

# HERITAGE RESOURCES REVIEW and ASSESSMENT

## Guidelines for Northern Exploration

May 2017

### Introduction

Where proposed land and resource developments are likely to adversely impact heritage resources (including historic sites and structures, archaeological sites, palaeontological localities, and other sites of cultural or scientific value), proponents may be required to carry out a Heritage Resource Impact Assessment (HRIA) of those projects pursuant to s.63 of *The Heritage Property Act*. To determine if an HRIA is warranted, proposed developments must be reviewed and approved by the Heritage Conservation Branch (HCB) of the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide direction to proponents concerning the type of northern exploration projects (see Definitions section below) which require heritage review due to their moderate to high potential for adversely impacting heritage sites, and which are considered a low risk of impacting heritage resources and require no review. For the former type of project, where HRIA is deemed necessary, considerations for carrying out pre and post-construction assessment are also discussed.

### Northern Exploration Activities that REQUIRE Heritage Review

Northern exploration activities are likely to impact heritage sites where those activities are located in heritage sensitive areas and result in the physical disturbance or removal of mineral soils. Accordingly, exploration activities located within 100m of a waterbody or watercourse, a known heritage site, or on an esker and requiring site preparation such as surface blading, stump removal or grading, including the construction of:

- Permanent and temporary roads;
- New work camps; and
- Staging areas and drill pads;

normally require heritage resource review.

### Northern Exploration Activities that DO NOT REQUIRE Heritage Review

Activities such as tree cutting which only affect the surface litter mat or uppermost organic soil layer are unlikely to adversely impact heritage sites. Accordingly, exploration activities, including:

- Line cutting;
- Mulching of vegetation;
- Geophysical survey;
- New works camps, roads, staging areas, drill pads, etc. constructed in areas that have been previously disturbed by development;
- New works camps, roads, staging areas, drill pads, etc. constructed in areas that are more than 100m from a watercourse or waterbody (except if located on an esker);

- Drilling during frozen ground conditions, or from drill pads located on a frozen lake; and
- Any activity that will disturb an area less than 26 sq. m of mineral soil;

will not normally require heritage resource review.

### **When HRIA is Required**

If a northern exploration project is reviewed, and it is determined that an HRIA is required, the proponent must engage the services of a qualified heritage consultant to undertake the study. A list of heritage consultants that have expressed interest in providing HRIA and related services is available on the ministry's website (see Resources section below).

HRIA studies of proposed exploration projects should, preferably, be carried out prior to development. A pre-construction (or pre-impact) HRIA is the usual practice whenever a significant known site is determined to be in direct conflict with a proposed exploration activity. The HRIA will serve to determine the extent of the adverse impact on the heritage site and options for avoidance or impact mitigation or other conservation measure.

However, pre-impact HRIA is often impractical due to the inability to access development areas prior to initial road construction, extremely poor heritage site visibility and discovery in forested regions, or other limiting reasons. Accordingly, in most situations, heritage clearance for northern exploration activity is granted subject to the satisfactory completion of a post-construction (or post-impact) HRIA and any required impact mitigation follow-up.

### **Reporting Fortuitous Heritage Discoveries**

Whether or not heritage resource review and HRIA are undertaken, the fortuitous discovery of heritage resources during northern exploration should be reported immediately to the HCB and further development within approximately 30m of the discovery should cease temporarily. In consultation with the proponent, the HCB will determine the need for an on-site assessment by qualified personnel. In the event human remains, or suspected human remains, are encountered, both the local RCMP and the HCB must be contacted immediately and development must cease until the remains and discovery location can be secured.

### **Definitions:**

The standard mapped definition for watercourse, waterbody or esker is derived from features that have been identified on National Topographic System 1:50 000 scale maps. This data is also available electronically through CanVec, Canmatirx, and Toporama.

*Esker*: Long ridges of gravel and other material deposited by meltwater channels within a retreating glacier.

*Heritage resource*: Includes archaeological sites containing cultural objects and features relating to (pre-contact period) human activities, as well as fur trade and early European settlement and sites, as well as palaeontological localities containing the remains of fossil vertebrate and invertebrate animals and plants.

*Mineral soil:* Soil located immediately below leaf litter and consisting primarily of minerals (in the form of sand, silt, clay or loam) rather than organic materials.

*Northern exploration activities:* Those resource exploration activities undertaken in northern Saskatchewan which is roughly defined as the area north of Hwy 55 east of Prince Albert and Hwy 3 west of Prince Albert.

*Watercourse:* For the purposes of these guidelines, any flow of water, having a defined channel that is greater or equal to 1000 metres in length.

*Waterbody:* For the purposes of these guidelines, any body of water having a length or width greater or equal to 1000 metres.

**Resources:**

National Topographic System Maps:

<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geography/atlas-canada/read-about-topographic-maps/16840>

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport information for developers and list of archaeological consultants:

<http://www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/HeritageReviewForms>