



Q&A for Residents: Potash exploration in the Salt Springs / Cassidy Lake area

The provincial government has issued a request for proposals for potash exploration in the Salt Springs / Cassidy Lake area. At this stage, the request for proposals is to seek parties interested in exploration only. If no satisfactory proposals are received, exploration rights will not be issued.

This proposed area, located southeast of Norton, represents about 26,350 hectares. Most of the land is privately owned.

Why is the provincial government issuing a request for proposals seeking parties interested in potash exploration?

Potash has been an important contributor to the local and provincial economy for more than 50 years. It has been identified as a critical mineral by [Natural Resources Canada](#) and placed on [Canada's Critical Minerals List 2021](#), a list of minerals essential to Canada's economic security.

New Brunswick is the only region along the eastern seaboard of North America that has mined potash resources.

What happens if a successful proponent is identified?

If a successful proponent is identified, they may enter into a potash exploration agreement giving them the sole right to explore for potash in the area defined.

This area includes my property. If exploration rights are issued, what will this mean for me?

This request for proposals is for exploration only. This is not a mining lease agreement, and no production rights are being granted at this time.

Under a Potash Exploration Agreement, exploration activities still require oversight from the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development. The exploration agreement alone does not authorize all the necessary exploration work.

Any exploration work that interferes with the use and enjoyment of the land or requires the use of equipment beyond very basic hand tools and/or some geophysical equipment is considered work of a damaging nature. Any work of a damaging nature must not proceed until landowner permission has been obtained and appropriate permissions are obtained from the department.

On privately owned lands, access approval to conduct this work is a matter between the owner, tenant or occupant and the successful proponent.

How will exploration work affect me?

Depending on the location and type of exploration being done, it may not be noticeable to you.

Early exploration will most likely be a desktop exercise looking at existing geological data and mapping, reprocessing of current data, and identifying gaps in the current data for additional exploration.

At other times, you may see exploration equipment and staff in the area conducting seismic work on roads, gravity survey with manual sensors, and possibly constructing temporary access for drill testing on a limited basis during advanced stages of exploration.

As with all mineral exploration on privately owned lands, permissions are required before any damaging work may be conducted.

What happens if potash is found under my property?

If potash is discovered under your property, it does not guarantee a mine site will be proposed on your land.

If a viable mining opportunity is identified, a mining lease may be requested. There are several legislative steps in this process, including, for example, an Environmental Impact Assessment; consultation with First Nations and the community; reclamation plan and securities; landowner agreements; feasibility studies and various approvals and permitting for aspects of construction and operation.

Obtaining land access permission or rights for the development of a mine site is between the proponent and the landowner(s).

As a private property owner, do I have to allow exploration on my land?

Mineral resources are vested in the Crown, and therefore are public resources for all New Brunswickers. Proponents and landowners are encouraged to enter respectful dialogue when reviewing any proposed activity.

Landowner permission is required for any work of a damaging nature and in most cases, agreements are reached between the landowner and the proponent.

What if there is a problem before or during exploration work?

If exploration proceeds and the proponent appears to be operating in bad faith, a good first step is to contact the exploration company and discuss it.

You can also bring your concern to the Mining Recorder's office at the Department of Natural Resources and Energy by calling 506-453-3826.

I have questions about this proposal that aren't answered in this FAQ. Who can I contact?

Please contact the Mining Recorder's office at the Department of Natural Resources and Energy by calling 506-453-3826.