

**APPENDIX 30-A
TAHLTAN NATION TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
AND USE DESK-BASED RESEARCH REPORT**

Seabridge Gold Inc.

KSM PROJECT Tahltan Nation Traditional Knowledge and Use Desk-based Research Report

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KSM PROJECT

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Glossary 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.

BC EAA	<i>BC Environmental Assessment Act, SBC 2002, Chapter 43</i>
BC EAO	British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office
CEA Agency	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
CEAA	<i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 1992</i>
EA	Environmental Assessment
ha	Hectares
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
BC MARR	British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
BC MEMPR	British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
BC MOE	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
TCC	Tahltan Central Council
THREAT	Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment Team
The Project	KSM Project
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TU	Traditional Use

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared using solely desk-based research from publicly available information sources. The report is not comprehensive as it requires input from the Tahltan Nation related to the current and historical use of the Project area (see below) by its members.

The Project is subject to an environmental assessment (EA) review under the BC *Environmental Assessment Act* (BC EAA) and *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). This report is intended to help Seabridge Gold Inc. (Seabridge) fulfill the requirements of the KSM Project Application Information Requirements issued by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) on January 31, 2011. Information from this report will be incorporated into the EA Application for the proposed KSM Project.

1.1 TAHLTAN NATION

The territory of the Tahltan Nation covers approximately 93,500 km² in northwest BC and includes the Stikine River basin, the Stikine tributaries (including the Iskut River), and the northern sources of the Nass and Skeena rivers (Tahltan First Nation and IISD 2004). The territory also extends across the provincial boundary into the Yukon Territory. The Tahltan Nation issued a formal “Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe” in October 1910, compiled with the help of ethnographer James Teit, which claimed Tahltan rights over their traditional territory (Albright 1984; Tahltan First Nation and IISD 2004).

The Tahltan Nation is not currently in the British Columbia Treaty Commission process. The Tahltan have been involved in a reconciliation process with the provincial government (the Province) since 2004 and work closely with the Province to mutually manage potential development in their territory. In 2007, the Province and the Tahltan Nation announced a restoration plan to assess and address the impacts of past mineral exploration and development activity within Tahltan asserted territory. The restoration plan was one of the first outcomes of the Minerals Working Group, a Tahltan/Provincial partnership including representatives of the Tahltan Central Council (TCC) and the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines (BC MARR 2011).

In 2011, the Province and the Tahltan Nation signed a government-to-government Framework Agreement to develop the Northwest Transmission Line (NTL). The agreement includes commitments on behalf of the Province to negotiate future NTL-related agreements based on shared decision making, revenue sharing, and managing social and cultural changes (BC MARR 2011).

1.1.1 Governance

The Tahltan Nation is comprised of two bands: the Tahltan Band headquartered in Telegraph Creek and the Iskut First Nation based in Iskut (BC MARR 2011). The Tahltan Band and Iskut First Nation are governed by a Band Council comprised of a chief and five-member council, elected every two years.

The Tahltan Central Council (TCC) was established in 1975 as an umbrella organization to collectively represent the joint interests of the Tahltan Nation’s two bands. The TCC, based in Dease Lake, is the central administrative governing body for the Tahltan Band and the Iskut First Nation (TCC 2010b). It is a registered society under the *BC Society Act* and is comprised of an elected executive (President, Vice President, and Secretary Treasurer) for two year terms and representatives from ten families (Quock, Carlick, Shoe-kawk/Howd-a-gette, Thud ga, Good-za-ma, Stikine Claw and Thick, Simgaltdadta, Cawtooma, Etzenlee, and Ootheny). Family representatives are nominated yearly and ratified at the Annual general meetings held each summer.

