

Greenstone Mine

2023 Federal Biodiversity Monitoring Report

(To satisfy Federal EIS Conditions 4.1, 4.3, 7.1, 7.1.1, and 7.1.2)

December 30, 2023

HP-MG003-EV-136-0059_0

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List of Abbreviations

2023 Monitoring Period	October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023
BMMP	Biodiversity Monitoring and Management Plan
CEAA	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ETP	Effluent Treatment Plant
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act
GGM	Greenstone Gold Mines GP Inc.
MBCA	Migratory Birds Convention Act
MECP	Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
MNR	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
MNRF	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
MTO	Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
OMNRF	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
PDA	Project Development Area
the Project	Greenstone Gold Mine
SARO	Species at Risk in Ontario
SWAT	Southwest Arm Tributary
TETP	Temporary Effluent Treatment Plant
TMF	Tailings Management Facility

1 Introduction

Greenstone Gold Mines GP Inc. (GGM) is in the process of constructing the Greenstone Mine (the Project), which was formerly referred to as the Hardrock Project. The Mine site is located just south of Geraldton, Ontario, within the municipality of Greenstone, at the intersection of Highway 11 and Highway 584. The Project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Stantec 2018) was approved by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), as outlined in the Decision Statement issued (dated December 10, 2018 and as amended on February 10, 2021) under Section 54 of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. The federal Decision Statement contained various Conditions of Approval. A Biodiversity Management and Monitoring (BMMP) (GGM 2020) was prepared to address Conditions of Approval related to monitoring potential effects of the Project on biodiversity. The BMMP contained a series of appendices that each deal with specific federal or provincial monitoring requirements.

Construction started March 1, 2021, with tree clearing activities, which allowed for the construction of a temporary camp to house mine workers, the set-up of construction trailers, and the construction of a temporary effluent treatment plant (TETP). Construction of the following features and mine components progressed during the 2023 monitoring period (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023):

- A. New highway realignment
- B. Tailings Management Facility (TMF) dams
- C. Goldfield Creek Diversion Dam
- D. Goldfield Creek realignment
- E. Full scale effluent treatment plant (ETP)
- F. Office buildings
- G. The mill
- H. Other site infrastructure.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this 2023 Biodiversity Monitoring Report is to describe monitoring activities and results for the period of October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, that were undertaken to satisfy Federal EIS Conditions 4.1, 4.3, 7.1, 7.1.1, and 7.1.2.

The overall objectives related to each condition are provided in Table 1.1, which also references the applicable section of this 2023 Biodiversity Monitoring Report. This report focuses on those Federal conditions that are relevant to the 2022/2023 development activities. Other conditions apply to activities that will commence in subsequent years, and they will be reported on those development activities and associated conditions are initiated.

Table 1.1: Objectives for Federal Conditions of Approval Related to Biodiversity Monitoring and Management

Federal Condition	Report Section	Objective (from federal Decision Statement, 9/4/2019)
4.1	2.1	The Proponent shall carry out the Designated Project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing, or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall consider Environment and Climate Change Canada’s <i>Avoidance Guidelines</i> and the risk of incidental take. The Proponent’s actions when carrying out the Designated Project shall be in compliance with the <i>Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994</i> , the <i>Migratory Birds Regulations</i> and the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> .
4.3	2.2	Compensate the loss of barn swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>) nesting sites as a result of the Project, taking into account Ontario’s <i>Recovery Strategy for Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica)</i> . Install, prior to construction, and maintain, for three years, artificial barn swallow nesting structures.
7.1	BMMP and 2.3	Develop, prior to construction, a Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) protection plan that considers Ontario’s Management Plan for the Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) in Ontario and Ontario’s Bald Eagle Habitat Management Guidelines. Implement the protection plan during construction and operation. As part of the implementation of the protection plan:
7.1.1	2.3	Conduct, once prior to construction and annually until vegetation clearing is completed within the project development area, surveys of active Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) nests within the project development area and within 800 meters of the project development area and provide the results of the surveys to Indigenous groups, relevant authorities, and the Agency no later than 60 days after the end of each survey.
7.1.2	2.3	Develop, and implement measures to protect active nest(s) found pursuant to the surveys referred to in condition 7.1.1. At a minimum, these measures shall include restrictions on access and on Designated Project activities, including site preparation and vegetation clearing, that the Proponent may undertake from March 1 to August 31 within 400 metres of any active nest. The Proponent shall submit these measures to the Agency prior to implementing them, including the period(s) of time during which these measures will apply.

