



**Project Title:** HMS Erebus and HMS Terror Inuit Guardian Program (Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror NHS)

**Project Contact(s):**

Proponent: Nattilik Heritage Society (in collaboration with Gjoa Haven Hunters and Trappers Association and Parks Canada)

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**Date of Request:** 2021/06/08

**Proposed Project Start:** 2021/08/09

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Project objective:**

The objective of this project is to implement the fifth year of the Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror Inuit Guardian Program in order to contribute to protection and presentation of the Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site (WET NHS). This program will assist to inform future site management while enabling Inuit to undertake traditional land-based activities and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

Many of the activities have been addressed previously in:

- 2018 NIRB Project File #148878 HMS Erebus and HMS Terror Inuit Guardian Program (Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror NHS), and
- 2019 NIRB Project File #149196 HMS Erebus and HMS Terror Inuit Guardian Program (Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror NHS).
- 2020 NIRB Project File #149388 HMS Erebus and HMS Terror Inuit Guardian Program (Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror NHS).

Which both received a “No Conformity or Screening required” determination under NIRB file number 15YN037.

Activities will include:

- Establishing a temporary camp near each of the *Erebus* and *Terror* wreck sites;
- Monitoring the *Erebus* and *Terror* wreck sites from land and water, including on foot, by all-terrain vehicle and small motorized and non-motorized vessel (including but not limited to: dingy, life boat, motor yacht, inflatable, cuddly boat, etc.) to the WET NHS;
- Recording and reporting observations including weather, marine traffic in vicinity of WET NHS, wildlife and archaeological resources; and
- Undertaking traditional land-based activities including traditional harvesting and knowledge sharing between Inuit Elders, adults and youth. Recording 360-degree video while patrolling by boat for the purpose of producing a virtual interpretative tour of the WET NHS and surrounding area. The tour will integrate Inuit and knowledge into site operations for the purpose of enhancing visitor experiences, outreach and education;

Note: Guardians requested permanent structures at each basecamp. Although this will not occur in the summer of 2021, the Guardians’ experiences at the temporary camps will continue to inform the precise location and design of the permanent base camps. When the permanent base camps are planned, a new project description will be submitted. Additionally, with the completion of the visitor experience component in 2019 it has been removed from



the updated project description.

**Project rationale (optional):**

In 2017, acting upon a recommendation from the Franklin Interim Advisory Committee (FIAC), Parks Canada worked together with Inuit from Gjoa Haven to develop and implement the Wrecks of HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* Guardian Program Pilot Project to provide site protection and presentation while promoting Inuit culture. FIAC is composed of representation from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Government of Nunavut's Department of Culture and Heritage, and Economic Development and Transportation – Tourism and Cultural Industries, Parks Canada, Travel Nunavut, and community members of Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay. FIAC proposed that a camp be established near each of the two wreck sites where Inuit can undertake traditional activities, provide site protection and monitoring, and present the Franklin story. Inspired by existing Parks Canada Guardian and Watchman programs, this program was seen to have the potential to bring numerous benefits to Inuit while contributing to shared Inuit and Government of Canada priorities.

In 2017, the Inuit Guardian Pilot Project was planned and delivered collaboratively by Parks Canada, the Gjoa Haven Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) and the Guardians themselves in a manner that demonstrated exceptional collaborative site management. The Pilot Project consisted of a short pilot trip, a training program, and teams of Guardians at each of the two wreck sites for a total of 48 days (32 at *Terror* and 16 at *Erebus*) between August 26 and September 30, 2017. The Guardians were prepared for the first ever visit by cruise ship visitors to the *Erebus* wreck site; however, poor weather led to the cancellation of this visit. Significant benefits, both monetary and cultural, were seen by the Guardians. At the end of the Guardian season, feedback sessions were held with the Guardians as well as others who were involved. All involved felt that the program was positive and successful overall, and recommendations included that it should be expanded in 2018 and should build on the lessons learned.