1.1.2 Tahltan Location

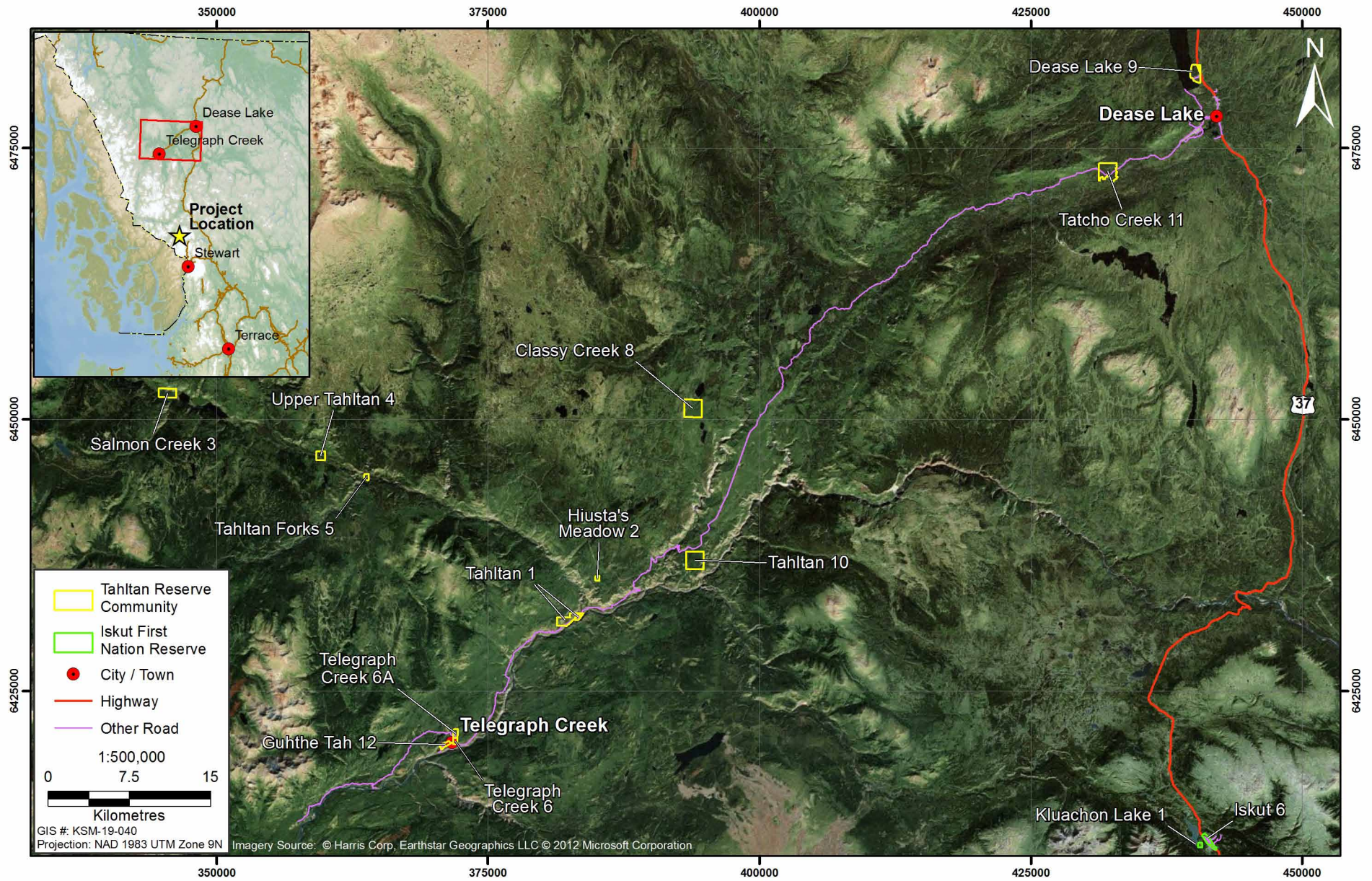
The Tahltan Band has 12 registered reserves in northwest BC totalling 1,338.5 ha. The names and size of the registered reserves are (alphabetically):

- Dease Lake 9, 129.50 ha;
- Guhthe Tah 12, 30.40 ha;
- Hiusta's Meadow 2, 16.20 ha;
- Salmon Creek 3, 129.50 ha;
- Tahltan 1, 151.70 ha;
- Tahltan 10, 259.40 ha;
- Tahltan Forks 5, 19.30 ha;
- Tatcho Creek 11, 222.20 ha;
- Telegraph Creek 6, 24.30 ha;
- Telegraph Creek 6A, 32.30 ha; and
- Upper Tahltan 4, 64.70 ha.

Four of these reserves are populated, including three reserves in the vicinity of Telegraph Creek (Telegraph Creek 6, Telegraph Creek 6A, and Guhthe Tah 12), and one located 4 km north of Dease Lake (Dease Lake 9). Telegraph Creek is located on the Stikine River at the base of the Stikine River Canyon, 108 km southwest of Dease Lake.

The Iskut First Nation has three reserves totalling 107.9 ha (BC MARR 2011). On-reserve members primarily live on Iskut 6, located on Highway 37, approximately 83 km south of Dease Lake. Eddontennajon, a small, non-native community, is adjacent to the reserve.

Figure 1.1-1 indicates the location of each of these reserves, Figure 1.1-2 indicates Tahltan Asserted Territory in Canada, and Figure 1.1-3 highlights the proposed KSM Project infrastructure in relation to Tahltan Asserted Territory.