2 Monitoring Activities

Sections 2.1 through 2.3 provide a description of monitoring activities undertaken in the 2023 monitoring year to satisfy Conditions 4.1, 4.3, 7.1, 7.1.1, and 7.1.2.

2.1 Migratory Bird Nest Management Plan

The following section describes measures carried out to satisfy Federal Condition 4.1 of the Decision Statement. The Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA), 1994 protects migratory birds, their nests, and eggs. It prohibits the harming, killing, disturbance or destruction of migratory birds, nests, and eggs. Birds not addressed under the MBCA are grouse, quail, pheasants, ptarmigan, hawks, owls, eagles, falcons, cormorants, pelicans, crows, jays, kingfishers, and some species of blackbirds. Most species not protected by the MBCA are protected by the provincial Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA). Some species are also protected by provincial and/or federal species at risk legislation.

Birds and their nests and eggs may be inadvertently destroyed through the undertaking of certain activities (e.g., during vegetation clearing). This is referred to as “incidental take”. The Migratory Bird Nest Management Plan was created to reduce the risk of harm to migratory birds due to incidental take related to the construction, operation, and closure of the Greenstone Mine (GGM 2021). The Plan is intended to apply to native bird species that nest in Ontario.

2.1.1 Methods

To support pre-construction vegetation clearing during the breeding bird nesting period for Zone C5 (April 20 to August 31), nest surveys are completed by a qualified biologist to identify active bird nests and establish appropriate buffers. Nest sweeps are conducted according to methods outlined in the BMMP (GGM 2020) and Stantec’s Low Intensity Nest Search protocol (Stantec 2019) under the supervision of a qualified biologist.

Systematic sweeps of forested areas are conducted by walking parallel transects at 5 m spacing through areas to be cleared. Where nests were identified, a 30 m boundary was delineated and flagged to maintain a vegetation and disturbance buffer around the nest.

Locations are identified and flagged nests provided to GGM and clearing operators. Vegetation is maintained in the 30 m buffer around the nests until the end of nesting season in Zone C5 (August 31). Results of each nest sweep effort are considered valid for up to 7 days after which time the area would be re-swept if clearing had yet to occur.