In 2018, the Inuit Guardian Program built upon the recommendations received from the previous year. The program was administered by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA), with support from Parks Canada. The 2018 season consisted of over 2 weeks of training and a cumulative of 62 days in the field. The field season consisted of a 3-day field trip, 29 days to the *Erebus* wreck site spread throughout 4 trips, and 33 days at the *Terror* wreck site spread throughout 4 trips. The Guardians again prepared for another attempt for the first ever visit by cruise ship visitors, however poor weather continued to cancel this visitation. At the end of the 2018 Guardian season, feedback sessions were again held with Guardians and other participants.

In 2019, the Inuit Guardian Program continued to build upon the recommendations from the previous years. The program was administered by the Nattilik Heritage Society (NHS), with support from Gjoa Haven HTA and Parks Canada. The 2019 season consisted of 1 week of training in Gjoa Haven. The field season consisted of a 3-day field trip to the *Terror* wreck site with Elders and youth from the community, a cumulative of 31 days at *Erebus* wreck site over 3 trips and another cumulative of 30 days at the *Terror* site over 3 trips (81, 167, 127 person-days respectfully). The Guardians successfully welcomed the first cruise ship visitors to the *Erebus* wreck site with Parks Canada as part of a pilot site visit that continually got cancelled the previous years due to weather and environmental conditions. At the end of the 2019 Guardian season, feedback sessions were again held with Guardians and other participants.

In 2020, the Inuit Guardian Program continued to build on the successes and implement recommendations from previous years. The 2020 field season was shorter out of consideration from the complexities from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 season had a total of 15 Guardians between the 2 sites and 2 shifts for a total of 120 person-days. By following the most up-to-date guidance from public health officials and other governmental agencies, the Guardians continued to protect and present the national historic site. Ship traffic was restricted in the Arctic due to travel restrictions, however the Guardians were still able to monitor the marine environment but also fulfill their other role of presenting Inuit culture and the site virtually. Guardians incorporating 360-degree video footage of their patrols; this footage will be used towards to developing capacity in the creation of virtual interpretative boat tours of the area around the shipwrecks by incorporating Inuit knowledge into site operations for the purpose of



enhancing visitor experiences, outreach and education.

#### **Project location:**

Primary Location: WET NHS, specifically the 10 km x 10 km HMS *Erebus* wreck project site and the approximately 6 km x 10 km HMS *Terror* wreck project site, as well as on land near the *Terror* wreck site (see map and description, Appendix A).

Land areas consist of 4 locations, two near the *Erebus* wreck site, and two near the *Terror* wreck site:

#### **Locations near *Erebus* Wreck site, which were screened in project #15YN037:**

Location A (68°11'41.66"N, 98°37'48.78" W), also known as Davit Island, is a beach isthmus separating a small freshwater pond from the sea. In 2017 & 2018 this location was screened and used as the base camp location, and was approved as a potential visitor landing area. In 2019 it is proposed again to be used as a stop on the Adventure Canada visit plan which was aborted due to weather conditions; Guardians continued to use location as a camp site as it was previously screened and had access to freshwater.

Location C (68°14'56.60" N : 98°39'32.38" W), also known as Hattuq Island and Guardian Camp, is an island with a suitable beach for landing small boats on the SE side. In 2017 & 2018 this location was screened for a potential landing area, and in 2019 has been selected by the Gjoa Haven HTA for use as the Guardian Camp, however was not used. No plans to return to this island for a campsite for 2021, unless Location A is no longer feasible.

#### **Location nears *Terror* Wreck Site, which has not yet been screened:**

Location D (68°55'26.85"N, 99° 7'32.66"W), located on the western shore of Terror Bay, consists of a location selected by the 2017 & 2018 Guardians and HTA Board as being suitable for a permanent Guardian camp (although it will only to be used as a temporary camp in 2019). In 2021, Guardian temporary camp still may use area depending on access and reliability of freshwater.

Location E (68°56'5.50"N, 99° 4'13.16"W), also located on the western shore of Terror Bay, consists of a location identified by the 2019 Guardians as an alternative to Location D. In 2021, Guardian temporary camp may be relocated to utilize this area, if Location D is no longer feasible.

Class B permit from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Development Canada (CIRNDC) has been obtained for base camps; permit expires 2023-06-26.

