



Gartner Lee Limited

November 5, 2003

Sherry Sian
Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
P.O. Box 938
5102 – 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2N7

Dear Ms. Sian:

Re: 23546 – Respond to participant comments on regional cumulative effects study for Drybones/ Wool Bay

I am writing in response to the questions raised concerning the report entitled, *Regional cumulative effects study for Drybones Bay and Wool Bay* and am responding, where applicable, to the questions posed by the parties. Prior to providing the more detailed, party-specific response, I would like to cover some common themes.

Public concern

Gartner Lee has made no judgement regarding public concern though we can appreciate how the wording in the report can leave that impression. The reasons for referral cited by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, was “public concern”. The evaluation that public concern exists has already been made. In the preparation of the *Cumulative Effects Study*, reference is made to public concern, but only for the purpose of outlining the history of the environmental assessments under consideration. Concern for cumulative impacts, impacts on social and cultural resources, and traditional land use were included in the correspondence received by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board during their preliminary screening process. The Review Board will be considering these issues during its review of the environmental effects, and will be evaluating the significance of any changes upon reviewing the evidence submitted by the parties.

Development proposal information

Several parties expressed concern over the adequacy of the information in the Development Assessment Reports and the land use permits. Gartner Lee recognizes the issues raised and the concern for the completeness of the *Cumulative Effects Study*. We also recognize that since the submission of the report, there have been changes to the proposed developments namely, Snowfield’s reintroduction of a bulk sample program. At the time of writing the report, we made every effort to have as complete a picture of the development proposals as possible. At the direction of Review Board staff, we listed the discrepancy on the report and otherwise did our best to work with the information available to us.



Hearing dates

At the time of drafting the report, the hearing dates were identified as November 18-19. It is understood that the dates have been changed to November 25-26.

Databases

Gartner Lee did consider databases such as NORMIN.DB, historical listing of claims, etc. While these databases indicate a long-standing interest in the mineral potential (and therefore economic potential) in the Wool Bay and Drybones Bay area, they offered limited information on the kind of activities that took place on the claimed areas and / or it was assumed that the activity resulted in no change to the environment.

Matrix (Table 16)

The preparation of the matrix was intended to provide a snapshot of the activities and possible environmental changes that have taken place in the Regional Study Area. In the absence of being able to visit each of the sites (e.g., cabins, camps, fishing etc.), it was necessary to develop a picture for these changes from such sources as the land use guideline books produced DIAND (commonly referred to as the “DIAND Blue Books”), previous environmental assessments in particular mitigation measures, and professional judgement.

In preparing the matrix, we did limit ourselves to those developments or activities that were still active in the summer of 2003 i.e., potentially still altering the environment. Similarly, with respect to future projects, we considered those projects or activities currently in the permitting process and had to make some assumptions about the amount of exploration that would take place. We recognized that there would have to be sufficient exploratory work in order to ensure that the claim remains active. We assumed that this might mean on each claim block that ultimately some kind of drill program might be undertaken such as in the applications currently before the Review Board. We did not assume that any of the new claims would lead to a bulk sample. That kind of assumption is statistically unwarranted.

At this point, Gartner Lee has noted the comments related to Tables 16 and 17, but we will not be revising the tables. We will ensure that the comments will be brought to the attention to the Review Board, in particular, those of Fisheries and Oceans. Their professional judgement on residual impacts with respect to fisheries impacts is reasonable.

Consultation

Gartner Lee accepts the questions and comments regarding the adequacy of consulting with elders. It was our understanding as per the terms of reference that we were not to undertake any primary research i.e., original, new research on the Drybones Bay and Wool Bay area, but rather only seek out available existing information. Through arrangements made primarily by Review Board staff, we did



contact the aboriginal organizations that expressed concern about the development proposals. Only those aboriginal organizations that wished to be parties to these environmental assessments by the end of June 2003 were invited to submit findings of the past (i.e., North Slave Metis Alliance) or ongoing (i.e., Yellowknives Dene First Nation) traditional knowledge studies. Lutsel K'e First Nation and Deninu Ku'e First Nation became parties to these environmental assessments following the release of the final report so consultation was not undertaken with the latter two parties.