2.1.2 Results and Mitigation

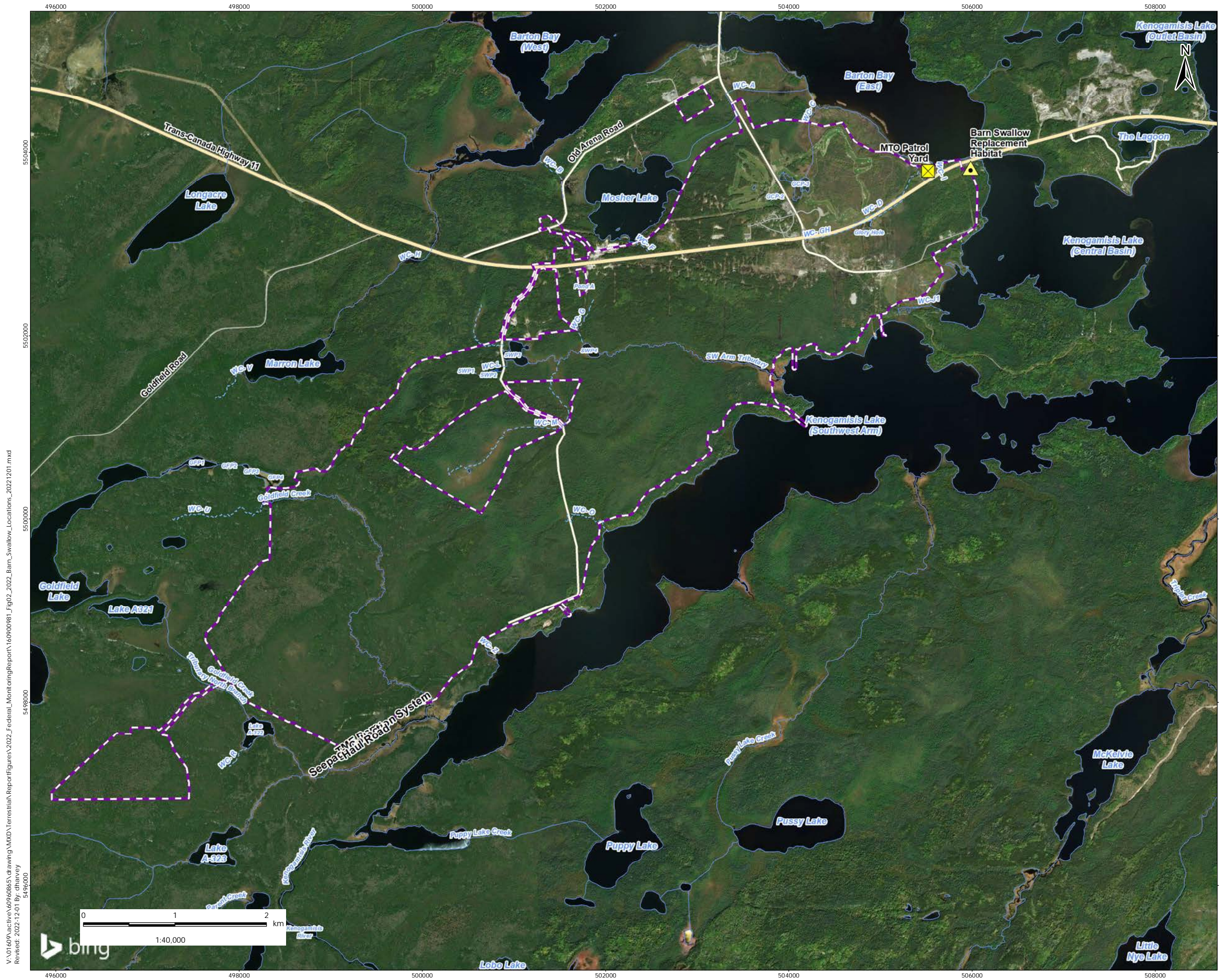
All vegetation clearing in the PDA in the 2023 monitoring period was conducted outside the nesting season for Zone C5, with the exception of two areas. No nests were observed.

2.2 Barn Swallow Mitigation and Restoration Record

The following section describes measures carried out to satisfy federal Condition 4.3 of the Decision Statement. Barn swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) was a threatened species (ESA 2007, SARO 2011) at the time of approval. It was present in two buildings requiring removal by GGM in the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) Patrol Yard (Figure 1). Removal was conducted in spring 2023 following procedures outlined in the BMMP (GGM 2020).

