



NOTICE OF SCREENING

NMRIRB File Number: 125663

Date: August 29, 2023

Notice of Screening: The following notice of screening is information submitted by the project proponent and does not represent the views of the Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board (NMRIRB). During the active screening, the NMRIRB will assess and evaluate the content of the submission.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Maude Durand - "Arqvilliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area Establishment Project"

The Arqvilliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) Establishment Project is a Nunavik Inuit-led conservation project to protect Arviliit. Arviliit, which means "the place where you see bowhead whales" in Inuktitut, has been occupied by Nunavik Inuit since time immemorial. It is a very important place for polar bears, and harvesting polar bears remains a significant part of Nunavik Inuit culture. The islands are also home to countless seabirds that use the islands as nesting and staging area, walrus, beluga, and many more. The underwater ecosystem surrounding the islands is just as lush and pristine as the islands, and such is also considered for conservation.

Arviliit has always been known to Nunavimmiut as a place where polar bears mate, den, and feed, and as a nesting place for eider ducks. While polar bears remain the main target species for conservation on the islands, we know that Arviliit shelters an incredible biodiversity of life. Accordingly, the creation of the Arqvilliit IPCA will protect polar bear habitat and the broader ecosystem through ongoing monitoring and management. In addition, protecting Arviliit is an important step in the reconciliation process with Nunavik Inuit through the recognition and respect of the Nunavimmiut traditional territory, way of life, culture, livelihood, Traditional Knowledge and traditional laws and practices.

The Arqvilliit IPCA Steering Committee has collaborated a federal polar bear research scientist to develop a scientific passive monitoring plan for polar bears for Arviliit. This monitoring plan is both based on western science and rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, as it was developed under the guidance of Elder and Polar Bear Expert, Lucassie Echalook and the Steering Committee. The work to be conducted mainly focuses on gathering baseline data about the islands, collecting information on target species (polar bears, eider ducks, etc.), on cataloguing the biodiversity of the islands, and determining habitat. This will include polar bear presence and population genetics, eider duck nest counts, incidental Species-At-Risk observations and habitat mapping (e.g. topography, habitat types, etc.). For the upcoming field season, the Arqvilliit IPCA team will be conducting two trips to Arviliit to carry on its passive polar bear monitoring program. The passive polar bear monitoring allows for the collection of hair samples and photos, using bear hair snares paired with trail cameras. The hair snares or hair traps are wooden boxes mounted with brushes mounted and sent-baited with a commercially available non-rewarding liquid lure. The hair traps are used to collect hair from bears without affecting them: the loose hair is collected in the brushes when a curious bear investigates the scented trap, and the hair is later retrieved by the monitoring team. It is a non-invasive sampling method that provides genetic material (DNA) from the root of the hair and allows genetic analysis to identify individual bears and to allow for further population genetics analysis. This method was suggested by Dr. Richardson and has been used worldwide for passive monitoring of bears. Traveling by boat from Inukjuak and from island to island, the monitoring team will retrieve the memory cards left in the camera traps as well as any hair samples from the hair traps. Furthermore, from the boat, the team will identify species and map habitat that are observed. With the use of georeferenced cameras, the work of the monitors contributes to the inventory and the approximate distribution of the biodiversity on the islands. To complement boat-based surveys and land-based surveys, drones will be used to survey the smaller islands.

Please visit the NMRIRB Public Registry at
<https://www.nmrirb.ca/portal/registry/default.aspx>

For project related information, access the NMRIRB Public Registry, click the Projects menu and under a keyword search, use the NMRIRB file number. All project information, documents, maps and public comment submissions will be available.

PROJECT MAP



APPLICANT

Representative / Consultant Details

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Applicant

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ACTIVITIES

1 activity was identified in the project application:

Activity 1: Arvilliit (Ottawa Islands) Research

Activity Type: Research

Land Status: Crown

Site History: Arviliit is the Nunavik Inuit name for the Ottawa Islands, a chain of 24 islands in northeastern Hudson Bay (Nunavik) that has a land footprint of 24,000 hectares. Arviliit, which means “the place where you see bowhead whales” in Inuktitut, has been occupied by Nunavik Inuit since time immemorial, up to a few decades ago.

Archaeological or paleontological Value: Avataq Cultural Institute has identified numerous archaeological sites on the islands. TK studies led by the Arqvilliit IPCA team and Avataq Institute have shown that Arviliit has been inhabited by Nunavimmiut since time immemorial, up to a few decades ago - each island presents countless tent rings and other archeological sites, which have been recorded, some being centuries-old, even millennia.

Proximity to nearest communities/protected areas: Arviliit is situated approximately 100 km north-east offshore of Inukjuak.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community	Name	Organization	Date Contacted
Inukjuak	Paulosie Kasudluak	NV Inukjuak	May 18, 2023
Inukjuak	Many people (ongoing)	LNUK of Inukjuak	December 1, 2022
Puvirnitug	Paulusie Angiyou	NV Puvirnitug	January 24, 2023
Puvirnitug	Aisa Surusilak	LNUK of Puvirnitug	January 24, 2023
Puvirnitug	Elders	Elders	January 25, 2023

AUTHORIZATIONS

There is 1 Authorizations identified by the Proponent for the Project:

1. Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, Wildlife Research Permit

DETAILS

Mode of transportation: The monitoring team travels between Inukjuak and Arviliit with the project boat, a Silver Dolphin 26'. A small inflatable boat raft is used to get to shore in Arviliit.