Regional Study Area (Also see Bathurst Caribou study)

The regional study area was set to organize the scope of work not just the literature search. The error has been noted. The boundaries were established by considering the extent of the effects of the proposed developments in the Drybones and Wool Bays area. We did consider setting the boundaries according to the VECs (i.e., caribou migration), but when considering matters such as home range size or timing of activities, it was felt that the impact effects would be diluted to negligible and would not necessarily provide an accurate cumulative effects picture. The challenge with determining potential cumulative effects is defining the most appropriate boundary for the effects analysis.

Appendix E

The error has been noted. There is no appendix E. In the transition from draft two to the final report, the number of Appendices changed. The correct reference is Appendix D.

Bathurst Caribou study (Attachment A)

Since writing the report, the GNWT has released the latest population survey results for the Bathurst Caribou. It is attached for your consideration. The report does not offer any explanation for the decline in the population. As mentioned in the *Snap Lake Environmental Assessment* report based on information presented at the environmental assessment hearings, precautionary measures should be taken to prevent cumulative impacts to the caribou population. It was felt that there was potential that further development could impact caribou movement in the region. With respect to revisions to the *Cumulative Effects Study*, there will be no revisions to the report. However, the potential for significant impact on caribou in the region should be considered in this context.

Valued Environmental Components

Both the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the North Slave Metis Alliance have referenced their valued environmental components (VECs) for clarification to the existing list. Gartner Lee agrees that as summarized by these two parties, the clarification and interpretation of VECs is added to and included in the roll-up presented in the *Cumulative Effects Study*.



DETAILED RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BY THE PARTIES

North Slave Metis Alliance – October 23, 2003

2.0 Milestones and Deliverables

The Review Board has not completed its review of the proposed developments. The information gathering approach is summarized in Sections 3.3 – 3.5. Gartner Lee did contact your office and was offered information and maps on land and resource use in the Drybones Bay and Wool Bay area. Unfortunately, we were unable to use the information in the report.

3.0 Methodology

Noted. Directly affected parties will also have an interest in the report.

3.2.1 Yellowknives Dene First Nation Field Trip

Gartner Lee Ltd. was on-site July 20-22, 2003 as arranged with the Yellowknives Dene through the Review Board. This site visit was intended to allow for the exchange of information for planned field studies in the Drybones and Wool Bay areas. Other parties were not conducting research in the area at this time but were invited to provide submissions based on past work (See 2.0).

It has already been noted that Bob Turner of the NSMA was a participant in the DIAND site visit on August 14th. DIAND will be advised to revise their note on the trip.

3.5.2 Information Recording

Noted. This suggestion has been passed to the Review Board.

3.9.1 Information Availability

Noted. The limitation of the WKSS research studies to this report was their focus on the Lac de Gras area and northward. While Drybones and Wool Bays lie in the same geological area, no studies were found that extended to the shore of Great Slave Lake. It is correct to say, that in general, the WKSS research studies would have provided information on both the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the North Slave Metis. There is also information in these reports that could have been extrapolated to apply to the region within defined limits.

3.9.4 Suggested Information Requests

Noted. It will be at the discretion of the Review Board whether or not Information Requests will be filed with Directly Affected Parties to gauge the level of public concern.

4.1.4 Heritage Resources: Archaeology

Table 5 was prepared using information from the draft report prepared as a result of the 2003 research program. Permission to use that information was provided by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation on



the condition that the report remains confidential. It is our understanding that the intention is to register the sites with Archaeological Sites Registry Office at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. With permission from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation,

Any questions regarding this archaeological information should be directed to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

4.3.2 Plants

Noted.

4.4.1 Social, cultural and environmental sensitivities (VEC descriptions)

Gartner Lee has no difficulty with the thoughts expressed by the North Slave Metis Alliance. The comments provide additional depth to the descriptors.

Table 6-13. Explanation of the VEC descriptors.

<i>Social and cultural value</i>	Why the VEC is of social or cultural importance.
<i>Habitat use</i>	General distribution of the animal or plant.
<i>Exposure</i>	Other activities that may impact the animal or plant.
<i>Uncertainty – wildlife</i>	What is not currently known about the VEC.
<i>Uncertainty – human</i>	What is not currently known about the human use of the VEC.

