal potential, developing numerical models, and analysing life-cycle costs. The results could support geothermal development in the north and contribute to a thermo-hydro-mechanical properties database. The goal is to promote sustainable energy independence while respecting the environmental and social values of the Baker Lake community.

1.5 Where, When, and Duration of Field Research: Field research is scheduled for the summer of 2024 (between June 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024) and will be conducted within a limited area (less than 10 km) surrounding the Baker Lake community. The fieldwork is expected to span over three weeks.

1.6 Methods for Fieldwork: Research methods include fracture studies, geological mapping, and surface rock sample collection. Fracture data will be gathered through linear scanline and rectangular window sampling methods. Linear scanline involves measuring attributes of fractures intersecting a tape laid on an outcrop. Rectangular window sampling uses a rectangle placed on an outcrop to measure selected fracture attributes within the area. Surface rock samples will be collected using a geological hammer.

1.7 Environmental, Wildlife, and Societal Impacts: With no drilling planned, we expect minimal environmental and societal impacts from our research. Our field activities will be conducted quietly and with utmost respect for the environment. Despite the research's proximity to the community, no impacts on wildlife are expected. Regarding social impact, Baker Lake has already experienced Respec's work in December 2022, which involved engaging in dialogue with residents. Based on this, we anticipate a positive community response. Additionally, we'll conduct follow-up activities with the Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC). This collaboration is crucial, as QEC could potentially use our findings, in partnership with the community, to advance geothermal resource development if desired by the community. This proactive approach underscores our commitment to transparent communication, community engagement, and potential collaboration for the benefit of Baker Lake and its residents.

1.8 Data Storage and Management: The results obtained from the 2024 fieldwork will remain within our institution until their public release in spring 2025, in the English language.

1.9 Involvement of Nunavut Residents: The Baker Lake community will be actively engaged in the research by sharing their expectations and limits. Their preferences for heating and energy sources will contribute to building a realistic model for assessing the potential and feasibility of installing a geothermal heating system within the community.

1.10 Communication of Research Results in Nunavut: Research findings will be shared with Baker Lake through a non-technical report. We maintain open communication with our team and invite future collaboration. This project aligns with environmentally responsible practices, meeting the community's specific needs for a sustainable energy solution while preserving local values.

French: Résumé non technique

1.1 Titre du Projet : Évaluation du Potentiel Géothermique Profond du Lac Baker, Nunavut, Canada

1.2 Chercheurs Principaux et Affiliation : Pr. Jasmin Raymond, Dr. Mafalda Miranda, Ysaline Bacon

1.3 Questions de Recherche : Notre objectif est d'évaluer le potentiel géothermique profond du Lac Baker à la demande de la Qulliq Energy Corporation (QEC). Nous visons à compléter le projet d'exploration géothermique de Respec pour la QEC en abordant les questions suivantes : Les ressources géothermiques sous le Lac Baker peuvent-elles répondre aux besoins de chauffage et d'électricité de la communauté ? Les ressources géothermiques profondes du Lac Baker sont-elles accessibles à un coût compétitif ? Pour répondre à ces questions, nous prévoyons de mener des travaux sur le terrain, des analyses en laboratoire, une modélisation numérique et une analyse des coûts du cycle de vie. Ces outils économiques fourniront une évaluation préliminaire du potentiel géothermique profond du Lac Baker.

1.4 Objectifs de Recherche : Ce projet vise à évaluer le potentiel géothermique du Lac Baker en identifiant les paramètres clés nécessitant plus d'informations pour atténuer les risques futurs.

[illegible]

Operations Phase: from 2024-06-01 to 2024-09-30

Activities

Location	Activity Type	Land Status	Site history	Site archaeological or paleontological value	Proximity to the nearest communities and any protected areas
Field Work Boundary	Researching	Municipal	N/A	N/A	The exploration activity takes place in an area surrounding the community of Qamani'tuaq

Community Involvement & Regional Benefits

Community	Name	Organization	Date Contacted
Baker Lake	Don Grant	Qulliq Energy Corporation	2022-12-01

Authorizations

Indicate the areas in which the project is located:

Authorizations

Regulatory Authority	Authorization Description	Current Status	Date Issued / Applied	Expiry Date
Nunavut Research Institute	Permit describing our research and its contributions to Nunavut.	Applied, Decision Pending		

Project transportation types

Transportation Type	Proposed Use	Length of Use
Air	air travel between Quebec and Baker Lake	
Land	Vehicle rental to travel within the designated research area outlined on the map via accessible roads.	

