

Community Involvement



Community Site Tour, Silverbear Properties, August 2007

Community members from the region have been involved throughout each phase of the projects. During the environmental assessment phase, individuals assist with water quality and environmental investigations by collecting fish, soil, sediment, and water samples. Local people are formally interviewed, and provide very important information on many topics such as the previous land use of the sites and local wildlife information, such as the type of wildlife in the area, migration patterns, and numbers. This information is incorporated into environmental assessment reports and the Remedial Action Plans.

The camps used during the assessments are run by INAC and members of the local communities. Community members work as bear monitors, tour guides, maintenance workers and cooks. The people in the camps make camp life productive, comfortable and a great place to work.

When tendering remediation work at the sites, an Aboriginal Benefits Package is designed so that local involvement is maximized. Local people have the opportunity to work at the sites, and to be trained for different skills.

Moving Forward

The former mine sites in the Sahtú region are in various stages of remediation. A successful clean-up at Port Radium took place over the summer of 2007, after many years of environmental assessment and community consultation.

The environmental assessment work at Silver Bear, Contact Lake and El Bonanza was completed in 2007, and is ongoing at Sawmill Bay. A number of community consultation meetings took place during the fall of 2007 with Tǎichô and Délíne community remediation representatives. During the meetings, environmental assessment results and clean-up options

were presented, and the representatives were then able to choose a preferred clean-up option for each area of concern.

The information collected at the community consultation meetings was used to complete a Remedial Action Plan (RAP). The RAP is used to create specifications for the clean-up of the sites, as well as tender documents. The tender documents for the combined remediation of Silver Bear, Contact Lake, El Bonanza, Bonanza and Sawmill Bay will likely be posted in the spring or summer of 2008, and remediation work planned to begin in 2009.

In addition to the work being done in the Great Bear area, preliminary assessments are also under way for sites in other parts of the Sahtú region. A ground inspection of the Canol Trail was conducted this summer, and existing reports on the Canol Trail are being compiled and examined in 2007 and 2008. The Government of the Northwest Territories has indicated interest in developing a Canol Heritage Trail as part of plans for the proposed Doi T'oh Territorial Park. The trail's heritage value will be taken into account when developing assessment and remediation plans, if remediation is required.

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Contaminated Sites in the Sahtú

The Contaminants and Remediation Directorate (CARD) of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is currently managing over twenty contaminated sites in the NWT, at various stages of remediation.

A number of contaminated sites have been identified for further investigation and potential remediation in the Sahtú region, and identification and assessment is ongoing. These sites are located on both Sahtú and Crown Land. The majority of the high priority sites are located within the Délíne district.

Délíne residents today maintain strong links to their traditional Dene way of life. In 1993 the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement was signed to, among other things, "recognize and encourage the way of life of the Sahtú Dene and Métis which is based on the cultural and economic relationship between them and the land"¹. The following sites were identified by INAC and the Sahtú as priority sites for remediation, to reduce federal liability and allow, to the extent possible, renewed traditional use of the areas:

Port Radium

Port Radium was a former radium, uranium and silver mine, located along the eastern shore of Great Bear Lake, 440 kilometres north of Yellowknife and 265 kilometres east of the community of Délíne. The site was decommissioned in 1982 to the standards of the day. Beginning in 2000, the site was reassessed and further studied, due to concerns raised by the community of Délíne. All studies and recommendations on how to address the site were developed jointly by Canada and Délíne. Remediation of the site was completed in 2007/08.

Silver Bear Properties

Silver Bear Properties is a collection of former silver, copper and bismuth mines, located in the Camsell River area, approximately 300 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife, and 250 kilometres east of the community of Délíne. The sites include Terra Mine and four satellite mines known as Northrim, Norex, Graham Vein and Smallwood. The Silver Bear Properties area is used by the Sahtú people as a traditional harvest ground for country food, fur, fish, berries and plants, as are other sites in the area. These sites also fall inside the Mǔwhi Gogha De Nǐtǎèè boundary, within the Wek'èezhii management area of the Tǎichô settlement area.

Contact Lake

The Contact Lake Mine is a former silver and uranium mine, located on Contact Lake approximately 265 kilometres east of Délíne and 300 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife. The site is located within the Great Bear Lake watershed and the Sahtú settlement area, within the Délíne district.