4.6.3 Cumulative effects decision-making tools

Spelling mistake noted.

4.6.3.2 Cumulative effects assessment considerations

Most of these statements, while essential to the understanding of the impacts and essential to significance determination, are outside the scope of the work assigned to Gartner Lee. Any concerns relating to the terms of reference should be directed to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

Indian and Northern Affairs (Environment and Conservation)– October 22, 2003

1. Section 1.4 and Table 14

The source of the information in Table 14 is DIAND-Land Information Management. The map is available in the Review Board office. A digital copy of this map was posted to the Review Board's website (as per fax/e-mail notification from Sherry Sian, Environmental Assessment Officer, dated October 1, 2003)



2. Section 4.5.2 and Table 14.

We are uncertain as to which information may be missing from the report. The data used by Gartner Lee is presented in Attachments B and C respectively of this report. The Lims-Miner maps are available for reviewing at the Review Board. Digital copies of these maps were also posted to the Review Board's website (as per fax/e-mail notification from Sherry Sian, Environmental Assessment Officer, dated October 1, 2003).

Indian and Northern Affairs (Mineral Development Division)– October 22, 2003

1. Figure 1. Onshore and Offshore Activities in Regional Study Area has been available at the Review Board. It is re-attached to this response as Attachment E.

2. Error in Table of Contents
Noted.

3. Existing regulatory process
Noted. No response required.

4. Meaning of vital importance
The notion of "vital importance" was adopted from the correspondence of the Yellowknives Dene and the MVLWB and their request that the project be referred for environmental assessment.

5. Section 1.3 – Environmental Assessment Process
The intention of this section was to summarize the environmental impact assessment process to which development proposals are subject and not to discuss the particulars of the development proposals under consideration.

6. Reasons for referral
No response required from Gartner Lee.

7. Section 1.4.2 Local Study Area
Correction noted.

8. Section 2. Milestones and Deliverables
The operators that were contacted are summarized in Table 2.

9. Section 3.2 – Site visit
The report referenced was provided by the Yellowknives Dene with the understanding that it would be held in confidence. Information from this report is aggregated to a level comfortable for the



Yellowknives Dene to ensure that identified archaeological sites and graves would be protected. This approach was taken to be consistent with the stated intent of the MVRMA to avoid damage to “known, suspected archaeological sites”.

12. Section 3.4 Past activities

If the Mineral Development Division has information about past developments and their impacts overlooked by Gartner Lee, it should be placed on the public registry for consideration by the Review Board.

Section 3.4 Developer interviews

N/R means that there was a failure to note the name of the person (i.e., not recorded). The interviews, however, did take place.

17. Section 4.1.3 – Present Day

Noted. The clarification does not change the results of the report.

18. Section 4.1.4 – Heritage resources: Archaeology

The interpretation of the Cultural and Historical Resources report needs to be directed to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for clarification.

19. Section 4.2.4 - Hydrology

Noted. The clarification does not change the results of the report as the focus of the report was when there was the possibility of cumulative impacts.

20. Section 4.4.1 – Social, cultural and environmental sensitivities

Noted. It is correct that the Bathurst Caribou herd extend into northern Saskatchewan and not northern Alberta. The correction will be made.

21. Section 4.4.1 - Social, Cultural and Environmental Sensitivities (moose)

Gartner Lee did attempt to get information on moose populations and habitat use in the Drybones/Wool Bays area, but no survey has been conducted in the region. It is accurate to say that the GNWT does ask non-aboriginal hunters in the NWT to report their kills (approximately 70% do for the territory) there is no information for the aboriginal hunt. Extrapolations can be made from data in other regions, but given the proximity to Yellowknife – a large population base – the results will likely be inaccurate. Therefore, aside from anecdotal information uncertainty remains regarding the impacts to moose.

Moose are sensitive to loss of cover where predators are plentiful. Yes, it is valid to indicate that they also benefit from removal of forest cover such as may occur as a result of forest fire with the



introduction of new browse. In this case, we do not know the predator levels; therefore, it was considered valid to indicate that among the pressures on moose may be the removal of forest cover.

