

Canadian Nuclear  
Laboratories

Laboratoires Nucléaires  
Canadiens

# NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION ROUTE

## Southeast Sites

An Environmental Cleanup Initiative



Fort Fitzgerald Temporary Storage Area Cleanup - 2021

# What is the Northern Transportation Route?

The Northern Transportation Route (NTR) initiative is a federal environmental remediation project to clean up legacy ore spillage sites in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and northern Alberta (AB).

These sites contain small quantities of uranium-impacted soils that resulted from spillage during the past handling of uranium ore at certain points along the 2,000 kilometre route of waterways and portages between Port Radium, NWT and Fort McMurray, AB.

The spilt uranium ore contains low-level radiation in concentrations that do not pose a risk to people or the environment. It will be removed and the spill sites remediated to enable future land use for other purposes.

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is implementing the NTR initiative on behalf of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, a federal Crown corporation.

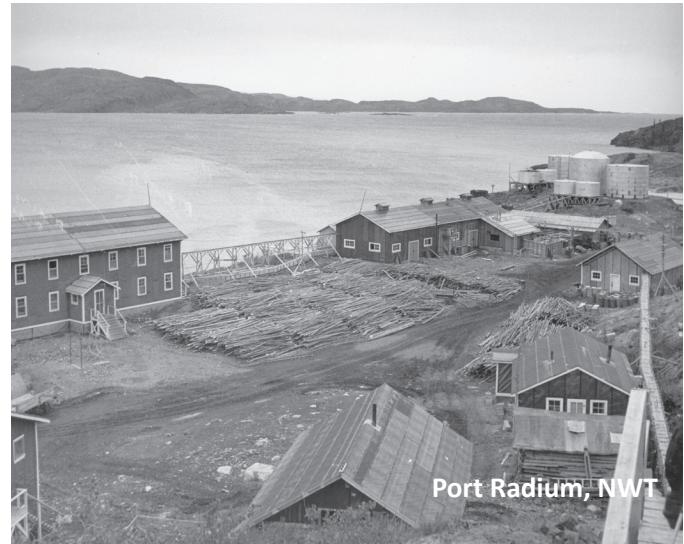
## History of the Northern Transportation Route

In the 1930s, Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd. established a mine in Port Radium, NWT and a refining facility in Port Hope, Ontario. Between the 1930s and 1960s, as uranium ore was shipped along the NTR and loaded onto rail cars in Fort McMurray, some spillage occurred at points along the route.

With the discovery of this spilt uranium ore in the North in the early 1990s, formal investigations were conducted and NTR sites with higher radiation levels were cleaned up from the 1990s to 2011.

Through the NTR initiative, remaining uranium-ore spillage will be collected and transported south to appropriate licensed storage facilities in Alberta.

CNL will oversee the remediation and restoration of the remaining impacted areas along the NTR to ensure these sites meet criteria for future unrestricted land use.



## A Phased Approach to Remediation

The NTR is being undertaken in three phases, based on geographic region. Cleanup of the temporary storage areas in Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith was completed in summer 2021. Work at Hay River Dene Reserve, Bell Rock, Fort Fitzgerald and Halfway House sites is forecasted for completion in 2029.

Work sites are secured and all standard construction safety and environmental protection measures are in place during cleanup.

Uranium-impacted soil removed from the sites is safely transported off-site to licensed disposal facilities in Alberta. Once all waste has been removed, sites are backfilled with clean fill, graded and restored, and all equipment decontaminated before leaving the sites.



# NTR Cleanup Sites



# Engaging for learning and collaboration

The NTR project focuses on early engagement with each community to collaborate on meeting mutual cleanup needs with appropriate plans.

Before planning begins, CNL Indigenous Relations staff and the NTR project team engage at the leadership and staff levels to gather input and get an understanding of the community, culture, Aboriginal Rights and specific community priorities and goals.

CNL will then seek guidance on relationship building, community needs and opportunities to engage appropriately on the project.

A community-specific agreement and engagement strategy can be developed to outline preferred approaches and timelines for sharing information.

Support and tools may include funding toward a community liaison, creation of brochures, newsletters and social media campaigns or project events, community meetings, open houses, celebrations or commemorations.

As the project progresses, there is an opportunity to generate local economic benefit, skills development, training, and additional capacity building.

Working closely with each community, CNL will clean up and restore the sites, leaving a positive project legacy for all.



## Do you know NORM?

Naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) has always been a part of our lives. NORM is in the air, our drinking water, the food we eat and the ground we walk on.

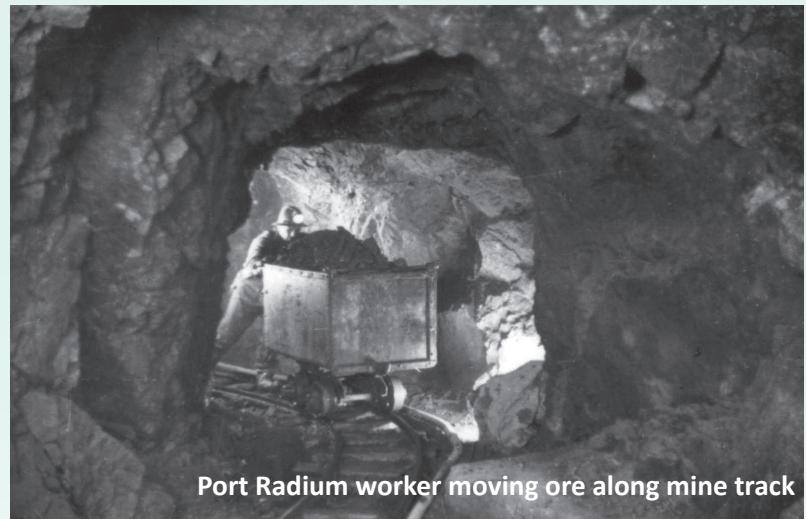
**The material transported along the NTR is naturally occurring uranium ore mined in the Northwest Territories.**

During transportation to the refinery in Port Hope, ON some of the ore was spilled at locations along the route. The ore contains low-level radiation in concentrations that do not pose a risk to people or the environment.

**NORM is natural material** that exists in its original form. While the material along the NTR is not in its original location, it is still in its naturally occurring form.

**NORM is not nuclear waste.** Nuclear waste is the result of nuclear processes found, for example, in nuclear reactors, fuel processing plants, hospitals and research facilities.

**There is no nuclear waste deposited anywhere related to the Northern Transportation Route.**



Port Radium worker moving ore along mine track

