



GOVERNMENT OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
**Department of Environment and Conservation**  
**Lands Branch, Land Management Division**

**Paddy's Pond Float Plane Hangar Lots  
and Access Road Extension**

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**Environmental Assessment Registration**

**1. NAME OF UNDERTAKING**

Paddy's Pond Float Plane Hangar Lots and Access Road Extension

**2. PROPONENT**

**(i) Name of Body**

Land Management Division, Department of Environment and Conservation

**(ii) Contact Person**

Mr. John Howley, Resource Planner, Land Management Division, 729-0501  
Howley Building, Higgin's Line, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL A1C 4J6

**3. THE UNDERTAKING**

**(i) Nature of the Undertaking**

This project consists of the development of a maximum of 27 additional float plane hangar lots at the south end of Paddy's Pond, extending westward from 5 existing floatplane hangar lots. An area of approximately 4.2 ha (10.4 acres) of land will be required for the 27 lots. The number of lots may be reduced depending on terrain conditions. Approximately 0.86 km of new road construction will be required (1.06 ha; 2.61 acres) to provide vehicular access to the lots. The road will be an extension to a pre-existing access to the TCH which currently terminates at five aforementioned existing float plane hangar lots. (See Map 2). The new lots will be sold for the purpose of float plane hangars only. The proponent (Lands Branch) will construct the road, survey and sell the lots. All further development will be the responsibility of subsequent individual lot owners.

Paddy's Pond has been used as a float plane base for four or five decades by private

operators and is designated for unrestricted use for that purpose by Transport Canada. An aircraft fueling facility exists at the south end of the pond and at present 15 float planes are based at 11 dock/hangar sites in the same general area. The floatplane base originated as a commercial/passenger float plane base in the 1950's and operated as such for several years. In the 1960's it became a base for provincial water bombers. While it is no longer used for that purpose now, offices of the provincial Forestry Division remain there. Private float planes have been based at the pond since the 1950's. Eight lots for hangars were granted during the 1970's. There are three other sites permitted under Licences to Occupy (which do not have surveyed property lines). (See Map 2).

**(ii) Purpose / Rationale / Need for the Undertaking**

This proposal stems from the demand for further float plane docks/hangars in this area. Paddy's Pond has long been used for float plane hangars and docks. Fifteen float planes are currently based there on eight hangar lots and three other sites as portrayed on Map 2. Paddy's Pond float plane owners are represented by the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA). According to the head of this organization, Mr. Munden Critch, there is demand for lots from additional float plane owners. At present several operators are even doubling up on existing hangar lots. Operation for these owners is cumbersome and potentially hazardous as a result. Lots will be allocated only for the purpose of floatplane storage.

Note that in 1997 there was an application by a group known as the Private Aircraft Association for an airstrip in this general area (Registration #677). However, the Private Aircraft Association has been absorbed within COPA. Mr. Critch of COPA (and of the former PAA) informed us that both groups are, in fact, essentially the same people and they are no longer seeking to develop the airstrip.

**4. DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING**

**(i) Geographic Location**

**Description:** Paddy's Pond is located within the City of St. John's, adjacent to the west side of the Trans Canada Highway, about 4.5 km south of the TCH-Conception Bay South By-Pass Highway interchange. (See Map 1). The pond is irregularly shaped and roughly 2 km long and 2 km wide. It has a surface area of approximately 229 ha (566 acres) and 16 km of shoreline. Development under this proposal is confined to an area at the south end of the pond, extending about 600 m along the shoreline, inland to a depth of roughly 100 m. The development area is generally well drained and is covered with typical Newfoundland forest cover, predominantly back spruce with balsam fir, larch and occasional hardwood trees and shrubs. In low lying areas bog and marsh occur but where they do no lot development is proposed.

The south Paddy's Pond area is presently used for a business (Islander RV; on the former site of an automobile service station), a government Forestry office and for float plane hangars and docks. Approximately 11 docks/hangars currently exist there. Five are adjacent to the lots proposed under this submission. The others are located within 500 m. (See Map 2). A government forestry office and an RV sales office are located in the same general area well. Memorial University has an experimental woodlot adjacent to and overlapping the proposed hangar area. MUN has already agreed to transfer a parcel of land to facilitate the proposed development. Several (five or six) cottages exist at the north side of the pond which are well over 1 km from the proposed development.

**Maps:** Map 1 (1:50,000) and Map 2 (1:5,000) attached.

**(ii) Physical Features**

Please refer to attached maps which show terrain features and proposed lot layout. Generally the area is located along a 600 m portion of the south end of Paddy's Pond accessing a road extending from the TCH. With the exception of a poorly drained area between lots 17 and 18 (to be left undeveloped) the area is well drained and is covered with typical Newfoundland forest cover.

Lots 15, 16 and 17 are somewhat irregularly shaped. This is due to the shape of the shoreline and the requirement of both pond and road access for each lot. Lots also need to be sufficiently wide to accommodate float planes of varying wingspan. Terrain north of Lots 15 and 16 seems to have rock outcrop that would render site development prohibitively expensive. Note that the layout depicted is not necessarily final and the shapes of the lots and road may be altered slightly from that depicted. However, even if that occurs, there will be no additional land required for this proposal nor will the number of lots be increased.

The existing gravel access road to the hangar lots at the south end of Paddy's Pond is about 220 m in length and is in excellent condition. To accommodate vehicle access from Paddy's Pond access road to each individual lot, it is proposed to extend this road by 860 m to the west.

**(iii) Construction**

The 860 m of road construction as indicated on Map 2 will be contracted by the Lands Branch and built to provincial Class 1 gravel road standards. Slight alterations of this design may be required to account for terrain conditions. Typical activity associated with Class 1 gravel road construction is to be expected which will involve vegetation removal, culvert installations and localized cutting, filling and grading. No long term storage of fuels or chemicals is to be expected with road construction. Road construction should not be expected to take more than one month.

The proposed lots will front on the road and access the pond. Development will be undertaken by individual owners once lots have been allocated. Construction will

be limited to facilities for float plane docking and storage. Potential sources of pollutants during the construction period will be that typically associated with individual building and dock construction and site preparation (i.e. vegetation removal, heavy equipment operations and earth moving). Bulldozers and backhoes may be used for localized grading to prepare ground for installation of foundations and site grading, however there is no anticipated extensive long term heavy equipment use or storage of fuels or other chemicals on-site. The choice of building for aircraft hangars will be up to individual owners but most likely they will be steel frame, aluminum sided warehouse-style buildings. All buildings will have to meet requirements of the City of St. John's, who require buildings to be constructed to National Building Code of Canada standards.

**(iv) Operation**

**Description:** A maximum of 27 float plane lots, each with a floating dock, ramp and storage building approximately 45' x 30' (13.7m x 9.1m). There is no intention to store aircraft fuel on site as a fueling station already exists at a facility near the Forestry office. (Aircraft fuel deteriorates with time and poses a flight safety hazard if not stored properly.) There is no intention for maintenance or mechanical work to be carried out on site, other than possibly minor activities such as changing spark plugs (i.e. people would not be spending time on site fixing planes. Planes are relocated to St. John's Airport for mechanical work.) There is no proposal for electrical hookups or installation of on site sanitary or potable water facilities as no human habitation will be permitted. Doing so could potentially encourage use of the sites for unintended purposes. Pilots (and passengers) don't spend much time on site, other than the time necessary to move planes to or from a hangar and fuel up. However, should there be a requirement that on-site waste disposal systems be installed, the size of lots will be sufficient to meet health standards and all provincial and municipal regulations controlling their installation and use will be complied with.