Footprint size: Guardians will establish one temporary camps at of Location A (alternative C) and Location D (alternative E), consisting of up to 8 personal tents and other personal equipment. Note, an increase in tents from 4 to 8 is recommended to promote physical distancing during pandemic scenario.

#### **Project phases and activities:**

**Phase 1 - Guardian Training and Planning (August):** Following recommendations from the pilot project, Guardians will receive additional training in emergency management and reporting, monitoring and daily duty protocols, and the history of the Franklin Expedition. Training provided by Parks Canada archaeologist in 2019 on procedures of how to report accidental archaeological findings to Government of Nunavut, and refreshers planned each future years.

**Phase 2 - Guardian Season (August and/or September):** After training, once ice conditions permit, teams of four Guardians will travel to each of the two wreck site areas. Travel will take place by boat and, in the case of the *Terror* Guardians, possibly all-terrain vehicle, from Gjoa Haven. Guardians will set up camp at the locations described in Project Locations and will perform their regular activities from that base camp. Guardians will rotate out approximately every two weeks according to a schedule determined by the Guardian Coordinator. The regular Guardian team size will normally be four people.

#### **Regular daily Guardian routine:**



Daily activities are as follows:

The Guardian Program will be an integral part of monitoring and protecting the site, with the primary objective to observe/monitor, record and prevent/report any vessel traffic at either wreck site based on the protocol below.

Guardians will be present 24/7 and will have a constant awareness of their surroundings and the water while monitoring from both. Two patrols, consisting of 2 Guardians in one boat, will be conducted each day, weather permitting, to increase awareness of potential activity over a larger area. They will travel by boat and potentially all-terrain vehicle into the national historic site or, in the case of all-terrain vehicle, around the national historic site. They will use binoculars to patrol the general area and take notes. After each patrol the Guardian team will return to base camp. Once per day Guardians will do a check-in with Guardian Coordinator in Gjoa Haven.

**Outside of the monitoring duties the following activities are required:**

- Accidental Archaeological/Historical Resource Reporting – to be observed and logged by camera, forms and InReach devices, and then reported to GN if any archaeologically significant resources were accidentally discovered. No handling of resources during observation and reporting;
- Harvesting Recording and Reporting – to be recorded on InReach devices and reported to HTA;
- Photography and Videography (NEW) – to document activities as Guardians for use in presentations, reports, and outreach/education;

**Camp take-down:** In late September, as weather conditions necessitate, Guardians will break down camp and return to Gjoa Haven. All camp equipment and waste will be removed and returned to Gjoa Haven.

**Project Environment**

The sites are near active archaeological sites, managed by Parks Canada under the advice of the Franklin Interim Advisory Committee. Activities will be coordinated with the Underwater Archaeology Team (UAT).

Separate application made to CIRNDC for a Class B permit for use of the 2 islands contained within the wreck of the HMS *Erebus* 10x10 component and for use of the land near HMS *Terror*.

**Project timing:**

- Early August: Guardian training and refreshers;
- Early-August: Elder & Youth Field Trip
- Mid-August: First Guardian teams travel to Guardian camps;
- Late-August: First Guardian teams pack up and leave camps to return to Gjoa Haven.
- Early-September: Second Guardian teams travel to Guardian camps;
- Mid-September: First Guardian teams pack up and leave camps and return to Gjoa Haven. Second Guardian teams travel to Guardian camps;
- Late-September: Second Guardian team pack up and leave camps and return to Gjoa Haven; and
- Post-September: Guardian program closed for season.

**Additional details (as required):**

Preliminary feedback from 2019 pilot site visit recommended exploring virtual options for presenting the national historic site. Part of the objective of the site visit was to make the WET NHS a tourism resource to be used by Inuit. The outcome will be a set of site guideline recommendations that will shape how visitors will experience the wreck site in the future.

With COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, advancing these virtual options will require flexible planning to address any health and safety of the Guardians under current public health orders, while they continue to protect the national historic site.

**Camp Specifics:**

A safety plan and camp management plan will be developed collaboratively by Parks Canada staff and the Inuit Guardians during Phase 1.