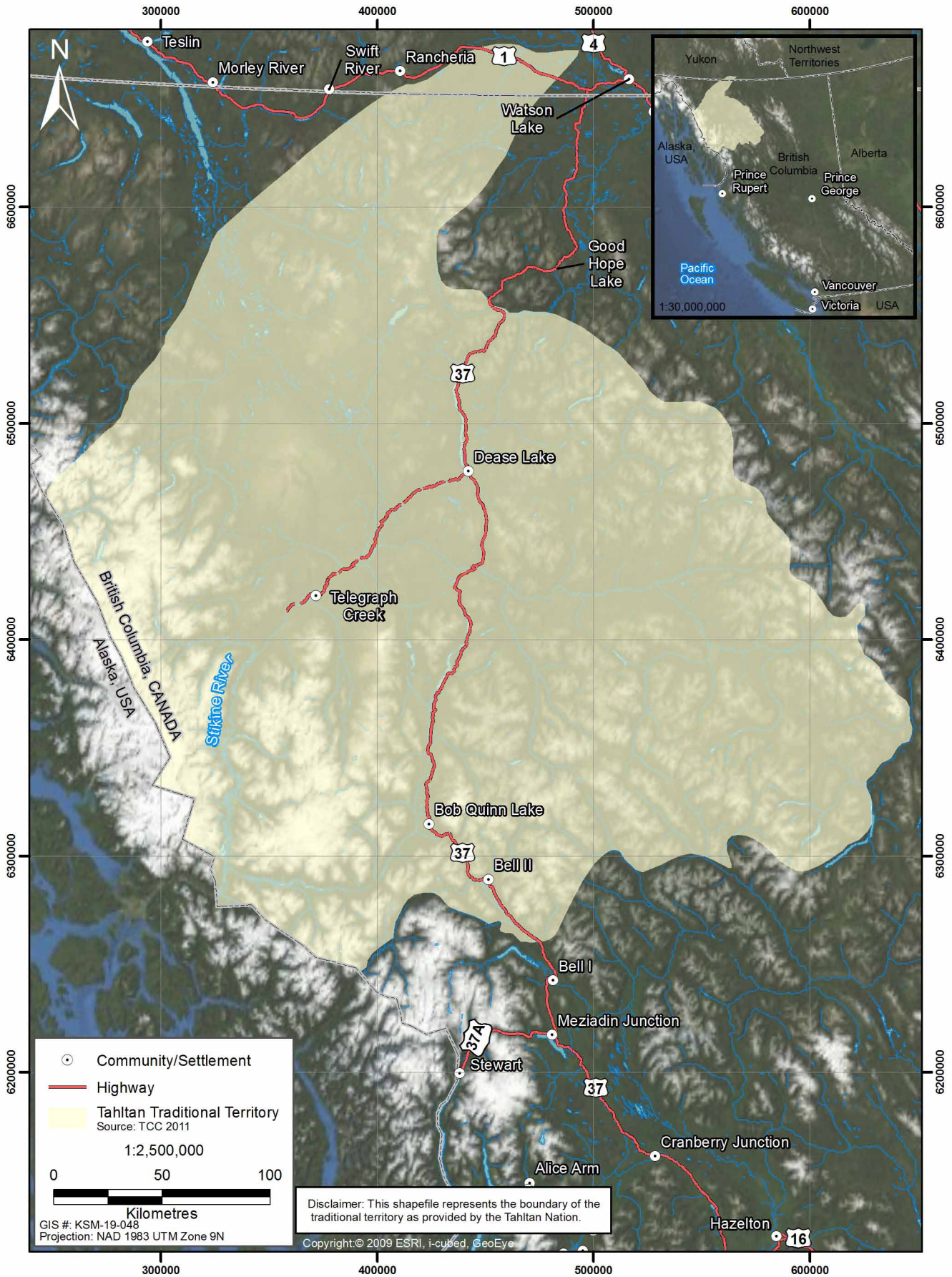
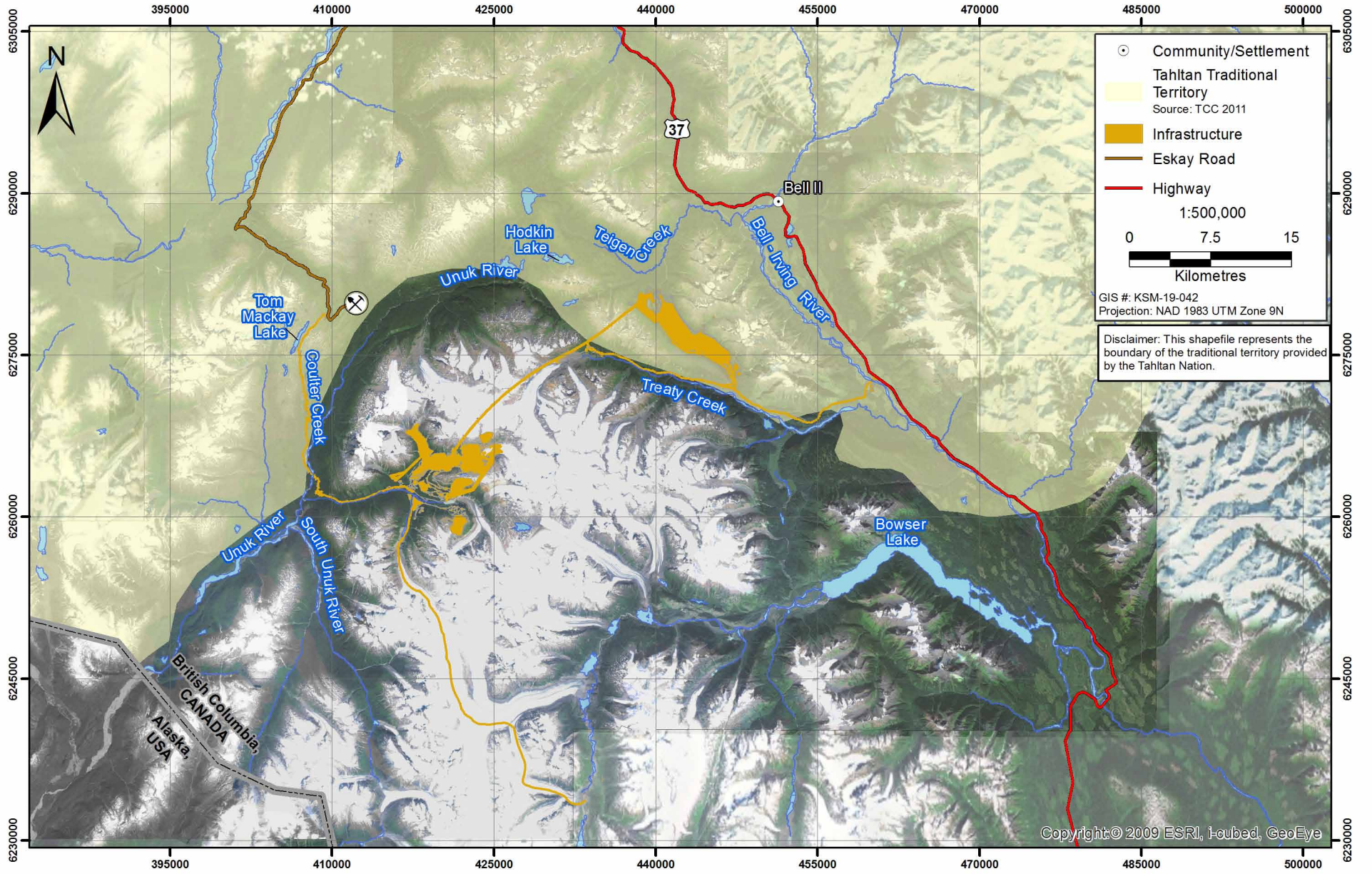