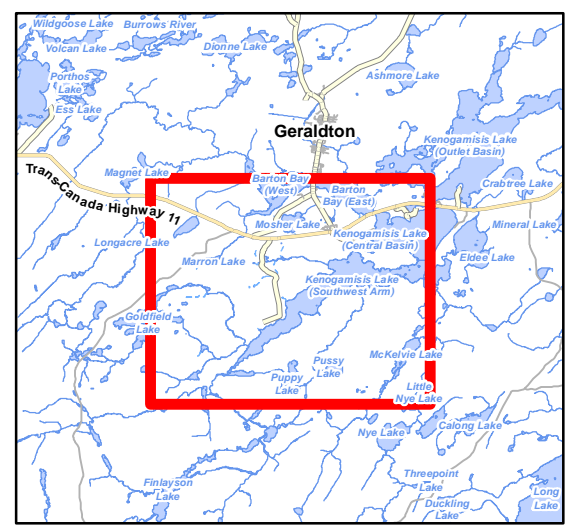
In preparation for removal of Barn Swallow habitat, and in accordance with federal EIS Condition 4.3 habitat compensation was provided in 2021 through installation of a nesting structure with artificial nesting cups following nesting habitat guidelines provided by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNRF 2016). The structure is located approximately 500 m east of the former MTO Patrol Yard, immediately outside the PDA, near suitable foraging habitat over Kenogamisis Lake (GGM 2021). The BMMP states that a Notice of Activity will be filed with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) in 2022; however Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) was reclassified on January 25, 2023 on the Species at Risk in Ontario List (Ontario Regulation 230/08) as a special concern species. The change in classification means that the Provincial prohibitions in subsections 9 (1) and 10 (1) of the ESA that apply in respect of endangered and threatened species and their habitats no longer apply to Barn Swallow. As a result, filing a Notice of Activity was no longer required. Despite the change in status of Barn Swallow, GGM continues to honour previous commitments for compensation and monitoring.

The two buildings in the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) Patrol Yard were removed in April and May 2023 with all structures completely removed by May 5, 2023. MTO structures containing barn swallow nests were removed before the end of April, 2023. The alternate nesting structure was monitored during the Barn Swallows breeding period, following the guidelines from Stantec's Low Intensity Nest Search protocol (Stantec 2019) under the supervision of a qualified biologist.



Legend

- Project Development Area (Optimized Site Plan, May 2019)
- Former MTO Patrol Yard (Barn Swallow Habitat)
- Barn Swallow Replacement Habitat
- Highway (pre-construction alignment)
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Watercourse- Permanent
- Watercourse- Intermittent
- Waterbody



Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 16N
2. Base features produced under license with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2013.
3. Orthographic Imagery Source: © 2022 Microsoft Corporation © 2022 Maxar © CNES (2022) Distribution Airbus DS Imagery Date- Unknown

December 2022
160900981

Client/Project

Greenstone Gold Mines GP Inc (GGM)
Hardrock Project

Figure No.

1

Title

Barn Swallow
Locations in the PDA

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 Revised: 2022-12-01 By: dhanvey



2.2.1 Barn Swallow Monitoring 2023

2.2.1.1 Monitoring of Habitat Compensation

The Barn Swallow habitat compensation structure was monitored twice during the 2023 nesting season (Table 2.1). The habitat compensation structure was in good condition during the 2023 nesting season, including the overall structure, nest cups, and predator controls (Photo 1). There was no evidence of use of the structure by Barn Swallows or other bird or bat species in 2023.

Table 2.1: Barn Swallow Habitat Compensation Structure Monitoring

Survey Date	Is the Barn Swallow structure in good condition? (Y/N)	Are nest cups in good condition? (Y/N)	Evidence of Barn Swallow nesting? (Y/N)	Are predator controls in good condition? (Y/N)	Other Birds/Bats Using Structure? (Y/N)
May 18, 2023	Y	Y	N	Y	N
June 29, 2023	Y	Y	N	Y	N
August 16, 2023	Y	Y	N	Y	N



Photo 1. Barn swallow habitat compensation structure showing the structure in good condition with no nesting observed. June 29, 2023.

2.2.1.2 Mitigation

The MTO structures were removed during the spring of 2023 with the structures containing the nests removed before May 1, 2023. Monitoring of the habitat compensation structure will continue for a final year in 2024.

2.3 Bald Eagle Protection Plan

The following section describes measures carried out to satisfy federal Condition 7.1, 7.1.1, and 7.1.2 of the Decision Statement. Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) has been confirmed nesting within 800 m of the PDA. Bald Eagles are a species of special concern in Ontario but are not at risk federally. Bald Eagle nests are also protected by the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

In 2023 a Bald Eagle survey was completed because the development of GGM has the potential to encroach on Bald Eagle nests through removal of forest cover and mine construction and operation activities such as moving vehicles, and construction of roads and other mine infrastructures. One new active Bald Eagle nest within 800 m of construction activities was also monitored to document potential impacts of project construction on Bald Eagle nesting behaviour and nest success.

