

**Written Submission No. 35**

**2016 Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan**

**Proposed Land Use Designation:**

**Community Area of Interest – Multiple Values –**

**Flagler Bay Polynya**

**To:** The Nunavut Planning Commission

**From:** The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), and  
the Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) of Grise Fiord

**Background Information:**

The polynya of Flagler Bay on Ellesmere Island is an important walrus haul-out and feeding area, and the islands in the bay and in its mouth into Hayes Fiord and Buchanan Bay are important nesting areas for common eiders. The bay and polynya are also important for polar bears, other marine mammals (e.g., narwhal, ringed seals, bearded seals) and birds (e.g., king eiders, red-throated loons, long-tailed ducks, glaucous gulls, black guillemots). The remains of bowhead whales have been found at old Tuniit sites around Flagler Bay.

Flagler Bay lies just north of Alexandra Fiord on Ellesmere Island off Nares Strait. Because of the variety and abundance of wildlife in the ocean and on the land, this region has been used by Inuit and their ancestors and predecessors for about 4,500 years. The RCMP had a detachment in the area of Alexandra Fiord, staffed by Inuit special constables and their families during 1950s. Inuit from Grise Fiord continue to visit the area occasionally for polar bear hunting, collecting eider eggs and other reasons. Tourists and researchers also visit the area.

This area has a primary polynya open year-round at the mouth of Flagler Bay. In spring, the primary polynya usually expands to include the whole bay plus extending from the mouth into Hayes Fiord and Buchanan Bay, before open water joins Flagler Bay with Kane Basin. This polynya and the wildlife that utilize it are connected to, and north of, Pikiqtaorsuaq (aka the North Water), which the 2016 DNLUP described as the most northerly polynya in North America. Flagler Bay, a unique more-northerly polynya, should be considered highly risk intolerant and categorized as a Protected Area under the final NLUP.

**Source of information:** Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

**Proposed Designation:** Protected Area

**Proposed Restrictions:**

**Prohibited Uses:** The following uses are prohibited:

- Oil and Gas Exploration and Production;
- Seismic testing;
- Disposal at sea;
- Mineral Exploration and Production;
- Quarries;
- Obnoxious Land Use;
- Related research except Non-Exploitive Scientific Research

**Conditions:**

- Closed to all ship traffic, subject to safe navigation, during Ukiaq, Ukiuq, Upingaksaq, and Upingaaq.
- No vessel may approach within five (5) km seaward of a walrus haul-out, any time during the year.
- When walrus are present, fixed wing aircraft must maintain a minimum vertical setback of 460 m (1500 ft) above ground level (AGL) while within 310 m (1000 ft) of a group of walruses. Helicopters should remain at altitudes greater than 910 m (3000 ft) AGL when traveling within 1,610 m (1 mile) of a group of walruses.
- When walruses are present, walruses must not be approached by terrestrial vehicles closer than 800 m (0.5 mile) while the vehicle remains out of sight of the walruses.
- Regulatory Authorities, where appropriate, must incorporate the aerial, marine and terrestrial setbacks in a modified Table 2<sup>1</sup> for all migratory birds, all seabirds, and coastal waterfowl and sea ducks during issuance of permits, licences, and authorizations.
- Any project in Nunavut that would violate any of these conditions is prohibited.

**Proposed Boundaries of the Community Area of Interest – Flagler Bay Polynya:**

This area is to include all the islands and waters and of Flagler Bay and adjacent parts of Hayes Fiord and Buchanan Bay as shown on the attached maps and the associated shp files.

**Date of this draft:** August 08, 2018

---

<sup>1</sup> Modified Table 2 refers to a version of Table 2 that incorporates modifications recommended in Written Submission No. 14 from the QWB and its associated HTOs.