Figure 1.1-2



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 understand the historic and contemporary traditional Tahltan Nation activities, practices and uses of the proposed Project Area.

This report is based on desk-based research using publicly available sources. This report is not comprehensive, but is intended to be reviewed by the Tahltan for their input and edits.

3. Methodology

3.1 APPROACH

The overall approach for the study involved a desktop review of available ethnographic information for both the Tahltan Nation as well as northwest British Columbia.

3.2 DESKTOP ETHNOGRAPHIC INFORMATION COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Bibliographic and internet sources 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. All identified 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 EA documents produced for other Projects were also reviewed for TK information relevant to the Tahltan Nation. Based on the results of the review, an analysis and synthesis of the available ethnographic information was prepared (Section 4).

3.3 DATA CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

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. However, this work provides important accounts into daily life, social and political structures, and subsistence methods employed by members of the related First Nations.

Data gaps within this study are expected due to a lack of site-specific information. 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 the KSM Project area.

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.

4. Results

4.1 BACKGROUND

Centered in northwestern British Columbia, the Tahltan trace their cultural lineage from the greater Athapaskan group which ranges across Canada's northwestern and arctic provinces and territories.

4.1.1 Traditional Territory

The Tahltan traditions hold that they have inhabited the region since time immemorial (TCC 2010a). The Tahltan Nation's asserted traditional territory includes approximately 93,500 km² of terrain in northwestern BC (TCC 2010a). Among seasonally-mobile Aboriginal groups, traditional territorial boundaries were typically defined by specific geographic features located in the region's most commonly used throughout a typical annual cycle. Tahltan territory is found in northwestern British Columbia throughout areas surrounding the Stikine River drainage basin in the Coast and Cassiar Mountains.

