



July 5, 2004

Mr. Vern Christensen
Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Box 938
5102 – 50th Ave.
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Dear Mr. ~~Christensen~~ ^{Vern},

Thank you for your letter of June 30th requesting a definition of the phrase “archaeological resource impact assessment”, and for clarifying the use of the terms “survey” and “scouting”.

The term “scouting” is not used in archaeological research and therefore cannot be adequately defined. The Review Board used this term in R2 of the Snowfield “Report of EA and Reasons for Decision...” with respect to a winter ‘scouting’ of access routes. Please note that, except in rare instances, archaeological research can only be undertaken when the ground is clear of snow cover.

An “Archaeological Survey” would involve a search (reconnaissance) for new archaeological sites and is regarded, generally, as a ‘research’ effort. The term is widely used in archaeological research.

An “Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment” implies a broader program which usually includes a search for new archaeological sites, but also requires that known archaeological sites be identified and relocated (known as reconnaissance and inventory). Once all sites within a development area are identified and located then an assessment is completed to determine the nature and extent of potential impacts. Finally, a mitigation plan is developed for each site.

Any mitigation effort proposed for a site should take into account cultural, historic, public, and scientific values. Mitigative techniques accepted in the NWT (and, indeed, throughout North America) range from avoidance (where the site is not disturbed) to complete and full excavation (where all cultural materials are excavated in a controlled fashion to document all aspects of the site). Once potential impacts to a site have been ‘mitigated’ then the site area can undergo development. In situations where an



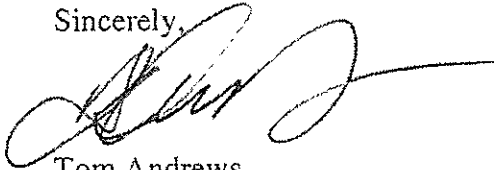
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archaeological impact assessment is undertaken, we require that mitigation plans be submitted and approved before we will advise the land management authority to issue a permit for the proposed development.

Sometimes, in very large development areas, a systematic approach to searching for archaeological sites must be used. Generally this entails developing a sample of areas that will be intensively searched for archaeological sites. Sample areas can be selected in a variety of different ways (e.g. based on landforms, or selected through stratified random or random sampling procedures, or various combinations), but where traditional land use information is available it is always used to inform the search for sites. (The various developments described for the Drybones and Wool Bay areas are small enough that all of the proposed development areas could be examined by an archaeologist.)

In our review of the Review Board's recommendations, we requested that the phrase "archaeological resource impact assessment" be used in place of "survey" to ensure that a complete assessment, including the development of a mitigation plan, would be undertaken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Andrews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Andrews
Territorial Archaeologist
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre