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MEMORANDUM

TO: Wayne Manuel, BAE-Newplan

FR: B Bennett

DATE: 19 September 2003

FILE NO.: 9700

RE: **Reconnaissance Survey – Proposed Central Waste Management Site (Norris Arm)**

Wayne,

This is a brief outline of the field reconnaissance of the proposed Central Waste Management Site, conducted by Jacques Whitford. Photos are appended.

The survey was conducted on September 12, 2003, by Kathy Knox. The area surveyed corresponded to an area delineated by the Client on a 1:50,000-scale topographic map. The site comprised a mix of forest and wetland areas that are flat and gently sloping in a northern direction. The site has been extensively disturbed by past forest harvesting activity (Photos 01 and 02). The most recent cutovers on the western end of the site are estimated to be in the order of five years old; older cutting activity, on the eastern end of site, may be upwards of 80 years old. With the removal of the conifers, the remaining hardwoods have developed into healthy stands of white birch and red maple. Generally, the softwoods have not extensively regenerated, although extensive alder beds have developed in some areas (Photo 03).

Interspersed among the forested areas are wetland features that are predominantly sloped fens (Photos 04, 05, and 06). Compared to bog, fens are relatively nutrient-rich due to inputs of surface water draining from upland areas. Fens tend to support a higher proportion of grasses and sedges rather than sphagnum mosses that are generally associated with more nutrient-poor bogs.

Three small streams that are not shown on 1:50,000-scale topographic mapping were found. All three are very small (i.e., < 1 metre wide) and flowed in a northward direction through areas of fen (in two cases: Photos 07, 08, 09 and 10) or alders (in one case: Photo 11). No standing waterbodies were observed.

The area is used extensively by moose as the combination of cutovers and fens provide suitable habitat for this species. Moose beds (i.e., sites where an individual moose bedded down for the night) were found along the edges of several fens (Photo 12). Moose droppings and trails were found throughout the site. Other evidence of wildlife included fox and snowshoe hare scat and red squirrel were seen and heard.

Birds observed included boreal chickadee, American crow and common flicker. The history of forest harvesting and the relative diversity of the site combine to create a variety of habitats (i.e., hardwood stands, residual softwood, alder beds). During the breeding season, these habitats may support bird species that would otherwise not be found in a typical black spruce forest. This could only be confirmed by conducting surveys at the appropriate time of year (early June).

In summary:

1. There may be an issue with the streams on the site. DFO will want to know if they are fish habitat in reference to their no net loss guiding principle for habitat conservation. Based on our observations, the streams are suitable habitat for brook trout, but none were observed and it has not been determined if any are present. Water Resources Management Division of DOE will also require permitting for any work within 15 m of a waterbody or wetland, so further delineation of these features may be required.
2. There were no obvious issues with wildlife or avifauna determined from the site visit.
3. The vegetation types are typical of cut-over areas, and no issues were identified in that respect.

It must be noted that this survey was conducted at a reconnaissance level of effort and we can not verify that the above notes constitute a comprehensive list of potential environmental issues (or lack thereof). We assume that constraint mapping has been conducted with regard to land use on and around the site; however, we do not have the results of such mapping.

Noting that we are operating on a tight budget for this study, we will await a discussion with you before we proceed with further analysis or reporting.



07-Brook Through Fen



08-Brook Through Fen



09-Brook Through Fen



10-Brook Through Fen



11-Brook Through Alders



12-Moose Bed

Reconnaissance Survey - Proposed Central Waste Disposal Site



01-Typical Cutover



02-Typical Cutover



03-Typical Alder Bed in Cutover



04-Typical Wetland



05-Treed Fen



06-Treed Fen

Reconnaissance Survey - Proposed Central Waste Disposal Site