



STAR-ORION SOUTH DIAMOND PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX 5.4.2-C

**Excerpts from IBRG's Report of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK)
of Traditional Land Use**

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Report of Aboriginal
Traditional
Knowledge (ATK) of
Traditional Land Use

Métis Nation of Saskatchewan -
Eastern Region II and Western Region II
Pertaining to the Shore Gold's Orion South
Diamond Project in the Fort la Corne Forest

For Release to Shore Gold

ATK GATHERING PROCESS AND SURVEY DESCRIPTION

APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY FOR GATHERING ATK

Collecting knowledge pertaining to TLU and cultural values is challenging and can be enhanced by adhering to principles that have been shown to generate meaningful results. The interview process is the cornerstone of effective ATK gathering and requires substantial preparation. The first step in the process is to determine who is to be interviewed and who will be doing the interviewing. Since knowledge is passed down from elders, it is important to make these individuals one of the focal points in the process. There may also be people who are known to have special knowledge that is relevant to the study or study area. These people are equally important interviewees and can often be identified by talking to elders or leaders within the community. Individuals conducting interviews should have some familiarity with Métis customs and traditions and should, ideally, speak the language of the person being interviewed.

Prior to conducting interviews, it is important to leave enough time to contact potential interviewees and to make sure they have a good understanding of the study being conducted and why their participation is valued. If potential interviewees understand that their information is important, they are more likely to participate. Word of mouth is the primary mechanism through which information is exchanged between community members, suggesting that substantial lead time for notification is important. Some individuals holding relevant traditional knowledge may no longer live in the study area, necessitating interviews conducted outside the study area. It is also important to make sure that the interview process is inclusive, ensuring that as many individuals as possible with traditional knowledge are able to participate (Garvin et al., date unknown).

Although interview preparation is an important process of ATK gathering, the interview process itself is equally as significant in ensuring relevant information is obtained. When interviewing elders it is important that the interview is done in a comfortable setting and that travel is minimized or eliminated entirely. Therefore, it is often best to interview elders at their homes. Interview times can vary considerably in length and interviews should not be rushed. Often it may be necessary to interview elders several times in order to ensure that all relevant traditional knowledge is gathered. To facilitate a timely collection of knowledge, questions should be designed to keep the interview focussed and should be specific to the study being performed (Garvin et al., date unknown).

METHODOLOGY USED FOR GATHERING ATK FROM MÉTIS NATIONS WESTERN REGION II AND EASTERN REGION II

To the extent possible, the methodology employed in gathering ATK related to the Shore Gold South Diamond project attempted to adhere to the principles described above, which was challenging given the short time frame available for the completion of this study. Traditional knowledge was obtained from community members and elders regarding the location of cultural, spiritual and traditional uses of affected lands. The “affected lands” refer to those lands that are located within the natural boundary of the Fort à La Corne Forest region. In several cases, traditional knowledge related to the region but not specifically the affected area, is reported in the results for informational purposes.

When carrying out this study, IBRG’s specific objectives were to (a) develop a survey instrument appropriate to gather information required by the MN-S in WRII and ERII and Shore Gold; (b) conduct the survey in a timely manner in affected communities and with elders in each community; (c) evaluate and synthesize information; and (d) develop a written report and database.

IBRG designed a survey instrument based on discussions with ERII, WRII and Shore Gold to gather important information pertaining to cultural, spiritual and traditional uses of affected land. The survey design was based on literature and historical information of the region, as well as close consultation with the Métis Nations to ensure that findings were relevant for future use. The survey was tested using a focus group to ensure that community members, including elders, were able to clearly impart their traditional knowledge and how resources and lands are presently and have traditionally been used. The survey test also ensured that maps of the local areas were appropriate for mapping traditional uses. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix I, while maps are presented in Appendix II.

The survey was conducted in five communities including Prince Albert and Kinistino in ERII, and Melfort, Nipawin and Tisdale in WRII, and all Métis residing within both regions were invited to participate in the town-hall style meetings. The meetings consisted of three parts. The first part involved a representative of Shore Gold providing an overview of the proposed mine and taking questions about the project. The second part involved IBRG explaining the survey, asking participants to complete the questionnaire, and walking

through the survey, question-by-question, to ensure that all questions were understood. The final part of the meeting involved survey participants, where applicable, locating activities and areas of spiritual and cultural relevance on a map. Ample time was given for discussion both during and at the end of the meetings. Local Métis people from the community were employed to facilitate the meetings, to ensure the survey instrument was accessible to all people, and to provide refreshments.

A similar process was followed in small informal meetings with elders throughout both regions. Upon completion of the surveys, information that was gathered either verbally, on the survey instrument, or on maps for each area, was transcribed and entered into an excel spreadsheet. Information was analyzed and interpreted, and is reported in the subsequent discussion.

TRADITIONAL LAND USE

The survey posed questions regarding the TLU of the Shore Project area, including participation in activities such as hunting, trapping, and the gathering of plants and berries for food and medicine. Participants were also asked whether there were any dwellings, burial sites, sacred places, celebrations, and areas in need of special protection located within the affected area. In all cases, participants were asked to identify activities and sites on the map.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The survey asked participants for knowledge about hunting and trapping activities that are currently occurring in the study area, but also about those similar activities that had occurred in the past. We found that 35 percent of the survey participants or someone in the participant's family currently hunts in the area (Figure 7). This was slightly greater than the percentage who had knowledge of ancestral hunting activities (29 percent). Animals currently hunted in the Fort à la Corne Provincial Forest include deer, elk, moose, bear, grouse, rabbit, duck, and geese. Survey participants indicated that in addition to these animals, ancestors also hunted caribou and trapped muskrat. Among the survey participants that had knowledge about hunting activities, 35 percent indicated that they could identify current hunting areas, while 29 percent indicated that they could identify past hunting locations. Hunting activities occur throughout the entire forest, in particular along the roads located in the forest.

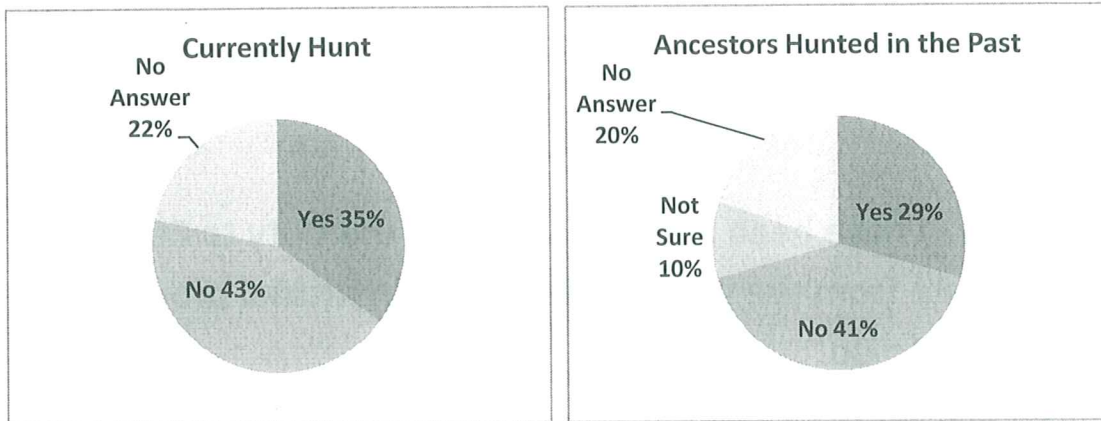


Figure 1: Métis Hunting Activities in the Fort à la Corne Forest

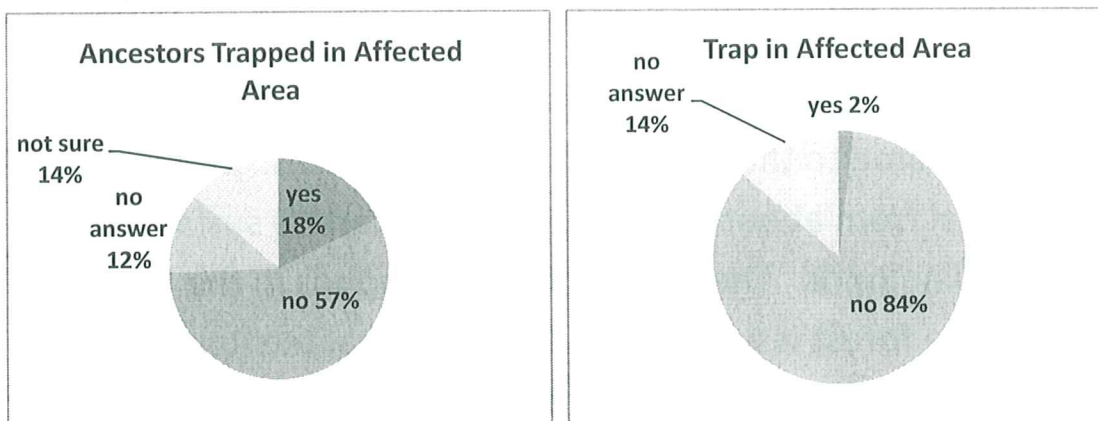


Figure 2: Métis Trapping Activities in the Fort à la Corne Forest

While there was little knowledge pertaining to current trapping activities in the forest, 18 percent of participants indicated having knowledge about their ancestors trapping (Figure 8). The animals trapped in the past included moose, deer, beaver, muskrat, mink, otter, lynx, fox, rabbit, squirrel, grouse, and geese. In terms of location, participants suggested that past trapping activities occurred throughout the whole Fort à la Corne Provincial Forest. It was also suggested that current trapping activities occur in the Glen Mary area and include animals such as weasel, coyote and squirrel.

FISHING

The survey questioned the participants about Métis fishing activities within the Fort à la Corne Forest. The survey results indicate that 20 percent of the participants currently fish or have family that fish within the forest boundary (Figure 9). Common fish include

walleye, perch, jack, sucker, goldeye, whitefish, and sturgeon. Among the participants that had knowledge of fishing activities occurring within the forest boundary, only 20 percent could identify specific locations. These individuals identified the fishing location as being north of James Smith Reserve on the Saskatchewan River and along the river to the Highway 6 bridge.

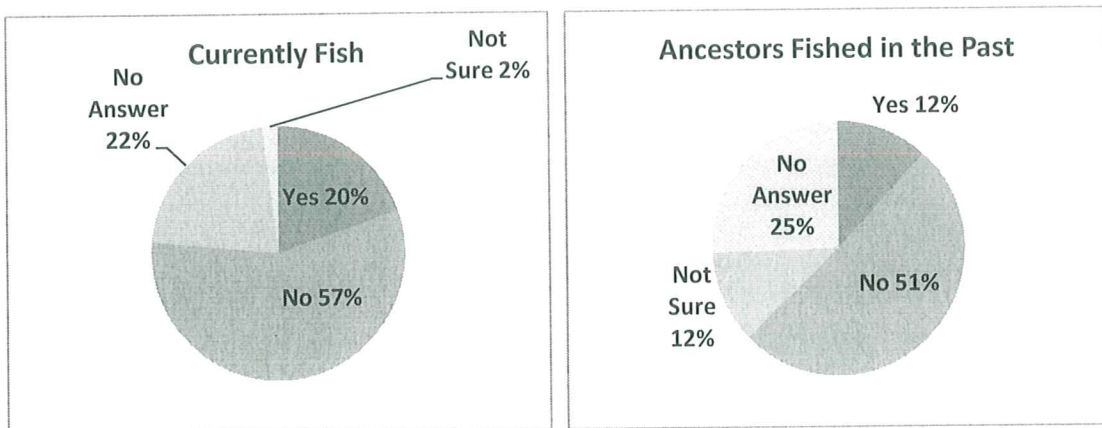


Figure 3: Métis Fishing in the Fort à la Corne Forest

The participants also had some knowledge of their ancestors fishing within the Fort à la Corne Forest. Twelve percent of the survey participants indicated that they had ancestors that fished in the same portion of the Saskatchewan River as is fished today, and that they fished the same type of fish.

Métis Settlements

Survey participants were asked whether they had any knowledge about Métis cabins, dwellings, or settlement ruins within Fort à la Corne Provincial Forest. Results showed that 16 percent of participants had knowledge of different types of Métis dwellings in the area including cabins, a fire tower, saw mills, an old school house and a church. It is unclear whether these dwellings were located inside the affected area, as some were identified as being in the Glen Mary area (which is outside the affected area), while several cabins were identified as being along the south side of the Saskatchewan River.

MÉTIS BURIAL SITES

Relatively few survey participants indicated having knowledge of burial sites in the area. Among the 8 percent that indicated having some knowledge of burial sites, only one

participant identified a possible location on the map. The majority of survey participants had indicated no knowledge of Métis burial sites (Figure 10).