This annual report addresses the following reporting requirements:

1. Annual surveying of active eagle nests
2. Reporting implemented mitigation measures.

2.3.1 Methods

2.3.1.1 Nest Survey

An aerial raptor nest survey was conducted on February 17, 2023, by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (Philip Wilson, personal communication). Due to the time of year, the status of nest activity could not be determined. GGM completed an additional targeted drone survey in June 2023 using a Mavic Air 2¹ drone, a small quad-rotor drone. The drone survey targeted areas where Bald Eagle nests were known to be present and most likely active during surveys conducted in 2019, 2021 and 2022 along the Kenogamisis Lake shoreline from Barton Bay to the southwest arm (Figure 3) (Northern Bioscience 2019, Stantec 2021).

¹<https://www.dji.com/ca/mavic-air-2>

2.3.2 Nest Monitoring

Bald Eagle Nest GGM-001 is within the project development area and is between 200 m of various Project components (Figure 2). For nests within 200 - 400 m of project components, restrictions on access to roads and to the peninsula, where the nest was located, was restricted from May 1 to August 31, 2023. During this time no vegetation clearing or large vehicle traffic was permitted, with access limited to non-disturbing activities (e.g., monthly surface water sampling).

Nest E-535 has been identified and monitored since pre-construction in 2019. Last year, there was no active construction in the TMF that occurred within 800 m of nest E-535 during the nesting period. However, there was construction vehicle traffic travelling within 800 m of the nest during the nesting period. To monitor potential impacts from vehicle traffic, nest E-535 was regularly monitored by GGM staff throughout 2022. During the 2023 survey, there was no confirmation of nest E-535 due to tree felling. The MNRF also noted the presence of an eagle on February 26, 2023, near the former site of nest E-535, suggesting eagles may attempt to build a new nest in the vicinity.

2.3.3 Results

2.3.3.1 Bald Eagle Nest Survey

One active Bald Eagle nest (E-535) was located during the 2022 drone survey (Figure 2 and Table 2.2) and has since been absent. Two nests that weren't previously identified in the 2022 survey (WP-008 and 487) were located in 2023. A new Bald Eagle nest (GGM-001) was observed to be actively used by eagles by GGM staff in spring of 2023. Each nest observed in 2023 was constructed in large trembling aspen trees near the shoreline of Kenogamisis Lake.

Table 2.2: Summary of Aerial Drone Survey of Bald Eagles, 2023

Nest ID (BMMP ID)	First Year Identified	Status - 2021	Status - 2022	Status- 2023	Easting	Northing	Within 800 m of PDA?	Notes
WP-008 (WP-008)	2019	Present	Unknown	Present	505612.5	5504865	No	In large trembling aspen near shoreline.
E-535 (WP-003)	2019	Present	Present - Active	Absent	500320.5	5497932	Yes	In large trembling aspen near Kenogamisis shoreline. Tree was felled in early 2023.
E-487 (WP-004)	2019	Present	Unknown	Present	499648.7	5497012	Yes	In large trembling aspen near Kenogamisis shoreline.

Nest ID (BMMP ID)	First Year Identified	Status - 2021	Status - 2022	Status- 2023	Easting	Northing	Within 800 m of PDA?	Notes
GGM-001 (n/a)	2023	-	-	Present-Active	503989.2	5501170	Yes	In large trembling aspen near Kenogamisis shoreline.

2.3.4 Mitigation

Of the four eagle nests that were identified in 2019, two were present in 2023 (487, WP-008). Only nest GGM-001 showed evidence of potential nesting in 2023.

Nest 487 (present in 2023) is 650 m from the TMF and nest E-535 (not active in 2023) is 217 -352 m from various project components, including the TMF (Table 2.2). Nest WP-008 (not active in 2023) is greater than 800 m from project component (Table 2.2). Given the location, Nest GGM-001 (active in 2023) continues to be subject to precautionary mitigation measures.

