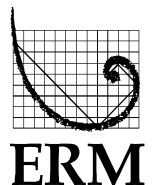


BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate /
Environmental Impact Statement

Appendix 25-B

Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge
and Traditional Use Report



Pretium Resources Inc.

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT

Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Use Report

PRETIUM 



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June 2014

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT TSETSAUT/SKII KM LAX HA NATION TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITIONAL USE REPORT

June 2014
Project #0194150-0020-0090

Citation:

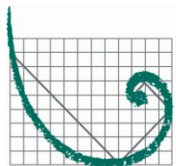
ERM Rescan. 2014. *Brucejack Gold Mine Project: Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Use Report*. Prepared for Pretium Resources Inc. by ERM Rescan: Vancouver, British Columbia.

Prepared for:



Pretium Resources Inc.

Prepared by:

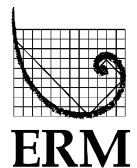


ERM

ERM Rescan
Vancouver, British Columbia

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge and
Traditional Use Report

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The proposed Brucejack Minesite is situated within the Sulphurets District in the Iskut River region, approximately 20 kilometres northwest of Bowser Lake or 65 kilometres north-northwest of the town of Stewart, British Columbia. This report characterizes the Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Use (TU) of the proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project (the Project) area as provided by the Skii km Lax Ha, an Aboriginal group with traditional territory which overlaps the Project. The report aims to clearly identify Skii km Lax Ha interests, activities and land uses within areas of their traditional territory adjacent to the Project.

Research was implemented between April 2012 and May 2014 and included a literature review of available ethnographic information for the Skii km Lax Ha as well as for other Aboriginal groups in northwest British Columbia. The Skii km Lax Ha were actively involved in providing historical and ethnographic documents to Rescan that were relevant to their ancestry, as well as in defining the boundaries of, and the events that shaped, their traditional territory. They also assisted ERM Rescan in analyzing these documents. Subsequently, primary data were obtained through a formal interview and mapping session held with the Skii km Lax Ha and follow-up communications with them. Primary data included locations of TK/TU activities, sites and areas within a local study area (LSA), which surrounds the project footprint, and regional study area (RSA), defined as the Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory.

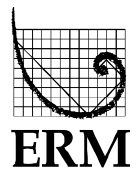
The report provides a brief overview of the Tsetsaut ethnographic group (from which the Skii km Lax Ha are descended), including traditional economy, social organization, spirituality and worldview, as well as a review of place names within northwest BC that can be traced to Skii km Lax Ha ancestors or are Tsetsaut in origin. Fishing, trapping, hunting and plant and berry harvesting are noted as traditional activities that continue to be practiced today in various areas within the RSA and LSA.

Interview and mapping data to date indicate no evidence for the traditional use of Brucejack Lake or the proposed Brucejack Minesite. The lake itself is surrounded by glaciers, is barren of fish, and until recently may have been covered by snow. Therefore its value as a harvesting area is low. In contrast, the existing Project exploration road passes through cranberry picking areas along the bottomland of Bowser River, as well as various hunting areas as it proceeds around the north side of Mount Anderson. Todedada Lake, used for trout fishing, is located a short distance east of the road. The road also intersects a marten trapping area within a Skii km Lax Ha trapline. Three cabin sites (one of which has been recently constructed) have also been identified along the exploration road.

Finally, the south option transmission line passes along a travel corridor used by Skii km Lax Ha ancestors in the recent past for access and hunting. One former cabin site (no longer standing) was identified along this travel corridor at Summit Lake.

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge and
Traditional Use Report

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BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT TSETSAUT/SKII KM LAX HA NATION TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITIONAL USE REPORT

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

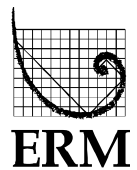
Acronyms and Abbreviations

Terminology used in this document is defined where it is first used. The following list will assist readers who may choose to review only portions of the document.

BCEAA	<i>BC Environmental Assessment Act, SBC 2002, Chapter 43</i>
BC EAO	British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office
BC MOE	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
CEA Agency	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
CEAA	<i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 1992</i>
CMT	Culturally Modified Tree
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ILMB	Integrated Land Management Bureau
LSA	Local Study Area
masl	Metres above sea level
NTL	Northwest Transmission Line
Pretivm	Pretium Resources Inc.
the Project	The proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project
ERM Rescan	ERM Consultants Canada Ltd. (formerly Rescan Environmental Services Ltd.)
RSA	Regional Study Area
TK	Traditional Knowledge
tpd	Tonne(s) per day
TU	Traditional Use

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
Tsetsaut/Skii km Lax Ha Nation Traditional Knowledge and
Traditional Use Report

1. Introduction



1. Introduction

This report characterises Skii km Lax Ha Traditional Use (TU) and Traditional Knowledge (TK) data as it relates to the proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project (the Project). The purpose of the study is to gain a clear understanding of Skii km Lax Ha interests, activities and land uses within their traditional territory adjacent to the Project.

Skii km Lax Ha was actively involved in the TK/TU study and worked collaboratively with Rescan Consultants Canada Ltd. (ERM Rescan) through primary data gathering efforts and the provision of additional secondary data to support research findings. The report includes the results of the desk-based literature review for the Project, as well as from interviews and mapping sessions held with members of the Skii km Lax Ha.

The Project is subject to an environmental assessment (EA) review under British Columbia's *Environmental Assessment Act* (BCEAA) and Canada's *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). This report has been prepared to support Pretium Resources Inc. (Pretium)'s application for an EA Certificate. Information from this report will be incorporated into the relevant chapters (i.e., wildlife, socio-economics, etc.) of the EA Application for the Project.

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

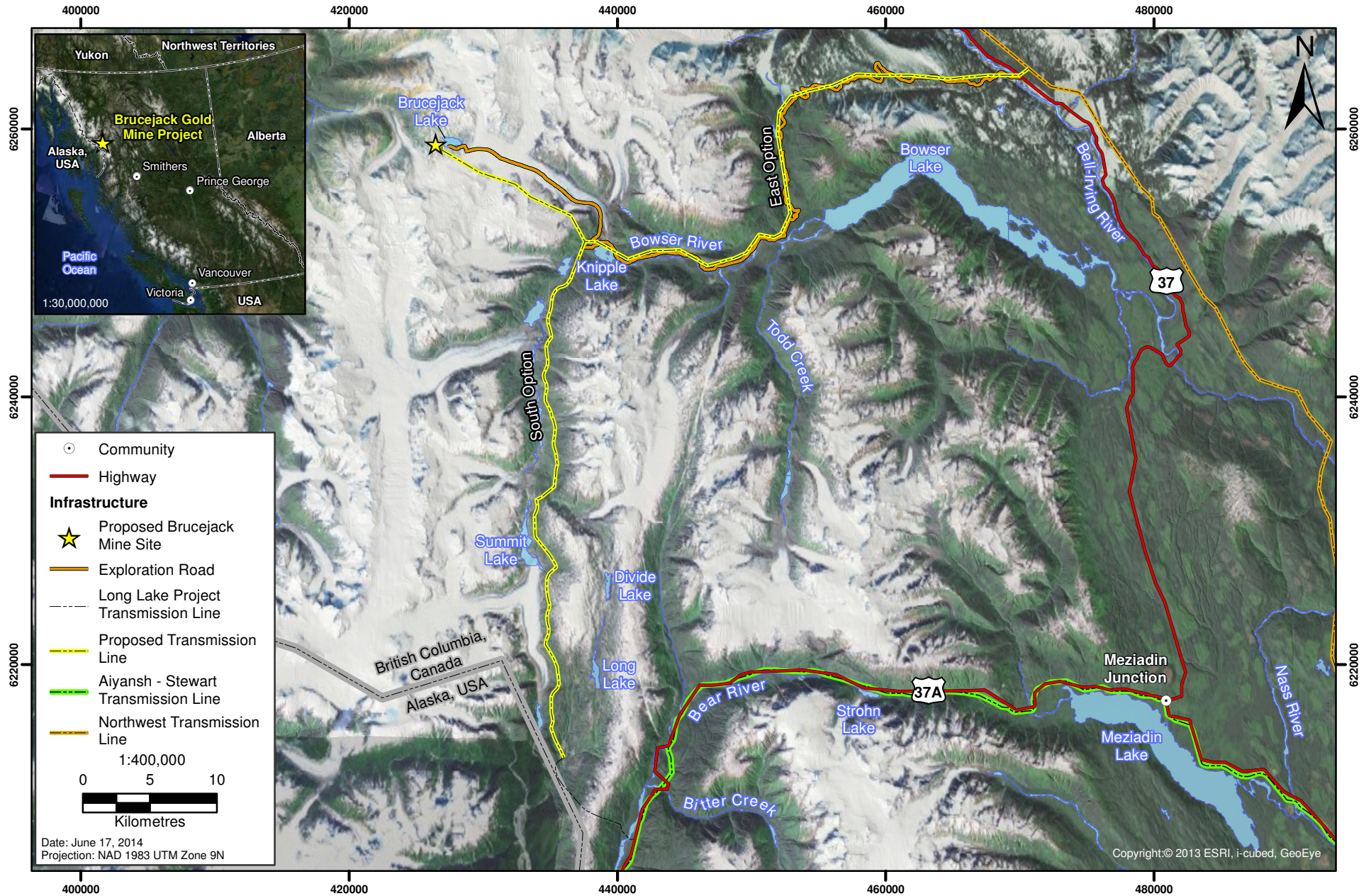
Pretium proposes to develop the Project as a 2,700 tonne per day (tpd) underground gold and silver mine. The Brucejack property is located at 56°28'20" N latitude by 130°11'31" W longitude, which is approximately 950 km northwest of Vancouver, 65 km north-northwest of Stewart, and 21 km south-southeast of the closed Eskay Creek Mine (Figure 1.1-1). The Project is located within the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District. Several First Nations and a Treaty Nation have traditional territory within the general region of the Project including the Skii km Lax Ha, the Nisga'a Nation, the Tahltan Nation, the Gitxan First Nation, and the Gitanyow First Nation.

The mine site area will be located near Brucejack Lake. Vehicle access to the mine site will be via an existing exploration access road from Highway 37 that will require upgrades to facilitate traffic during mine operations. A transmission line will connect the mine site to the provincial power grid near Stewart or along Highway 37; two options are currently under consideration.

The Project is located within the boundary range of the Coast Mountain Physiographic Belt, along the western margin of the Intermontane Tectonic Belt. The local terrain ranges from generally steep in the western portion of the Project area in the high alpine with substantial glacier cover to relatively subdued topography in the eastern portion of the Project area towards the Bell-Irving River. The Brucejack mine site will be located above the tree line in a mountainous area at an elevation of approximately 1,400 masl; surrounding peaks measure 2,200 m in elevation. The access and transmission corridors will span a range of elevations and ecosystems reaching a minimum elevation near the Bell Irving River of 500 masl. Sparse fir, spruce, and alder grow along the valley bottoms, with only scrub alpine spruce, juniper, alpine grass, moss, and heather covering the steep valley walls.

The general area of the Brucejack Property has been the target of mineral exploration since the 1960s. In the 1980s Newhawk Gold Mines Ltd. conducted advanced exploration activities at the current site of the proposed Brucejack mine site that included 5 km of underground development, construction of an access road along the Bowser River and Knipple Glacier, and resulted in the deposition of 60,000 m³ of waste rock within Brucejack Lake.

Figure 1.1-1
Brucejack Gold Mine Project Overview



Environmental baseline data was collected from Brucejack Lake and the surrounding vicinity in the 1980s to support a Stage I Impact Assessment for the Sulphurets Project proposed by Newhawk Gold Mines Ltd. Silver Standard Resources Inc. commenced recent environmental baseline studies specific to the currently proposed Project in 2009, which have been continued by Pretium following its acquisition of the Project in 2010. The scope and scale of the recent environmental baseline programs have varied over the period from 2009 to the present as the development plan for the Project has evolved.

1.2 SKII KM LAX HA

The Skii km Lax Ha estimate it has approximately 30 members, most of whom live off-reserve in Hazelton and New Hazelton (D. Simpson, pers. comm.). Hazelton is approximately 208 km southeast of the Project (as the crow flies), or 300 km by road, and 71 km northwest of Smithers.

The Skii km Lax Ha self-identify as being descendants of the Tsetsaut ethnographic group (see Section 4.1); however, they are not currently recognized by the Government of Canada as a distinct “band” as defined by the *Indian Act*. In the draft Section 11 Order for the Project dated May 7, 2013, they are considered by the provincial government as a *wilp* (“house”) of the larger Gitksan Nation. Under the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Guidelines prepared by the federal government on March 26, 2013, however, they are identified as “Skii km Lax Ha First Nation.” The Skii km Lax Ha continue to advance their claim to nationhood with both the federal and provincial governments.

