
HAMMOND REEF GOLD PROJECT RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON FINAL EIS/EA

COMMENT – T(3)-04

Source: Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

Summary of Comment

The response to T(2)-15 indicates studies were done to identify areas of importance within the “project footprint for a variety of land uses.” The potential effects of limited or prohibited access to these areas within the mine study area, and other areas of importance outside the mine study area that are used for traditional or socio-economic purposes, remains unclear. In addition, the proposed mitigation, accommodation and follow-up, and the predicted residual effects also remain unclear.

To fulfill Subsections 10.3.1 and 13.1.2 of the EIS Guidelines, the potential effects, the proposed mitigation, accommodation and follow-up, and the residual effects must be described. Consideration of the effects of limited or prohibited access to areas should also include consideration of whether and how these effects will require Aboriginal resource users to relocate to other areas in order to continue performing land use activities.

Proposed Action

1. Describe how the Project or project activities may change access to areas that are used for traditional activities (e.g. special sites, hunting, fishing, trapping, plant harvesting) or socio-economic purposes (e.g. commercial fishing/bait fishing, outfitting) within the local and mine study areas. Confirm whether or not Aboriginal groups will be restricted from accessing the mine study area.
 2. For areas where limited or prohibited access will occur, describe the mitigation, accommodation, and follow-up measures proposed and how these measures will address the adverse effects described in item 1. For areas where limited access will occur, also describe mitigation, accommodation, and follow-up measures proposed to address any corollary health and safety effects.
 3. Describe the predicted residual effects on use of lands for traditional or socio-economic purposes due to access changes identified in Item 1 and implementation of the proposed mitigation, accommodation, and follow-up measures of Item 2, and describe the significance of those residual effects based on the Agency’s methodology for assessing significance (including the criteria of magnitude, geographic extent, duration, frequency, reversibility, ecological/social/cultural context).
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Response

Access by the general public to the mine site area will be restricted for safety and security reasons. However, agreements are in place such that Aboriginal community members who have traditionally used the areas where access will be restricted to the public will continue to have access if accompanied by an authorized CMC representative.

Restriction of access will affect a non-aboriginal commercial bait fisherman. This effect has been mitigated through an agreement with the bait fisherman which includes financial compensation and access protocols for health and safety purposes. The bait fisherman has acknowledged that his concerns have been addressed through this agreement and consents to CMC carrying out mining activities on the CMC properties that overlap his licensed

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baitfish area. There are no other known current users of land that will have access restrictions imposed during mining activities.

Aboriginal community members and the general public will continue to have access to all areas outside the active mine site. Noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed. Within the LSA, project emissions may result in the concentrations of some compounds above ambient air quality criteria in areas near the mine site. However, a human health risk assessment has been completed assuming recreational receptor use of locations where the predicted maximum concentrations occur and concluded that potential effects to human health would be negligible for recreational or transient use of the areas surrounding the mine site (see response to T(3)-01). Therefore, there are no anticipated health risks associated with recreational or transient use of the areas surrounding the mine site.

An assessment of residual effects on current land use based on the Agency's methodology for assessing significance (including the criteria of magnitude, geographic extent, duration, frequency, reversibility, ecological/social/cultural context) is provided in the following table.

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Table 1: Assessment of Potential Impacts to Current Land Use

Potential Adverse Effect	Assessment Conclusion	Mitigation	Measures of Residual Effect					Significance of Residual Effect
			Extent	Duration	Frequency	Reversibility	Magnitude	
Loss of access	Access to active mining areas will be restricted for safety and security.	Agreements are in place such that Aboriginal community members who have traditionally used the areas where access will be restricted to the public will continue to have access if accompanied by an authorized CMC representative. Agreement is also in place with the commercial bait fisherman	Mine Study Area	Construction, Operations and Closure (during active decommissioning)	Continuous	Reversible upon Closure (post decommissioning)	Low	No residual effect (agreements in place)
Reduced air quality	Concentrations of some compounds above ambient air quality criteria in areas near the mine site. A human health risk assessment has been completed assuming recreational receptor use of locations where the predicted maximum concentrations occur and concluded that potential effects to human health would be negligible for the recreational user (see response to T(3)-01).	None required	Local Study Area (see frequency above criteria isopleths provided in response to T(3)-01)	Construction, Operations and Closure (during active decommissioning)	Continuous	Reversible upon Closure (post decommissioning)	Low	No residual effect
Noise disturbance	Noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed.	None required	Local Study Area (see Figure 4-2 of Atmospheric Environment TSD)	Construction, Operations and Closure (during active decommissioning)	Continuous	Reversible upon Closure (post decommissioning)	Low	No residual effect