Freshwater for the Guardians will be sourced locally and will be gathered by hand and stored in standard water containers. If strict water conservation methods are adhered to over the course of the 4 weeks at the Guardian camps, approximately 10 liters per person per day for a total of 80L (0.08 m<sup>3</sup>) will be used at each of the two locations each day. For the entire 2021 season, less than 2500L (2.5 m<sup>3</sup>) will be used.

Guardians expressed concern over the reliability of freshwater sources, particularly near the *Terror* base camp, and that the quality of the water was not palatable at times. The Guardians are in the process of acquiring a saltwater desalinator to minimize the distance needed to transport water back to the base camp, and have more water readily accessible. The desalinator would be able to treat up to 682L of saltwater per day from the ocean to be stored in similar fashion to that of the freshwater.

Greywater will be deposited on the tundra at least 31 m away from a water body or else deposited into the high tide line. Less than 100L (0.1 m<sup>3</sup>) per day will be created.

Human waste management will be determined in collaboration with the Inuit Guardians during Phase 1. If practical, waste will be collected in WAG bags and disposed of at approved landfill in Gjoa Haven after the camp. Alternately human waste will be deposited at the high tide line.

Fuel management will be determined in collaboration with Inuit Guardians during Phase 1 in Gjoa Haven. All fuel will be stored at the camp within a commercial off-the-shelf fuel containment berm (Ready Containment 30 mil 700 L capacity). It is presumed that all fuel will be brought in and out by the teams of Guardians. A manual rotary pump will be used for fuel transfer to the generators and boat fuel tanks. All fuelling will take place within the berm. A fuel spill kit will be available on site.

All domestic waste will be collected in containers such as plastic drums and disposed of at approved landfill in Gjoa Haven after the camp season.

Guardian Camp personnel will be equipped with CB radios, first aid kits and wildlife deterrents, as well as Guardian Manuals with instructions and forms, binoculars, cameras, inReach device, marine VHF radios, and satellite phones.

**Potential for project to affect use of lands or resources by Indigenous persons:**

- Project will engage Gjoa Haven Inuit community members, developing capacity for enhanced participation by Inuit. Project has already contributed to economic and skill development and Inuit knowledge-sharing;
- Project will contribute to important site management goal to test the feasibility of both visit and site guidelines for future management of the site, which Parks Canada expects will be executed by Inuit; and
- Project will contribute to the presentation of the site by integrating Inuit storytelling and knowledge into site operations through outreach and education.

**Other jurisdictions or departments involved in project development, review and approval:**

The Franklin Interim Advisory Committee initiated and has approved this project.

**Appendix: Imagery and/or Maps of National Historic Site and Guardian Temporary Base Camp Locations**

The Guardians will patrol inside the two wreck site areas as indicated on the map below. Guardians will have inReach devices with coordinates of the national historic site loaded in them.

