
The Review Board approves Alex Debogorski's proposed Diamond Exploration Project

YELLOWKNIFE – On January 6th, 2012 the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) submitted its Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision for Alex Debogorski's proposed Diamond Exploration Project to the Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. The diamond drilling exploration project is proposed southeast of Burnt Island on Great Slave Lake, NT in the Drybones Bay area.

The Review Board has concluded, pursuant to paragraph 128 (1) (a) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, that the proposed development as described in the Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment is not likely to have any significant adverse impact on the environment or to be a cause of significant public concern.

Because the Review Board concluded there will likely be no significant adverse impact or cause of significant public concern, the development application may proceed to the regulatory phase. The regulatory phase administered by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, may begin after ten days if the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and responsible ministers do not order an environmental impact review of the development within that period.

The Review Board's *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* document for Alex Debogorski's proposed Diamond Exploration Project EA1112-001 is available online in the public registry at:

http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=627&doc_stage=11

- **A summary of the decision is provided on pages 2 and 3 of this news release.**
- **Background on other assessments in the area is provided on page 5 and 6**
- **Page 7 contains instructions for arranging interviews and gathering other background information.**

About the Review Board

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* in 1998 as an independent administrative tribunal responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, Northwest Territories. As a co-management board, aboriginal land claim organizations nominate half of the board members, and the federal and territorial governments nominate the other half of the board members. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development appoints all members to the Review Board.

For further information, please contact, Renita Jenkins, Head of Communications at rjenkins@reviewboard.ca or call (867) 766-7051

Summary of the main Report of Environmental Assessment for Alex Debogorski's proposed Diamond Exploration Project

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducted an environmental assessment of Debogorski Diamond Exploration Project proposed in the Drybones Bay area of Great Slave Lake, in the Akaitcho region of the Northwest Territories. The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board referred the proposed development to environmental assessment based on the authority set out in paragraph 126(2)(a) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*.

Parties identified the following main issues during the environmental assessment process through their submissions and participation at the public hearing:

- Potential impacts on heritage and archaeological resources;
- Potential for cultural impacts from the Debogorski diamond exploration project in combination with other past present and reasonably foreseeable development in the Drybones Bay area;
- Concern with development proceeding in a sensitive area without a land management framework or land use plan in place;
- Concern with the federal agencies' lack of action to approve and implement other Review Board recommendations intended to mitigate against cumulative cultural impacts in the Drybones Bay area;
- Concern with competing interest in land uses in the Drybones Bay area; and
- Concern that adequate Crown consultation and accommodation had not occurred for the proposed project.

After careful consideration of the evidence, the Review Board finds that the Debogorski Diamond Exploration Project is not likely to have any significant adverse impact on the environment or be a cause of significant public concern.

The Review Board concludes that significant adverse impacts to archaeological and heritage sites are unlikely in the context of the first two drill sites and camp location, as these are already disturbed areas. In addition, the Review Board believes that the standard terms and conditions, such as staying at least 30 meters away from heritage sites, included in a land use permit will prevent significant adverse impacts to any unidentified archaeological resources that may exist in the developer's claim block.

The Review Board has considered the protection offered by standard terms and conditions, combined with the very small scale of the project and its location within an area where the land is previously disturbed. It concludes that the proposed project is neither likely to significantly

contribute to the previously identified cumulative adverse impacts on land use and culture nor be a cause of significant public concern.

Therefore, the Review Board finds that an environmental impact review of this proposed development is not necessary and the project should proceed to the regulatory phase for approvals. The Review Board has provided four suggestions that would help protect heritage resources as well as reduce development pressure in the Drybones Bay area. The four suggestions are:

Suggestion #1

The Review Board suggests that developer access the NWT archaeological sites database to obtain the locations of all archaeological sites inside or directly adjacent to the Smitski #1 claim, and that all known archaeological features within proximity to the initial two drill sites and camp location be shown to all staff at the exploration camp to prevent unintentional disturbance of the sites.

