

GLOSSARY

Aquifer	An underground layer of rock or soil that contains important amounts of water.
Archaeology	The scientific study of the material remains of the cultures of historical or prehistorical peoples.
Bioaccumulation	The uptake and retention of contaminants by an organism from its environment.
Biochemical oxygen demand	A measure of the amount of oxygen consumed in the biological processes that breakdown organic matter in water. The greater the biochemical oxygen demand, the greater the degree of pollution.
Biodiversity	A measure of the variety of plants and animals in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
Borrow pit	A pit from which material is taken for building roads and for similar activities.
Cumulative effects	The impacts of a development taken in combination with the impacts of other past, current, or reasonably foreseeable future developments.
Demography	The statistical study of populations, with particular reference to births, deaths, migratory movements, age and sex.
Ecosystem	The organisms of a natural community together with their environment.
Esker	A winding ridge made of sand and gravel deposited by a melting glacier.
Faulting	Cracks or breaks within a body of rock, causing one part of the body of rock to slip or slide relative to the other.
Fines	Very small particles of rock, mineral or sediment.
Geochemistry	The study of the chemical composition of the earth and the physical and chemical processes responsible for it.
Geology	The study of Earth in terms of its development as a planet. Commonly thought of as the study of rocks.
Geomorphology	The scientific discipline that studies the surface features of the Earth, including land forms.
Geotechnical	Relating to the application of engineering to geology.
Gradient	The angle of a slope, or its steepness.
Greenhouse Gas	A gas released into the atmosphere, often by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, that increases the capacity of the lower atmosphere to trap heat from the sun, thereby contributing to global warming.
Hydrocarbons	Any substance containing carbon and hydrogen in various combinations (e.g., gasoline and oil).

Hydrology	The science that deals with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the Earth, including their reactions with the environment.
Leaching	The process by which a liquid (e.g., water) passes through a substance, picking up some of the material and carrying it to other places. Can occur underground in soil and rock, or above ground through piles of material.
Limnology	The study of life in lakes, ponds, and streams.
Lithology	The description of the physical characteristics of a rock, often based on its colour, structure, mineral components, and grain size.
Nitrate	A compound containing nitrogen that can exist in the atmosphere or as a dissolved gas in water, and that can have harmful effects on humans and animals.
Nitrite	A chemical compound produced when ammonia in wastewater is oxidized by bacterial or chemical reactions and ultimately becomes nitrate.
Nitrogen dioxide	The result of nitrate oxide combining with oxygen in the atmosphere. Nitrate oxide is a gas formed by combustion under high temperature and pressure, for example in a vehicle engine. Nitrogen dioxide is a major component of photochemical smog.
Nunavummiut	The indigenous inhabitants of Nunavut.
Ore	A rock or mineral that contains a valuable constituent, such as diamonds or a metal, for which it is mined and processed.
Overburden	Material that must be removed to allow access to an ore body, particularly in a surface mining operation.
Palaeobotany	The study of ancient and fossil plants and vegetation.
Palaeontology	The study of life in the past as recorded by fossil remains.
Periphyton	Very small plants that live attached to a surface in freshwater but do not move around.
Permafrost	Permanently frozen ground.
Phenology	The study of periodic phenomena in plants, such as the time of flowering in relation to climate.
Phytoplankton	Very small plants that float or drift in lakes.
Plume	A visible or measurable discharge of a contaminant from a given point of origin. Plumes may occur in water or air.
Pore	A very small hole, such as may occur in some types of rock.

Post-closure	The period of time, considered to be up to 30 years, following the shut-down of a mine or other facility, during which monitoring of its effects should be continued.
Post-project audit	An evaluation after a development of all of its environmental and social impacts and of the mitigation measures applied to it.
Proponent	The individual or organization that wishes to carry out a development project.
Raptor	A bird that hunts by snatching its prey.
Riparian	The land-water interface. Also refers to organisms living or located on the bank of a stream, river or lake.
Rock glacier	Boulders and fine material cemented by ice about a meter below the surface.
Rock heave	The movement of rocks as a result of freezing and thawing.
Rotary-wing aircraft	A helicopter.
Sacred site	A place on the land created or used by Inuit spiritual leaders in the past for religious ceremonies, such as: a platform or formation leading to an “altar”; a hill, mountain, stone, boulder, river, lake, or Inukshuk designated as a sacred site; an offering place where people might plead for good fortune and well-being, often found along the coast, but also inland; a place where an unusual event might have happened, or an event that led to a death or a story of survival; a place known to Elders in legend where a significant story occurred. (See Ittarnisilirijit Conference on Sacred Sites and Spiritual Places, Rankin Inlet, 1996).
Seismicity	The phenomenon of earth movements, in extreme cases in the form of earthquakes, and their geographic distribution.
Sulfur dioxide	A gas formed when sulfur burns in the presence of oxygen, as for example in the burning of gasoline or diesel fuel in a vehicle engine. It is a major air pollutant that is corrosive and harmful to plants and animals, especially trees.
Tailings pond	An engineered structure for storing those portions of washed, processed or milled ore that are regarded as too poor to be treated/processed further.
Talik	Permanently unfrozen ground in regions of permafrost. Usually applies to a layer that lies above the permafrost but below the active layer.
Thermal inversion	A phenomenon in which a layer of cold air above a layer of warm air close to the ground prohibits the dispersion of atmospheric pollution, such as vehicle exhausts.
Thermal stability	The degree to which something, such as permafrost, has the capacity to remain at the same temperature over time.
Toponym	A place name.

Toxin	A poisonous substance.
Vascular plant	A plant with a particular type of tissue for carrying water and mineral salts and for assisting the plant to stand upright.
Zooplankton	Very small animals that float or drift in lakes.