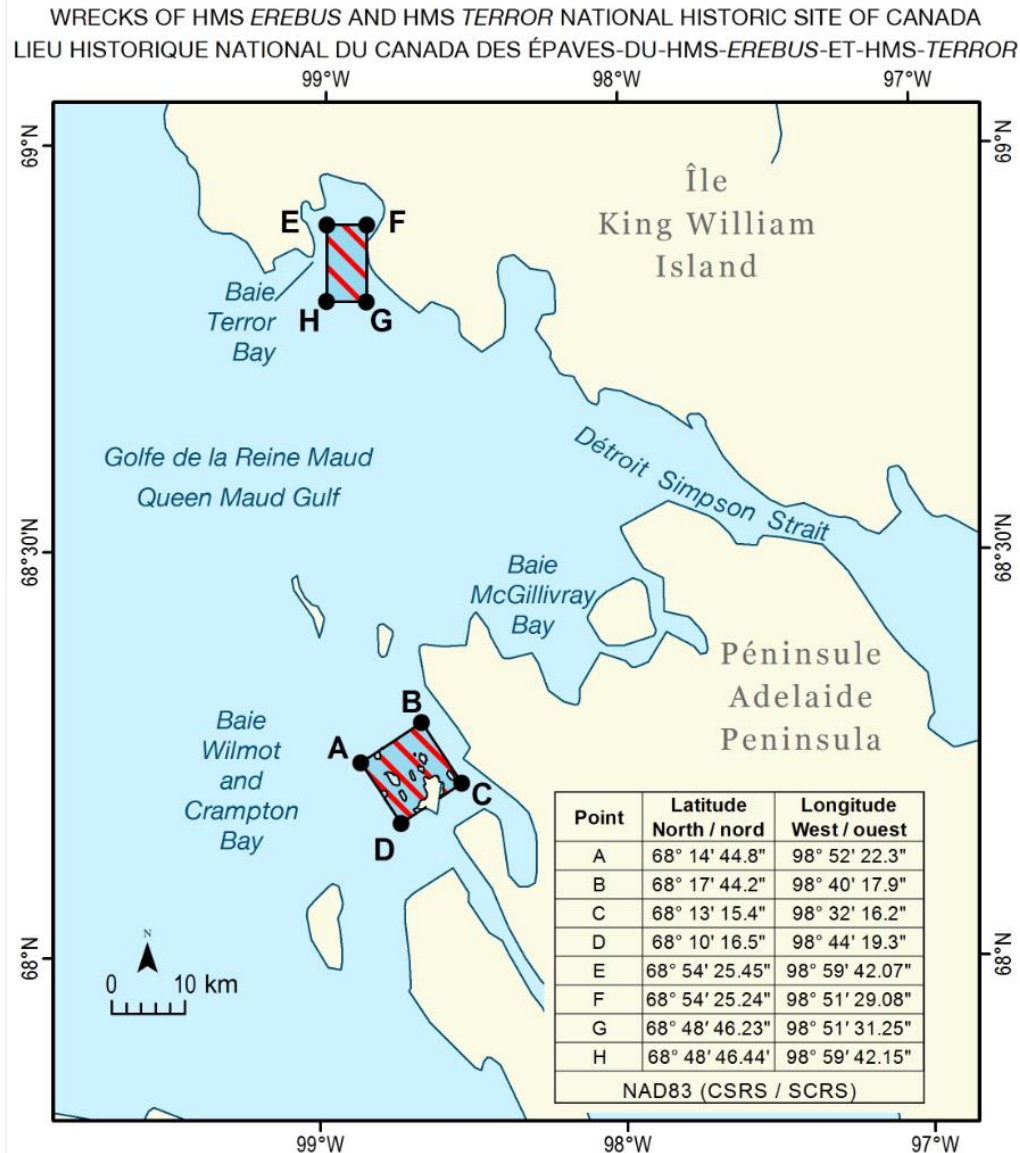




Erebus component of WET NHS and associated Guardian camp locations.



Terror component of WET NHS and associated Guardian camp locations.



The Wrecks of HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* NHSC was designated in 1992. The site is nationally significant because it is associated with Sir John Franklin's 1845 expedition, the wrecks are rare surviving examples of state-of-the-art, mid-19th century Arctic discovery ships, and the many search expeditions launched between 1847 and 1859 resulted in the mapping of large tracts of what is now the Canadian Arctic. The designated place is composed of two component parts, one for each of the two shipwrecks. The site of HMS *Erebus* is situated in Wilmot and Crampton Bay at the eastern end of Queen Maud Gulf, within the Kitikmeot Region (Qitikmiut) of Nunavut, Canada, approximately 125 km from Gjoa Haven and 275 km from Cambridge Bay, the two nearest communities in Nunavut. It is a 10 km by 10 km zone that encompasses the wreck of *Erebus*. The site of HMS *Terror* is in Terror Bay on the southwest coast of King William Island, 125 km from Gjoa Haven. This wreck is surrounded by a protected area measuring 57.8 km<sup>2</sup> (approximately 6 km by 10 km). The two protected areas were created by way of two Orders Amending the National Historic Sites of Canada Order under the Canada National Parks Act, for HMS *Erebus* on 8 April 2015 and for HMS *Terror* on 8 December 2017. The national historic site is owned by Parks Canada and managed in cooperation with the Government of Nunavut.