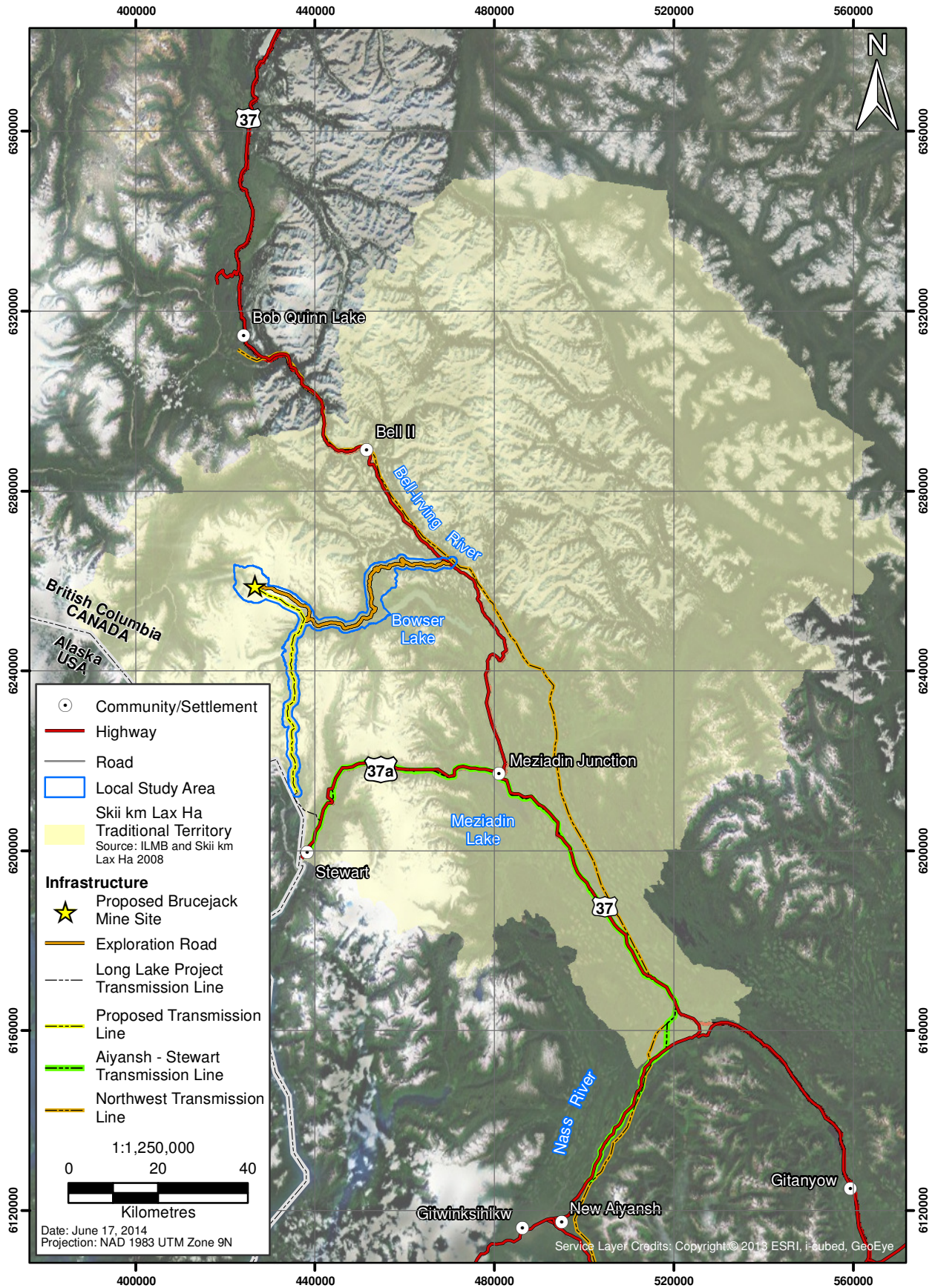
1.2.1 Traditional Territory

The Skii km Lax Ha territorial boundary in northwest BC extends from the north side of the Cranberry River in the south, to Beaver Pond in Ningunsaw Pass in the north. The traditional territory’s total area is approximately 19,800 km². A map of their traditional territory submitted to BC’s Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) in 2008 (Figure 1.2-1) shows the eastern boundary of their territory running from the upper Klappan River drainage in the north, down the Skeena River and the Groundhog Range of mountains, then along the Slowmaldo Pass to Blackwater or Damdochax Lake. It then runs southwest along the Nass River to Sallysout Creek, taking in Mount Skuyhil and the Kwinageese Valley, to the Kispiox River, then crossing over to Cranberry River. From here the boundary runs northwest across the Cambria Icefield to the town of Stewart, incorporating the upper Nass River, White River and Meziadin Lake. It continues northwest to the upper Unuk River, then follows the Unuk to its source. It skirts around Teigen Lake, incorporating the entire Bowser River and Lake valley, and the Bell-Irving River, and meets up with the Ningunsaw Pass.

Figure 1.2-1 identifies Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory in relation to the Brucejack Project. All major components of the proposed Project infrastructure lie within the area claimed by the Skii km Lax Ha.

The climate of the area in which Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory is located is characterized by high precipitation levels and deep snow packs. The landscape is mountainous and the habitats range from coniferous forests and areas with thick underbrush, as well as smaller subalpine open areas and alpine tundra, and steep rugged landforms surrounded by glaciers. Black bear, grizzly bear, moose and mountain goat are common in this area, especially in subalpine parkland areas around Todedada Lake, upper Scott Creek, and upper Wildfire Creek. Fur-bearing species such as marten, fisher, wolverine, and red squirrel are also common in upland areas. Common vegetation includes Alaskan blueberries and black huckleberries, though in alpine areas with little soil formation, dwarf willows, grasses, sedges, and lichens are more common (Meidinger and Pojar 1991; Daly 2005; Meidinger and MacKenzie 2006). For further information on the biophysical environment of Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory, please refer to the wildlife and terrestrial ecosystem baselines for this Project (Rescan 2013d, 2013c).

Figure 1.2-1
Proposed Project and Skii km Lax Ha
Traditional Territory



2. Purpose

2. Purpose

Traditional Knowledge and Use (TK/TU) studies can provide important information on First Nations' interests and elucidate technical, academic, and indigenous information about the traditional and contemporary use and knowledge of the Project and surrounding areas. The overall purposes of the collection of TK/TU information are to document and present information relating to historic and current Skii km Lax Ha activities, practices and uses in the general area surrounding the Project.

3. Methodology

3. Methodology

3.1 APPROACH

Research was implemented between April 2012 and May 2014, and included a literature review of available ethnographic information for the Skii km Lax Ha as well as for other Aboriginal groups in northwest British Columbia. The Skii km Lax Ha were also involved in providing documents to ERM Rescan that were relevant to their ancestry, as well as in defining the boundaries of, and the events that shaped, their traditional territory, and assisted Rescan in analyzing these documents. Primary data in the form of locations of TK/TU activities, sites and areas, as well as recent trends, were obtained through a formal interview and mapping session held with the Skii km Lax Ha. Additional data were provided through follow-up meetings and communications to address data gaps.

ERM Rescan previously conducted TK/TU research with the Skii km Lax Ha for the Northwest Transmission Line (NTL) Project (Rescan 2009; Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010). The findings from the NTL Project were used to supplement the findings in this report. Mapped TK/TU sites and areas from this prior study were also incorporated into the maps included herein while avoiding duplication of previously identified TK/TU sites and areas.

3.1.1 Local and Regional Study Areas

The Regional Study Area (RSA) for this report is defined as corresponding to the area bounded by Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory, as primary source information interviews and mapping focussed on the use of this area (see Figure 1.2-1).

The Local Study Area (LSA) corresponds with the Project's wildlife and terrestrial ecology LSA, and consists of an area of approximately 31,847 ha immediately surrounding Project infrastructure, where localized effects are largely anticipated to occur (Figure 1.2-1). The LSA was chosen to align with the biophysical studies conducted to support the Project's EA, as traditional activities are closely tied to the abundance and type of plant and animal species available in a specific area.

3.1.2 Desktop Ethnographic Information Collection and Analysis

Bibliographic and internet sources, including *adaawks* (oral histories), were searched to identify references for applicable ethnographic information. Topics for information collection included cultural setting (history, social organization, family and kinship, and language use), economic life, subsistence strategies, and spiritualism and ceremony. Journal articles, books and book chapters, reports and proceedings, as well as information from government and organization web sites, were reviewed. The analysis included studying pre-contact culture and historic patterns that occurred in northwest British Columbia through to the modern period.

Publically available documents produced for EAs for other Projects, such as the NTL (Rescan 2009; Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010), were also reviewed. Based on the results of the review, an analysis, synthesis and discussion of the available ethnographic information was prepared. A complete list of sources used for this study is included in the references section at the end of the report.

3.1.3 Primary Source Information

The Skii km Lax Ha were collaboratively engaged to conduct TK/TU studies and participated in semi-structured interviews as well as a mapping session in February 2013. Data collection focused on historic

and contemporary traditional uses and/or knowledge for their traditional territory. Interviews were recorded, both in writing and by audio record, and maps were provided to geographically locate uses and values, where appropriate.

Additionally, e-mails, phone conversations, and face-to-face meetings were held with the Skii km Lax Ha in order to facilitate the collection of further historical documentation gathered by the Skii km Lax Ha in support of their ongoing land claim. Draft versions of this report were provided to the Skii km Lax Ha for their review and input prior to finalization. Follow-up communications with the Skii km Lax Ha in May 2013, November 2013, February 2014, and May 2014 helped address gaps or errors in the information collected during the mapping session.

3.2 DATA CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

3.2.1 Desktop Information and Ethnographic Research

Historical secondary ethnographic information from published sources has limitations and should not be considered conclusive or complete, or necessarily reflective of the values, interests, and concerns of Aboriginal groups in the vicinity of the Project. Ethnographic observations were recorded by Euro-Canadians in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries; these observations were largely informed by a western worldview. Nevertheless, this work provides important accounts into daily life, social and political structures, and subsistence methods employed by members of the related First Nations. Similarly, First Nations typically passed their history through oral stories (*adaawks*) which, though they may not provide complete accounts of past use and traditions, are still important sources of information, particularly from the point of view of the First Nations who lived in the area.

Historical and cultural overviews provide useful information, but are often broadly scoped, providing information about culture, land use, and travel with relatively few details regarding specific locations within a specific study area. In addition, there is little literature readily available to describe aspects of the Skii km Lax Ha's social and heritage existence.

It is acknowledged that there are unpublished primary source materials available, including archived recorded oral history interviews, which may provide additional information on traditional knowledge and use of the Project area. This primary material was not consulted for this study, nor was a comparative analysis conducted.

3.2.2 Primary Source Information Interview/Mapping

Oral interview information, while indispensable as a source of information on the local environment, is representative of information at a specific point in time. The context and nature of the study determines the level and types of information the knowledge holder is willing to disclose. Moreover, information may be incomplete as interviewees may have trouble remembering specifics about certain time periods, places, or activities during the course of an interview. Finally, interviews are by their very nature anecdotal, and may provide limited insight in terms of statistical data regarding use or observations. Nevertheless, results of interview and mapping sessions are crucial to forming a comprehensive picture of Skii km Lax Ha's use of their traditional territory over space and time.

4. Results

4. Results

4.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE REVIEW - THE TSETS AUT¹

This section provides a brief overview of the Tsetsaut ethnographic group, including traditional economy, social organization, spirituality and worldview. A more detailed analysis of Tsetsaut ethnographic characteristics, as well as a complete regional overview of Aboriginal groups in northwestern British Columbia, is found in the *Brucejack Gold Mine Project: Desk-Based Ethnographic Overview Report* (Rescan 2013b).

4.1.1 History of Ethnographic Research

The Skii km Lax Ha identify themselves as descendants of the Tsetsaut ethnolinguistic group. It should be noted, however, prior to any discussion of the ethnographic characteristics of the Tsetsaut people, that very little research unique to the Tsetsaut was ever conducted prior to their absorption into neighbouring groups. The first ethnographer to spend time with the Western Tsetsaut, in 1894, was Franz Boas. By this time, the Western Tsetsaut of Portland Canal had already moved to the Anglican mission at Kincolith, and had been reduced to a total of 12 people. Only two individuals he came into contact with still spoke the Tsetsaut language fluently (Boas 1895). Boas also recorded small amounts of the Tsetsaut language prior to its alleged extinction in the early 1900s (Boas 1895; Boas and Goddard 1924), as well as whatever Tsetsaut legends and stories he could garner (Boas 1896, 1897).

During his research Boas also made note of a group called Laq'uyi'p (Laxwiiyip) which he differentiated from the Tsetsaut of Portland Canal, and from the Tahltan (Boas 1895). However, no effort was made to try to find any members of this group or talk to them. The reasons for this remain unclear, but if he had made an attempt, he would have discovered the linguistic and kinship affiliations between the Laxwiiyip and the Tsetsaut, now considered to be the eastern and western branches, respectively, of one "tribe" or ethnolinguistic group (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998).

