important technical and environmental work to prepare the site for drilling, including an evaluation conducted by a biologist on July 6, assessing the location for potential habitat use by sensitive species.

The borehole drilling and testing work is part of the NWMO’s site assessment program, as it seeks to understand the geosphere at the potential repository site. Located about 108 miles west of Toronto, South Bruce is one of two areas the NWMO is exploring as a potential repository site. The other area is around Ignace, in northwestern Ontario.

As part of its technical evaluation of the site, the NWMO will conduct borehole drilling, coring, and testing at South Bruce, and the organization is currently identifying local service providers and contractors in preparation for the drilling. In June, the NWMO announced that it has selected Ontario-based environmental and engineering company Geofirma Engineering to drill and test initial boreholes in South Bruce.

The organization said that it is also conducting a range of investigations to further confirm the suitability of the site and gain an understanding of local habitat use. The NWMO has contracted Tulloch’s Environmental Practice to conduct a ground-nesting bird habitat assessment at the site as part of its investigation into habitat use.

Once preliminary work confirms the suitability of the planned location for the first borehole in South Bruce, the NWMO said, it expects to start borehole site construction in early fall and begin drilling and coring later in 2020.