22. Section 4.4.1 - Social, Cultural and Environmental Sensitivities (caribou, moose, furbearers, waterfowl, fish and plants)

Gartner Lee understands the concerns raised by Indian and Northern Affairs regarding the degree to which the proposed developments may interfere with cultural activities. The purpose of Tables 6-13 was to summarize how a VEC may be affected (impacted) in order to focus the investigation and evaluation. Table 17 summarizes the outcome of the evaluation.

23. Section 4.4.1 - Social, Cultural and Environmental Sensitivities (fish)

See above.

24. Section 4.4.1 - Social, Cultural and Environmental Sensitivities (heritage resources)

The rationale for indicating that disturbance to heritage resources is unknown is because there has not been a comprehensive survey for heritage resources in the region. Prior to summer 2003, only 6 artifacts had been officially recorded.

25. Section 4.5 - Identification of Potential Cumulative Effects – 4.5.1 – Existing activities and projects

The information featured in report was obtained at the end of July and the beginning of August 2003. It is likely the difference is the change in status of the applications in the intervening 2-3 months. Attachment B and C is the information reviewed for this project. The corresponding map is available at the Review Board office. Attachment D is a summary of the drill locations.

It is suggested that any revisions to the information available in August be placed on the Review Board public registry.

26. Section 4.5.2 – Existing activities and developments

The GNWT - Forestry maintains a list of cabins, tent frames, etc. that they classify as *Values at risk*. *Values-at-risk* are defined in Forest Fire Management Policy 52.07-as *human life and the specific or collective set of natural or cultural resources and improvements/developments that have measurable or intrinsic worth and that could or may be destroyed or otherwise altered by fire in any given area*. Gartner Lee was not able to procure a copy of this list for the Drybones and Wool Bays area, but we did wish to acknowledge to presence of structures that were not otherwise registered or licensed.

27. Section 4.5 – Identification of Potential Cumulative Effects

The basis for the information summarized in Table 14 is in Attachment B and C. Gartner Lee would be pleased to take the opportunity to meet with Indian Affairs and Northern Development with the



permission of the Review Board to review the inaccuracies in the data and make the appropriate adjustments.

Gartner Lee recognizes that there are in existence over “a dozen shacks, cabins, large cottage, trailers, tent frames and various other structures throughout the area”. These are captured under the title “values-at-risk” and we were not given access to that information, and therefore could not record the number or their location. This has added to the impact related uncertainty of this report.

Gartner Lee contacted the known outfitters (Table 2) for the regional study area. Mr. Greg Robertson was the only operator who indicated providing fishing tours in the Wool Bay area.

28. Section 4.5.2 – Proposed projects – Table 15

Table 15 is a summary of each of the proposed developments based on the information provided in their land use permits and in their Development Assessment Reports. While it is true to say that there will be one ice road from Yellowknife to the region, we were not seeking to summarize the commonalities of the projects at this point, only to provide an overview of each of the projects.

29. Section 4.5.2 – Proposed Projects – Table 12 – Operations – Fuels, NAGRC
Need for correction noted.

Yellowknives Dene First Nation – October 29, 2003

Gartner Lee has no additional comments to add. Responses to the concerns of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation are summarized elsewhere in this correspondence.

EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. (*Response to Regional Cumulative Effect Study for Drybones Bay and Wool Bay* on behalf of Snowfield Development Corporation.)

We have no detailed comments on the response provided by EBA on behalf of Snowfield. The EBA comments are similar to those of others and do not need to be repeated here.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans – October 28, 2003

The concerns identified by Fisheries and Oceans are similar with those of others i.e.,

- accurate (final) descriptions of the proposed work;
- potential residual impacts as summarized in Tables 16 and 17; and
- selection of CES boundaries.

No additional comments will be provided at this point.



In conclusion, we trust that this response adequately covers the concerns raised by the parties to these environmental assessments. If you have any concerns regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Gordon Stewart in the Yellowknife office.

Yours very truly,
GARTNER LEE LIMITED

Heidi Klein
Sr. Environmental Planner, MES

attach.



Attachment A: Bathurst Caribou Population



Attachment B: Surface Dispositions



Attachment C: Land Use Permits



Attachment D: Drill Locations



Attachment E: On-shore and Off-shore