Later, G.T. Emmons, in the course of his research with the Tahltan, visited the "people of Portland Canal" in 1907. At this point there were "four men, two old women, and one grown girl. Should the last not have issue [i.e., not bear children], with the death of these [people] the tribe will cease to exist" (Emmons 1911). After the work of Emmons, ethnographers treated the Tsetsaut as an extinct group, whose remnants became members of the Nisga'a, Gitksan, Tlingit and Tahltan. More important research, however, began to focus on the origin and movement of clans, and the matrilineal units that make up those clans, in northwestern British Columbia. This work was carried out by Marius Barbeau, in collaboration with William Beynon, a Tsimshian man from Port Simpson. Most of their interviews were conducted with members of the Nisga'a, Gitksan and Gitanyow villages; the Western Tsetsaut and Laxwiiyip (Eastern Tsetsaut) came up at various times in the course of this research, particularly as it related to their origins, interactions with neighbouring groups, village locations, and their history immediately preceding European contact.

Some of Barbeau and Beynon's research appears in an inventory of totem poles Barbeau compiled for the Skeena River valley (Barbeau 1929). Very little of this research, however, was ever formally published; two unpublished manuscripts of oral histories for the area (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a,

¹ The spelling of the names of First Nations groups, as well as Aboriginal place names, may vary, and the original spelling was retained when specific researchers are directly quoted.

1950b), and the majority of Barbeau and Beynon's field notes (Barbeau 1910-1969) are now housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

A limitation to this research was that information on the Laxwiiyip and Tsetsaut was second-hand, gathered indirectly from individuals who at best did not know them personally, and at worst may have felt personal animosity towards them. Therefore, the accuracy of statements made regarding the Laxwiiyip and Tsetsaut is difficult if not impossible to determine. It is even more unfortunate in that, according to interviews conducted with the Skii km Lax Ha, several of their ancestors with immediate knowledge of the Laxwiiyip and Tsetsaut characteristics were alive at the time of Barbeau's research (Rescan 2009; Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010). However; none of these individuals were interviewed by Barbeau or Beynon, except for Simon Gunanoot, whose father was from the Tsetsaut house of Skii km Lax Ha, but whose mother came from the Gitxsan house of Geel (Barbeau 1910-1969).

Wilson Duff also conducted extensive research in the area in the 1950s. Most of his work, however, was with the Gitanyow, and the publication which resulted is not an ethnographic analysis but, rather, a statement by the Gitanyow of their asserted territorial rights. Notably, no critical analysis appears to have been performed by Duff, nor was he even permitted to do so; these were the conditions laid down by the Gitanyow in return for their totem poles being transferred to the Royal BC Museum for preservation and duplication (see Preface, Duff 1959). Duff states in the preface that "the authors of this book are the Kitwancool themselves..." Duff's unpublished field notes did contain some analysis on the Tsetsaut and their origins, though these relied primarily on Barbeau and Beynon's field notes (Duff 1950-1978). Within Duff's collection of field notes is a letter written to him by Michael Krauss, a linguist with the University of Alaska, who states in 1962:

"I am also aware that the field itself can probably still yield some good information [about the Tsetsaut]. There are probably still some old Tahltans and Niskas who remember something about them, and as a matter of fact, I am by no means ready to discount the possibility that there are still some Tsetsaut around somewhere. Those Indians have not been well-studied, at least for that possibility. Certainly I have never heard of anyone making a search for them since Boas's time. Boas, like others, was often much too quick to say so and so was or were the last survivors of a group or the last speakers of the language...Two of his informants were still young men...and Boas recognizes 12 survivors to the group. Furthermore, other groups or families of Tsetsaut also have survived in other vicinities, probably among the Tahltans...It is therefore very important...that a thorough search of the area be made as soon as possible."

There is no indication that further investigation was ever made. Duff, for his part, made the error of associating the Laxwiiyip with the Naskoten Tahltan (Rescan 2013b) instead of searching for members of this group which, the Skii km Lax Ha have stated, existed and still exist (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm.). Duff's error was rectified in part by Sterritt et al. (1998) as a result of their coordinated effort to document the *adaawk* of the Gitxsan and Gitanyow peoples. However, Sterritt perpetuates the theory that the people once known as the Laxwiiyip Tsetsaut are now extinct, having been absorbed into the Gitxsan and Tahltan communities.

In summary, the ethnographic literature on the Tsetsaut and Laxwiiyip ancestors of the Skii km Lax Ha is limited in scope, and little of it was obtained through first-hand observation by the aforementioned ethnographers. As such, these limitations must be acknowledged when considering the ethnographic characteristics of the Tsetsaut and Laxwiiyip. An attempt to broaden the ethnographic discussion, based on a review of oral and written history available at the time of writing, is provided in the *Brucejack Gold Mine Project: Desk-Based Ethnographic Overview Report* (Rescan 2013b).

4.1.2 Overview

The Skii km Lax Ha people identify themselves as descendants of the Raven Clan of the Laxwiiyip or Eastern Tsetsaut (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm.). Boas (1895) translates Laxwiiyip as “on the prairie,” referring to their territory - the plateau at the headwaters of the Stikine, Nass, and Skeena Rivers. “The name Laxwiiyip is said to derive from [Eastern Tsetsaut] territory, alternatively described as being at Meziadin Lake and at the head waters of the Stikine River, both accounts being accurate since the territory of the Eastern Tsetsaut extended at that time from Meziadin Lake across the headwaters of the Nass and Skeena Rivers to the headwaters of the Stikine” (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998). This definition of the “Laxwiiyip” territory is important in that past confusion regarding its boundaries have led to errors, both by ethnographers and writers of contemporary accounts, about its inhabitants as well as the location of past events. The Skii km Lax Ha state that the Laxwiiyip has the same boundaries as the traditional territory they mapped with the provincial government in 2008 (see Figure 1.2-1).

Boas (1895) states that “Tsetsaut” is a Tsimshian word meaning “those of the interior,” applied by the Gitksan and Nisga’a indiscriminately to the Athapaskans that inhabited territory north and northeast of themselves. The Tahltan called the Western Tsetsaut the ‘Tseco to tinneh’, and the Western Tsetsaut apparently referred to themselves as Wetalth (Emmons 1911), though Boas indicated that they had forgotten the name they had used to refer to themselves (Boas 1895).

Three named divisions of the Tsetsaut, or fragments of earlier divisions, were identified by Thorman (1915) as follows:

1. Suss to’deen- “people of the black bear [clothing],” the Unuk River area band;
2. Tse etseta- “people of the adult marmot headgear,” farther south (presumably along Portland and Behm canals); and
3. Thlakwair khit- “they of the double house” (most likely the Laxwiiyip in other accounts). “Double house” may refer to the two Raven clans that originally made up the Eastern Tsetsaut (see later).

Jenness (1934) states that the Tsetsaut are called “Black Bear people [by the Tahltan], because, unlike the neighboring peoples, they frequently wore clothing of black bear skin.” Boas (1897) remarks:

“I was also told that before our times [the pre-contact era] the [Tsetsaut] country was inhabited first by the ts’ak’ê’, who wore marmot skins; later on, by the futvūd’iê’, who wore bear skins. Both were said to have spoken the Ts’Ets’ā’ut language, and it is not quite clear in my mind if the narrator did not want to tell me that his ancestors wore garments of this kind.”

Boas’ ts’ak’ê’ appears to coincide with Thorman’s Tse etseta, and his futvūd’iê’ with Thorman’s Suss to’deen, based on their respective affiliations with marmot and (black) bear, respectively. The names of the groups do not appear at all similar; however, and the reason for this is unclear. The fact that Boas does not mention the third group (Thorman’s Thlakwair khit) is telling, as his informants belonged to the Western Tsetsaut, who identified with the first two groups mentioned by Thorman. This lends credence to the theory that the “Thlakwair khit” were actually the Laxwiiyip or eastern branch of the Tsetsaut.

The Tsetsaut spoke an Athapaskan language, though its relationship within this language family is not fully clear. The evidence suggests that the Tsetsaut are most closely related to the Kaska (Duff 1981), though an analysis of the Tsetsaut language have shown more linguistic similarities with the Han and Kutchin of the Yukon (Krauss and Golla 1981). The Tsetsaut language is now considered to be extinct (Duff 1981).

According to oral histories of the area, the Western Tsetsaut consisted of Wolf and Eagle Clan peoples (Barbeau 1910-1969). These groups were originally situated with the Laxwiiyip or Eastern Tsetsaut at

the headwaters of the Unuk, Nass and Stikine rivers until approximately 1830, when the territory was ceded to the Laxwiiyip in a peace settlement and they migrated to various spots along the coast (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm, 2014). They occupied a core area on Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet, and extended as far west as Behm Canal, as far north as the Unuk River and the Iskut River watershed, and as far east as Alice Arm (Duff 1950-1978). Boas (1895) states that their primary residence was on the Tcu naq (Unuk) River at its mouth, where it flows into Behm Canal. They were attacked by the Nisga'a, the Tlingit, and the Eastern Tsetsaut, and eventually, during the post-contact period, they were amalgamated with the Nisga'a and Tlingit, among whom their descendants now reside. The Nisga'a claims to Portland Canal, according to Sterritt et al. (1998) are founded on this amalgamation.

Tharp (1972), using material collected by Boas, states that “as late as the first half of the 19th century the [Western] Tsetsaut had been a tribe of some 500 souls who fished and hunted in a roughly triangular area of approximately fifty square miles centred about ten miles northeast of present-day Ketchikan [Alaska].”

Wilson Duff's field notes contain a transcript of material from James Teit, regarding the territory of both branches of the Tsetsaut (Duff 1950-1978):

“Their country lay in a strip from near Bradfield Canal and the Iskut, across the streams flowing into Behm Canal, perhaps to the head of Boca de Quadra (Tlingit all along the north and south of them). They occupied all of the upper Portland Canal around Stewart, and Salmon and Bear Rivers. They may or may not have come down the canal as far as Maple Bay. They occupied all the White River and Meziad[i]n Lake basins, and one of their principal headquarters, especially for salmon fishing, was at Meziad[i]n Lake (probably the south end)². Here they had the Nishga south of them on the Nass. They stretched across the head of the Skeena above Kuldo River over to Bear and Sutsut Lakes. They had the Gitksan south of them on the Skeena, and Babines south of them at Bear Lake. To the east on the Omineca, Ingenika and Finlay they had the Sekani, of which they themselves may be a branch. I think different, however, but nearer Sekani than Tahltan.”

The connection between the Western and Eastern Tsetsaut could still be identified in the early 1900s. A fur trader resident at Stewart identified descendants of the “Zitz-Zaows” people of Portland Canal as Gun-an-noot, Skawell, Wilson, May, Pete Morrison, Pete Wilson, [Charlie] Clifford, Green, Chiefs Isaac Gourney, Luke Nelson, Albert Allan and others (Hutchings 1976). As shown in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, many of these people are ancestors of the present-day Skii km Lax Ha.

4.1.3 Traditional and Subsistence Economy

As the Tsetsaut ethnographic group became assimilated into other Aboriginal groups in the early 20th century, there is little readily available information on the Tsetsaut annual round of resource harvesting. Boas (1895) makes it clear that the Western Tsetsaut economy was based on inland game hunting. Only in the summer when they descended the rivers to Portland Inlet did they take any salmon, drying their excess catch for winter use. He also mentions, in a legend, how the Tsetsaut went up Portland Inlet to catch oolichan in the spring. Their principal food was the marmot, though they also relied on mountain goat, bear, and porcupine. In the winter, the Western Tsetsaut lived to a great extent upon meat dried during the summer months, primarily marmot. It was mixed with marmot grease, boiled and preserved in marmot intestine for future use (Boas 1895).

² This is the village of Lakanjok. See Section 4.3.4.

The Eastern Tsetsaut would have been more reliant on salmon than their western kin, as they occupied areas along the Bell-Irving River and Meziadin Lake, which contained plentiful salmon stocks (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998). George Derrick in his 1924 interview with Barbeau and Beynon stated that they caught spring and sockeye salmon at Meziadin Lake and “used hooks to spear the salmon” (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Fishing also occurred throughout the lake itself using drift nets or gaff hooks from a canoe (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm.).

The Tsetsaut commonly employed deadfalls to snare marmot (Duff 1981). Porcupines were hunted at night with lances, clubs or arrows. The Eastern Tsetsaut used nets for hunting rabbits, but the Western Tsetsaut did not (Boas 1895). The Tsetsaut also employed the sinew-backed bow when hunting large game (Duff 1981). The skins of mountain goat, bear and marmot were used for quilts and blankets. Mountain goat horn was used to make spoons. The Tsetsaut never ate the head of a mountain goat as they believed doing so would turn their hair grey prematurely (Boas 1895). Marmot skins were used for clothing and boots, as well as mountain goat and beaver, and porcupine quills were used for embroidery (Boas 1895). One of the legends recounted by Boas notes how the Tsetsaut hunted mountain goats at the head of the Unuk River (Boas 1897).

The collection of vast quantities of salmonberries, and mixing them with bear grease to preserve them, was noted in a legend recorded by Boas (1896).

Cedar bark was used to make bed mats. Arrow shafts were made from yellow cedar and winged with eagle feathers. Yellow cedar bark was also used to make canoes, though they were not often used. Baskets made of spruce roots and bark were used for cooking and carrying water, berries and other kinds of food. Yew wood was used for making bows for hunting and for firedrills. Beaver skin was cut into strips and twisted to make the sting for the firedrill. Beaver skin was also used for the netting of snowshoes (Boas 1895).

