

Appendix D: Compliance Monitoring Reports

**APPENDIX D.4: HOPE BAY PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE STATUS REPORT
2023**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Hope Bay archaeological field program involved inventory surveys of proposed exploration zones and potential developments, revisits of seven known sites to confirm location accuracy and update site content information, and completion of mitigation of one site that is likely to be affected by proposed development in the near future. Inventory surveys were restricted to the north portion of the property where the exploration activities were focused. The exploration program involved more than 300 potential drill targets. Additional inventory surveys were completed of a possible fuel line route in Roberts Bay, a wind turbine site south of Doris, and some spot checks along the east side of the TIA. The mitigation of the single tent ring at site NaNh-109 comprised plan mapping to scale and completion of some excavations inside and around the ring as well as checking under the ring rocks. No artifacts were found. Seven previously recorded sites were revisited to update coordinates and create polygons because they were within proposed exploration areas.

Nine archaeological sites were newly recorded as the result of the surveys in 2023. Four sites were found during surveys of proposed drill areas: one in Hope Bay, two in Till zone west of Windy Lake and one along Patch Lake in the Patch zone. One site was found during the surveys east of the TIA, and the remaining four sites were either reported by prospecting geologists working west of the Koignuk River or found during the archaeological team's investigations of those sites.

No sites were found to be in direct conflict with proposed drilling, but two possible drill sites were situated within 25 m and 40 m of a previously recorded site, and one newly recorded site is within an intensive drilling zone. In these cases, it is recommended to keep all activities as far as possible from the sites, and to consider protective fencing during drilling.

The proposed fuel line route and associated anchor lines in Roberts Bay, as currently proposed, are in close proximity to four previously recorded sites. A slightly different route for the fuel line was examined by the archaeological team and found to reduce potential for effects on three of those sites. Effects from an anchor line are still possible on one site, and careful assessments of possibilities for avoidance are recommended.

The sites found during 2023 investigations are generally small, containing between one to three stone features, mainly rings of varying sizes and styles of construction, but also possible hunting blinds and/or caches. One site is unique in this study area: a 500 m long line of 14 upright rocks on elevated bedrock, interpreted to mark a route. This site was mapped by drone, which worked extremely well to record all of this large site.

The 23 years of investigations completed up to and including 2023 have resulted in the recording of 352 archaeological sites, 37 of which have been mitigated due to various project related potential disturbances over the years. Most of these mitigated sites have not yet been impacted by project activities since development has been interrupted and project plans have been revised several times. Based on the current proposed project footprint, 21 additional recorded sites are recommended for site data recovery, while 35 sites are recommended for monitoring. However, small refinements in individual project component alignments and boundaries may still change recommendations for some sites. Another 40 sites are recommended for reassessment as the project footprint finalizes and may or may not require some level of mitigation. Although further developments of the belt-wide Madrid-Boston project are currently on hold, close communication between project infrastructure planners, construction supervisors and the project archaeologist will continue to be crucial during the project planning and development phase.

Archaeological assessments of the ongoing exploration program must continue since a significant proportion of the project area has not been examined for archaeological resources. An important component of this work will be to continue to revisit and update coordinates for sites recorded in the early years of investigation as well as to create polygons around multi-feature sites in order to accurately delineate avoidance zones.