Accommodation: Crew to sleep on the Silver Dolphin Vessel

Personnel: Personnel on site 5, total number of days 14, 70 total person days

Project Schedule: September 15, 2023 to October 30, 2023

MATERIAL USE

Equipment

Equipment	Quantity	Dimensions	Proposed Use
Hair Snares	5	1m X 1m	Passive polar bear genetic sampling
Camera Traps	5	1m X 1m	Passive polar bear monitoring paired with snares
Drone (DJI Matrice 300 RTK)	1	895 mm, 6.3 kg with two TB60 batteries	Surveying for polar bears and archeological sites

Fuel Use

Fuel Type	No. of Containers	Container Capacity	Total Amount	Units	Proposed Use
Gasoline	1	200	200	Gallons	Vessel Fuel (internal tank)
Gasoline	8	55	440	Gallons	Vessel fuel (drums)
Diesel	1	6	6	Gallons	Heater - Internal tank
Diesel	1	6	6	Gallons	Heater - Jerry Can

WATER USE

All potable water is transported from Inukjuak and carried on board.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Human wastes and garbage are collected on board and disposed of in Inukjuak - no waste or discharge are disposed of in the marine environment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Description of Existing Environment: Physical Environment

The 24 islands composing Arviliit range significantly in size, with the main islands including Eddy Island, Gilmour Island, Patty Island and Perley Island. The topography is mainly composed of exposed granitic bedrock with mossy and wetland patches.

Description of Existing Environment: Biological Environment

Arviliit has always been known to Nunavimmiut as a place where polar bears mate, den, and feed. They are also an important nesting place for eider ducks and many other waterfowl, seabirds and migrating birds (including Harlequin duck and Red Knots). The waters surrounding the islands also shelter an incredible diversity of life and are an important habitat for seals, Atlantic walrus, and bowhead and beluga whales. Both the islands and the underwater ecosystem surrounding the islands, equally as lush and pristine, are considered for conservation.

Description of Existing Environment: Socioeconomic Environment

Arviliit is a presently inhabited archipelago. Traditional Knowledge studies led by the Arqvilliit IPCA team has shown that Arviliit has been inhabited by Nunavimmiut since time immemorial, up to a few decades ago. Archeological surveys led in Arviliit this past year have substantiated Traditional Knowledge collected by the Arqvilliit IPCA team as countless tent rings and other archeological sites have been recorded, some being centuries-old, even millennia. The islands are currently Crown Land but Nunavimmiut retain constitutionally-protected harvest and access rights under the Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement.

Identification of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

The Arqvilliit IPCA team is not anticipating significant environmental impacts. The only potential impacts are related to noise disturbance from the presence of the monitoring team or from the monitoring vessel. These impacts will be temporary and are expected to be low in significance for the wildlife. A potential risk for environmental impact includes the spill of fuel, however precautions and safety protocols on board are reducing this risk to a minimum. The project activities are not expected to have any negative impact on Inuit rights and use of the land. In fact, the project will add much needed information to the Arqvilliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area establishment project. The contribution to polar bear monitoring and biodiversity conservation are expected to strengthen and reaffirm Nunavimmiut stewardship over Arviliit.

Cumulative Effects

N/A

Miscellaneous Information

N/A

Section H1: Vessel Use

The project boat is a Silver Dolphin 26' with two outboard motors. The project boat is used for transportation between Inukjuak and Arviliit - which takes about 8 hours of travel. A small

inflatable raft is used to get to shore from the project boat onto the islands in Arviliit. The monitoring team is composed of a captain, the Arqvilliit IPCA Project Coordinator, and two or three monitors/boat crew. The vessel calls into Inukjuak everyday for security updates, and the crew is reachable at any time on a satellite phone. Because of the size of the boat, there is not ballast or bilge water. Human wastes and garbage are collected on board and disposed of in Inukjuak – no waste or discharge are disposed of in the marine environment. All potable water is transported from Inukjuak and carried on board. Travel route and timing is sensitive of traditional harvesting areas and periods as well as of animal migration – both of which are not considered to suffer any disturbance from project activities. There are no anticipated significant impacts to wildlife and flora on Arviliit from project activities.

IMPACTS

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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ANTICIPATED IMPACTS ON INUIT RIGHTS AND USE OF THE LAND

The project activities are not expected to have any negative impact on Inuit rights and use of the land. In fact, the project will add much needed information to the Arqvilliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved

Area establishment project. The contribution to polar bear monitoring and biodiversity conservation are expected to strengthen and reaffirm Nunavimmiut stewardship over Arviliit.

The proponent has listed positive impacts for designated environmental areas, wildlife, birds, aquatic species, wildlife protected areas, archaeological and cultural sites, employment and community wellness.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

You are invited to provide the NMRIRB with your comments regarding whether the proposed project:

- May have significant adverse effects on the ecosystem, wildlife habitat or Nunavik Inuit harvesting activities;
- May have significant adverse socio-economic effects on northerners;
- Will cause significant public concern;

- Involves technological innovations for which the effects are unknown.

Parties are also invited to recommend any specific mitigation measures they feel would be appropriate, and to bring any other matter of importance related to this project proposal to the NMRIRB's attention. Parties may also indicate support for or against the Project Proposal, request additional information, or recommend potential terms and conditions for the NMRIRB to consider.

As per the NMRIRB screening process, the Board provides 15 days of consultation period for commenting.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS IS: **September 15, 2023**

Comments can be submitted on the attached comment form or by using the online comment form in the NMRIRB Public Registry. Navigate to www.nmrirb.ca, click the "Public Registry" button at the top right of the page. Click the Projects link at the top of the Registry and conduct a keyword search for the project. Search using the assigned project number "125663". Click Find Projects and click the hyperlink "NMRIRB 125663" to load the project. The comment form will be available in the Project Dashboard.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You are invited to provide comments via email or using the accompanying comment form.

The NMRIRB can be reached at:

Email: info@nmrirb.ca

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