

Date

MEMORANDUM

To: Kirk Cameron
Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

Bill Oppen
Deputy Minister, Renewable Resources

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From: Angus Robertson
Deputy Minister, Economic Development

Re: Special Management Areas - Proposed Mineral Potential Assessments

As I am sure you know, it is the policy of the federal government that no federal land will be withdrawn from disposition without first taking into account the mineral potential of the area in question. More specifically, DIAND has provided written direction to the effect that assessment of the mineral and/or oil & gas potential of areas to be withdrawn or an explanation of why no assessment was done, must accompany all requests for withdrawal.

I think you will appreciate that the very limited funding we have for mineral potential assessments must be used not only for SMAs negotiated through First Nation Final Agreements, but also for protected areas established under YPAS and for regional land use planning purposes. It is therefore necessary for us to set priorities in terms of where we can conduct such studies to maximum advantage.

The following outlines our proposal for mineral potential assessments to be conducted by the staff of our Mineral Resources Branch during the remainder of this fiscal year.

- Proposed Frances Lake SMA – geological mapping and sample collection in the northern portion of the Study Area, with detailed mineral assessment to be carried out in Winter 2001/2002 or Fall 2002, depending upon schedule of Land Claims negotiations.

- Dhaw Ghro SMA - Geological mapping, sample collection and fossil chronology, with detailed mineral assessment to be carried out in winter 2001 (for use in management planning process).
- North Yukon Regional Land Use Planning Area and Eagle Plain Ecoregion - follow-up of geochemical anomalies from new survey in Eagle Plain ecoregion; geological mapping and prospecting; regional mineral potential map to be updated and completed to include area north of Kaltag Fault by Spring 2002; detailed mineral potential map of YPAS areas of interest in Eagle Plain ecoregion to be completed within 3 months of identification of areas of interest.
- Proposed Snafu-Tarfu SMA - geological mapping and sample collection, with preliminary report and map to be completed by September, 2001
- Proposed Wellesley Lake, Pickhandle Lakes, and Scotty Creek SMAs - preliminary survey of work conditions, road access, etc.
- Proposed M'Clintock/Swan Haven and Chadburn Lake SMAs - preliminary survey of work conditions, road access, etc.

A detailed mineral assessment is required for proposed boundary changes at Asi Keyi. This will involve field mapping at an estimated cost of about \$150,000, but unfortunately we do not have sufficient funds to conduct this work this year.

No detailed mineral potential assessments have yet been conducted in the following areas, and at this time we do not plan to conduct assessments. The reason is that there appears to be no ability to change final boundaries, designation of protection, or whether or not there will be full mineral withdrawal. This being the case, we cannot at the present time justify the expenditure of funds in these areas. Work could be done were additional funds to be made available to us.

- Kusawa (estimated cost ~\$150,000)
- Coal River (estimated cost ~\$150,000)
- Tagish Narrows (estimated cost ~\$35,000)

As well, fieldwork is not planned for the Ross River SMAs, since a proposal has yet to be advanced.

I would be pleased to discuss these issues with you at your convenience.

Angus Robertson
Deputy Minister