4.1.4 Tsetsaut Social Organization

Tsetsaut social organization would have resembled that of other Athapaskan groups in the Cordillera (McClellan 1981), prior to their penetration into areas inhabited by coastal peoples. By the time this penetration was complete, however, they had copied their neighbours in carving out territories for each kin group rather than devising shared territories. Duff (1981) states that the Tsetsaut had been divided into two matrilineal exogamous clans, Eagle and Wolf. Emmons (Emmons 1911), on the other hand, stated the Tsetsaut originally claimed three totemic families- Wolf, Eagle, and Raven. By the time of Boas' 1894 field work the Eagle clan was extinct, and the Wolf clan maintained exogamy by marrying members of foreign tribes. Barbeau and Beynon (1950a), however, showed that the Eastern Tsetsaut (or Laxwiiyip) were descended from the Raven clan, from which the present-day Skii km Lax Ha claim descent.

The kin group or “house” was the basic social unit of the Tsetsaut, as well as that of their neighbours, the Nisga'a and Gitksan. A “house” was a corporate matrilineage, the members of which, together with spouses, children belonging to other lineages, and slaves, occupied one or more dwellings. Houses fluctuated widely in size, and hence in productivity, at times resorting to adoption to prevent extinction, at other times growing so large that they split into two or more separate houses (Halpin and Seguin 1990). Each house owned hunting and gathering territories which were exploited at the direction of the house chief. Being a matrilineage, possession of a house's territory passed through the female line. Succession to a man's names and position went in theory to a brother, or to a sister's son (Garfield 1939), and not his own children, since they obtained their names from their mother's line. Matrilineal succession was confirmed by Boas in his work with the Western Tsetsaut (Boas 1895).

Important features of the house system, which reinforce the common understanding of history, house territory boundaries, status, and names, include oral history, laws/crests, totem poles, and songs. The house system serves an important social organizing function and is supported by feasting. Oral histories contain key historical events for the house, which are recounted in the context of feasts to reinforce house title.

Totem poles are a significant visual indication of house title and provide an account of a house's history (Halpin and Seguin 1990). The totem pole of Skii km Lax Ha and Gyetem Galdo in Hazelton are those which narrate the Skii km Lax Ha people's possession of their history and title (Rescan 2009).

The Skii km Lax Ha recognize four remnant Tsetsaut houses from which they claim descent, and all trace their ancestry to the Raven clan. They are Gyetem Galdo, Skawill, Ksemgunqweek, and Skii km Lax Ha. Barbeau had stated that the first three were extinct (Barbeau 1910-1969); however, Skii km Lax Ha informants state that Skawill and Ksemgunqweek were amalgamated with the Skii km Lax Ha in the post-contact era. Gyetem Galdo remains separate and is affiliated with the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs in their treaty negotiations with Canada and BC (Rescan 2009).

A detailed genealogy of the Skii km Lax Ha is presented in a TK/TU study carried out as part of the environmental assessment for the NTL Project (Rescan 2009). Descent is matrilineal, but Skii km Lax Ha indicate that several factors have interrupted the Aboriginal system of transfer of names, including re-marriage, polygamy, and the patrilineal-oriented trapline registry that followed contact with Euro-Canadians (Rescan 2009).

4.1.5 Spiritualism and Legends

Boas (1896, 1897) recorded many traditions of the Tsetsaut during his brief time with them. Mountain goat and marmot play prominent roles in their stories, and the transformation of humans into animals (and vice versa) indicates the connection that the Tsetsaut had with their immediate surroundings. The animals also brought the weather from the sky. Physical or spiritual cleansing of individuals is also a common theme. In order to secure good luck in hunting, for example, hunters fasted and washed their bodies with gingerroot (wild ginger) for three to four days and abstained from female contact for two to three months. They also drank concoctions of devil's club to purify themselves. The tail feather of an eagle was used in shamanistic ceremonies to cure patients of physical or spiritual sickness (Boas 1895).

One legend recorded by Boas recounts how a Tsetsaut woman and her child went to the headwaters of the Nass River, where they still continue to live on a lake (Boas 1895). In another version of the legend the woman made a rock resembling her shape at the source of the Unuk River, and can still be seen today (Boas 1896). This legend shows a spiritual connection of the Tsetsaut with these places, and provides further understanding of territorial boundaries.

4.1.6 Language

The Skii km Lax Ha have indicated that previous generations spoke the Tsetsaut language, also known as *Wetalh*, a dialect of the Athapaskan language family (FPHLCC n.d.). The language is no longer spoken and is thought to be extinct. As Section 4.1.1 notes, it was studied by Franz Boas, who succeeded in collecting a fragmentary amount of linguistic information (Boas 1895; Boas and Goddard 1924; Duff 1981). Linguists who have studied this information have described Tsetsaut/*Wetalh* as one of the most divergent of all the Northern Athapaskan languages, and more similar to the Han and Kutchin of the Yukon than its immediate Athapaskan neighbours, the Tahltan and Kaska (Krauss and Golla 1981). Currently, English is the predominant language used by the Skii km Lax Ha, though some members can still speak the Gitxsan language (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2013).

4.2 REVIEW OF PLACE NAMES

Place names are an important indicator of past use. Waterbodies and landforms in British Columbia were often named after people that had a close connection to them. Table 4.2-1 shows places in Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory whose names can be traced to Skii km Lax Ha ancestors or are Tsetsaut in origin. Secondary sources for these place names, where available, are also noted.

Table 4.2-1. Place Names Tied to Skii km Lax Ha Ancestry

Place Name	Primary Source Data	Secondary Source Verification
Fred Wright Lake	Should actually be called “Fred White Lake,” named after Fred White, who was related to James White, who held the name Gyetem Galdo.	“Adopted 6 August 1953 on 103 P; a well-known local name according to A.V. Tremblay, forester... In June 1993, George Muldoe, a long-time trapper in the area, advised that this lake is actually Kwinageese Lake, and vice versa. Also, “Fred Wright Lake” should actually be Fred White Lake.” (GeoBC n.d.-b)
White River	Named after James White, who at one time held the name Gyetem Galdo.	Unconfirmed.
Adam Creek	Named after Ernest Wade, who held the name “Adii am”. Darlene Simpson of the Skii km Lax Ha held the name “Adii am” before she was given the name Skii km Lax Ha.	“Adopted 5 November 1953 on 104A, as originally submitted by A.R. McDonell, retired Dominion Fisheries Inspector, to Mr. P.M. Monckton, BCLS, while the latter was surveying the area. “Named after an Indian who lived in the area in the early 1920s.” (GeoBC n.d.-a) Jessie Sterritt in her testimony at the <i>Delgamuukw</i> trial (UBCLDC n.d.) stated that Ernest Wade was the brother of Gyetem Galdo [at the time Charlie Clifford].
Nelson Creek	Named after Luke Nelson.	In the book, “Stewart,” written by Ozzie Hutchings (1976), a long-time resident of the Stewart Area, Luke Nelson was identified as a Tsetsaut individual.
Hanna Creek	Named after Hanna Jackson, who took the name Ananhlyee from Esther Joseph, the sister of Daniel Skowill. Hanna Jackson had a cabin at this creek, near where it empties into Meziadin Lake. The name Ananhlyee then passed to Jessie Sterritt, Cora Grey and Valerie Jack (Rescan 2009).	David Gunanoot in his testimony at the <i>Delgamuukw</i> trial (UBCLDC n.d.) stated that Hanna Jackson was his father’s [Simon Gunanoot’s] first cousin, meaning she was the daughter of one of Johnson Nagun’s siblings [most likely Esther Joseph]. Jessie Sterritt in her testimony (UBCLDC n.d.) stated that Ananhlyee or Hahllyee means “walking along beside the hill [or mountain].”
Meziadin Lake	This lake should actually be called “Suutsii’ada.” The meaning of Meziadin is “pearly/milky water,” and Meziadin Lake is not pearly-coloured or milky, but clear. Bowser Lake, on the other hand, is glacier-fed and murky. Bowser Lake should have actually been called “Meziadin.”	From “Prospectors, Promoters and Hard Rock Miners: Tales of the Stewart, B.C. and Hyder, Alaska Camps” (2004) by Ian McLeod, long-time mayor of Stewart and friend of David Gunanoot: “David claimed that the original map surveyors gave the wrong native names to a number of landmarks. He said the Meziaden name should have been attached to what is now Bowser Lake. In the Gitsan [properly Tsetsaut] language, Meziaden means ‘milky water’ and, while the present Meziaden is crystal clear, the Bowser [Lake] is glacier-fed, grey and murky. David said the proper name for Meziaden is ‘Sushiadit’, meaning ‘where the fish spawn’.”

(continued)

Table 4.2-1. Place Names Tied to Skii km Lax Ha Ancestry (continued)

Place Name	Primary Source Data	Secondary Source Verification
Mount Stephens (aka Stevens Mountain or Mount Stevens)	The Stephens brothers were the brothers-in-law of Charles Clifford, who was the maternal nephew of Daniel Skowill. Charles Clifford had a trapline there and he trapped there with Daniel Skowill.	“Mount Stevens adopted 5 November 1953 on 104A. Spelling changed to Mount Stephens 6 May 1954 on 104A, being the correct spelling of the family name. Submitted by P.M. Monckton, BCLS, in turn from A.R. McDonnell [sic], dominion fisheries inspector; after William Stephens, an Indian trapper (letter 16 December 1953, Ottawa file 104A). See also Stephens Lake on 103P/15.” From the BC Place Names description of Stephens Lake: “Named after the Stephens family from Kispiox (frequently mis-understood by residents to be spelled 'Stevens').” (GeoBC n.d.-f)
Mount Skuyhil	Named after Daniel Skowill.	“This should be Mount Skuyhil, named after an Indian trapper who was in the area in the late 1920s.... I contacted Mr P.M. Monckton, BCLS, to see if he could supply [information about the origin of the names], but learned that he had obtained the names from Mr. A.R. McDonnell, Dominion Fisheries Inspector, now retired and living at Smithers.” (16 December 1953 letter from W.H. Hutchinson, BC representative to the Geographic Board of Canada, file B.1.53).” (GeoBC n.d.-e)
Shanoss Creek	Named after Peter Shanoss, married to Nancy Skowill, Daniel’s adopted daughter.	“Adopted 5 November 1953 on 104A as submitted by P. M. Monckton, BCLS, as an established local name. After an Indian trapper whose traplines are or were along this creek.” (GeoBC n.d.-h)
Mount Gunanoot	Named after Simon Gunanoot.	“Adopted 14 July 1945 on 104/SE, as labelled on plan 1T183, Topographic Survey of Groundhog Coal Area, by T. Rognass, 1914. Gun-a-noot was guide for the party building the southern section of the Yukon Telegraph Line ...Gun-a-noot and his father are both buried on the north shore of Bowser Lake. (P.M. Monckton, BCLS). See also Gunanoot Lake.” (GeoBC n.d.-c)
Mount Skowill	Named after Daniel Skowill, the brother of Johnson Nagun. Daniel Skowill held the name Skii km Lax Ha.	“Skowill Mountain adopted 24 July 1945 on 104/SE; form of name changed to Mount Skowill 5 April 1951 on 104 A. Named for Skowill, a very old Indian trapper from Hazelton whose winter camp was at Oweegee Smokehouse, near this mountain (information from P.M. Monckton, BCLS, file S.2.44) Also Skowill Creek. Daniel Skawill (Simon Gunanoot’s uncle) had the hunting rights in the Meziadin and Bowser Lake areas. (“Trapline Outlaw: Simon Peter Gunanoot” by D.Williams, 1982, recounting the events of the manhunt for Gunanoot, 1906-1919.)” (GeoBC n.d.-d)
Skowill Creek	See above.	“Adopted 24 July 1945 on 104/SE. Named for Skowill, a very old Indian trapper from Hazelton, whose winter camp was at Oweegee Smokehouse, near this creek (information from P.M. Monckton, BCLS, file S.2.44) Also Mount Skowill.” (GeoBC n.d.-i)

(continued)

Table 4.2-1. Place Names Tied to Skii km Lax Ha Ancestry (completed)

Place Name	Primary Source Data	Secondary Source Verification
Oweege [Awijii] Creek	Named after the Tsetsaut village of Awijii, which was found near the mouth of the creek. “Awijii” means “to squeeze through a narrow place to get into the territory”, referring to Ningunsaw Pass.	“Adopted 5 November 1953 on 104A. Oweege [Awijii] Smokehouse [winter camp of Daniel Skawill- see Mount Skowill above] was located in this vicinity along the Bell-Irving River, in the 1920's and earlier. BC map 5C, 1929, labels Oweege Peak, Range, and Creek (applying to a creek below Delta Peak, since named Deltaic Creek). An Indian name - origin/meaning not known (P.M. Monchton, BCLS).” (GeoBC n.d.-g) David Gunanoot stated that Awijii is a Tsetsaut word meaning “whistle.” Sterritt et al. (1998) stated that the Gitksan word for Skowill Creek means “water/comes from (mountain)/whistles.”
Treaty Creek	Tsetsaut word for this creek is “zoo,” meaning “grizzly bear” (Rescan 2009)	Unconfirmed.
Bowser Lake	Should have been called “Meziadin.”	From “Prospectors, Promoters and Hard Rock Miners: Tales of the Stewart, B.C. and Hyder, Alaska Camps” (2004) by Ian McLeod, long-time mayor of Stewart and friend of David Gunanoot: “David claimed that the original map surveyors gave the wrong native names to a number of landmarks. He said the Meziaden name should have been attached to what is now Bowser Lake. In the Gitsan [properly Tsetsaut] language, Meziaden means ‘milky water’ and, while the present Meziaden is crystal clear, the Bowser [Lake] is glacier-fed, grey and murky. David said the proper name for Meziaden is ‘Sushiadit’, meaning ‘where the fish spawn’.”