Project accomodation types

Community

Material Use

Equipment to be used (including drills, pumps, aircraft, vehicles, etc)

Equipment Type	Quantity	Size - Dimensions	Proposed Use
Geological Hammers	3	30 cm	For geological research, we will utilize a specialized geological hammer for surface sample collection, ensuring samples are hand-sized. This tool is designed to minimize environmental impact, allowing precise collection while preserving the delicate nature of the terrain.
vehicule	1	4200*1500*1700	Renting a small local vehicle is vital for efficient mapping in our designated area. Its compact size enables easy navigation through tight spaces. Choosing a local agency supports the community and provides insights into the terrain. This flexibility is crucial for adapting to our mapping needs, ensuring effective coverage.

Detail Fuel and Hazardous Material Use

Detail fuel material use:	Fuel Type	Number of containers	Container Capacity	Total Amount	Units	Proposed Use
Information is not available						

Water Consumption

Daily amount (m3)	Proposed water retrieval methods	Proposed water retrieval location
0	Drinking water available in the hotel (for cooking, drinking, showering)	Baker Lake

Waste

Waste Management

Project Activity	Type of Waste	Projected Amount Generated	Method of Disposal	Additional treatment procedures
Information is not available				

Environmental Impacts:

Given the absence of camps and our accommodation in a hotel, the waste production associated with our presence in Nunavut is minimal and has little impact on the natural environment. We will implement stringent practices to minimize our ecological footprint, in compliance with the regulations in place in Baker Lake, ensuring that all generated waste is properly disposed of. In the field, we employ non-invasive exploration methods such as the use of hammers and crack counting, thus avoiding the generation of unnecessary waste, and will be conducted on area free of vegetation. Furthermore, all the equipment we utilize is designed to be reusable, and it will be carefully transported back to the laboratory after our fieldwork. This approach ensures sustainable waste management, minimizing our environmental impact and preserving the integrity of local ecosystems within the framework of our geothermal exploration in Nunavut.

Additional Information

SECTION A1: Project Info

SECTION A2: Allweather Road

SECTION A3: Winter Road

SECTION B1: Project Info

SECTION B2: Exploration Activity

SECTION B3: Geosciences

SECTION B4: Drilling

SECTION B5: Stripping

SECTION B6: Underground Activity

SECTION B7: Waste Rock

SECTION B8: Stockpiles

SECTION B9: Mine Development

SECTION B10: Geology

SECTION B11: Mine

SECTION B12: Mill

SECTION C1: Pits

SECTION D1: Facility

SECTION D2: Facility Construction

SECTION D3: Facility Operation

SECTION D4: Vessel Use

SECTION E1: Offshore Survey

SECTION E2: Nearshore Survey

SECTION E3: Vessel Use

SECTION F1: Site Cleanup

SECTION G1: Well Authorization

SECTION G2: Onland Exploration

SECTION G3: Offshore Exploration

SECTION G4: Rig

SECTION H1: Vessel Use

SECTION H2: Disposal At Sea

SECTION I1: Municipal Development

Description of Existing Environment: Physical Environment

The physical conditions of the Kivalliq region, focusing especially near the Baker Lake area, are characterized by a geological environment primarily composed of Archean gneissic rocks. The topography is generally flat, and the permafrost reaches a depth of approximately 350 meters. Hydrological conditions are influenced by the presence of lakes like Baker Lake and watercourses such as the Thelon River, crucial for fishing activities. The climate is typically tundra, with long, extremely cold winters where temperatures average between -21 and -25°C, and short, cool summers with rainy conditions. The absence of trees contributes to its designation as having a polar climate. Furthermore, the region hosts several protected areas, such as Inuujaarvik Territorial Park, providing a importante recreational activities, and a part of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, the largest wildlife refuge in North America, offering vital protection for various animal species, including caribou. Caribou management is crucial in this region, with proposed mobile conservation measures for the Kivalliq sector aiming to minimize disturbances from industrial exploration on migratory caribou populations. These measures are designed to reduce caribou encounters and exposure to industrial activities while allowing for sustainable economic development.