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GRT Review Findings and Comments on above Responses

(Provided in letter to proponent dated March 15, 2017)

Information Request T(3)-04 requested a description of how the Project or project activities may change access to areas that are used for traditional activities (e.g., special sites, hunting, fishing, trapping, plant harvesting) or socio-economic purposes (e.g. commercial fishing/bait fishing, outfitting) within the local and mine study areas. Further, confirmation was requested as to whether or not Indigenous groups would be restricted from accessing the mine study area. The response stated that agreements are in place such that indigenous community members who have traditionally used the areas where access would be restricted to the public would continue to have access if accompanied by an authorized CMC representative.

Recognizing that CMC has been working with the Indigenous communities to identify traditional land use activities, and have developed agreements to address any impacts to preferred locations for traditional land use activities, and that the Indigenous communities have requested to not disclose the specific locations of the traditional land use activities, the Agency would like to understand the severity of the potential impacts in order to come to a conclusion of significance. As such, we have several areas where clarification is required

- a) For the following traditional land use activities, how many will be lost and how many will be altered:
 - o Plant gathering; Plant or animal harvesting; Hunting, trapping; Fishing, bait fishing; Teaching sites; Cultural ceremonies and sites; Archaeological sites; Cabins and outposts; and, Swimming/recreation
- b) Regardless of whether the locations of the traditional land use activities are preferred or altered, how will the project impact the experience of the traditional land use activities from such changes as noise levels, water quality, air quality, etc.

CMC Response

Identification of the number of known locations of traditional land use and description of the potential effects is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Assessment of Potential Impacts to Current Land Use

Traditional Land Use Activity	Number of Known Locations Potentially Effected	Description of Potential Effects
Plant gathering/ harvesting	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known plant gathering/harvesting sites in vicinity of the Project site ■ CMC has been informed of a wild rice harvesting area downstream of Raft Lake dam. An assessment of potential impacts on wild rice harvest due to sulphate discharge will be provided as separate stand-alone document.

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Traditional Land Use Activity	Number of Known Locations Potentially Effected	Description of Potential Effects
Animal harvesting/ hunting	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ General site area potentially used for hunting (no known specific sites). ■ Access to Mine Study Area will be restricted. ■ Upgrade of access road will improve access to other areas and is viewed as positive impact ■ No residual impact to hunting activities/opportunities.
Trapping	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreements in place. See response to T(3)-02 ■ No residual impact to trapping activities.
Fishing	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sport fishing is known to occur at Marmion Reservoir, Lizard Lake and Long Hike Lake. ■ No known fishing locations within Mine Study Area ■ Access to existing fishing locations will not be impacted. ■ Noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions in parts of Sawbill Bay and Lizard Lake, in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed.
Bait fishing	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known traditional bait fishing activities ■ Agreement in place with non-Aboriginal commercial bait fisherman potentially affected
Teaching sites	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal trapline area AT040 used by owner for teaching. Potential impact mitigated through agreement (see response to T(3)-02) ■ Historical Metis canoe building site located on shore of Sawbill Bay near Mine Study Area. Site is no longer used. Access to site will not be restricted.
Cultural ceremony sites	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known cultural ceremony sites in vicinity of Project site
Archaeological sites	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known archaeological sites associated with Indigenous communities
Cabins and outposts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal trapper cabin located within trapline AT040. Potential impact mitigated through agreement and access protocols (see response to T(3)-02)
Swimming and recreation	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known swimming and recreations sites located in vicinity of Mine Study Area

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GRT Review Findings and Comments on above Responses

(Provided in letter to proponent dated June 28, 2017)