Construction mitigation recommendations for eagle nests 487 and GGM-001 are summarized in Table 2.3. The Bald Eagle Habitat Management Guidelines (MNR 1987) identify three buffer zones that should be applied to Bald Eagle nests. Varying levels of activity restrictions apply to each buffer zone:

- Primary zone: the first 100 m around the nest and carries the highest level of restriction.
- Secondary zone: extends from 100 to 200 m around the nest and activities significantly altering the landscape are prohibited within this zone.
- Tertiary zone: extends from 200 to 800 m around the nest; this is the least restrictive zone and allows some activities except during the most critical life cycle period for nesting eagles.

Mitigation measures during construction are as follows:

- No vegetation removal or Project activities will occur within 200 m (i.e., the primary and secondary zones, as defined by MNR 1987) of an active nest.
- The limits of the vegetation removal and construction area within 800 m of an active nest will be staked in the field. Activities will occur inside the marked limit of work.
- A 120 m vegetated buffer zone will be retained along the shoreline of the lake; and vegetation that is present between each nest and the lakeshore will be retained.
- Large and mature trees will be retained between each nest and the closest Project components to maintain a visibility barrier to Project activities to the extent possible

- Vegetation clearing activities and site preparation activities between 400 m and 800 m of active nests will not occur from March 1 to June 30 (the incubation and nestling period for Bald Eagle [MNR 1987; MNR 2010]).
- If vegetation clearing or site preparation activities are required within 200- 400 m of the nest, they should occur outside of the incubation, nestling, and fledging period (March 1 to August 31 [MNR 2010]).

These mitigation measures are specific to construction activities that are currently being undertaken. Operations mitigation for raptor nests will be implemented when operations activity commences.

Table 2.3: Summary of Recommended Construction Mitigation Measures for Eagle Nest within 800 m of the PDA

Critical Buffer Distance from Nest	Mitigation Measure	Current Applicable Nest IDs
All distances	Large and mature trees will be retained between each nest and the closest Project components to maintain a visibility barrier to Project activities to the extent possible.	487; GGM-001
< 120 m	Vegetated buffer zone will be retained along the shoreline of the lake; and all vegetation that is present between each nest and the lakeshore will be retained.	487; GGM-001
< 200 m	No vegetation removal or Project activities will occur within 200 m (i.e., the primary and secondary zones, as defined by MNR, 1987) of an active nest.	Does not currently apply to known nests
200 m - 400 m	Vegetation clearing or site preparation activities should occur outside incubation, nestling, and fledging periods (March 1 to August 31 [MNR 2010]).	GGM-001
400 m - 800 m	Vegetation clearing activities and site preparation activities will not occur from March 1 to June 30 (the incubation and nestling period for Bald Eagle [MNR 1987; MNR 2010]).	487; GGM-001
< 800 m	The limits of the vegetation removal and construction area within 800 m of an active nest will be staked in the field. Activities will occur inside the marked limit of work.	487; GGM-001
Source: Stantec 2020		