4.3 TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT LAND AND RESOURCE USE OF THE REGIONAL STUDY AREA

The following information was collected from Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders through interviews and mapping sessions for both the NTL Project (Rescan 2009; Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010), as well as for the Brucejack Gold Mine Project in January 2013. Figures 4.3-1a to 4.3-1d show traditional use sites and areas identified by knowledge holders and discussed in the sections below. These are categorized under the more general headings of fishing, hunting/trapping, plant resource gathering, villages/cabins, graveyards/spiritual sites (such as pictographs), and trails/travel corridors.

4.3.1 Country Foods Consumption

A country foods survey conducted by Rescan with the Skii km Lax Ha in 2013 (Rescan 2013a- a copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A of the report) indicated that the animals most utilized by the Skii km Lax Ha are moose and salmon. When moose are harvested, all parts are utilized, and preserved (frozen) for future consumption. Moose is consumed throughout the year two or three times per week. Similarly, chinook and sockeye salmon are eaten two to three times per week throughout the year, and could be consumed at every meal (Rescan 2013a). The meat, head and bones of the salmon are consumed.

Black bear is consumed fresh only in the spring, but also processed into sausage and consumed in the fall and winter. Beaver and hoary marmot are currently harvested for their skins only, though their meat was consumed in the past. Rainbow trout are consumed two to three times per month. Dolly

Varden and Steelhead trout are consumed on occasion (less than once per month) and only the meat of these fish is consumed. Oolichan is utilized for its grease, and is consumed two to three times per week with dried meat (Rescan 2013a).

Consumption of birds is not as frequent as that of fish or land mammals. Ducks are consumed approximately two or three times per month, while grouse, ptarmigan and Canada geese are consumed on occasion, less than once per month (Rescan 2013a).

Berries make up the majority of wild plants currently consumed by the Skii km Lax Ha. Soapberries are the most important plant in terms of consumption, being consumed daily. Blueberries (all types) are consumed two to three times per week, and notably are consumed during feasts. Bog cranberries as well as their juice are consumed occasionally (less than once per week). As for other plants, Devil's club is intensively utilized in the springtime, as much as four to five times per week (Rescan 2013a); the inner bark of devil's club is steeped in boiling water and drunk as tea for medicinal purposes.

4.3.2 Fishing

Knowledge holders make little distinction between areas that were fished in the past versus those that are fished today, as both past and present fishing sites are important to them and merit concern regarding impacts. Nevertheless, according to information obtained during the interview process, certain sites are not currently used. For example, fish traps were identified as having been set on Adam Creek near its outlet into Kwinageese River. Skii km Lax Ha ancestors also fished in and around the Stewart area. Oolichan were plentiful in Stewart, and were caught in a small creek (known locally as "Rainey Creek") near the town, and dried for future use. Simon Gunanoot had a net in the inlet while his family stayed in Stewart. Oolichan remain an important food source, and are still harvested occasionally at the Rainey Creek site.

Fishing for trout occurred at Hidden Lake, Gilbert Lake, Todedada Lake, and Hodder Creek and Lake (now Mehan Lake). Fishing also occurred on Snowbank Creek at its junction with the Ningunsaw River. These areas appeared to be employed during the course of hunting and trapping activities. These areas remain in use today, are considered to be preferred areas for current use activities, and are intended to be used in the future as well.

The Meziadin Lake and Bell-Irving River areas were and are particularly important to the Skii km Lax Ha. A major fishing site for Skii km Lax Ha is the falls along Meziadin River, close to where it empties into the Nass, which are used to harvest the annual runs of salmon, most of which ascend Meziadin River and Meziadin Lake to spawn in Hanna and Tintina creeks. In the past, the Skii km Lax Ha used to ice fish on Meziadin Lake in the winter for trout; however, the lake no longer freezes solid, making ice fishing on the lake a risky endeavor (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009). The Bell-Irving River is a notable source of steelhead. One of the Skii km Lax Ha's preferred fishing locations is at the confluence of Treaty Creek and Bell-Irving River, but anywhere along the west side of the river is considered a productive fishing spot. Knowledge holders also currently fish for spring salmon at the confluence of Snowbank Creek and Bell-Irving River, as well as in the Cranberry River using a net (Rescan 2009). Bowser Lake was never used much for fishing as the water is murky and subject to snow slides and landslides. One spawning channel, however, was identified on the north side of the lake near its outlet into Bowser River.

A smoke house belonging to the Skii km Lax Ha at Skowill Creek is used to smoke salmon and Dolly Vardens to preserve them for winter consumption (Figure 4.3-1b). Daniel Skowill also had a smokehouse at the confluence of Oweege and Skowill creeks (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2014).