Description of Existing Environment: Biological Environment

The biology of the area surrounding Baker Lake in the Kivalliq region is rich and diverse, adapted to the challenging Arctic environment. The flowering tundra wetlands, freshwater bodies, and fertile valleys along the Kazan and Thelon Heritage Rivers support a plethora of wildlife species. Among them are muskoxen, caribou, arctic hares, jackrabbits, arctic foxes, arctic wolves, wolverines, geese, and lake trout. These ecosystems are vital breeding, spawning, and nursery grounds for various species, contributing to their survival and resilience in the region. The Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, with its vast expanse of protected lands, provides essential habitat for muskoxen, caribou, geese, and grizzly bears, among other species, ensuring their continued existence and ecological balance. Additionally, the area's lake resources play a crucial role in sustaining the diverse biological communities within the region.

Description of Existing Environment: Socio-economic Environment

The residents of Baker Lake primarily depend on local grids powered by diesel generators for electricity, while oil furnaces are used for space heating. Despite subsidies, this reliance leads to considerable expenses. The local economy is closely tied to the Meadowbank gold mine, operated by Agnico Eagle Mines Limited, serving as a key source of employment and economic activity in the area. During our research, we will engage local services such as hotels, food, and car rentals, contributing positively to the socio-economic environment of the community.

Miscellaneous Project Information

Given the absence of camps and our accommodation in a hotel, the waste production associated with our presence in Nunavut is minimal and has little impact on the natural environment. We will implement stringent practices to minimize our ecological footprint, in compliance with the regulations in place in Baker Lake, ensuring that all generated waste is properly disposed of. In the field, we employ non-invasive exploration methods such as the use of hammers and crack counting, thus avoiding the generation of unnecessary waste. Furthermore, all the equipment we utilize is designed to be reusable, and it will be carefully transported back to the laboratory after our fieldwork. This approach ensures sustainable waste management, minimizing our environmental impact and preserving the integrity of local ecosystems within the framework of our geothermal exploration in Nunavut. So, there are no additional plans or documents provided due to the low-impact nature of our proposed activity.

Identification of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

The activity of soil observation and rock sample collection can have various impacts on the local environment. By driving vehicles on existing roads, there's a risk of soil compaction, especially in areas sensitive to degradation such as the tundra. This can affect soil permeability and water flow, disrupting habitats and natural cycles. Additionally, rock sample collection can alter the physical characteristics of the terrain and disturb rock ecosystems, which may have repercussions on local fauna and flora dependent on these habitats for survival. However, it's important to note that these activities are part of research aimed at finding alternatives for energy in the Inuit community, which can have positive implications for the local socioeconomic environment. To mitigate the potential impacts of these activities, it's essential to implement appropriate environmental management measures. This may include reducing the frequency of vehicle movements by consolidating activities where possible, limiting vehicle use to specific areas, and choosing routes that minimize impacts on sensitive habitats. Furthermore, rock sample collection protocols should be established to minimize disturbances on the ground, selecting sampling sites thoughtfully and ensuring minimal damage to surrounding ecosystems (only sampling on vegetation-free areas). Finally, regular monitoring of environmental impacts and adaptation of practices based on new information can help ensure responsible management of activities on the territory, while simultaneously advancing sustainable energy solutions for the Inuit community.

Cumulative Effects

While each individual activity may seem relatively minor, the cumulative effects of multiple similar activities can become significant. Increasing vehicle movements on existing roads can intensify soil compaction effects and enhance habitat fragmentation, thus reducing ecological connectivity between different areas. Similarly, repeated rock sample collection may lead to progressive degradation of rock ecosystems and additional disturbances for organisms living within them. , it's crucial to underscore that these research efforts are ultimately aimed at fostering local and eco-friendly energy solutions. These endeavors hold the promise of improving air quality by reducing reliance on diesel fuel, thus mitigating associated risks and lowering transportation costs. By transitioning to sustainable energy sources, such as geothermal or renewable energy, the community can achieve cleaner and more affordable energy options, enhancing overall environmental sustainability. This shift not only aligns with global conservation goals but also presents tangible benefits for the Inuit community, including improved health outcomes, reduced environmental degradation, and enhanced resilience to climate change impacts. Therefore, while we must remain vigilant about potential environmental impacts, it's essential to recognize the broader positive implications of these research initiatives in promoting a healthier and more sustainable future for all.