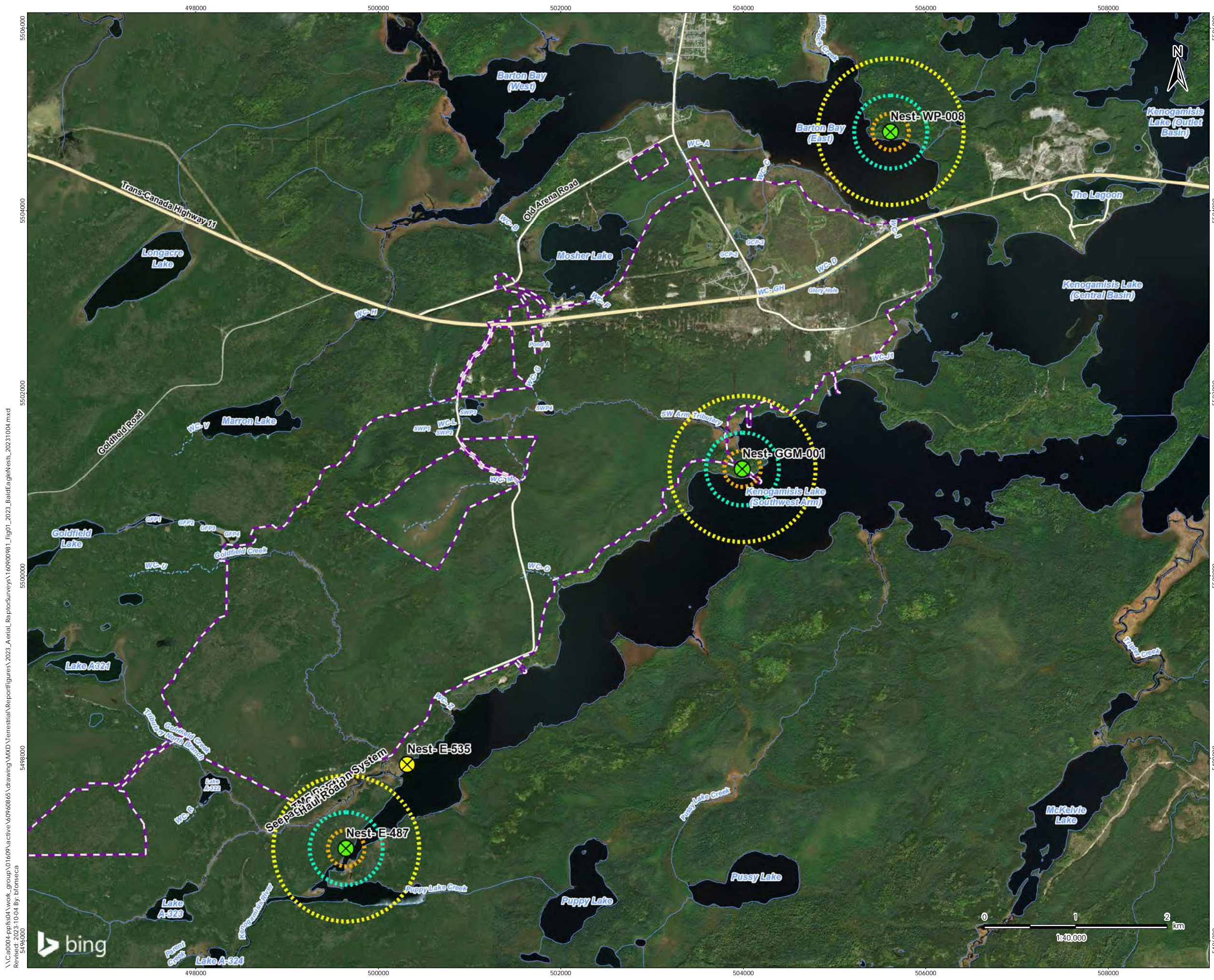
2.3.5 Recommendations

Based on result of the 2023 Bald Eagle monitoring, the following recommendations are made to reduce the likelihood of impacts of GGM Project activity on Bald Eagle nests in the PDA:

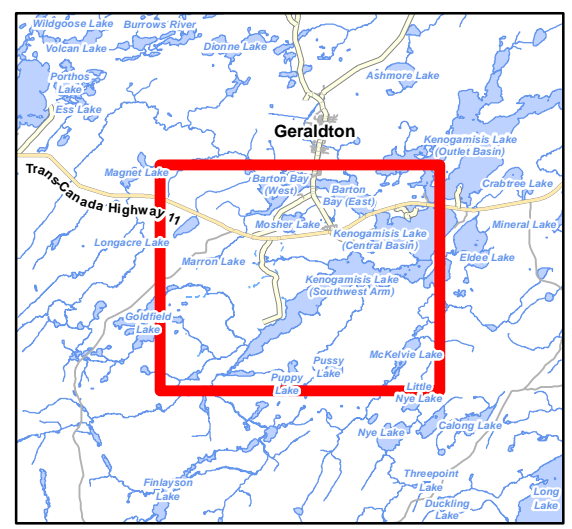
- It is recommended that all known Bald Eagle nests in the PDA be visited annually to visually confirm the presence of eagle nests and their activity status in the PDA. Assessing status of nests may require use of a larger drone to better assess eagle activity.
- Nest GGM-001 should be monitored regularly for nesting activity from the ground beginning in April each year.
- Construction mitigation measures be adhered to, and anticipated non-compliance be communicated to regulators (ECCC and MNRF).