**Estimated period of operation:** Ownership of lots will be permanent by each individual lot owner. Storage of planes at the hangars will, likely be year round. Note that, according to Mr. Munden Critch, float plane usage at Paddy's Pond generally occurs on evenings and weekends. Individual pilots rarely fly more than three or four times a week. Flying opportunities are highly dependent on weather conditions. For instance, on a weekend with foggy, rainy or snowy conditions there would probably be no flying. Further, float planes cannot use the pond when it has ice on it, which means flight operations cannot take place for five or six months of the year, or longer, depending on whether or not there is an early thaw. According to Mr. Critch, the surface of the Pond during winter is generally not conducive to ski-plane use and he knows of no pilot at Paddy's Pond who equips their plane with skis. Therefore, while plane storage at hangars may be year round, the use of Paddy's Pond for float plane operations by individual pilots can be described as taking place for only half the year on a sporadic, weather dependent basis.

**Potential sources of pollutants:** Fuel and oil are associated with aircraft usage. However, no fuel is to be stored on individual sites. Fuel dispensing will not take place on individual hangar sites. A fueling facility already exists at Paddy's Pond in the vicinity of the Forestry Office and has been in use for five or six decades. Although there is no change proposed in the procedure or location for dispensing aircraft fuel, should any future change ever be proposed, it will be addressed within the context of existing provincial regulations and approval processes designed to deal with such issues.

**Potential resource conflicts:** None.

**Dog Hill Waste Disposal Facility:** There is a waste disposal facility proposed near Dog Hill, approximately 7 km southwest of the proposed hangar lots. Aircraft flight operations are the jurisdiction of Transport Canada and Paddy's Pond has been registered with them for use as a float plane base for the past four or five decades. Paddy's Pond is also available for use on an unrestricted basis by visiting aircraft. The issue of this proposal, therefore, is not aircraft usage of Paddy's Pond, but that of the placement of 27 storage hangars and an 860 m extension to a pre-existing road. If the waste disposal facility were sufficiently close, its proximity could raise concerns with respect to conflict between birds and aircraft takeoff and landings. However, at a distance of 7 km this will not be a concern. According to Mr. Munden Critch of COPA, within a minute after take off float planes are above an altitude at which bird strikes would be an concern. By then the aircraft would still be several kilometres from the waste disposal facility, even taking off in that direction. Even in the unlikely event of a bird strike, according to Mr. Critch, it would not be a great concern on small propeller aircraft as the float planes do not travel fast enough for the birds to create sufficient damage to cause a crash. The issue of bird strikes is mainly concerned with jet aircraft which could ingest a bird into an engine. This is not possible on a propeller engine aircraft. In any event, Paddy's Pond has been used as a float plane base for several decades before the Dog Hill waste disposal facility proposal. It is noted that St. John's Airport is located 4 km from the Robin Hood Bay waste disposal facility.

**Domestic Water Supply:** Paddy's Pond is not designated as a protected drinking water supply or as a water supply reserve. An inquiry made to the City of St. John's (the municipal authority) and a referral made to the provincial Water Resources Division through the Interdepartmental Land Use Committee (ILUC 1128) made no mention of Paddy's Pond being considered as a future water supply source. Mr. Haseen Khan of the Water Resources Division has "no concerns" with this proposal.

(v) **Occupations:**

There will be a maximum of 27 individually owned float plane hangars.

- (vi) **Project-Related Documents:** ILUC 1128 Referral. (Essentially a repetition of this document.)

**5. APPROVAL OF THE UNDERTAKING**

- (I) **Project:** ILUC (Interdepartmental Land Use Committee) (Approved by all referred agencies and departments).
- (ii) **City of St. John's:**
  - a) Planning approval. (The City has informally indicated approval in principle. A formal application not been submitted yet.)
  - b) Building inspection of structures.

**6. SCHEDULE**

**Latest date by which the proponent would like to complete the requirements of The Environmental Assessment Act and seek approval for the undertaking:**

December 6, 2004.

**7. FUNDING** N/A.

**8. SUBMITTED**

**Barry Butt  
Director, Land Management Division**

**Date: October 22, 2004**