

To: MACKENZIE VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW BOARD

ANSWERS TO EVIDENCE TRANSFER & SCOPING QUESTIONS FOR URAVAN'S
NORTH & SOUTH BOOMERANG LAKE MINERAL EXPLORATION
AND
BAYSWATER'S EL LAKE & CRAB LAKE MINERAL EXPLORATION

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EVIDENCE TRANSFER QUESTIONS (pertaining to all four EAs)

I agree that the entire "Hearing Transcript and Report of Reasons for Decision" for EA 0607-003 (UR Energy, Screech Lake) should be considered as evidence for all four current EAs (EA 0708-002, EA 0708-003, EA 0708-004, EA 0708-005). The issues are exactly the same as those for the UR Energy Screech Lake EA. In fact, I don't see any reason for holding hearings on the four EAs for Uravan and Bayswater. Nothing has changed and MVEIRB could not possibly come up with a different decision than it did for UR Energy's application to drill for uranium in the same area. As I stated previously to the Board (MVEIRB), considering how emotional the UR Energy hearings were for the citizens of Lutsel K'e, it's almost cruel to put this community through this same process again. What could possibly be different this time?

SCOPING QUESTIONS (pertaining to all four EAs)

Question 2b:

In addition to the primary issues of (1)Impacts on the Beverly and Ahiak caribou herds and (2)Impacts on Aboriginal culture, the Board needs to consider as an important, but secondary, issue: (3)Impacts of mineral exploration and development on tourism and ecotourism operators on the upper Thelon River.

The Board should be aware of the fact that the dominant use of the upper Thelon River during the past 35 years has been by recreational canoeists in summer, and that the Thelon River is one of the most important tourism resources in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Recreational canoeists come from all over North America and Europe every summer to paddle the Thelon River, both on their own and with licenced tourism operators like me. Although the majority of these canoeists paddle only that part of the Thelon within the Thelon Wildlife

Sanctuary, a significant number (many dozens each year) paddle the upper Thelon south of the sanctuary as well. Most of these private recreational canoeists on the upper Thelon tend to be on trips of a month or more, on their way through the sanctuary and on to Baker Lake.

Before 2006 (when Uravan began drilling for uranium on the upper Thelon) I traditionally operated two commercial canoe trips on the upper Thelon south of the sanctuary and I have been doing that since the mid 1970s. Now, I have been forced to abandon the 160 km. stretch of the Thelon south of the sanctuary because of mineral exploration. Therefore, the impact on my business of mineral exploration on the upper Thelon River in recent years has been to EXCLUDE my business from an area that I have traditionally operated in and for which I have held an Outfitter's Licence/Tour Operator's Licence since 1975.

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut have acquired an international reputation as the home of the best wilderness canoeing rivers left on Earth. The Thelon River inside the borders of the Northwest Territories is second only to the South Nahanni River in popularity amongst wilderness canoeists. These paddlers come from as far away as Australia seeking remote untouched wilderness and solitude, to experience the pristine tundra and to see some of the last free-roaming herds of wild animals left on the planet. For some people it's akin to a religious experience---and it may sound corny---but most go away with a sense of renewal and new meaning in their lives. At the very least, nearly all of these people view it as "the trip of a lifetime."

Mineral exploration, with its man-made noise (drilling, aircraft and other engine noise), and frequent sightings of low-flying helicopters and other aircraft are not compatible with the kinds of experiences these wilderness canoeists seek. Even worse, when canoeists enter areas being explored for minerals they are frequently buzzed and even harassed by helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. I've even had helicopters land in my campsites, their occupants starved for the sight of a woman. In fact, once you spot a helicopter it's rare not to be buzzed by it. This has happened to me innumerable times over the years (this is one of the chief reasons why I abandoned the entire western Barren Lands in 1980) including 2006 and 2007 when I made the mistake of poking into the edges of these mineral exploration areas on the upper Thelon River.

Finally, regarding the "Project Description" summaries submitted to the Board by both Uravan and Bayswater, I find their knowledge of the natural and cultural history shockingly inadequate. Obviously, neither company has any real interest in or knowledge of these matters. If their offerings on these subjects in their project descriptions weren't so

pathetic and deceiving, they would be downright humorous---like the assertion by Bayswater that these areas on the upper Thelon are not in the post-calving area of the Beverly caribou herd (so how come most of the Beverly herd can usually be found migrating through here in late July); like that pitiful list of bird species that Bayswater has inserted in its project descriptions (obviously put together by some underling spending an hour or so with a field guide book on North American birds); like Bayswater's assurances that they will keep their eyes peeled for the Eskimo curlew (admittedly, outright hilarious); like Bayswater's assertion that it will keep archaeological data confidential (as if such sites were rare, when in reality they are almost everywhere you look along the Thelon and between large lakes); like Bayswater promising to keep their helicopters 300 and 610 metres above the ground so as not to disturb wildlife (when in reality helicopters used in mineral exploration seldom fly more than 50 or 100 metres above ground and harass the hell out of large mammals and canoeists alike); like Bayswater's bibliography of a whopping six titles in reference to natural and human history (when for starters they could have taken a look at the 163 titles on these subjects in the bibliography of David Pelly's book "Thelon--a River Sanctuary"); and like the impossibly low numbers of large mammals reportedly seen by Uravan (page 13) after two summers in the area (a joke or something far worse).

These people are complete scoundrels and wanton plunderers who care nothing about anything but their own private bank accounts. I urge the Board to send them packing, once and for all.

Alex Hall, Canoe Arctic Inc.