Figure 4.3-1a
 Skii km Lax Ha Traditional Knowledge and Use Sites - Map A

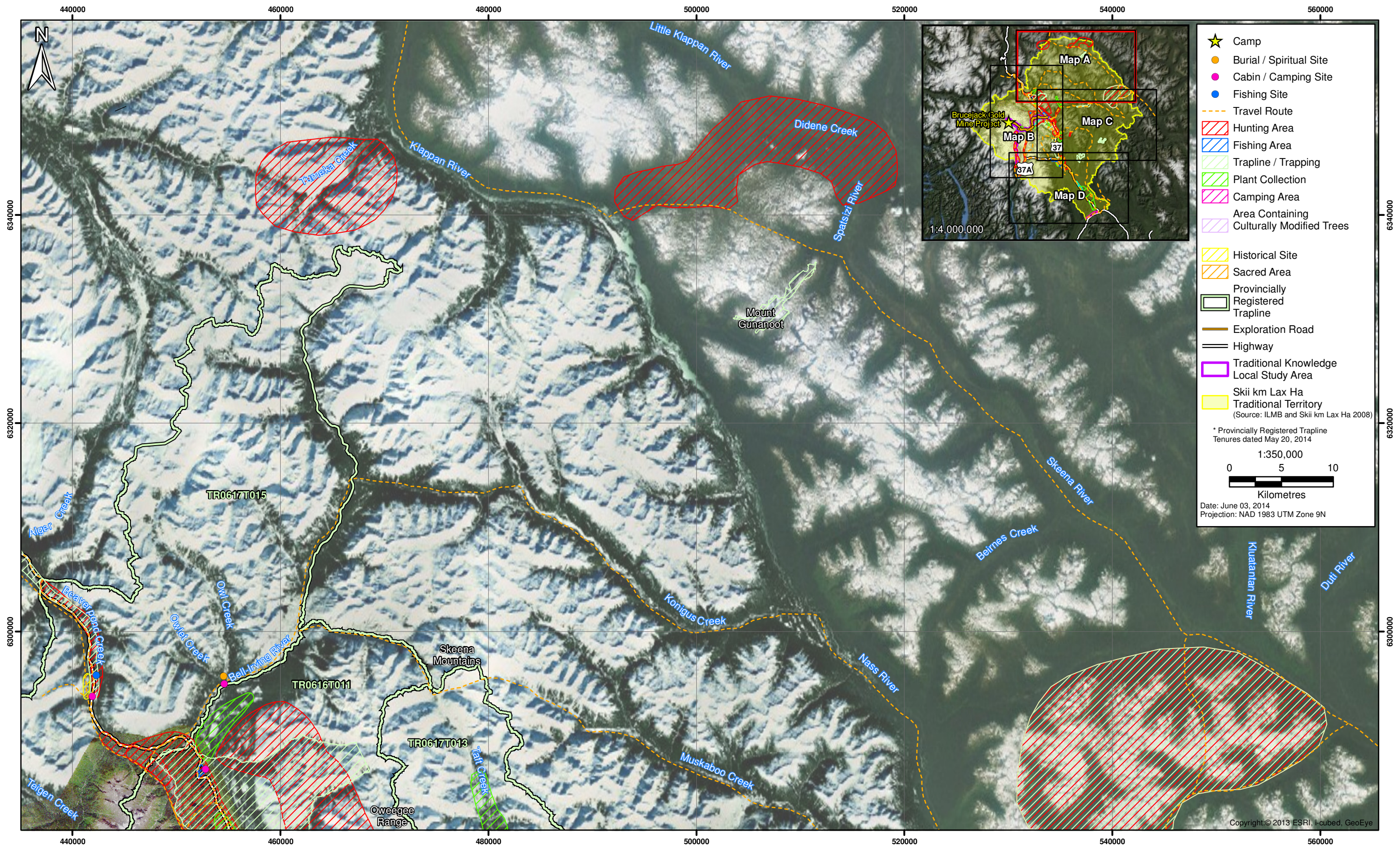


Figure 4.3-1b
Skii km Lax Ha Traditional
Knowledge and Use Sites - Map B

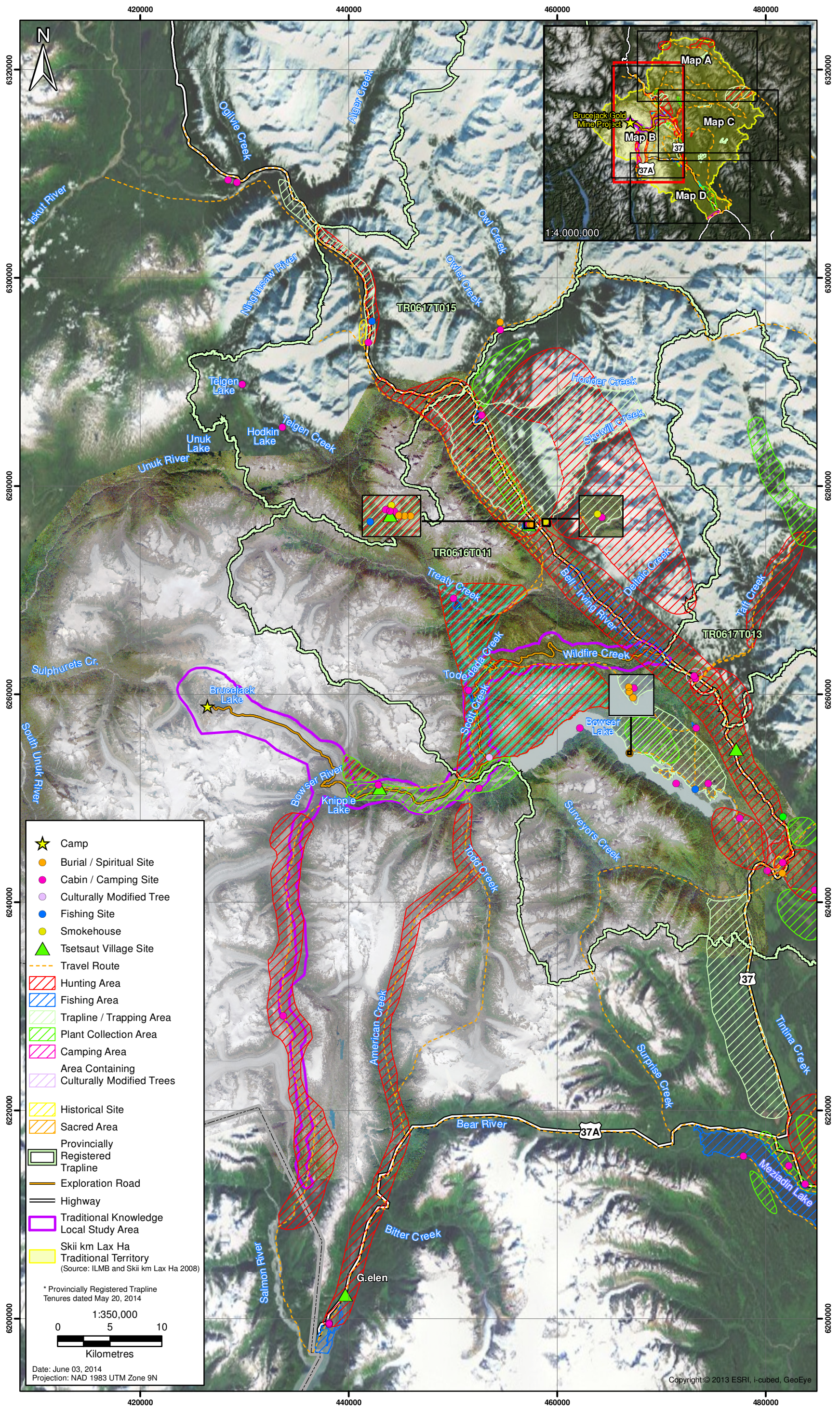


Figure 4.3-1c
 Skii km Lax Ha Traditional Knowledge and Use Sites - Map C

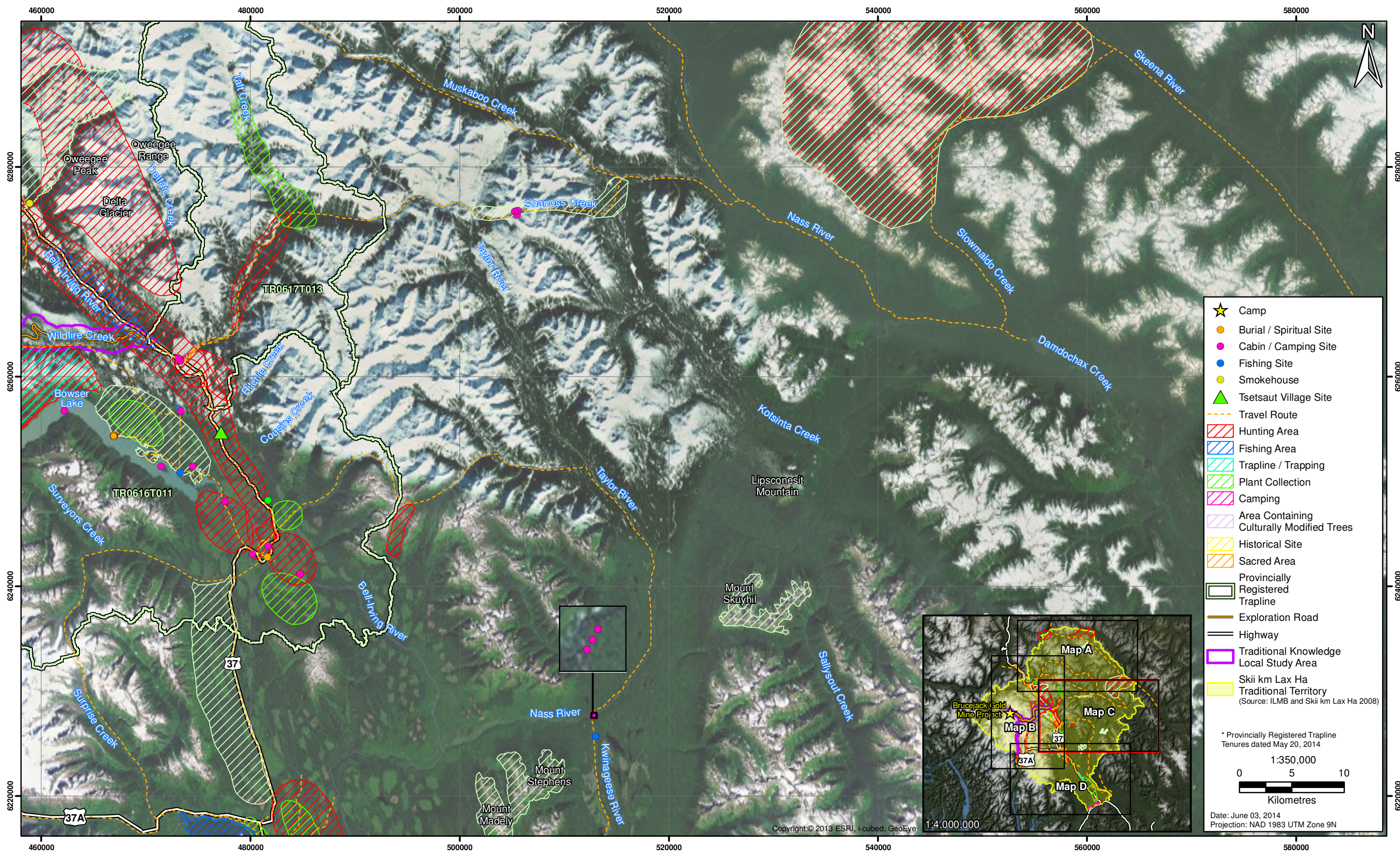
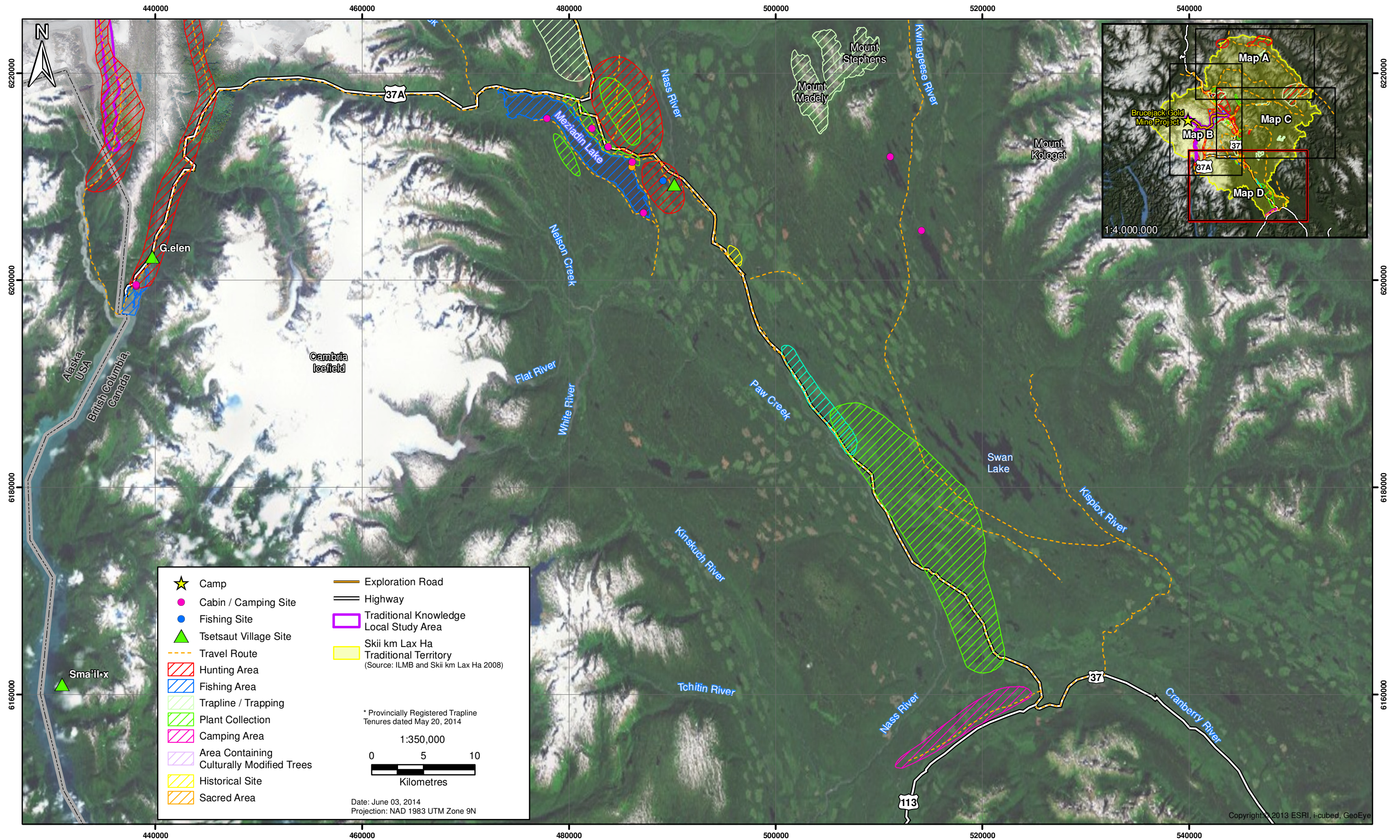


Figure 4.3-1d
 Skii km Lax Ha Traditional Knowledge and Use Sites - Map D



4.3.3 Hunting/Trapping

Information collected for interviews with Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders indicated that they routinely travelled long distances and over large areas to harvest animals for subsistence and for furs. Hunting and trapping activities were not confined to just one area; rather, they practiced a form of rotational harvesting so that no area would become exhausted of subsistence game or fur-bearers. Species which the Skii km Lax Ha people are reported to have hunted and trapped include: caribou, moose, mountain goat, grizzly bear, black bear, grouse, rabbit, beaver, marten, wolverine, fisher, muskrat and groundhog.

Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory is within an area known locally as the “Groundhog Country,” as in the past it was a valuable and plentiful marmot harvesting area. Today, most areas of the “Groundhog Country” still contain hoary marmot, except for the “sacred headwaters” area, where the Skii km Lax Ha assert that roads cut into the area have allowed resident and Aboriginal trappers to trap marmot into extinction.

Simon Gunanoot, in an interview with Marius Barbeau (B.F. 89-20, Barbeau 1910-1969), stated that his father, Johnson Nagun (who held the name Skii km Lax Ha), travelled two weeks from Kispiox along the Kispiox River to the head of the Nass to hunt marten, beaver and bears. Beavers were plentiful in his hunting area. Robert Pearl (Barbeau and Beynon 1950b) identified Daniel Skowill as also hunting at the head of the Nass. Groundhogs were hunted in the Groundhog Range on the east headwaters of the Nass River. The name for this area, Ksemgugweek, roughly translates to “groundhog hunting grounds” (Rescan 2009).

Cox (1958) reported that Simon Gunanoot’s father taught Simon the law of the woods at Meziadin Lake, where the family trapped and hunted. Fred Johnson (UBCLDC n.d.) states that Simon and his father (Johnson Nagun) came often to Meziadin Lake from their core territory of Bowser Lake (referred to as Miin Lake) and Gisa’anmeldit (Xsigisi’am’malidit, or Surveyor’s Creek- N. J. Sterritt et al. 1998). He also states that Johnson Nagun “always lived at Meziadin Lake”. Ian McLeod (McLeod and McNeil 2004) noted that Graveyard Point on Bowser Lake was an important base camp for Simon Gunanoot and his family, who trapped in the Bowser and Bell-Irving River watersheds. Daniel Skowill, Simon’s uncle, held a trapline in the Bowser Lake, Todedada Creek and Todedada Lake area³; his hunting territory was defined in an 1897 agreement with the Eastern Tstesaut⁴ (N. J. Sterritt et al. 1998), and confirmed by the Department of Indian Affairs in 1938 as running “40 miles north and south of Bowser Lake” (Simpson and Latz 1934). Further details surrounding this treaty and Daniel Skowill’s territory can be found in the *Brucejack Gold Mine Project: Desk-based Ethnographic Overview Report* (Rescan 2013b).

Mount Stevens (or Stephens) was the location of Charlie Clifford (Gyetem Galdo)’s trapline. Charlie Clifford also possessed a trapline on Mount Madely. Daniel Skowill had trapped in the areas that are now named for him, including Mount Skowill and Mount Skuyhil, and Skowill Creek. Mount Gunanoot was named after Simon Gunanoot, who trapped on the mountain and the area surrounding it. Peter Shanoss had a trapline that ran along Shanoss Creek (Rescan 2009). Simon Gunanoot, according to his great-nephew Gerry Gunanoot, shot a lot of caribou in the Adam Creek area (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998; UBCLDC n.d.).

³ This trapline is formally registered as TR0616T011 (see 4.3.3.1).

⁴ This remnant of the Eastern Tsetsaut is thought to have merged with a group of Bear Lake Tsek’ehne and the Tlepanoten Tahltan in the Spatsizi and Klappan river regions, and settled at Caribou Hide and *Me’etsendane* (Rescan 2013b).

David Gunanoot, in his cross-examination at the Delgamuukw trial (UBCLDC n.d.), discussed the areas he used to trap with his great-uncle, Daniel Skowill. He stated that he would start at Meziadin Lake, and go up Hanna Creek (which he also referred to as Cottonwood Creek); he also trapped along the Bell-Irving River and Spruce (Bell) Creek, as well as Taft Creek, Oweegee Creek, Skowill Creek, and as far up as Hodder Creek. He identified these areas as belonging to Daniel Skowill, but he had permission from Daniel to trap there. On his own trapline (Treaty Creek) he trapped around Gilbert Lake, and going north from there to “North Fork” and then “straight up until you hit the...creek going down to Unuk [River].”

The highlands through the Bear River and American River travel corridors, as well as along the Silver Creek/Summit Lake corridor (Section 4.3.6) were plentiful in mountain goats and groundhogs and were used by Skii km Lax Ha ancestors when traveling back and forth from Stewart and Portland Canal. These areas are still used for camping by the Skii km Lax Ha.

Interviewees identified the upper Taft Creek area as a prime hunting spot that is plentiful in moose (which use the bog/swampy areas as habitat) and grizzly bear. The plateau near the headwaters of Spruce Creek (now known as Bell Creek) was identified as a prime hunting area for grizzly bear and groundhog (hoary marmot). The pass from Bowser Lake to Awijii (along the north side of Mount Anderson and down the Scott Creek/Treaty Creek valleys) is a productive moose hunting area, and is also plentiful in grizzly bear and mountain goat. West of Bowser Lake, hunting occurred above the cabin at Jeannette Creek.

