

April 4, 2024

Cory Barker
Technical Advisor III
Nunavut Impact Review Board
P.O Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, NU X0B 0C0

Sent VIA Email: info@nirb.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for the University of Nevada’s “Sampling treeline trees to develop a temperature reconstruction using quantitative wood anatomy” project proposal


Dear Cory Barker,

The Government of Nunavut (GN) would like to thank the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) for the opportunity to provide comments regarding University of Nevada's "Sampling treeline trees to develop a temperature reconstruction using quantitative wood anatomy" project proposal, NIRB File # 23YN002.

The GN has reviewed the proposed project and related documents and has provided two (2) comments, which are appended to this letter.

The GN appreciates participating in the screening of this project through the NIRB process. Should there be any concerns or need for follow-up, please do not hesitate to contact me at jbuller@gov.nu.ca.

Qujannamiik,


Justin Buller

Justin Buller
Interim Avatiliriniq Coordinator
Government of Nunavut

GN-01: Predator Mitigation	
Department	Environment
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Predator Mitigation
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised “NIRB Application for Screening #125890 Sampling treeline trees to develop a temperature reconstruction using quantitative wood anatomy,” NIRB File No. 23YN002, NIRB Project No. 125890 (2024). “Bear Safety – Reducing Bear-People Conflicts in Nunavut,” Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment (n.d.).
CONCERNS	
<p>The Proponent’s (University of Nevada-Reno) application indicates that the proposed project will take place “...at the northern edge of [the] treeline on the banks of the Coppermine River” and that hiking and camping will occur along the river to facilitate the collection of samples (page 2).</p> <p>The Government of Nunavut (GN) notes that the area in which the Proponent plans to conduct activities has active polar bear and grizzly bear populations. Interactions with these species can pose risks to human property and safety. While the Proponent’s application indicates that a firearm will be used for bear protection, they have not included additional information regarding predator detection, defense, and deterrence.</p>	
RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>The GN recommends the Proponent provide a human-wildlife conflict plan that includes specifications on materials/equipment to be used for detection, defense, and deterrence of bears. The Proponent should submit this plan to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) for inclusion on the public registry. The GN encourages the Proponent to review the GN, Department of Environment’s Bear Safety – Reducing Bear-People Conflicts in Nunavut to help inform their human-wildlife conflict plan.</p>	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
N/A	

GN-02: Archeology	
Department	Culture and Heritage
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Sampling Treeline trees to develop a temperature reconstruction using quantitative wood anatomy
References	NIRB Notice of Screening 23YN002, for Sampling Treeline trees
CONCERNS	
<p>The applicant is proposing to conduct tree core sampling along the Coppermine River to better understand historical climate patterns in the North American Arctic. A float plane will transport a team of 3-4 scientists to the nearest location to the proposed sampling site and the team will then travel by raft along the Coppermine River. The team will set up a temporary camp on the bank of the Coppermine River near the sampling site.</p> <p>A search of the Nunavut Site Data Base indicates that there are no recorded archaeological sites within the vicinity of the project area. The closest sites are located about 20km to the northeast. 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.</p>	
RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>No permit is required from the Department of Culture and Heritage (CH). However, CH recommends that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The research team exercises caution in their movements to avoid archaeological sites, specifically with regards to the placement of the temporary camp site; (2) The Temporary camp location and associated components must be visually assessed for archaeological resources; if encountered the camp location should be moved; (3) No tree sampling activities should occur within 50 meters of historical/archaeological sites; (4) The Department of Culture and Heritage recommends that the applicant avoids conducting activities in the vicinity (50 m buffer zone) of 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 our office. 	

REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATIONS/ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<p>All archaeological and paleontological sites in Nunavut are protected by law. The applicant must understand that it is their responsibility to ensure that no heritage resource sites are disturbed during the course of their activities. No person shall alter, or otherwise disturb an archaeological site, or remove any artifact from an archaeological site. Moreover, the building of inuksuit is discouraged.</p>