

**TSILHQOT'IN CURRENT USE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
VALUES**

**PRESENTATION TO
THE FEDERAL PROSPERITY PANEL
APRIL 2010 SOCIO-ECONOMIC TOPIC SPECIFIC HEARING
IN WILLIAMS LAKE**

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ON BEHALF OF THE TSILQHOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The purposes of this presentation are:

1. Summarize evidence about current use & cultural heritage provided during the Community Hearings;
2. Describe Project effects on current use & cultural heritage;
3. Present conclusions about the efficacy of proposed mitigation measures; and
4. Present conclusions about the significance of residual impacts.

CURRENT USE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES AT 'NABAS CENTRAL'

'Nabas Central' in this presentation means Teztan Biny, Y'anah Biny, Teztan (Fish) Creek and adjacent wetlands and meadows, and Wasp Lake area.

Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes and cultural heritage values evident today based on evidence provided during the Panel hearings.

CURRENT USE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES AT 'NABAS CENTRAL'

A place where Tsilhqot'in members continue to:

- harvest deer and moose for food purposes;
- harvest fish from Teztan Biny and Y'anah Biny for food purposes;
- harvest plants for food purposes and medicines for health and ceremonial purposes; and
- graze cattle that are used for income purposes.

CURRENT USE & CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES AT 'NABAS CENTRAL'

A cultural hub where Tsilhqot'in members continue to:

- call it their homeland and backyard;
- frequent it to promote cultural continuity and identity through;
 - intergenerational transmission (teaching) of traditional knowledge and traditional activities
 - intergenerational transmission of history, ancestry and culture
 - holding social and cultural gatherings
- use it for family social and recreational purposes.

CURRENT USE & CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES AT 'NABAS CENTRAL'

A Sacred Place:

- a place where the ancestors lived;
- a place where there are burial sites;
- a place to obtain or revitalize spiritual guidance and powers;
- a place connected with Ts'yl-os

CURRENT USE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES WITHIN 'GREATER NABAS'

'Greater Nabas' means Anvil Mountain (Nabas Dzelh), Red Mountains (Gwetex Natel?as), North Taseko Lake (Dasiqox Biny), the outlet of Taseko Lake (Nadliin Yex), and Onion Lake (Jididzay Biny).

CURRENT USE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES WITHIN 'GREATER NABAS'

- Anvil Mountain, Red Mountains, and Nadilin Yex continue to be important deer and moose hunting areas;
- Nadilin Yex and Onion Lake (Jididzay Biny) continue to be important fishing sites;
- Greater Nabas continues to be used for food and medicine gathering.
- Greater Nabas used as a teaching ground for youth.

TSILHQOT'IN SALMON FISHERY

- **Chilko, Chilcotin, Taseko Rivers and outlet of Taseko Lake critical salmon fishing waterways;**
- **Salmon critical component of subsistence economy;**
- **Annual salmon harvest variable and dependent upon natural cycles in run size.**
- **Grave concerns about recent declines in salmon runs.**

IMPORTANCE OF NABAS TO TSILHQOT'IN

- Valued and enjoyed by families from all Tsilhqot'in communities;
- Strong historic and ancestral connection;
- Highly accessible to Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in families;
- An intact and relatively undisturbed landscape;
- Rich and diverse area supporting multiple traditional activities;

IMPORTANCE OF NABAS TO TSILHQOT'IN

- Teztan Biny/Y'anah Biny used to acquire fresh fish during seasons when salmon are not available;
- Teztan Biny/Y'anah Biny fish are important for food security in times of low salmon runs;
- Contributes to overall sustainability of mixed-subsistence lifestyle and economy.
- Contributes to overall well-being - cultural, spiritual, social, health and economic.

