



## News Release September 12, 2008

---

### **The Review Board announces its decisions for four proposed uranium exploration programs in the Thelon geologic basin**

YELLOWKNIFE – On September 11, 2008, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) announced its decisions and recommendations for the following environmental assessments:

1. EA0708-002: Uravan Minerals Inc.'s proposed South Boomerang Lake development
2. EA0708-003: Uravan Minerals Inc.'s proposed North Boomerang Lake development
3. EA0708-004: Bayswater Uranium Corporation's proposed EL Lake development
4. EA0708-005: Bayswater Uranium Corporation's proposed Crab Lake development

In its *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* for Bayswater Uranium Corporation's proposed Crab Lake uranium exploration project, the Review Board recommended the federal and responsible ministers allow the proposed development to proceed to permitting. The Review Board's recommendation to approve the Crab Lake project is conditional on the implementation of four measures necessary to avoid significant adverse environmental impacts on barren ground caribou and heritage resources. See attached backgrounder for a summary of the measures contained in the *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* for the Crab Lake project.

In its decisions for Uravan Minerals' proposed North and South Boomerang Lake developments and for Bayswater Uranium Corporation's proposed EL Lake development, the Review Board recommended the federal and responsible ministers reject each proposed development without ordering an environmental impact review.

The Review Board was of the opinion that the Upper Thelon River Basin has a high spiritual and cultural importance to the Akaitcho Dene and other Aboriginal peoples. The Review Board recognized that Aboriginal people have a connection to the Upper Thelon River Basin that goes beyond the use of the physical landscape. The Aboriginal groups see any industrial development in the Upper Thelon River Basin as incompatible with the cultural values they associate with this spiritually significant landscape. While these proposed developments are physically small, the Review Board concluded that in combination with the cumulative effects of other present and reasonably foreseeable future developments in the Upper Thelon River Basin, each proposed development will likely cause significant adverse cultural impacts on Aboriginal peoples by impacting an area of very high spiritual importance.

A noteworthy difference between the three projects recommended for rejection and the Crab Lake project is the location of the proposed development. The Crab Lake project is proposed within the Dubawnt River watershed, which is east of the Upper Thelon River Basin where the other three projects are located.

To make each decision, the Review Board considered the evidence on the public record for each environmental assessment. Each public record includes evidence transferred from the previously completed UR Energy Screech Lake environmental assessment's (EA0607-003) public registry.

The Review Board also heard from Aboriginal groups, government and members of the public throughout the course of the four environmental assessments.

The Review Board's recommendations now go to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and other ministers responsible for regulating the project. These ministers have the following options for each of the Review Board's decisions:

- 1) accept the Review Board's recommendation;
- 2) send the recommendation back to the Review Board for further consideration
- 3) start a "consult-to-modify" process which will include discussions with the Review Board to modify certain aspects of the decision; or
- 4) order an environmental impact review.

The Review Board's four *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* documents are available online in the public registry at [mveirb.nt.ca](http://mveirb.nt.ca)

#### *About the Review Board*

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) 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 Indian and Northern Affairs appoints all members to the Review Board.

**For further information, please call:**

**Renita Jenkins**

Manager of Communications

[rjenkins@mveirb.nt.ca](mailto:rjenkins@mveirb.nt.ca)

(867) 766-7051

## Backgrounder

### *Measures required in the Report of Environmental Assessment for the Crab Lake project*

#### **Measure #1:**

The responsible ministers and applicable regulatory agencies shall ensure the following for the Crab Lake development:

- i. To avoid impacts on caribou the developer shall not conduct any activities at its proposed drilling targets or any ground-based or airborne geophysical survey activities during the following time periods:
  - o Mid-March to the end of May, to avoid disturbance to pregnant cows migrating to calving grounds; and
  - o The month of October, to avoid disturbance during the rutting period.
- ii. To avoid disturbance on caribou during periods when they are migrating, the developer shall not conduct:
  - o Any drilling within 10 kilometres of recognized water crossings<sup>1</sup> between July 15 and the end of September.
  - o Operations (including drilling, any aircraft overflights below 300 metres, and vehicle use outside of the immediate camp area) when concentrations of caribou (>50 animals) are within 500 metres of drilling operations/sites. A spotter on the drill tower and marker flags in a 500 metre perimeter shall be used to assist in identifying caribou encroachment.

#### **Measure #2:**

To avoid disturbance of caribou, the responsible ministers and applicable regulatory agencies shall ensure that one of the following restrictions are placed on any airborne geophysical surveys in support of the Crab Lake development:

- i. Airborne geophysical surveys will be limited only to the June 1-July 15 period; or
- ii. Airborne geophysical surveys will be conducted entirely at a minimum of 300 metres above ground level; or
- iii. Airborne geophysical surveys will only be conducted after a same day aerial or ground survey, including the community environmental monitor (See Measure #3), has

---

<sup>1</sup> For clarification, a “recognized water crossing” is one identified and mapped by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of the Northwest Territories or by the Beverly & Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board. The Review Board recommends these organizations provide available information to the developer well in advance of any on the ground activities in support of the Crab Lake development.

confirmed there are no cow/calve groups (>50 animals) within five kilometres of the proposed survey grid.

**Measure #3:**

The responsible ministers and applicable regulatory agencies shall require the developer to have at least one community environmental monitor on site at all times during development activities. Community environmental monitors will at minimum assist with the following:

- i. Conduct of regular on the ground surveys both prior to start up and during activities.
- ii. Receipt and cataloguing reports from aerial overflights (see Commitment #12 in the *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision*) of the project area(s).
- iii. Monitoring the presence of caribou near the development activities as required in Measure #1.

The developer will make the reports of the community environmental monitors available to land use inspectors and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

**Measure #4:**

The responsible ministers and applicable regulatory agencies shall ensure the following protections are implemented to safeguard heritage resources that may be impacted by Bayswater Uranium Corporation's Crab Lake development:

- i. Bayswater Uranium Corporation shall conduct a heritage resource impact assessment of all proposed development areas (including drilling target sites, the proposed work camp and any ground access routes or surface sampling locations) and provide a report to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre prior to on-land operations at any location proceeding. The archaeologist conducting the heritage resource impact assessment shall seek input from respected elders of affected first nations.
- ii. No part of the proposed development shall occur within 100 metres of any known or suspected archaeological, burial or cultural site.
- iii. If a suspected archaeological, burial or cultural site is identified during operations, a 100 metre buffer zone shall be established, the location photographed, the location coordinates logged, and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and affected first nations notified.