Given the spatial boundary of the Air Quality LSA (and keeping in mind the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise, visual aesthetics, etc.), provide a revised Table 2: Assessment of Potential Impact to Current Land Use. Ensure commitments made in the table are included in the Commitments Registry. In addition to the revised Table 2, clarify the detail of potential effects by responding to the following:

Fishing

The Agency understands that there are no known fishing locations within the Mine Study Area and sport fishing is known to occur at Marmion Reservoir, Lizard Lake and Long Hike Lake. Given the spatial boundary of the Air Quality LSA,

- Indicate whether Indigenous groups fish for traditional purposes (including recreational, commercial or bait fishing) in the LSA. Indicate the Indigenous groups, and for each group describe the amount of time spent for this practice, as well as the locations.
- For each Indigenous group, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience of fishing, as well as the mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous groups to address those effects on fishing. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

Hunting

The Agency understands that the general site area is potentially used for hunting although no specific hunting sites are known. Given the spatial boundary of the Air Quality LSA,

- For each Indigenous group, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience of hunting, as well as the amount of time spent for this practice. Describe the mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous groups to address those effects on hunting. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

Plant Gathering/Harvesting

(i) The Agency understands that there are no known areas for plant harvesting in the vicinity of the project site. Given the spatial boundary of the Air Quality LSA,

- Clarify if any harvesting sites are located in the LSA, which Indigenous groups are harvesting, what is being harvested (specify the types of plants and their intended uses) as well as the amount of time spent for this practice.
- For each Indigenous group, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience of plant gathering/ harvesting. Describe the

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mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous groups to address those effects on plant gathering/harvesting. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

(ii) The Agency understands that CMC would invite Indigenous groups to provide input on the selection of plant species for site re-vegetation.

- All Indigenous groups should be consulted for their input on their selection of plant species for revegetation. Ensure this is included in the Commitments Registry.

(iii) Clarification is needed on how Indigenous groups' traditional use practice and experience of wild rice harvesting may be affected by changes to water quality, including effects from sulphate discharge. The Agency understands that this response will be available once CMC completes its assessment and provides a stand-alone document. This response should:

- Describe changes to water quality and potential effects on wild rice;
- Indicate which Indigenous groups could be affected and describe the predicted effects to each group's practice and experience, as well as the mitigation measures as applicable;
- Describe long-term plans for monitoring and the roles of Indigenous groups in such monitoring; and
- Specify the notifications and other commitments to Indigenous groups to mitigate effects on wild rice harvesting, as well as ensure they are included in the Commitments Registry.

Ceremonial, Cultural & Spiritual

(i) The Agency understands from the bi-weekly calls, that CMC has been facilitating ceremonies in light of the proposed draining of Mitta Lake. However, for the written record:

- Specify which Indigenous groups were involved in the planning and development of these ceremonies and which groups were aware of the opportunity to participate in the ceremonies.
- Clarify if such ceremonies would continue during all phases of the Project. Ensure commitments to conduct these ceremonies are included in the Commitments Registry.

(ii) The Agency understands that there is a historical Métis canoe building site within the LSA near the mine site and access would not be restricted. Ensure this commitment is included in the Commitments Registry.

- If the Métis opt to use the site in the future, including during phases of the Project, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience. Describe the mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous group to address those effects on the site and any future use. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

(iii) The Agency understands that controlled access would be provided at trapline 040 and a teaching site is located in trapline 040.

- Describe if teaching could still continue in trapline 040 and if so, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience of teaching.

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Describe the mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous group to address those effects on use of the trapline area for teaching. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

(iv) The Agency understands that there are no known cultural ceremony sites in the Mine Study Area. Given the spatial boundary of the Air Quality LSA,

- Identify the teaching, culturally or spiritually important sites within the LSA and to which Indigenous groups they are affiliated.
- For each Indigenous group, describe how the Project's predicted effects on air quality, noise and visual aesthetics would affect the practice and experience. Describe the mitigation measures developed with input from the Indigenous groups to address those effects on use of the sites. Ensure these measures are included in the Commitments Registry.

