

NORTH SLAVE MÉTIS ALLIANCE

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Application #914 – 2008-2010 Baseline Studies for Avalon Ventures Ltd. Proposed Thor Lake Rare Earth Metals Project (Aquatics and Hydrology component)

The North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA) has reviewed, and conditionally supports the aforementioned application submitted by Ms. Carey Sibbald, based upon the conditions and assumptions as below.

The NSMA represents the indigenous North Slave Métis People whose ancestors have continuously “used and occupied” the North Slave area since long before Europeans “established effective control” of fisheries or fish habitat management in the area. This means the indigenous North Slave Métis People possess Aboriginal Rights and Titles to the lands and resources throughout the North Slave area. As well, about seventy-five of the roughly ninety Métis families¹ occupying this area “took Treaty” at Fort Rae, in 1921, which means that most, if not all, North Slave Métis also possess Treaty Rights. The area identified as our homeland, or traditional territory during the negotiation of Treaty 11 included all that area between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, and from the Deh Cho (Mackenzie) River to Contwoyto Lake, and encompasses completely the area relevant to this application. As well, this application is inside of that portion of our traditional territory which was set aside in 1923 for our exclusive harvesting (shared between treaty Dene and Métis) as the 70,000 square mile (181,300 square kilometre) Yellowknife Game Preserve.

The Métis People indigenous to the North Slave have a direct and proprietary interest in Thor Lake, which is within the NSMA's traditional territory.

Guidelines for the conduct of ethical research have been provided by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People², and described in section 6 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Research³. These guidelines confirm that the interests of Aboriginal Peoples must be taken into account in the conduct of research, in addition to the individual interests of aboriginal individuals, and that Aboriginal Peoples have a right to be meaningfully involved in and benefit from research that affects them.

¹ Treaty Research Report, Treaty Eleven (1921) INAC 1986. QS-3440-000-EE-A1

² http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sgmm_e.html

³ <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/section6.cfm>

The best way for the North Slave Métis to ascertain whether baseline studies are completed to standards acceptable to the North Slave Métis is to utilize traditional Métis Knowledge, which requires hands-on experience at the site. We are not satisfied with textual or mathematical information provided to us by Government, Industry, or Industrial Consultants, and have many reasons not to trust resource management decisions based upon that kind of information. We also require the experience based opinions of our respected elders to inform our community whether or not the research is acceptable or not. The meaningful incorporation of Traditional Knowledge ensures that community concerns, as well as academic interests, are addressed by the research.

Our support, therefore, is based on these conditions and expectations:

- ∞ Ms. Sibbald will use at least one NSMA field assistant or bear monitor for each baseline study every year. She should contact the undersigned to confirm the details of this participation at least one month in advance.
- ∞ Ms. Sibbald will provide the NSMA with copies of annual reports and published papers for research done in their traditional area. Please email these to the undersigned by email as soon as they are completed and/or published.
- ∞ At the end of each year of research, the NSMA expects a community presentation, attended by principle members of the research team, to discuss the methods and findings of the study and to ensure that Métis traditional knowledge is incorporated into the interpretation of the results, and is used to improve and adapt methods to local conditions, where appropriate. Costs associated with this meeting including room rental, food and beverages, compensation to participants, and staff time will be covered by the applicant Ms. Sibbald must contact the undersigned by email at least one month prior to a proposed date for these meetings.
- ∞ The written summary report required by the Scientists Act should include details on NSMA community consultation, NSMA member participation and the integration of Metis Traditional Knowledge into this research.

Since many researchers are being asked to present their preliminary field results in September, at a community meeting, we suggest this be planned well in advance to minimize inconvenience and “consultation fatigue” to NSMA community members, and to minimize meeting costs for the researchers.

Sincerely,



Sheryl Grieve
Manager, Lands and Resources
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CC: Carey Sibbald (carey.sibbald@JacquesWhitford.com)
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