CONTEXTUAL SETTING FOR ASSESSING PROJECT IMPACTS

- **Historic and continuing encroachment on lands and resources necessary to support traditional activities, cultural continuity, and sustainable mixed-subsistence economy;**
- **Colonization impacts on ability to pursue traditional activities and on cultural identity;**
- **Deep rooted distrust of government and industry;**

CONTEXTUAL SETTING FOR ASSESSING PROJECT IMPACTS

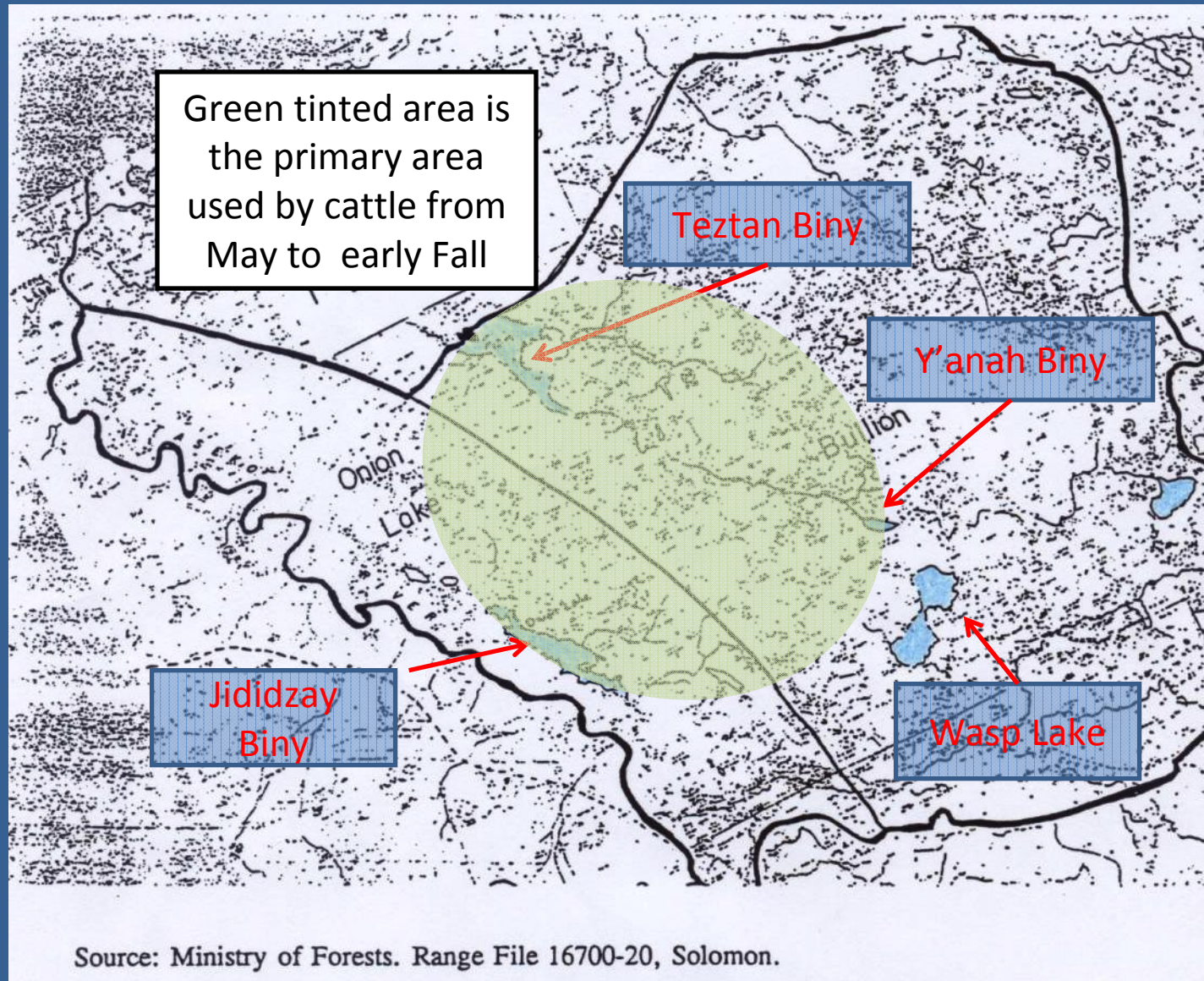
- Tsilhqot'in communities in a fragile state of “recovery” with cultural protection and promotion efforts in place;
- Xenigwet'in described as a model First Nations community;
- Tsilhqot'in environmental protection ethics and efforts conflict with mine development;
- Tsilhqot'in have development plans for their territory. A mine at Teztan Biny will conflict with some of these plans.