The core of Tahltan culture is located in the northern region of their territory near the confluence of Tahltan and Stikine Rivers, while seasonal hunting ranges cover a much broader area. This broader area encompasses the Spatsizi Plateau, the Dease Lake basin, headwaters of the Nass and Skeena Rivers, and the Tuya, Tahltan, Klappan, and Iskut river drainages (MacLachlan 1981; TCC 2010a).

The southern boundary of Tahltan asserted traditional territory follows the Unuk River drainage from the Alaska/Canada border and along Treaty Creek which was named as the result of a historic treaty between Nisga'a and Tahltan that established territorial boundaries between the two nations in 1898, and reaffirmed in 1977 and 1993 (Sterritt et al. 1998). Traditional relationships between the Aboriginal groups that border Tahltan territory are complex and in some instances boundaries overlap. Tahltan have shared territorial borders with Kaska to the northwest, Sekani to the east, Gitksan and Nisga'a to the south and Tlingit to the west (MacLachlan 1981).

Until the late 19th century six clans existed within the greater Tahltan territory, each having their own traditional territory. These clans included the Tagicoten, Naloten, Talakoten, Tlepanoten, Tulenekoten and Naskoten (MacLachlan 1981; Albright 1984; THREAT 2009). Each clan's traditional territory was associated with a seasonal range of terrain used throughout the year.

Primary Tahltan communities are Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake and Iskut, though approximately 5,000 community members live off of reserve lands (TCC 2010b). These modern settlements were initially associated with Cassiar gold rush trading posts during the mid-19th century but have since developed into cultural and social hubs for the Tahltan community.

4.1.2 Language

Members of the Tahltan Nation speak an Athapaskan language related to the Kaska Dena peoples of the Liard and Dease river drainages, and the Tagish peoples of Yukon River drainage (Krauss and Golla 1981). Tahltan language is considered endangered with few remaining speakers, however efforts are ongoing to revitalize its use (TCC 2010b).

4.1.3 Social Organization

Tahltan social organization is kinship-based, within a phatry system that involves at least two clans from common descent. The Tahltan kinship system is characterized by matrilineal descent and is divided into two exogamous moieties: the Raven and the Wolf (Albright 1984). Each moiety has three clans associated

with them named after the geographical areas in which they claim hunting rights. The Raven moiety includes the Tulenekoten, Tlepanoten and Naloten clans, and the Wolf moiety includes Tagicoten, Talakoten and Naskoten clans (MacLachlan 1981). Marriage was exogamous, meaning that it was restricted to men and women belonging to opposite moieties. An additional clan called Nana'a, who had no recognized territory, but who freely utilized hunting areas along the lower Stikine River, has been described by Albright (1984) referring to James Teit's ethnographic work in the early 20th century. Each clan is associated with a specific set of local names and cultural traditions, including stories, dances and crests. Traditionally the seasonal round of families within the clan was specialized to their region, and during periods of mobility families would travel as a corporate unit to preferred areas in the territory. According to MacLachlan (1981) these clans were present in record until the late 19th century when Tahltan social organization was affected by the influx of Europeans during the Cassiar gold rush.

Albright (1984) describes status within the clans as based on personal character and wealth which is traditionally seen as a sign of competence. Personal status was a highly developed institution that gave high value to individuals and groups who possessed land, objects and goods (MacLachlan 1981). Historically clans were headed by a single leader with a name and position that was inherited along the matrilineal line. The leader's duties included the settling of disputes and maintaining organization of the hunting and fishing territories of each family within their territory (Albright 1984). Social mobility was achieved through the acquisition of wealth, marriage, and trade, but inherited status had to be validated with proper behaviour (MacLachlan 1981). Large seasonal feasts put on by a clan leader for members of an opposite moiety served to display wealth and influence to other clans. During these gatherings clan leaders would express their status by displaying or destroying symbols of wealth. Following the influx of European influence and a sharp drop in population due to disease epidemic in the area, clan leaders amalgamated under a single leader in order to mediate inter-clan disputes (MacLachlan 1981).

Travel rights through clan territories were strictly enforced and encounters with members of outside groups sometimes ended in violence, however alliances with other local groups were established through intermarriage while borders were usually shared for hunting purposes (Albright 1984). The lower Stikine River was a meeting point between the Tahltan and the Tlingit from the coast who were in contact with Tahltan prior to the European influx in the region and developed a rich trade relationship. Teit (1956) recounts this in his ethnographic interviews:

Long ago the Tlingit of the Coast were never met. They never came up the Stikine very far and the Tahltan never went down far. There was thus no trading with the Tlingit. At last Tlingit commenced to come up the river and finally met the Tahltan. After this they came often and finally came annually.