Moose can be harvested all along the Bell-Irving River valley. In particular, the section of Bell-Irving River between Teigen and Treaty Creeks is very braided, and contains numerous bog/swampy areas; this place was used intensively for hunting moose and beaver, and is still used today. Many goats are found along the glaciers of the Oweegee Range, east of the Bell-Irving River. The area also is home to two grizzly bear groups - one high alpine group and another group that fishes down on Oweegee Creek (Rescan 2009).

The highlands of Taft Creek are interspersed with a number of bog/swampy areas that contain lots of beaver. The north side of Bowser Lake, from its outlet to the top of and around Mount Anderson, is a good area for trapping marten. Both of these areas are still used by the Skii km Lax Ha.

At the Ningunsaw River/Snowbank Creek junction, right at the north end of Skii km Lax Ha territory, is a vast swampy/boggy area that is the floodplain of Beaverpond Creek. According to the Skii km Lax Ha, it is “loaded” with beaver and provisions both the Skii km Lax Ha and the Iskut band of the Tahltan. Grizzly bear, moose, and wolverine are hunted in the wetlands near Oweegee and Teigen Creeks. Moose calving grounds and beaver trapping areas are located near Oweegee Creek (Rescan 2009).

Moose, bear and beaver are hunted and trapped along Bell-Irving River near Wildfire Ridge. Moose, bear, and marten are hunted and trapped in the wetlands at the mouth of Bowser Lake near Bell (Spruce) Creek. Cache Point on Bowser Lake was utilized to spot mountain goat on Mount Anderson on the opposite side of the lake (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2014). Bell Creek is known as a crossing area for moose. The Brown Bear Creek area was also identified as a good moose hunting location, as moose cross at Vandyke Island (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009). A rabbit snaring area is located near confluence of the Bowser and Bell-Irving rivers.

Trapping in the recent past occurred along what is now the west side of Highway 37, up against and on top of Hanna Ridge. The use and possession of Hanna Ridge for trapping by the Skii km Lax Ha was noted by Gerry Gunanoot (UBCLDC n.d.). Marten was primarily trapped here, though beaver were also plentiful at Blackfly Lake on the ridge. Marten and beaver were also trapped in the Bell I area by the mother of one interviewee. Trapping for marten also occurred along Scott Creek and Wildfire Creek, and around Hodder Lake (Mehan Lake). Skii km Lax Ha in recent years would run a trapline starting

from the Cranberry River to their cabin on Skowill Creek (running along the Bell-Irving River for much of the way), and pick up traps on their way back to Hazelton (Rescan 2009). The Cranberry River was identified as a good beaver harvesting area (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009).

4.3.3.1 *Registered Trapline TR0616T011*

Two trapping areas that were formerly trapped by Daniel Skowill (the Bowser Lake/Bowser River trapping area and the Treaty Creek trapping area) are now registered under one trapline (TR0616T011), held by Darlene Simpson of Skii km Lax Ha. Daniel Skowill registered the Bowser Lake/Bowser River trapline area in 1929; however, the trapline registration form stated that he had already been using the trapline for 50 years (i.e. since 1879). The Game Warden would not allow him to hold two separate trapping areas, so the Treaty Creek trapping area was registered to a William Scott (the namesake of Scott Creek), a white man, without Skowill's permission. According to David Gunanoot, Daniel Skowill was very upset about this, so the Game Warden removed Scott from the Treaty Creek trapline and allotted it to David Gunanoot, who was Daniel Skowill's nephew and trapped with him on the trapline. Peter Morrison was also identified by Gunanoot as trapping with them in the Treaty Creek trapping area (UBCLDC n.d.)

When Daniel Skowill passed away in 1945, Bob and Steven Skowill (his adopted sons) inherited the Bowser Lake/Bowser River trapping area. Martha Risdale inherited this trapping area from them and she added Johnny Wilson (Skii km Lax Ha) to it, and then they both added Darlene Simpson to the trapline. Johnny Wilson passed away in 2005, and Martha Risdale passed away in 2012, leaving Darlene Simpson as the sole holder of the trapline. As the hereditary chief for the Skii km Lax Ha, Ms. Simpson has trapped this line for decades.

The Treaty Creek trapping area was trapped by David Gunanoot (Niigap) until he passed away. It then passed to his nephew Gerry Gunanoot, and then to Gerry's niece, Verna Benson from Gitanyow. Ms. Simpson purchased the Treaty Creek trapping area from Verna Benson in 2009 and amalgamated it with the Bowser Lake/Bowser River trapping area so that it is now a single registered trapline (M. Williams, Pers. Comm., 2010). Reena Benson, Vera's mother and current holder of the name Niigap, approved her daughter selling the trapline to Darlene Simpson because it is on Skii km Lax Ha territory and not Niigap territory (D. Simpson, pers. Comm., 2014).

Until recently, Ms. Simpson has harvested marten (in higher areas), beaver (in marshy areas and lowlands) and wolf on this trapline. Marten were typically trapped from October to December; the trapping season for marten would usually shut down in December as the fur gets too thick and bunched up, making them undesirable for pelts. As many as 160 marten were trapped in one year on TR 0616 T011. Wolves were trapped for their pelts and also to prevent them from preying on other trapped species. Beaver were trapped for their pelts but beaver meat was also consumed on occasion. Trapped animals were also used as bait for trapping other animals. Pelts sold from harvested furbearers would pay for the cost of the trapping trip, as well as for the year's moose hunt.

TR 0616 T011 is accessed by access roads, foot or snowmobile. The Skii km Lax Ha are not aware of anyone else trapping in this trapline area; however, resident hunters have been known to poach in their trapping territory. According to interviews, poaching has decreased dramatically since the acquisition of this and other trapline areas, particularly poaching (of bears) by other Aboriginal people. However, resident hunters have been occasionally noted to pursue poaching within these areas.

While traplines and harvesting are important to the Skii km Lax Ha, due to their recent involvement in a number of power and mineral exploration projects within their traditional territory, they have had no time to trap of late. Ms. Simpson, for instance, reported that she last trapped in her trapline area around 2009.

Currently, the Wildfire and Scott Creek areas within Darlene's trapline are overrun with marten. However, Ms. Simpson has also noted that marten and wolverine in her trapline area are being attracted into the various exploration camps operating in the area due to camp odours or food waste. Consequently, the furbearers that enter the camps are either culled, transplanted to other areas, or kill each other over competing territory, thereby affecting potential future trapping activities. Further, many animals are killed at a time when their furs are immature and of little value.

4.3.4 Plant Resource Harvesting

In the late spring and summer, berry harvesting would have occurred in the same areas where Skii km Lax Ha hunted or fished. The upper Taft Creek area (above the hunting grounds) was burned to allow berries bushes to grow better. This burn patch extended into the Shanoss Creek headwaters. Another burned patch was located on the north side of Bowser Lake above the cabin at Jeannette Creek, which was burnt off down to the valley bottom. The upper Bowser River, before it runs into Bowser Lake, was a wet boggy area that was plentiful in cranberries. There were also two burn patches on the west side of Meziadin Lake, which were created and maintained by the Gunanoot family for berry picking. However, burning of forests to promote growth of berries has been prohibited for decades (Gottesfeld 1994).

David Gunanoot told Ian McLeod about the large burned out areas of forest at Meziadin Lake, among others (McLeod and McNeil 2004):

“My people started the forest on fire when there was hot weather and a good wind. When the fire burned out, about two years later, the blueberry bushes would come up and we would harvest lots of berries. Also the willow and alder bush would start to grow and the moose would come into the country. Heavy timber no good for berries and moose.”

This indicates that controlled burns of dense forest was utilized not only to improve berry production, but also to increase foraging areas for large game, particularly moose.

Gottesfeld (1994) makes mention of a natural burn at Meziadin Lake, which occurred in 1959. This may be the same as one of the burns mentioned by the Skii km Lax Ha as being created by the Gunanoot family. Gottesfeld confirmed that it had not been re-burned for some time, and has been heavily invaded by willow, young pine and spruce trees. The once highly productive area for berry production had been significantly reduced in area over the 11 years Gottesfeld had observed it. McLeod confirms that second growth coniferous trees had choked out the sunshine for berries at these former burn patches, and soon there would be a shortage of moose feed in the area (McLeod and McNeil 2004). Burn patches continue to be used for berry harvesting by the Skii km Lax Ha, even though active burning is no longer performed. Berry and plant collection areas identified in the NTL Project include Ningunsaw, the east side of Bell-Irving River north of Mehan Lake, Oweege Creek, Oweege Lake, and Bowser Lake. The Oweege area is noted as a picking location for soapberries. Bell Creek (known in the past as Spruce Creek) is a good place to pick huckleberries (Rescan 2009). The south side of Mount Bell Irving is also a good huckleberry-picking area (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009). Soapberries and huckleberries are plentiful at Meziadin Lake (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009).

Jessie Sterritt, in her testimony at the Delgamuukw trial (UBCLDC n.d.), mentions picking berries at Oweege Lake. They would pick huckleberries and high bush blueberries there, but lowbush blueberries did not grow there.

4.3.5 Villages/Cabins

Knowledge holders identified four once-populous Eastern Tsetsaut village sites in their traditional territory which were inhabited prior to the allotment of reserves in the area (Figures 4.3-1b and c). The location of the first village, known as Ts’imanluuskeexs (meaning “footprints in shallow water”), is disputed. The Skii km Lax Ha contend that it was located at Blackwater Lake (Rescan 2009), though other sources contend it was along the Bell-Irving River (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998). This village was home to both the Eastern Tsetsaut and the Frog (formerly Raven) clan of the Gitanyow, until this Raven clan migrated away from Ts’imanluuskeexs after one of their clan murdered a Tsetsaut man (Rescan 2013b). This village was eventually abandoned by the Eastern Tsetsaut in favor of the villages mentioned below.

The second village, known as Laxanzok or Laxanjok, was located just downstream from the falls of Meziadin River. The village, which is noted in the oral histories of the area (Rescan 2013b), was used as a summer base camp for the procurement of salmon at the falls. Fred Johnson recounts from the oral history how Gamlaxyeltxw, after the killing of Skowill, fled the village and moved south with Luuxhon, eventually settling at Gitanyow (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Many skirmishes between the Gitanyow and Tsetsaut were fought here. It was still a Tsetsaut village in 1903 (Duff 1959).

Cox (1958) stated that Johnson Nagun lived at Meziadin Lake, where he fished and raised his son, Simon Gunanoot. Interviewees stated that the location of his cabin was most likely at the old village site of Laxanjok.

The third village site was at Awijiii, at the confluence of Oweege and Skowill creeks along the Bell-Irving River. This village is also identified in the oral histories of the area (Rescan 2013b). Three historical cabins are still located in this area, and one additional cabin continues to be used for hunting, trapping, fishing and plant gathering excursions.

The fourth village is said to be located in close proximity to Knipple Lake, and is thought to be in the same location, or close by, the cabin remains at the confluence of “Jeannette Creek” with Bowser River (see later). A disastrous flood caused by a natural draining of Tide Lake in the mid to late 1800s destroyed this village “in Bowser Valley between Frank Mackie Glacier and Bowser Lake” (Clague and Mathews 1992).

Among the Western Tsetsaut, oral histories of the area identify the following places where villages were located:

- Tcu naq or Chunah- at the mouth of the Unuk River on Behm Canal. The word “Unuk” comes from the Tsetsaut word for the river and this village (Boas 1895);
- G.elen- at the head of Portland Canal (present-day Stewart, BC) (Duff 1950-1978);
- Smail’x, at Tombstone Bay on Portland Inlet, on the Alaskan side (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

The Skii km Lax Ha claim that documentary evidence exists for an application for a reserve in or near the town of Stewart by Albert Allen (Gyetem Galdo). This place was commonly known as the “Indian District.” Simon Gunanoot had a house here, as well as Albert Allen and Daniel Skowill. McLeod confirms that the Gunanoots came to Stewart to sell their furs and purchase supplies (McLeod and McNeil 2004). Ia. He also confirmed that David Gunanoot had a house in Stewart, on Second Avenue, most likely in the “Indian District.” A second reserve was applied for along American Creek, also by Albert Allen. A house and outbuildings were identified as being on the land for which he applied. The death register for Peter Morrison, who is buried at Bell I, shows his place of death as the “Bell Irving Indian Reserve.” Further research is required to confirm this information.

Cabins were erected throughout Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory for use during hunting and camping trips, or en route between places, along travel corridors. A total of 31 cabins have been identified by the Skii km Lax at places such as Kwinageese River and Lake, Hanna and Tintina creeks, Ningunsaw Pass, Graveyard Point (on Bowser Lake), Cache Point (on Bowser Lake), Taft Creek, Surveyors Creek, Shanoss Creek, Bell Creek, Gilbert Lake, Hidden Lake, Owl Creek, Fred Wright Lake, and along the Scott Creek pass (see Figures 4.3-1a through d). Cabins were usually erected amongst trees to protect them from the winter weather, but as close to the nearest waterbody as possible. According to the Skii km Lax Ha, many of these cabins have been lost as the Ministry of Forests burned cabins on Crown Land in the 1950s and 1960s as they were “not authorized to be there.”

One cabin site in particular was mentioned by the Skii km Lax Ha, on the Bowser River at the junction with Surveyor’s Creek, as a place that never froze in the winter. If drinking water was required during the winter freeze, it could be acquired here. Another cabin, located at Make-a-Deal Beach on Meziadin Lake, was removed by the current owners of the property.

