

NATIONAL ORPHANED/ABANDONED MINES INITIATIVE

NOAMI Nugget

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INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA (INAC) – NORTHERN CONTAMINATED SITES PROGRAM

Through its Northern Contaminated Sites Program (NCSP), created in 1991, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (formerly Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) manages contaminated sites across the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. INAC's portfolio of contaminated sites originates primarily from mining, petroleum and military activities dating back over half a century.

Following the Canada-Yukon Devolution Transfer Agreement in 2003, INAC retained the liability for the costs of the remediation of seven sites in the Yukon, should they be abandoned by their operators, while the responsibility for their implementation of ongoing care, maintenance, assessment and remediation remained with the Government of Yukon. Currently four of these sites (Faro, Mt Nansen, Ketza River and Clinton Creek) have been abandoned and their remediation is being funded by INAC but managed by the Government of Yukon.

In the Northwest Territories, with the coming into force of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement in April 2014, INAC retained liability and responsibility for identified historic contaminated sites. In Nunavut, devolution has not yet occurred and INAC's future role with respect to contaminated sites will be negotiated as part of the devolution agreement.

The Program objective is to reduce and eliminate, where possible, risks to human and environmental health, as well as federal financial liabilities associated with these sites. Core activities of the Program are consistent with the ten-step process developed by the Federal Contaminated Sites Management Working Group and include care and maintenance, investigation and assessment of suspected sites, development and implementation of remediation or risk management plans, consultation, securing regulatory approvals, and ongoing monitoring.

As custodian of most federal lands in the North, the Program has the largest contaminated sites liability of all federal custodial departments – estimated at \$2.4 billion as of March 2014. Between 2009 and 2014, Program expenditures on the management of contaminated sites in the North were just over \$636 million, of which \$592 million were funded through the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan. Since 2009, 24 sites have been completely remediated, including Roberts Bay and Ida Bay Silver Mine, an abandoned mine



in Nunavut, which was completed in 2010 and Colomac Mine, an abandoned site in the Northwest Territories, which commenced in 2000 and was completed in 2011.

Several other sites have advanced. For example, since 2008, some of the major accomplishments for the Giant Mine Remediation Project include the completion of the Freeze Optimization Study and the Environmental Assessment process. The Project Team continues to work to implement key elements of the Site



Stabilization Plan and has completed the deconstruction of the Roaster Complex and removal of the Conveyor Gallery, and has commenced the Underground Stabilization Program.

At the Faro Mine site, a conceptual closure plan - developed collaboratively between Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the Government of Yukon and First Nations (Ross River, Liard, Kaska and Selkirk) - was completed in 2009. The project is currently in the project definition phase which includes completing ongoing care and maintenance, undertaking work to address high risks and the development of a final closure plan. In 2014, the construction and commissioning of a new state-of-the art Interim Water Treatment Plant was completed to treat contaminated water over the next 10-15 years until the final closure plan is implemented.

The Program continues to promote social and economic opportunities in the North by engaging First Nations, Inuit and other Northerners in all aspects of the site management and remediation process and will continue to ensure that contaminated sites are managed to ensure the protection of human health, safety and the environment for all Northerners.



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