Tlingit would travel north up the Stikine River during the summer and trade eulachon (or oolichan) oil, salmon eggs, shells and metal implements for Tahltan-provided caribou and moose leathers, sinew, bags, small animals skins and articles of clothing (Teit 1956; MacLachlan 1981; Teit n.d.). Obsidian, useful for making tools and weapons, was also a key item traded (TCC 2010b). The Tahltan's trading relationships provided a foundation of exchange which Russian fur traders monopolized during the 19th century.

4.1.4 Traditional Economy

Prior to European contact the Tahltan subsistence economy was focused around a semi-nomadic seasonal round adapted to their unique geographic area. An annual cycle was characterized by a pattern of aggregation and dispersal, culminating in the summer with the intensified use of fishing villages located near the banks of major water ways (Albright 1984). Fishing villages were located along areas of high salmon volume during the yearly run and included large drying and storage houses constructed for communal use. Drying houses typically took the shape of an A-frame structure and

were constructed of wooden poles set in four corners, with two taller posts at the far ends over which a roof and walls of pine poles were constructed (Albright 1984). Lashings made from willow held the structure together. Clans would gather for up to three months catching enough salmon to last the season. By October families would disperse and travel to the uplands to hunt larger game such as caribou, bear and moose within clan territories, settling in established winter camps usually established in sheltered valleys (Albright 1982, 1984).

The seasonal cycles of each Tahltan clan was focused on a major river system within their territory. However, as salmon cannot proceed along the Stikine River past the Grand Canyon of the Stikine (upstream from Telegraph Creek) the Stikine-Tahltan river confluence was a major focal point for many families' seasonal round. In traditional Naskoten territory the Nass and Bell-Irving Rivers were likely of primary importance for this reason. According to interviews conducted by Albright (Rousseau 1990), the nearby headwaters area of the Unuk River south of the Ningunsaw Creek was a traditionally occupied upland hunting territory of the Naskoten. The area however was highly contentious during the 19th century as Nisga'a and Gitksan groups also utilized terrain to the east and south including areas between Treaty Creek and the Nass River.

Travel through Tahltan territories was typically on foot, utilizing snowshoes in the winter (Teit 1956; MacLachlan 1981; Teit n.d.). Travel by river was rare. Goods were carried on one's back utilizing elegantly crafted trumplines (a type of strap-support), or were transported by pack dog. Lean-to structures constructed from branches and bark were used during overnight camping.

4.1.5 Ceremonies and Spirituality

Tahltan traditionally practice a holistic worldview in which all things are considered to be interconnected. Social values are centred on principles of cooperation, honour, truth, and respect (TCC 2010b). Oral histories are the primary means of transferring information between generations and a vibrant oral tradition has been developed over many generations within the Tahltan community.

Tahltan spirituality was directly influenced by their unique geographic environment, and animals such as mink, wolverine, and wolf were traditionally held in high regard (MacLachlan 1981). Strong traditional taboos exist in Tahltan culture, some relating to the consumption of specific animal species perceived to contain potent supernatural powers. Like many Athapaskan groups, shamanism was an important part of Tahltan worldview. Shamans were curers of the sick and were understood to possess strong bonds to the spirit realm. Shamans were chosen from boys who had undergone rigorous training during puberty and public ceremonies would be conducted by shamans in order to heal community members from ailments caused by sorcery or spirit possession (Teit 1956).

Important rites of passage in Tahltan traditional culture include puberty and marriage. During specific periods in a person's life certain rites or training are conducted in order to properly adapt an individual, which serves as a mechanism to allow the individual to become incorporated into different levels of the social structure. Traditional puberty rites usually involved periods of isolation, followed by a period of instruction and social training taught by elders that served to prepare the individual for their duties to their family and clan (Teit 1956, n.d.).

4.1.6 After European Contact

Beginning in the mid-to-late 18th century European contact began to show an influence on the coastal region west of Tahltan territory. Russian traders established trade contacts with Tlingit groups along the coast which saw an intensification of European activity in the region. Fort Dionysius (later renamed Fort Stikine) was established on Wrangell Island in the 1830s as a response by Russian traders to Hudson's Bay employees attempt at establishing their own trade lines with Tlingit and Tahltan from the

interior (Albright 1984). Tahltan-Tlingit contact intensified as a result, and an influx of European goods occurred which affected the dynamics of status and power between the two groups.

The introduction of metals replaced traditional implements made from bone, antler and obsidian. During this time two smallpox epidemics decimated the Tahltan population, which was estimated at approximately 1,000 individuals in the year 1800 but reduced to approximately half of that by 1837 (MacLachlan 1981). The intensification of the fur trade along the coast and interior resulted in the increased production of furs in the region and traditional economies generally shifted in focus in order to facilitate the industry.

