



**Appendix A: Information Request # 1**  
**for National Geographic's "Pristine Seas" Project Proposal**  
**EMRIRB File No. 0026-1522-005**

**1. Topic/Issue: Project Map**

**Rationale:** The EMRIRB requires a map of the Project Proposal and related activities to assist in the assessment of the Project.

**Request:** provide us with a geometry/shapefile of the shipping route. Identify potential sampling sites if any have been recommended by the CNG or EMRWB at this point.

**2. Topic/Issue: Contingency Plan**

**Rationale:** Due to the urgent nature of the approval process and the several jurisdictions involved in assessing this project, we would like to know what National Geographic's contingency plan is if required approvals are not issued before the proposed expedition date in the Eeyou Marine Region.

**Request:** Submit a contingency plan.

**3. Topic/Issue: Scientific Research Proposal**

**Rationale:** To properly scope and assess proposed Projects, the EMRIRB would like to see a more in-depth scientific research proposal.

**Request:** Provide supplemental information regarding the following: We can see from your application the sites to be chosen will be subject to exploration, but what questions is National Geographic aiming to answer with this research? What are the aims and objectives; how will the data collected be used?

**4. Topic/Issue: Wildlife deterrent plan/Wildlife safety**

**Request:** Does the project have any wildlife deterrent plans? Depending on the location of the project, encounters with animals are likely and safety will be a big concern. To minimize impact, the EMRIRB will be able to provide advice in our report on what these measures can look like.

**5. Topic/Issue: Project schedule (final), including transit times per leg of trip.**

**Request:** Confirm file "Pristine Seas\_Canada timeline v05.19" is the final version. Do you have any back-up dates for entering the EMR if the DFO permits are not issued by July 30, 2022?

Response from Proponent

July 7, 2022

## **PRISTINE SEAS RESPONSES TO EMRIRB INQUIRIES:**

### **1. Topic/Issue: Project Map**

**Rationale: The EMRIRB requires a map of the Project Proposal and related activities to assist in the assessment of the Project.**

**Request: provide us with a geometry/shapefile of the shipping route. Identify potential sampling sites if any have been recommended by the CNG or EMRWB at this point.**

As the research is inherently exploratory in nature, the exact sampling sites need to be determined in collaboration with the local experts on board from Chisasibi as well as the captain to ensure safe movement of the vessel. Bottom substrate where it is not too silty is also a consideration, which will be determined using the remote operated vehicle camera and discussions with the William Kennedy expedition team based on their findings from last year. The attached file shows areas in red where the vessel will not go into or beyond in James Bay due to navigation concerns. The CNG and EMRWB have asked that the coastal and southern areas be studied as much as possible from the vessel, to complement the work of the William Kennedy expedition and to tie together the established terrestrial and developing marine conservation efforts. The community of Chisasibi recommended we explore around the Twin Islands.

### **2. Topic/Issue: Contingency Plan**

**Rationale: Due to the urgent nature of the approval process and the several jurisdictions involved in assessing this project, we would like to know what National Geographic's contingency plan is if required approvals are not issued before the proposed expedition date in the Eeyou Marine Region.**

**Request: Submit a contingency plan.**

We know we cannot conduct research without an EMRIRB approval. Unfortunately we cannot extend the length of time that we have the vessel as it is leased to another group after ours. We would like to honour the commitments made to the community and Chief and Council of Chisasibi, as well as the commitments we made to the CNG to help support their National Marine Conservation Area feasibility assessment and plan to create this protected areas, through needed underwater studies and filming, as well as a documentary sharing the Eeyou voice and vision for marine protection with an international audience. In light of this we would greatly appreciate hearing suggestions for a potential contingency plan.

### **3. Topic/Issue: Scientific Research Proposal**

**Rationale: To properly scope and assess proposed Projects, the EMRIRB would like to see a more in-depth scientific research proposal.**

**Request: Provide supplemental information regarding the following: We can see from your application the sites to be chosen will be subject to exploration, but what questions is National Geographic aiming to answer with this research? What are the aims and objectives; how will the data collected be used?**

National Geographic aims to answer scientific questions put forward by the Cree Research Needs Working Group, represented by Cree organizations on both sides of James Bay by Mushkegowuk and Eeyou reps from the Mushkegowuk Council, CNG, NMRWB and other organizations. This group was formed to advise and inform Cree research needs for scientific research in James Bay to the William Kennedy expedition and has met regularly over the past year. There are items on this list of research needs that cannot be addressed by the WK research team, which the Pristine Seas is aiming to help address. Specifically the question of "what is in the bay" focused on understanding the biodiversity of organisms (animals including invertebrates and plants) that

are difficult to see when harvesting or traveling. The Pristine Seas team focuses on underwater biodiversity assessments and will be able to provide a much needed understanding of biodiversity in James Bay and the EMR. Parks Canada, who has signed two separate memorandum of understandings with both the Mushkegowuk Council and the Cree Nation Government (Eeyou) are also interested in the research and filming done by Pristine Seas to understand the biodiversity in the bay to support the development of the two separate Cree-led National Marine Conservation Areas.

The data collected will be analyzed by the Pristine Seas scientists and affiliated scientists. The Cree Nation Government and Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board will own and have access to all of these research data being collected. This includes the footage from the different cameras and videos being collected (baited cameras, pelagic cameras, etc.), but not the media team footage. All reports and publications will be reviewed and vetted by the CNG and EMRWB prior to publication, and reps from these groups are welcome to be involved in writing the publications and reports as well.

#### **4. Topic/Issue: Wildlife deterrent plan/Wildlife safety**

**Request: Does the project have any wildlife deterrent plans? Depending on the location of the project, encounters with animals are likely and safety will be a big concern. To minimize impact, the EMRIRB will be able to provide advice in our report on what these measures can look like.**

Please see attached document. We are open to and welcome your advice on measures to be taken and to incorporate them into our plan.

#### **5. Topic/Issue: Project schedule (final), including transit times per leg of trip.**

**Request: Confirm file “Pristine Seas\_Canada timeline v05.19” is the final version. Do you have any back-up dates for entering the EMR if the DFO permits are not issued by July 30, 2022?**

Yes, this is still the final version of the expedition timeline. Unfortunately we cannot extend the length of time that we have the vessel as it is contracted to another team after our expedition (see above). We have been working with DFO for months on these permits and have answered all of their outstanding questions. They are aware of the need for the permits to start work on July 24th around Churchill MB and know their permit is required for this date and beyond, including in the EMR. They have assured us we will receive the permit by July 24th, if not earlier.