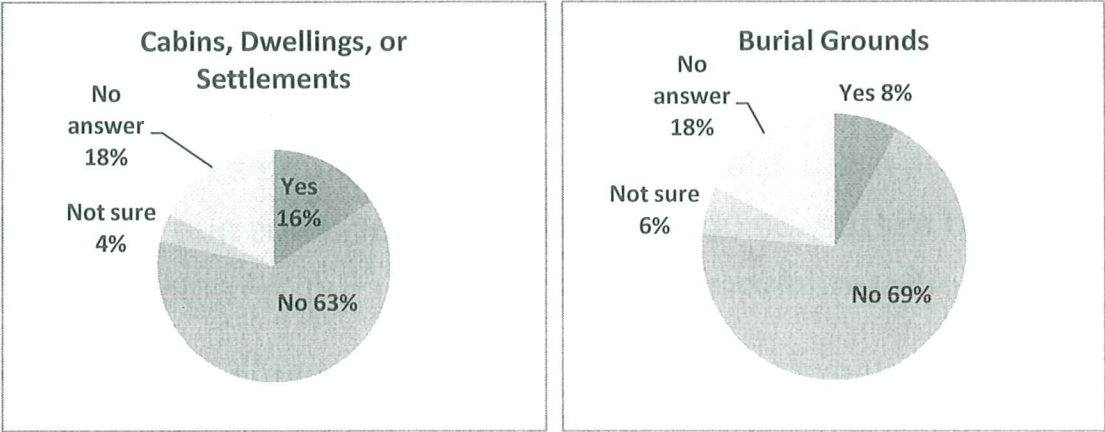


Figure 4: Métis Dwellings and Burial Grounds in the Fort à la Corne Forest

MÉTIS SACRED PLACES AND CELEBRATIONS

Survey participants were questioned about sacred places and celebrations that occurred or are occurring within the forest boundary. Eight percent indicated knowledge about sacred places including a sweat lodge, a church and an area for celebrating the solstice (Figure 11). Two percent described the entire Fort à la Corne Provincial Forest as sacred to the Métis, given the long historical record of Métis subsistence activities. Only four percent indicated specific locations on the map, both outside the affected area.

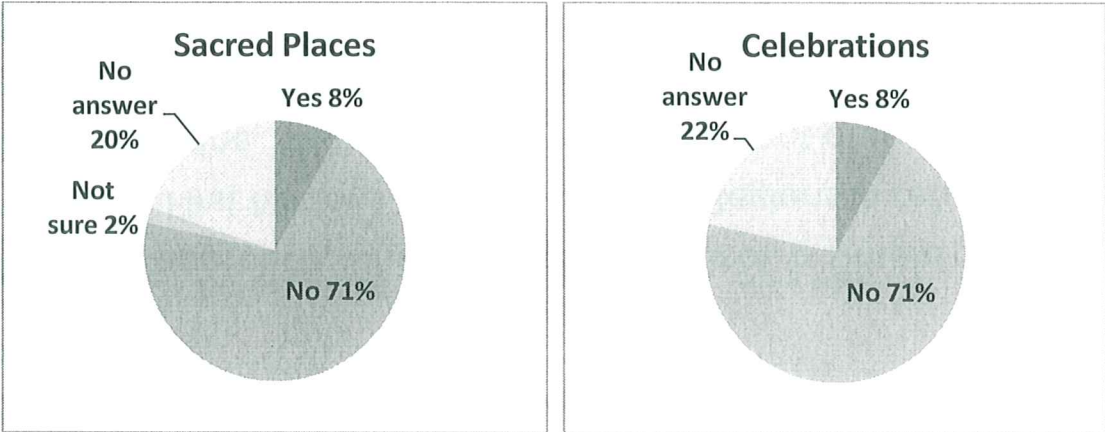


Figure 5: Métis Sacred Places and Celebrations in the Fort à la Corne Forest

Métis Historical and Cultural Sites

The participants were questioned about whether they had knowledge about Métis historical and cultural sites in the affected area. The survey found that eight percent had some knowledge of such sites, half of which were able to identify the areas on the map (Figure 12).

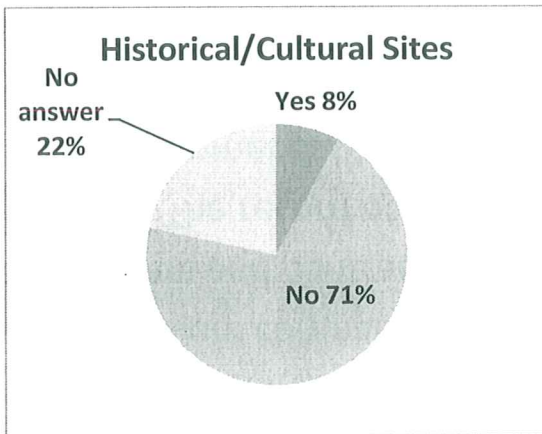


Figure 6: Métis Historical and Cultural Sites in the Fort à la Corne Forest

Plants and Berries

The survey participants were questioned about their knowledge of medicinal plants located in the area. We found that twelve percent of respondents currently collect medicinal plants, half of which indicated the picking area to be located on the north side of the river, inside the affected area (Figure 13). Medicinal plants collected include sage, sweet grass, Seneca root, birch bark, red willow, muskeg tea, Labrador tea and mushrooms.