PROJECT IMPACTS ON CURRENT USE/CULTURAL HERITAGE

1. Project will destroy food harvesting utility of Nabas Central:

- **complete destruction of Teztan Biny and Y'anah Biny, Fish Creek and wetlands complex;**
- **complete loss of opportunity for traditional use (fishing, hunting, gathering) within the mine footprint area;**
- **complete loss of hunting opportunity within an unknown area (possibly surface lease area or larger) as a result of Provincial institution of a “no hunt” designation;**
- **significant reduction in cattle grazing area.**

Solomon Family Grazing Area (Bullion/Onion Lake)



PROJECT IMPACTS ON CURRENT USE/CULTURAL HERITAGE

2. Loss of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage Sites and Values

- flooding or other destruction of burial sites;
- destruction, flooding and/or desecration of important cultural (historic, spiritual, sacred) places;
- complete severing of ancestral and cultural connection to Nabas Central.

PROJECT IMPACTS ON CURRENT USE/CULTURAL HERITAGE

3. Impacts on Traditional Use of Greater Nabas and Beyond

- **Avoidance of harvesting activity and consumption of animals, fish and plants in Greater Nabas area due to food security concerns (contamination);**
- **Potential avoidance of salmon harvesting and consumption in traditional waterways due to food security (contaminant) concerns;**
- **Increased competition for and harvest burden on fish and animals due to proposed improved access to Greater Nabas and other lakes (i.e. Transport Canada proposal of new/improved access as mitigation for navigation impacts);**

HEALTH IMPACTS

Shari Hughson, primary health provider at Xeni Gwet'in, spoke at length to the Panel about community health and well-being impacts associated with:

1. The act of approving the mine.
2. Contaminant concerns leading to mental health impacts and loss of faith in food supply.
3. Impacts on food sustainability goals.
4. Overall decline in community well-being

ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH TRADITIONAL USE IMPACTS

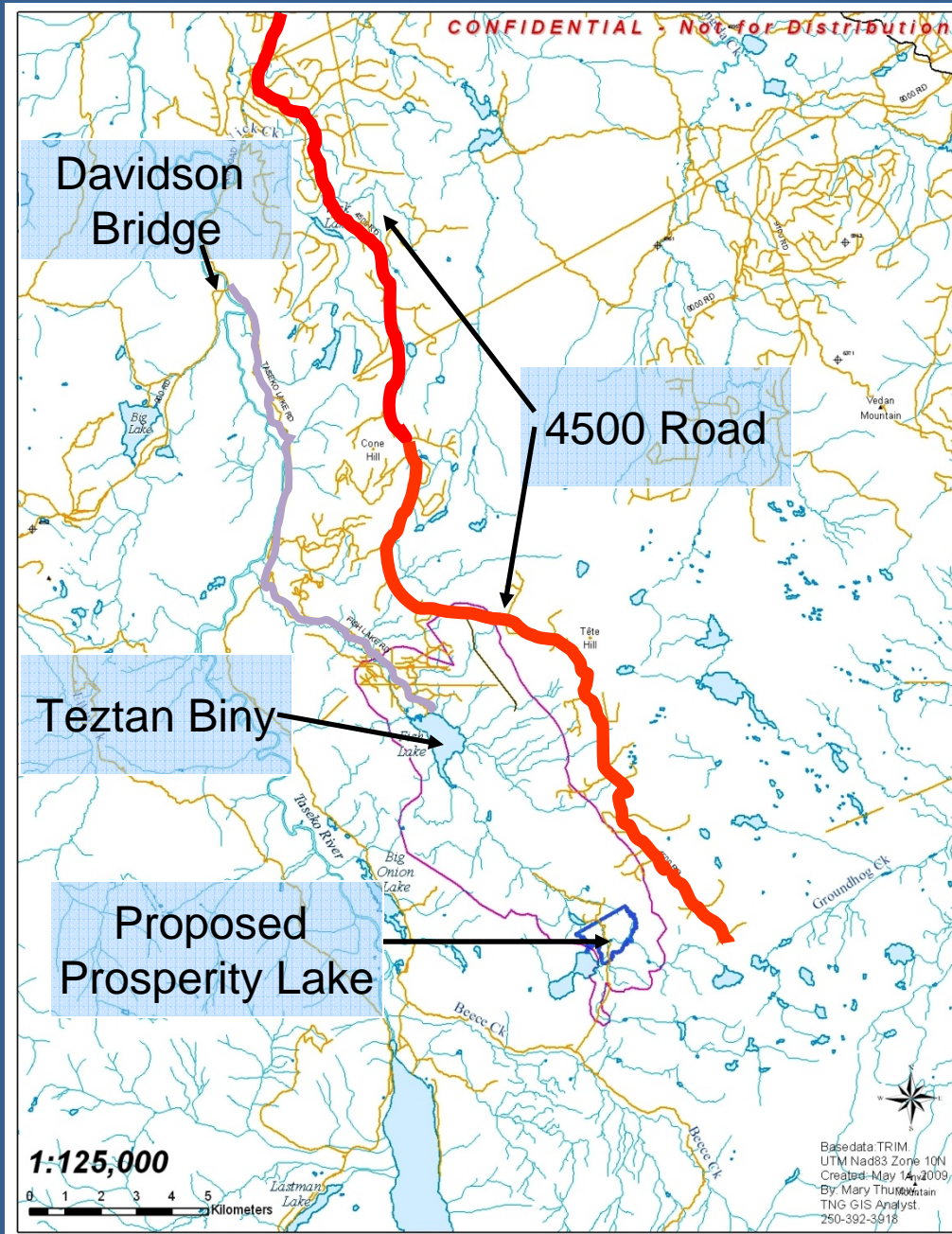
- Displacement & avoidance > higher harvesting costs;
- Decline in harvest effort > decline in income-in-kind
- Loss of faith (i.e. avoidance) or adverse effects on salmon would have a significant economic impact on families and all Tsilhqot'in communities.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH MINING