The cabins at Skowill Creek and at Spruce (Bell) Creek remain standing, as is the one at the outlet of Bowser Lake. A new cabin (now known as the Skii km Lax Ha Lodge) was recently erected along the Bowser River west of Bowser Lake, along the Exploration Road. The cabin along Scott Creek is also still standing (Figure 4.3-1b). The remainder of the cabins mentioned by the Skii km Lax Ha have either burned down, or are dilapidated and unusable.

4.3.6 Graveyards/Spiritual Sites

There are two graves of Skii km Lax Ha ancestors at Meziadin Lake, on a tiny island right near its outflow into Meziadin River. They are believed to be the children of Peter Morrison and Simon Gunanoot. Peter Morrison, as previously noted, is buried at Bell I. “Graveyard Point” on Bowser Lake is the burial location of Simon Gunanoot and his father, Johnson Nagun. Two of his children and his mother are also buried there (Cox 1958). Three grave sites are also found at Awijijii (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2014).

At the confluence of the Bell-Irving River and Owl Creek, according to information passed down from Skii km Lax Ha ancestors, is the location of a painted rock. In archaeological terms this is known as a pictograph; however, according to knowledge holders, this pictograph marks the true location of the “Treaty Rock” which marked the boundary agreed to between the Skii km Lax Ha and the Iskut Tahltan in the late 1890s. This contrasts with the Nisga’a/Tahltan interpretation of the “Treaty Rock” story (Rescan 2013b). This agreement was made between the Skii km Lax Ha and the Bear Lake Tsek’ehne/Tlepanoten Tahltan group that attempted to move into the Nass headwaters in the late 1800s. This group then settled at Caribou Hide and eventually at Iskut, becoming part of the Tahltan Band (Neil J. Sterritt et al. 1998; McIlwraith 2007).

4.3.7 Trails/Travel Corridors

According to knowledge holders, trails ran throughout their territory and were used either to travel long distances overland, or to access resource harvesting areas (see Figures 4.3-1a through d). On the western side of the territory, starting from Stewart, there were four separate trails: the first, along Bear River, descended down onto Strohn River to Meziadin Lake (the current location of Highway 37A); the second went up the Salmon River, along Silver Creek and Summit Lake, up and over the Salmon Glacier to Bowser Lake; the third went along Bear River and then cut down American Creek to Bowser River; and the fourth, from Strohn River, descended Surprise Creek to reach Surveyor’s Creek, which led down to the Bell-Irving River at the location of a cabin.

Gerry Gunanoot, David Gunanoot's nephew, described a travel route to Stewart from Hanna Ridge, which passed along Hanna Ridge, up to the top of Meziadin Lake along a glacier bed and then travelled about 14 miles (22 km) toward Stewart, as far as the road ran from Stewart in the winter months (UBCLDC n.d.). This trail also appears to have been documented by Beynon in 1953, who says "[t]he trappers who trap Meziadin Lake, even those from Kitwancool, travel by water to the head of Observatory Arm and then go up over the glacier. It is only a few days travel; the other way around is much longer" (Barbeau 1910-1969). Fred Johnson also makes mention of this trail (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

In a 1980 interview with Patti Smith, Jessie (Lumm) Sterritt describes travel from Prince Rupert to Stewart by boat, and then hiking to Bowser and Awijjii, which took a total of two weeks. Travel was expedited in the winter with snowshoes. Travel from Bowser Lake to Stewart was over the glacier, which was fraught with danger, and Jessie describes several near misses with family members almost falling into crevasses or off cliffs (Rescan 2009). The Skii km Lax Ha state that travel along this route sometimes entailed crossing over frozen Brucejack Creek and Brucejack Lake, among others (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2014).

On the eastern side of their territory, a major trail route ascended the Kispiox River to its headwaters, and then down to the Cranberry River. Another trail went between the lakes in the Kwinageese Area to Mount Skuyhil. Another trail ascended Taft Creek and then dropped into Muskaboo Creek via Shanoss Creek, in order to get from the Awijjii area to the head of the Nass River. On the Awijjii side again, a trail went up Bell Creek (formerly Spruce Creek) to a plateau between Bell Creek and West Taylor River, where there was good groundhog and grizzly bear hunting.

On the north side of Bowser Lake, a trail proceeded up along the back side of Mount Anderson to Hidden Lake (on Wildfire Ridge), then down Scott Creek along Todeddada Lake and into the North Treaty Creek valley, then down Treaty Creek to the Bell-Irving River. The river at this point, just north of Awijjii, is very shallow, and they used rafts made of cottonwood to cross the river to get to Awijjii. A branch of this trail went over the Treaty Creek headwaters to Teigen Lake, then down Teigen Creek to the Bell-Irving River and Ningunsaw Pass. Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) recently identified in the Scott Pass attest to its use as a travel corridor and a trapping area⁵ (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2014).

At the northern end of Skii km Lax Ha territory, the trail along the Ningunsaw River (Ningunsaw Pass) brought them into the Iskut River drainage where Skii km Lax Ha ancestors occasionally made contact with the Iskut Tahltan. A trail also went up the Bell-Irving River through the Konigus Creek pass to the Nass headwaters. An offshoot of this trail went down Rochester Creek to Muskaboo Creek to reach a point further down the Nass.

Simon Gunanoot was known to make use of the trail along the Skeena River that travelled up to the headwaters, and then descended into the Klappan River valley. He guided many prospectors through this area, which was also the location of the part of the Yukon Telegraph Line and the numbered cabins. Simon also used this trail to reach Mount Gunanoot, where he had a trapline. A branch of this trail cut south through the Groundhog Pass to descend into the Blackwater/Damdochax area.

Travel corridors, such as those along the Bear or Salmon Rivers, or the Skeena River into the Klappan headwaters, are considered important to the Skii km Lax Ha and are still used during hunting or trapping activities. The increased construction of access roads for mining and other industrial

⁵ Cuttings on the tree indicate it was used as part of a box trap device to catch small furbearers such as marten.

development, however, has made certain parts of their traditional territory easier to access without having to travel long distances on foot.

4.3.7.1 *Navigation*

The Skii km Lax Ha would occasionally use canoes (and later boats) in the summer along lakes and larger rivers (particularly Bowser Lake, Bowser River and the lower portion of Bell Irving River near its confluence with the Nass) to hunt bear and moose that foraged near the banks. The use of boats would occur when water levels were high after the spring freshet. At all other times of the year, river travel would have been limited because of the low water levels. Other creeks in their territory were too small to navigate. The upper Bell-Irving River could never be navigated because it was too braided and marshy. Rather, they would use wooden rafts to cross the upper Bell Irving where it was shallow, particularly when crossing over from the mouth of Treaty Creek to Oweegee Creek, or vice versa, during resource harvesting excursions. Crossing locations changed annually with river movements, though were generally in the same area where the river was braided and shallow with gravel and sand bars (Rescan 2009). In the winter, when the rivers froze, the Skii km Lax Ha would be able to cross the rivers unimpeded. In recent years, however, the rivers no longer freeze up completely in the winter, making travel more difficult.

4.4 TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT LAND AND RESOURCE USE OF THE LOCAL STUDY AREA

As with the previous section, the following information was collected from Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders through interviews and mapping sessions for both the NTL Project (Rescan 2009; Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010), as well as for the Brucejack Gold Mine Project in January 2013. Figures 4.3-1a to 4.3-1d show traditional use sites and areas identified by knowledge holders and discussed in the sections below.

4.4.1 **Minesite Area**

Interview and mapping data to date indicate no evidence for the traditional use of Brucejack Lake or the proposed Brucejack Minesite, except as part of the travel route mentioned in Section 4.3.7. The lake itself is surrounded by glaciers, is barren of fish, and until recently may have been covered by snow. Therefore its value as a harvesting area is low

4.4.2 **Exploration Road**

The existing Project exploration road passes through a prime cranberry picking area along the bottomland of Bowser River. As it proceeds around the north side of Mount Anderson, the road traverses an area currently used by the Skii km Lax Ha for hunting moose, grizzly bear and mountain goat, as well as a marten trapping area within trapline TR0616T011 (Figure 4.3-1b). Todedada Lake is 150 m west of the road, and is used by the Skii km Lax Ha for trout fishing. Three cabin sites were also identified along the exploration road. One of these, located at the confluence of “Jeannette Creek” with the Bowser River, east of Knipple Lake, was ground truthed and is 140m north of the exploration road (Jollymore and Walker 2013).

4.4.3 **South Option Transmission Line**

The south option transmission line passes along a travel corridor along the Salmon River and over the Salmon Glacier, which was used by Skii km Lax Ha ancestors in the recent past (Figure 4.3-1b). Mountain goat and hoary marmot were also hunted through this corridor. One cabin was identified along this travel corridor at Summit Lake. While the cabin is no longer standing, the corridor is still used on occasion on hunting or trapping excursions.

4.5 CHANGES TO TRADITIONAL USE PATTERNS AND INTERESTS

Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders are familiar with wildlife population trends and movements, based on their observations during hunting and trapping. They indicated a recent increase in wolf and wolverine populations. Knowledge holders have also observed deer and cougars moving into the Wildfire Ridge area north of Bowser Lake, as well as a high population of moose in the Cranberry area. Deer are found around Meziadin and are starting to move north of there (Rescan 2009).

In the past, goats inhabited the area around Spruce (Bell) Creek. Skii km Lax Ha believe the departure of goat from this area is due to helicopter-assisted exploration and survey work. Skii km Lax Ha are concerned about the impacts of helicopters on wildlife (goats and bears) during mineral exploration and environmental surveys (Rescan 2009). Poaching was identified as an issue in and around Awijii Lake, Meziadin Lake and Bear Pass (Rescan 2009).

4.6 CLIMATE CHANGE OBSERVATIONS

Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders have observed changes in the climate (i.e., warmer temperatures) in their traditional territory over the last 20 years. Most streams are unsafe to cross in winter as they no longer freeze over. The Skii km Lax Ha noted that the Bell-Irving River does not freeze over anymore either. Furthermore, the Skii km Lax Ha have noticed less snowfall from Cranberry River north to Meziadin. Snowfall is heavier north of Meziadin. Increased rain during winter has also been noted (Rescan 2009).

Skii km Lax Ha knowledge holders have observed an increase of parasites in fish, which they relate to climate change and warmer water temperatures. With colder water, fish are less likely to have parasites. Skii km Lax Ha have noted that salmon now contain more worms and lice, with some worms up to 30 cm long. More fish now also have a jaundiced colour (especially spring salmon), as well as a different taste and texture. Skii km Lax Ha have sped up the timing of processing their catch, due to increased rates of spoilage. Fish are now processed within a few hours of being caught, rather than the next day (Rescan 2009).

5. Conclusion

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This report was prepared through the research and interpretation of ethnographic sources, as well as from the extrapolation of data from previous studies of projects that have gone through the EA process, particularly the NTL project. Data was also collected through primary research efforts including interview and mapping activities with the Skii km Lax Ha. The report was also reviewed by the Skii km Lax Ha to address any remaining data gaps and inconsistencies.

The Skii km Lax Ha are descended from the Laxwiiyip or Eastern branch of the Tsetsaut ethnographic group. While many ethnographers asserted that the Tsetsaut as a distinct group became extinct in the early 1900s, additional in-depth analysis of the oral histories of the area refutes this assertion. The Skii km Lax Ha are familiar with the genealogy of their *wilp* and those of other groups which they identify as their kin. They understand their ancestral territory to extend from the north side of Cranberry River to Ningunsaw Pass, and from the Unuk headwaters in the west to the Groundhog Range in the east.

Skii km Lax Ha members actively engage in hunting, trapping, plant, berry and mushroom harvesting, as well as fishing and camping in their traditional territory. Knowledge holders have identified sites and areas throughout their traditional territory which they utilized and upon which they subsided. Travel corridors throughout their territory allowed the Skii km Lax Ha to travel from their villages and cabins to exploit hunting grounds, traplines or berry patches. They know where certain wildlife concentrate in their territory and how fish and wildlife have changed in the area in recent years.

The proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project infrastructure lies entirely within Skii km Lax Ha traditional territory. Interview and mapping data to date indicate no evidence for the traditional use of Brucejack Lake or the proposed Brucejack Minesite. The lake itself is surrounded by glaciers, is barren of fish, and until recently may have been covered by snow. Therefore its value as a harvesting area is low.

The existing Project exploration road passes through a prime cranberry picking area along the bottomland of Bowser River, and as it proceeds around the north side of Mount Anderson it traverses an area still used by the Skii km Lax Ha for hunting moose, grizzly bear and mountain goat, as well as a plentiful marten trapping area that falls within a Skii km Lax Ha member's trapline. Three cabin sites have also been identified along the exploration road.

The south option transmission line passes along a travel corridor that was used by Skii km Lax Ha ancestors in the recent past. Mountain goat and hoary marmot were also hunted through this corridor. One cabin was identified along this travel corridor at Summit Lake.

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Definitions of the acronyms and abbreviations used in this reference list can be found in the Glossary and Abbreviations section.

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