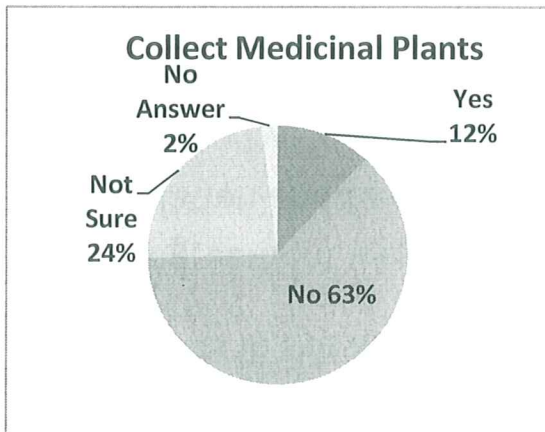


Figure 7: Métis Collection of Medicinal Plants in the Fort à la Corne Forest

Survey participants were questioned about their knowledge of berries and edible plants picked in the affected area. More than one third indicated they or a family member currently picks berries (Figure 14) of which about 33 percent identified areas on the map. While such locations were located throughout the forest, the areas burned by the Henderson fire in 1989 were prominent. It was made clear that there are berry picking sites within the affected area. Berries and edible plants identified include blueberry, chokecherry, Saskatoon berry, cranberry, pincherry, strawberry, and mushrooms.

Survey participants also indicated that their ancestors picked berries and edible plants in the forest (18 percent), with almost half identifying sites on the maps. Berries and edible plants historically picked where those listed above but included raspberries, turnip and rose hips.

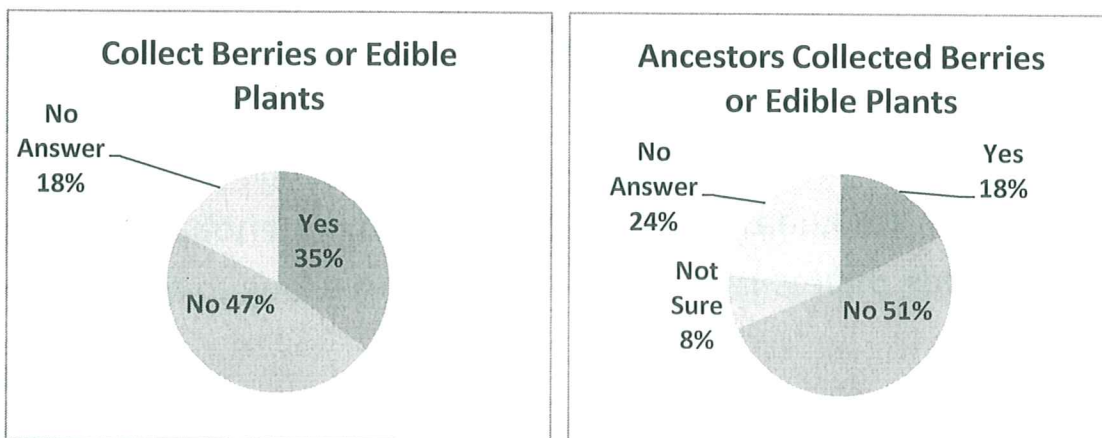


Figure 8: Métis Berry and Plant picking in the Fort à la Corne Forest

AREAS IN NEED OF SPECIAL PROJECTION

Although survey participants were asked to identify areas in need of special protection, only Glen Mary was identified and is outside of the project area. Glen Mary is believed to be a site where several Métis people are buried.

It is also important to note that eight percent of survey participants made a note that Métis logging activities should be protected. This is an activity that goes as far back nearly four generations and is currently ongoing throughout the forest. The survey instrument did not include this activity.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The survey included an opportunity for participants to add comments regarding the area and its traditional land use not specifically identified by the survey instrument. Several participants voiced concern about the Métis people being able to continue their traditional activities in the forest, and how they hoped these activities would be protected. As pointed out by one survey participant “we cherish the forest and use it for various activities. [We] do not want this to change.” Another participant was concerned that the Shore project would push the Métis people out of the forest, but hoped that instead there would be a “comprehensive approach to development.” One participant noted that Métis TLU activities had been altered as the mine development site has already forced them out of that area and has made them change their hunting locations and berry picking sites. In spite of relocating to new sites within the forest, this participant felt sadness towards the loss of access to the land. As the participant noted “it is a beautiful place that will be forever changed.”

Several participants were concerned with the potential negative impacts to the environment. As pointed out by one participant, it is important that “potential side effects of all kinds must be mitigated” throughout the development process, to consider and protect the health of animals and fish .

