

Executive Summary

This report details archaeological investigations completed in 2024 by InterGroup Consultants Ltd. (InterGroup) on behalf of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (AEM) at their Hope Bay property. The project is located in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, approximately 685 kilometres (km) northeast of Yellowknife, NWT and 125 km southwest of Cambridge Bay, NU. Field studies were conducted from July 3 to July 10, 2024, under Nunavut Archaeologist's Permit 2024-09A.

The 2024 Hope Bay archaeological field program involved assessments of potential exploration zones and proposed near-future developments, and mitigation of one site in Roberts Bay that is likely to be affected by proposed actions in the near future. Eight exploration zones within which drilling could occur this year were delineated by the exploration team, although the focus of intensive exploration was within the Madrid-Patch area. These were assessed by helicopter overflights and ground reconnaissance of selected portions. One large site, NbNh-53, was recorded in one of the exploration zones.

Development related assessments focused on the following components slated for imminent construction:

- Madrid to Patch exploration track
- Saline pond east of the TIA
- TIA to Madrid road and pipeline
- Expanded laydown areas
- Widening of the Doris to Windy road, realignment around a saline pond
- Camp and fuel tank storage along Windy road
- Two areas for wind turbines

Ground reconnaissance was completed along the Madrid to Patch exploration track and the saline pond east of the TIA. Two sites were recorded during these surveys, one in each project area (NaNh-124, NaNh-123, respectively). The remaining project developments are in areas that had been previously assessed or in the case of the wind turbine areas were subject to preliminary assessment since locations were not finalized.

Because these developments were brought forward too late to include mitigation plans in the 2024 permit application, no site data recovery mitigation could be completed this year. There are six sites along the TIA to Madrid road that will require mitigation: four (NaNh-35, NaNh-36, NaNh-113, NaNh-117) are recommended for site data recovery, while at two (NaNh-107, NaNh-108) plan mapping and protection during construction is minimally recommended. Newly recorded sites NaNh-123, NaNh-124 are recommended for site data recovery mitigation. Site NaNh-121 is within potential exploration/ road construction effects, but this cache was mapped by drone last season, and this is considered sufficient, given its location on bedrock with little chance of obscured remains.

The mitigation of site NbNh-52 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 during excavations;

two wood tent pegs and two pieces of wood were collected from the surface. This site is interpreted to be a late historic short term camp site.

Two of sites recorded during 2024 investigations are small, containing between two to four stone features comprising rings, markers and cache. These sites are recommended for mitigation due to proximity to imminent developments. The third site is a large camp that may exhibit multiple occupations. This site is within an exploration zone and should be readily avoidable by siting drills beyond the required buffer.

The 24 years of investigations completed up to and including 2024 have resulted in the recording of 355 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, 23 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 each year 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.