The Cassiar and Klondike gold rushes of the late 19th century saw a substantial increase in contact with Europeans and Northwest Coast groups, including traders, prospectors and missionaries. The increased activity in the region had a strong effect on the Tahltan way of life and essentially brought the full spectrum of the western world to the territory, ending the Tahltan control of furs trapping in the region. By 1875, the remaining Tahltan population decimated by smallpox epidemics, numbering around an estimated 300 members, joined under one clan and constructed Tahltan Village with European style houses. Telegraph Creek was established by 1906 and contained a school by 1915. Traditional trapping and hunting activities continued during this period, but with an increasing reliance on privatized industry, guiding, and wrangling in response to European settlement in the region (MacLachlan 1981).

Both the intensification of European occupation in the region and a desire by local clans to acquire more tradable goods had acute effects on the seasonal subsistence cycle of Tahltan clans. As a result the range of seasonal movement was increased in order to accommodate trading demands during the mid-19th century (Albright 1984). In Naskoten territory this resulted in contention with Nisga'a and Gitksan in the area of Bowser and Meziadin Lakes (Sterritt et al 1998).

In the mid-1860s to mid-1870s, a peace treaty was made between the predecessors of the Nisga'a and Tahltan Nations at Treaty rock, a large rock outcrop along the shore of Treaty Creek (Nisga'a Tribal Council / Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department, Aiyansh BC, cited in British Columbia 2007). The name Treaty Creek refers to a treaty between the Skeena and Stikine Indians. The territory surrounding the creek is considered neutral land between the groups, and neither group is permitted to trap or occupy this area (Monckton, P. M. 1930. BCLS. Quoted in GeoBC 2007).

4.2 TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT LAND AND RESOURCE USE

4.2.1 Fish

Fishing is an important traditional activity for the Tahltan who have numerous fish-bearing river systems running through their territory. These rivers include the Skeena, Stikine, Bell-Irving, Tahltan, Nass, Nahlin, and Ningunsaw watersheds. As a result, seasonally available fish resources played an important role in the Tahltan annual mobility cycle, resulting in periods of intense localized harvesting by the community. Traditional fishing villages were created along the Stikine and its tributaries, typically in the winter and summer for salmon harvests which represented an important time of year for Tahltan communities (Emmons 1911; Albright 1984). Summer fisheries were traditionally, and are currently, located in the mid-Stikine, upper-Nass and upper-Skeena basins (THREAT 2009). Fish caught during traditional harvest seasons are smoke-dried and preserved and used to feed families throughout the season (Albright 1984).

Seasonally, migratory and anadromous fish come into Tahltan territory to spawn, including Coho, Chinook, pink, chum and sockeye salmon species, as well as steelhead trout (School District 87 2000). Traditional fishing methods include gill and dip nets, weirs, basket traps, gaffs, spears and fish hooks (Albright 1984). Currently, gill-nets are the most common method employed for harvesting.

Given the importance of fish harvesting to Tahltan culture, maintaining productive fish habitats and salmon spawning routes are of key importance. Additionally, potentially reduced fish runs are understood to affect carnivorous wildlife in the region. Concerns regarding water quality of Unuk and Bell-Irving rivers and Teigen and Treaty creeks rank high among the Tahltan community, specifically in regards to the stability of mining tailing containment facilities (TCC 2009).

4.2.2 Wildlife

A number of species of wildlife are important subsistence sources for Tahltan communities and are found throughout their asserted traditional territory. This includes moose, black bear, grizzly bear, mountain goat and caribou (MacLachlan 1981; THREAT 2009). Currently moose is a primary food source in the Tahltan diet. Albright (1984) reported that two sub-species of moose were found in the Stikine Plateau area, one south of the Stikine River and east of the Tuya, and the other northwest of these two rivers. Traditionally caribou found in the northern areas of Tahltan territory were a highly valued food source, as were mountain goat which was also prized for its hair. Besides food, wildlife has provided the Tahltan with a rich supply of resources for preparing traditional implements. Animal hides are used for crafting clothing, drums and numerous other implements.

Traditional hunting activities were conducted in autumn and spring. Men were responsible for hunting and dressing an animal, while women were involved in the preparation of the meat and hides as well as in the hunting of smaller game (Albright 1984). Modern hunting methods typically involve stalking single prey, primarily using modern implements. Traditional hunting methods utilized fences while hunting caribou, snares for small game, deadfall traps for carnivores or stalking for mountain goats. Additionally, specially trained bear dogs were traditionally used on the hunt.

Areas within the study area that are considered sensitive to wildlife include the area of the Teigen-Snowbank-Ningunsaw corridor, where grizzly and black bears are known to be the dominant species (THREAT 2009).

Trapping for fur-bearing mammals is a common activity among Tahltan communities and, since the advent of the European fur trade in the region, has provided a source of income for individuals and families who own registered trap lines.