CMC Response

Revised Table 3: Assessment of Potential Impacts to Current Land Use within the Air Quality LSA

Traditional Land Use Activity	Number of Known Locations Potentially Effected	Description of Potential Effects
Plant gathering/harvesting	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known plant gathering/harvesting sites within the Air Quality LSA ■ The wild rice harvesting area identified in the previous table is located outside the Air Quality LSA. Potential effects to wild rice harvesting are discussed below.

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Traditional Land Use Activity	Number of Known Locations Potentially Effected	Description of Potential Effects
Animal harvesting/ hunting	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Air quality LSA potentially used for hunting (no known specific sites). ■ Access to Mine Study Area will be restricted and elevated noise will be experienced in area immediately surrounding the mine site (see Figure 4-3 of Atmospheric Environment TSD), , but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed.. ■ Upgrade of access road will improve access to other areas and is viewed as positive impact ■ No predicted residual impact to hunting activities/opportunities.
Trapping	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreements in place. See response to T(3)-02 ■ No residual impact to trapping activities.
Fishing	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recreational is known to occur at Marmion Reservoir, Lizard Lake and Long Hike Lake. ■ Access to Long Hike Lake is difficult and use is primarily limited to commercial guided fishing. No known aboriginal use of Long Hike Lake. ■ No known fishing locations within Mine Study Area ■ Access to existing fishing locations will not be impacted. ■ Noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions in parts of Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake, in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed. ■ The mine and TMF will be visible from parts of Sawbill Bay and Lizard Lake.
Bait fishing	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known traditional bait fishing activities in Air Quality LSA ■ Agreement in place with non-Aboriginal commercial bait fisherman potentially affected

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Traditional Land Use Activity	Number of Known Locations Potentially Effected	Description of Potential Effects
Teaching sites	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal trapline area AT040 used infrequently for land based teaching of trapping and fishing to family members. Not considered a traditional teaching site within context of this information request. Potential impact to trapping activity mitigated through agreement (see response to T(3)-02) ■ A historical Metis canoe building site may have been located on shore of Sawbill Bay near Mine Study Area. The site is no longer used. Historical use cannot be confirmed and the site was not identified in the Metis Traditional Knowledge study provided confidentially to CMC. Access to this site will not be restricted.
Cultural ceremony sites	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known traditional cultural ceremony sites in the Air Quality LSA ■ See response below regarding new ceremonies that have been initiated and facilitated by CMC
Archaeological sites	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known archaeological sites associated with Indigenous communities within the Air Quality LSA
Cabins and outposts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal trapper cabin located within trapline AT040. Potential impact mitigated through agreement and access protocols (see response to T(3)-02)
Swimming and recreation	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No known traditional swimming and recreation sites located in the Air Quality LSA

Fishing

The primary fishing locations used by Aboriginal communities within the Air Quality LSA are Upper Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake. These lakes are easily accessed by existing roads and boat launch locations and are used on a daily seasonal basis by most Aboriginal communities identified in the EIS/EA. Although it is likely that fishing in smaller lakes within the LSA does occur, there are no other known Aboriginal fishing sites that are used frequently. (Pers. Comm., Bud Dickson, Aug. 2, 2017).

The mine site and TMF will be visible from some parts of Upper Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake and during operations, noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions in parts of Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake, in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed. There are no predicted effects to fishing

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success or opportunities resulting from potential increased fishing pressure due to the Project (see response to MNRF-10). Access to fishing locations within Upper Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake will not be effected.

Direct access to Long Hike Lake is provided by the Premier Lake Road. Use of Long Hike Lake for fishing is primarily used by commercially guided trips for non-Aboriginal fishermen. Aboriginal communities are not known to frequent Long Hike Lake for fishing as there are productive lakes that are much easier to access (i.e., Upper Marmion Reservoir and Lizard Lake) (Pers. Comm., Bud Dickson, Aug. 2, 2017)..

No mitigation for Project related effects to the experience of Aboriginal fishing activities are necessary.