Specific to nest E-535, through the investigation, the following corrective actions were determined and undertaken:

- Bald Eagle education slides were presented to staff and contractors regarding protection of bald eagles and their habitat through a quarterly presentation
- Trail camera installation to support wildlife monitoring including one located at nest GGM-001 by the ETP Discharge Line, north of the E-535. This nest was also barricaded to prevent entry from heavy machinery.
- The Q1 2023 Community Newsletter included wildlife protection information including legislation and how to notify the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry if Natural Resource Violations are discovered.



- Legend**
- Project Development Area (Optimized Site Plan, May 2019)
 - Bald Eagle Nest, Absent
 - Bald Eagle Nest, Present
 - Bald Eagle Nest 200 m Buffer
 - Bald Eagle Nest 400 m Buffer
 - Bald Eagle Nest 800 m Buffer
 - Highway (pre-construction alignment)
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - Watercourse- Permanent
 - Watercourse- Intermittent
 - Waterbody



- Notes**
1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 16N
 2. Base features produced under license with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2013.
 3. Orthographic Imagery Source: © 2023 Microsoft Corporation © 2023 Maxar © CNES (2023) Distribution Airbus DS Imagery Date- Unknown

October 2023
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Client/Project
**Greenstone Gold Mines GP Inc (GGM)
Hardrock Project**

Figure No.
2

Title
Bald Eagle Nest Locations in the LAA

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 Revised: 2023-10-04 By: bronsceca
 5496000



3 Summary

This report addresses the management plans and conditions of the Federal Decision Statement that are required to be implemented because of the commencement of Project construction activities. Additional activities and associated conditions will be implemented as the Project proceeds towards operation and infrastructure is advanced and will be reported on at that time.

Three specific Conditions of Approval related to monitoring potential effects of the Project on biodiversity were assessed including:

- Condition 4.1, avoidance of incidental take of migratory birds through nest sweeps of areas to be cleared during the breeding season.
- Condition 4.3, Barn Swallow habitat compensation.
- Condition 7.1, (including subsections 7.1.1, and 7.1.2), monitoring of Bald Eagle nests within 800 m of the PDA and implementation of a mitigation plan to avoid disturbance of Bald Eagle nests from Project activities during the breeding season.

Management plans for these conditions have been developed as part of the BMMP. This report confirms compliance of the implementation of the three conditions and the performance and/or effectiveness of these conditions to maintain the function of the valued ecosystem components. Upon completion of additional surveys and monitoring in subsequent years, the effectiveness of the protective and mitigation techniques will be further assessed. At the time of this report, the Federal conditions related to valued ecosystem components have been implemented and demonstrated to be effective in meeting their intended objective.

4 References

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Appendix A

Photologs

A.1 Bald Eagle Monitoring



Photo 1 Newly constructed nest (GGM-001) in large aspen on shoreline of Kenogamisis Lake (Date: May 18, 2023)



Photo 2 Bald Eagle nest (GGM-001) identified in 2023 (Date: May 18, 2023)



Photo 3 Bald Eagle nest WP-008 in large trembling aspen on the north shore of Barton Bay (Date: June 9, 2023)



Photo 4 Bald Eagle nest E-487 in large trembling aspen on the west side of the southwest arm of Kenogamisis lake (Date: June 9, 2023)