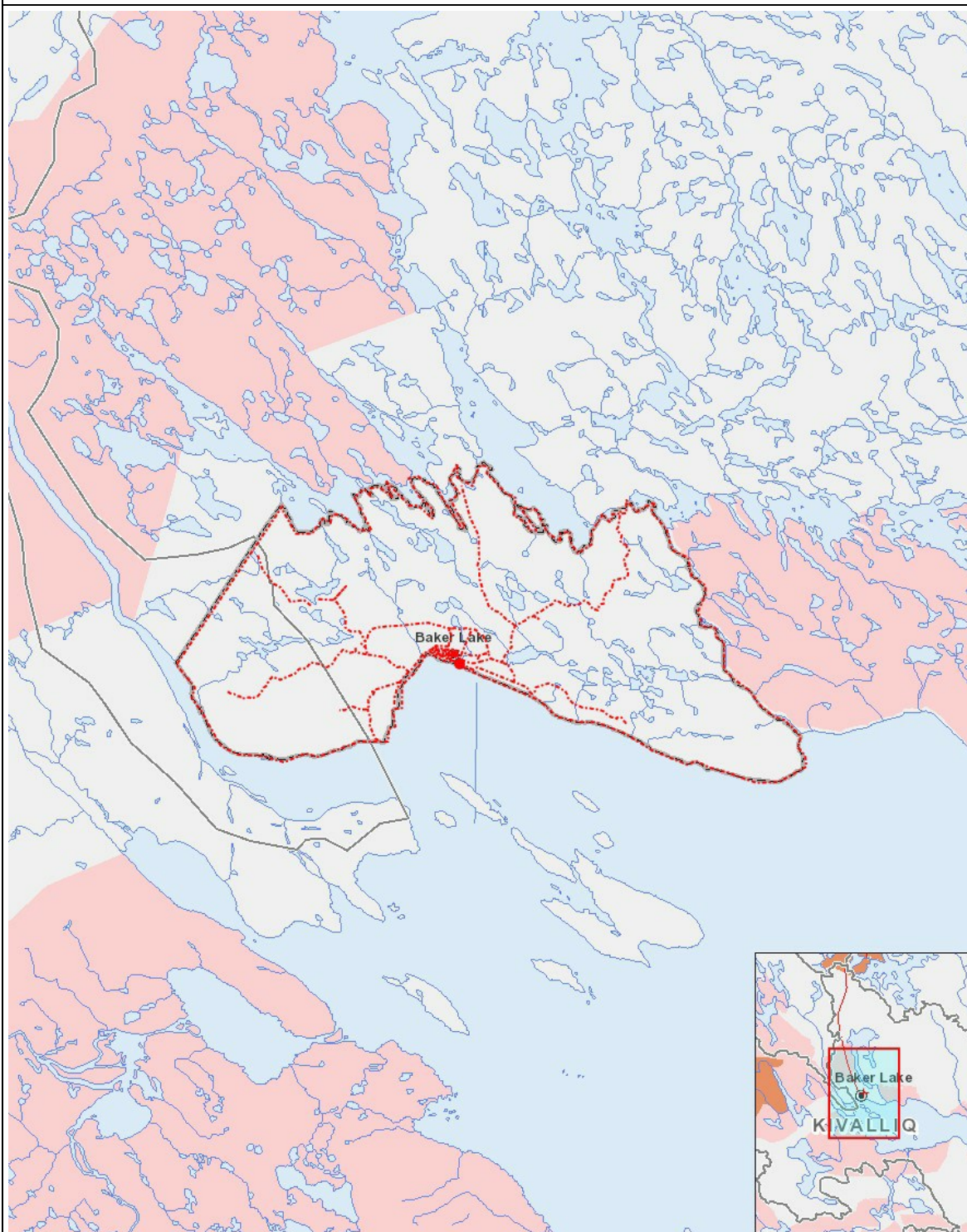
Impacts

Identification of Environmental Impacts

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(P = Positive, N = Negative and non-mitigatable, M = Negative and mitigatable, U = Unknown)

Project Location



List of Project Geometries

1	polygon	Field Work Boundary
2	polyline	road
3	polyline	road
4	polyline	road
5	polyline	road
6	polyline	road
7	polyline	road
8	polyline	road
9	polyline	road
10	polyline	road

11	polyline	road
12	point	our hotel - Nunamiut Lodge