Hunting

All Aboriginal groups identified in the EIS/EA are known to hunt within the Air Quality LSA. The area is used daily during the peak hunting season, approximately between September 15 and November 15. Hunting is typically done during the daytime from the existing roads. Aboriginal community members are not known to overnight within the LSA for hunting purposes (Pers. Comm., Bud Dickson, Aug. 2, 2017)..

The mine site and TMF will be visible from some parts of the existing access roads and during operations, noise levels will be elevated compared to existing conditions, in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, but outside of the active mine area, noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed.

The wildlife populations in the areas close to the roads from which hunting occurs have already adapted to the presence of and noise levels associated with the roadway. It is common for some wildlife to become habituated to the newly created edges and openings in the forest associated with road building as well as the levels of traffic noise (USDOT 2004). As such, hunting success is not expected to change as the populations and distributions of wildlife species are not expected to change due to the access road development and operation.

No mitigation for Project related effects to the experience of Aboriginal hunting activities are necessary.

Reference:

United States Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration. September 2004. SYNTHESIS OF NOISE EFFECTS ON WILDLIFE POPULATIONS. Publication No.: FHWA-HEP-06-016

Plant Gathering/Harvesting

(i) There are no known traditional plant harvesting sites located within the Air Quality LSA (Pers. Comm., Bud Dickson, Aug. 2, 2017).

(ii) CMC will consult all Indigenous groups identified in the EIS/EA for their input on their selection of plant species for revegetation. A commitment to this effect will be included in the Commitments Registry

(iii) As indicated in the Technical Memorandum: *Response to Comments Related to Sulphate Influence on Methylmercury Generation and Wild Rice Harvesting – Hammond Reef Gold Project*:

‘The nearest wild rice areas are downstream of the Raft Lake Dam. Under typical lakebed sediment conditions, the sulphate concentrations discharging at the Raft Lake Dam (1.8 mg/L) are well below protective thresholds proposed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.’

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No effects are predicted on wild rice harvesting within the Air Quality LSA or downstream of the Project and no mitigation is necessary.

Ceremonial, Cultural & Spiritual

(i) Members of the following groups have participated in the CMC initiated and facilitated Spring and Fall Pipe and Drum ceremonies, (most of which were held at the proposed Project site). These ceremonies have taken place since 2008.

- MNO Region One
- Lac Des Mille Lacs FN
- Lac La Croix FN
- Seine River FN
- Nigigoonsiminikaaning FN
- Couchiching FN
- Mitaanjigamiing FN
- Naicatchewenin FN
- Rainy River FN
- Wabigoon FN
- Grand Council Treaty 3
- PWI-DI-GOO-ZING NE-YAA-ZHING Advisory Services (formerly Ft. Frances Chiefs Secretariat)

A face to face visit to the spiritual advisor with a tobacco offering takes place at least four days prior to each ceremony. A tobacco offering is also given to the Elder who has been chosen to bring the drum.

The Atikokan Native Friendship Centre is invited through the Executive director via a face to face visit and various members from the ANFC have attended most ceremonies.

In August of 2011, a request was made from a representative of the Mitaanjigamiing FN to have a special Pipe & Drum Ceremony at Mitta Lake. Tobacco and food offerings were made to Mitta Lake at their request.

In August of 2012, a Special Mitta Lake Ceremony was held. During a Project Update presentation to the Seine River FN community, a CMC representative was approached by an Elder of the Seine River FN and informed that, because in their culture, the rock is considered the "oldest Indian", and because a large quantity of rock was going to be disturbed, as well as water on Mitta Lake, a special Pipe and Drum ceremony would need to take place within seven days. CMC was instructed to visit the drum keeper in each of the 7 First Nation Communities and offer tobacco and invite the drum keeper to the ceremony that was to take place the following Thursday at Mitta Lake. Drum keeps from the following communities attended: Seine River FN, Lac La Croix FN, Rainy River FN, Nigigoonsiminikaanmng FN, Mitaanjigamiing FN, Naicatchewenin FN, Doug and Lac Des Mille Lacs FN.

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There have been other visits by individual community members to Mitta Lake, including a visit by six members from Mitaanjigamiing FN in 2015. The last visit was held in July of 2017 with the Mineral Development officer for PWI-DI-GOO-ZING NE-YAA-ZHING Advisory Services.