The potential disturbance of mountain goat populations due to helicopter traffic, and the effects of Highway 37 traffic on moose and bear populations, are primary Tahltan community concerns regarding wildlife (TCC 2009).

4.2.3 Plant and Berry Gathering

Plant and berry harvesting is an important traditional activity for Tahltan families (THREAT 2009). A Tahltan study for the Northern Transmission Line (between Deltaic Creek and Bob Quinn Lake) noted the Tahltan plant harvesting concentrations around the Bob Quinn area (THREAT 2009). Plants are used for medicinal and subsistence purposes. Traditionally green vegetables and roots were gathered during the spring, including rhubarb, nettles, mountain sorrel, lamb's quarter, devil's club and dandelion. Approximately 25 species of berries are found in Tahltan territory, including raspberries, strawberries, bush cranberries, blueberries and soapberries (Albright 1984; School District 87 2000). Cambium harvesting is also a traditional activity as the inner living bark layer of some trees is traditionally consumed during the spring (Teit n.d.). Medicinal uses of plant resources focused on treating minor ailments. Some of the more important medicinal plants include evergreen bark and needles, soapberry, and caribou weed.

4.2.4 Mushrooms

A number of species of edible mushrooms are found throughout Tahltan territory, including pine mushrooms which are typically picked for sale. Pine mushroom picking is an important economic activity for Tahltan communities, especially members of the Iskut band. Remote areas along the Eskay Creek mine access road are often accessed for mushroom harvesting (Coast Mountain Hydro Corp 2002).

4.2.5 Obsidian

Obsidian is an important resource in Tahltan territory. For several thousand years, the Tahltan have extracted and traded obsidian from the flanks of Mt. Edziza. Prior to European contact, Tahltan traded obsidian, native copper, gold, jade, agate and precious stones with other First Nations (Tahltan First Nation and IISD 2004). Distribution of obsidian from Mt. Edziza likely found its way south through the Ningunsaw and Bell-Irving Valleys (THREAT 2009).

4.2.6 Travel

Tahltan people traveled extensively throughout the region through the year. Due to the mountainous and dense terrain present throughout Tahltan territory, traversing typically occurred by foot and utilized specific routes following natural terrain features. A number of significant features are noted throughout Tahltan territory and have traditionally served to define local boundaries and resource use areas. These features include all major river systems and valleys, as well as mountains.

Traditionally, trails served as important aspects of travel which facilitated trading and movement throughout a given territory between villages, and hunting, fishing and resource gathering areas (THREAT 2009). Trails often developed through major corridors. Historic trails are recorded throughout the Stikine watershed, as well as along the Ningunsaw, Snowbank and Teigen drainages (Sterritt et al. 1998; THREAT 2009). Major known trails include the Telegraph Creek, Hyland Post and Glenora-Dease Lake Trails. Culturally modified trees typically mark trail paths and markers may remain visible for hundreds of years.

Historically, the south bank of the Iskut River was used seasonally as a transportation corridor, providing access to higher value fishing habitat and hunting habitat further upstream. Historic travel through this area likely tended to occur predominately in late winter or early spring when snow was compact and ease of travel was increased. This transportation route is generally referred to as the Iskut River trail, and it was traditionally used by the Tahltan to access coastal marine resources such as oolichan, seaweed, and shellfish (THREAT 2010).

Packing was typically done by backpack or sled prior to the 19th century when dogs were utilized for packing purposes. Travel along water routes was uncommon except for river crossings, though sturdy dugout canoes were brought up the Stikine River by Tlingit traders (MacLachlan 1981). Horses were utilized during the late 19th century, however have only become more commonly utilized in modern times.

5. Conclusion

Traditional Tahltan knowledge and use within the Project study area is associated with the southern portion of the Tahltan asserted traditional territory. This area includes a number of major travel corridors such as the Ningunsaw and Bell-Irving River valleys. The Tahltan have traditionally and currently utilize wildlife, fish, and plant and berry resources near the eastern, northern and western boundaries of the study area.

The traditional annual cycle of Tahltan clans was focused on seasonal salmon runs on the Stikine and other watersheds within their traditional territory. Wildlife species important to Tahltan traditional culture include moose, black bear, grizzly bear, and mountain goat, though traditionally caribou may have been highly valued in some areas of Tahltan territory. Despite the availability of ethno-historic resources, Tahltan use of a large proportion of the study area is unknown and will require the completion of the pending TCC produced TK/TU report in order to better understand potential effects. Issues that have been identified to date centre on watershed management and water quality. Salmon habitat is of high significance to the sustainment of Tahltan traditional culture and ties closely to their use of the land for fishing and wildlife harvesting.

References

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

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