El Bonanza/Bonanza

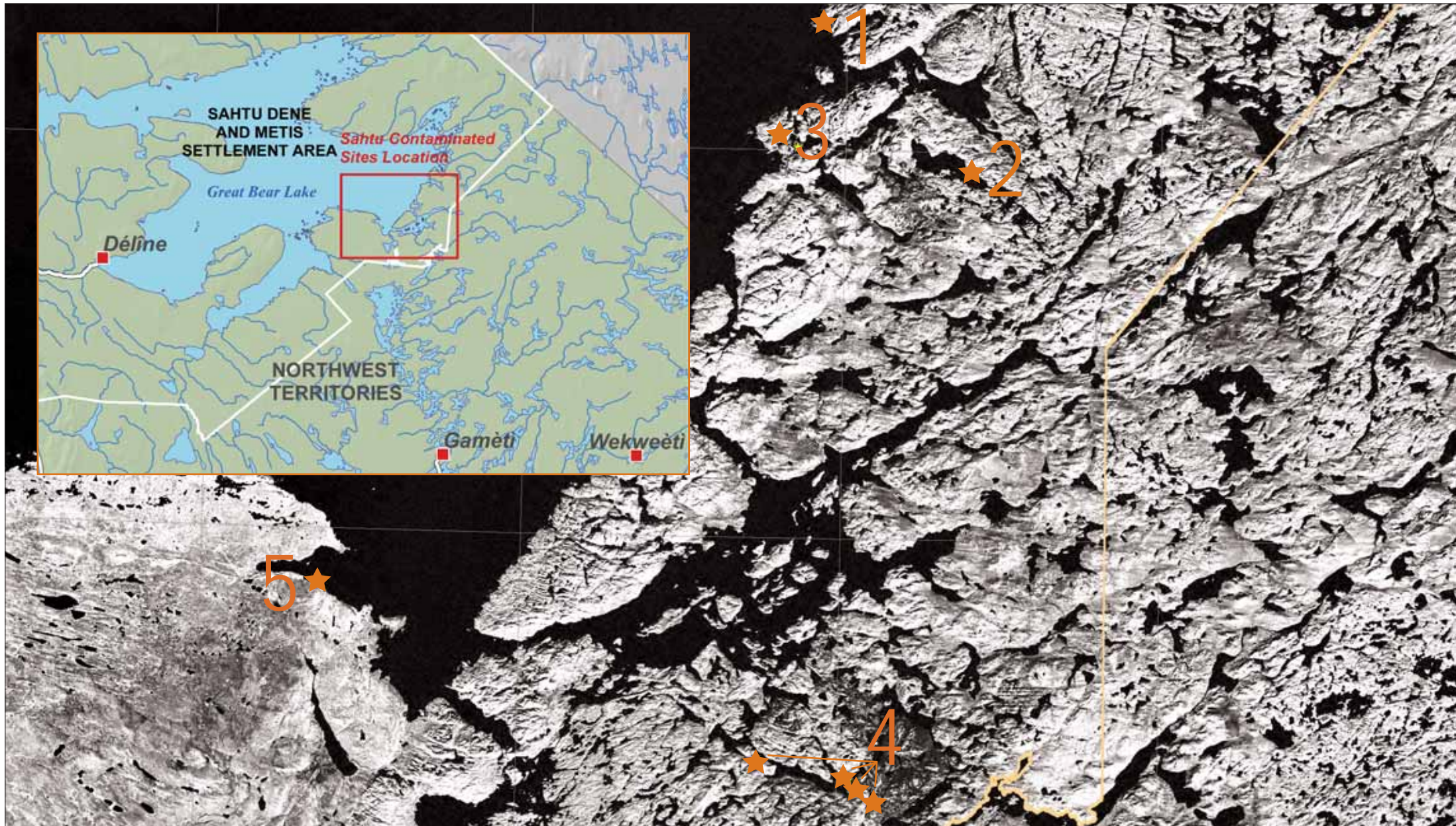
The El Bonanza and Bonanza sites, located on the Dowdell Peninsula about 430 km northwest of Yellowknife on the east coast of Great Bear Lake, were formerly mined for silver.

Sawmill Bay

The Sawmill Bay site is located on the northern part of the Leith Peninsula, on the eastern end of Great Bear Lake approximately 65 kilometres southwest of Port Radium. The site has had a varied history as an airfield for the shipment of uranium ore and concentrates from Port Radium, a staging area for the construction of the Distance Early Warning (DEW) Line, and as a fishing lodge.

¹Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement

What are the concerns at the sites?



1 Port Radium



- Remediation of the site complete in 2007/08
- Past concerns included:
 - Silver, copper and uranium were present in soils and surface water, around the immediate site
 - Elevated gamma associated with the waste rock, which has been covered
 - Small amounts of hydrocarbons and asbestos residue, which have been remediated
 - Various exposed waste materials, which have been covered or removed
 - Mine openings, which have been closed

2 Contact Lake



- Waste rock and processed tailings deposited downslope of the mine site, located in and around a tailings pond
- Elevated levels of metals in tailings and surface mine water
- Old buildings, mine structures and openings on the site that pose safety hazards

5 Sawmill Bay



- Elevated gamma levels at various locations
- Associated arsenic, barium, cobalt and antimony in the soil
- Small amounts of hydrocarbons and asbestos residue
- Old buildings, scrap metal and general debris

4 Silver Bear Properties



- Affected areas localized in two tailings ponds, including HoHum Lake at Terra Mine and Hermandy Lake at Northrim
- Elevated levels of cadmium, lead, mercury, uranium, zinc and arsenic in the tailings areas and nearby soils
- Hazardous waste, including laboratory chemicals and waste fuels
- Unsealed mine openings

3 El Bonanza/Bonanza



- A limited amount of soil containing hydrocarbons
- Drums of diesel
- Waste rock extending into Silver Lake
- Old buildings, mine structures and openings on the site that pose safety hazards
- Scrap metal and general debris