Suggestion #2

The Review Board suggests that the developer consult with Yellowknives Dene First Nation traditional land users prior to selecting the location for any camps or drill sites outside of the footprint of the existing Snowfield Development camp and roads.

Suggestion #3

For any activities planned by the developer on Burnt Island, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board should require the developer to conduct further archaeological survey work on the development footprint of any planned drill sites or accesses roads, if the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre can provide sufficient justification to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board for its need.

Suggestion #4

Until such a time that competing interests in land use in the Drybones Bay area are resolved, the Review Board suggests that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada proactively communicate to mineral claim holders in the Drybones Bay area that Section 81 relief of the NWT and Nunavut Mining Regulations will continue to be available to them should they request it, until such time that a plan for the Drybones Bay area is implemented.

Background on other environmental assessments in the area

The Review Board has heard, in this and other environmental assessments the concerns of land users about cumulative effects in the Drybones Bay area. It has recently released measures in another environment assessment recommending government plan for the area, and monitor and manage the cumulative effects.

This project is within that area. However, because of the small size of the project and its location in a disturbed area, the Review Board concluded that this particular project would not significantly contribute to cumulative effects.

Other Reports of Environmental Assessments for proposed developments in the area

Encore Renaissance Resources Corp (formerly Consolidated Goldwin Ventures Inc) - EA0506-005

Status: Review Board recommended approval with measures – waiting for ministerial response

- Reasons for Decision (2011) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=5&doc_stage=12
- Report of EA (2007) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=5&doc_stage=11

Sidon International Resources Corp. - EA0506-006

Status: Review Board recommended approval with measures - waiting for ministerial response

- Report of EA (2008) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=22&doc_stage=11

Snowfield Development Corp. - EA03-006

Status: Complete. Ministers accepted, with modifications, Review Board's recommendation to approve development with measures

- Report of EA (2004) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=23&doc_stage=11
- Ministerial acceptance with modifications (2004) –
- http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=23&doc_stage=13

New Shoshoni Ventures Ltd. - EA03-004

Status: Complete. Ministers accepted Review Board's recommendation to reject proposed development

- Report of EA (2004) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=15&doc_stage=11
- Ministerial acceptance of rejection (2006) - http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=15&doc_stage=13

North American General Resources Corp. - EA03-003

Status: Complete. Ministers accepted Review Board's recommendation to approve proposed development

- Report of EA (2004) -
http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=16&doc_stage=11
- Ministerial acceptance of approval (2005) -
http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=16&doc_stage=13

Encore Renaissance Resources Corp (formerly Consolidated Goldwin Ventures Inc) - EA03-002

Status: Complete. Ministers accepted Review Board's recommendation to approve proposed development

- Report of EA (2004) -
http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=4&doc_stage=11
- Ministerial acceptance of approval (2004) -
http://reviewboard.ca/registry/project_detail.php?project_id=4&doc_stage=13

Requesting an interview

If you are looking for information or would like to set up an interview, please call the Head of Communications at the Review Board.

Because of the quasi-judicial nature of the Review Board, there are certain limitations as to what the Chairperson and staff can speak about. Review Board decisions, submissions made by other parties or any other evidence must speak for itself. The staff cannot provide interpretation or explanations of any information that is on the public record. All the information is available on the Review Board's website.

If you would like to gain a better understand of the information on the public record, please contact the groups or individuals or outside expert who submitted the particular document. It is advisable to make sure they have had a chance to read the decision before soliciting their comments.

Finding background information and other interview sources

There are a number of sources you can use for background information about the Review Board and ongoing assessments.

Aside from the [public registry](#), which contains all the information the Review Board has on file, contact the developer of the project under assessment. Review Board staff will only be able to give you a cursory overview of the project. The developer is best suited to describe its own project.

For the Debogorski environmental assessment, the following groups were listed as registered parties.

- Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Lutsel K'e First Nation
- Akaitcho Interim Measures Agreement Implementation Office
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Deninu Kue First Nation
- North Slave Métis Alliance

You may wish to contact these groups to find out more about the information they submit to the Review Board for consideration.