CMC will continue to facilitate the Spring and Fall Pipe and Drum ceremonies during construction, operations and active closure. A commitment to this effect will be included in the Commitments Registry.

(ii) The potential Metis Canoe building site may have been used in the 1890's, however, the attached correspondence with the Atikokan Centennial Museum curator indicates:

'There is minimal documentation in the Atikokan Centennial Museum to support the assumption that there was a Metis Canoe building site located on the north shore of Sawbill Bay.

Our oldest map is dated 1917, created by the Department of Lands, Forests & Mines. It illustrates the mining districts of Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay and part of Algoma. The detailed map does not note any settlement or economic enterprise at this location.'

Furthermore, the Canoe building site was not identified in the Metis Traditional Knowledge study provided confidentially to CMC and CMC has no knowledge of any recent Metis use.

CMC will not restrict access to this site should a member of the Metis Nation of Ontario wish to access the site. A commitment to this effect will be included in the Commitments Registry. The experience of using the site would be effected by elevated noise levels compared to existing conditions, but predicted noise levels are below Health Canada recommended threshold at which mitigation should be proposed.

No mitigation is considered to be necessary.

(iii) It must be clarified that Aboriginal trapline area AT040 has only been used infrequently by the trapline owner to teach trapping and fishing to direct family members. There is not specific site considered to be a traditional teaching site within context of this information request. The impacts to trapping activities within AT040 have been mitigated through agreement (see response to T(3)-02). No further mitigation is necessary.

(iv) There are no known teaching, culturally or spiritually important sites located within the Air Quality LSA to which Indigenous groups are affiliated (Pers. Comm., Bud Dickson, Aug. 2, 2017).

Atikokan
Centennial *Celebrating all that we are!*
Museum & Historical Park

Box 849, 204 Main Street East, Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0 T: 807-597-6585

Monday, 17th July 2017

Bud Dickson, Manger
Indigenous and Community Relations
Canadian Malartic – Historic Métis Canoe Building Site
P. O. Box 2020
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0

RE: Environmental Assessment of Métis Canoe Building Site

Dear Bud,

There is minimal documentation in the Atikokan Centennial Museum to support the assumption that there was a Métis Canoe building site located on the north west shore of Sawbill Bay.

Our oldest map is dated 1917, created by the Department of Lands Forests & Mines. It illustrates the mining districts of Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay, and part of Algoma. The detailed map does not note any settlement or economic enterprise at this location.

The earliest documented history of Atikokan and surrounding area bears the following information about a site where canoes were made.

There was a trail blazed through the wilderness from the Canadian Pacific Rail Station in Bonheur, Ontario (west of Ignace now known as Martin) going south-west to the Hammond Reef Gold Mine site which was discovered in 1894, closed 1899. It was known as the Bonheur Trail. The trail was traversed by stagecoach to the halfway house at Red Paint. The stagecoach was an open democrat with 3 board seats and could carry 6 passengers. At the halfway house horses were changed and heavy draft horses were used to reach the Sawbill end because of the big hills. Where the trail intersected with Sawbill Bay (north west corner) passengers transferred to scows, boats or canoes to proceed to their destination during the open water season. Freight scows were powered by oars and sail, canoes could be purchased from a group of Indigenous Peoples, referred to as Indians in the history. The number of canoes built and sold at this site was not recorded and likely depended upon the supply of cedar and birch trees in the surrounding area.

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Box 849, 204 Main Street East, Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0 T: 807-597-6585

The history to which I refer was composed by Allan A Vitta, 1974 for the 75th Anniversary of Atikokan. The work is referenced and I've included a copy for your records. His work is well written and I believe appropriately researched. The work is indicative of the time period. Mr. Vitta was a veteran of the Second World War, a graduate of the School of Mines in Haileybury, Ontario. He had a lasting and absorbing interest in researching the early colourful history of this area.

The proposed camp for the mine site will be approximately one kilometre north of the former junction of the Bonheur Trail and Sawbill Bay.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Lois Fenton, Curator

Attachment: Page 25 of the History of Atikokan, 75th Anniversary