- **Extended shift rotation employment schedules are hard on individuals, families and the community at large;**
- **High paying mine jobs can be a double-edge sword;**

PROSPERITY LAKE WILL NOT MITIGATE THE LOSS OF THE TEZTAN BINY-Y'ANAH BINY FISHERY

- Prosperity Lake is less accessible;
- Fish Compensation Plan does not provide for same quantity of fish,
- Tsilhqot'in will not fish at Prosperity Lake:
 - artificial environment overlooking tailings pond and mine
 - reminder of what's been lost
 - no cultural importance, no history, no connection
- The Teztan Biny-Y'annah Biny fishery is more than fishing, Prosperity Lake does not replace important components of the fishery:
 - cultural transmission and teaching environment
 - spiritual and social activities associated with fishing experience
 - sense of connection, history and identity



Xeni Gwet'in to Teztan Biny using "purple" route is approximately 57 km. one way.

Xeni Gwet'in to Proposed Prosperity Lake using 4500 Road route is approximately 77 km. one way.

LOSS OF NABAS CENTRAL AS TRADITIONAL USE AREA CANNOT BE MITIGATED

- Taseko's position is that there will be no or minimal effect on traditional use is not accurate.
- Taseko's suggestion that Tsilhqot'in people mitigate their outright alienation from Nabas Central by simply going elsewhere has not been demonstrated to be feasible;
- Taseko has not adequately explained how they will mitigate the loss of grazing area;
- The Tsilhqot'in population is increasing and they will need more land and resources in the future. All intact land areas are critical now and for the future.

DESTRUCTION/DESECRATION OF ANCESTRAL, SPIRITUAL AND SACRED PLACES/VALUES AT NABAS CENTRAL CANNOT BE MITIGATED

- Disturbance/Relocation of burial sites, if they can be located, is not an acceptable practice;
- Disturbance/Removal of archaeological artifacts is not acceptable;
- Destruction of landscape and sites considered sacred or spiritual cannot be mitigated;
- Destruction of area of historic and ancestral connection cannot be mitigated.

AVOIDANCE OF GREATER NABAS LIKELY CANNOT BE MITIGATED

- **Tsilhqot'in have strong and wide-spread views and concerns about mining and contaminants;**
- **Tsilhqot'in have deep rooted distrust in government and industry;**
- **Health Canada's recommendation that Taseko, in collaboration with the Tsilhqot'in, conduct a food consumption survey to evaluate and monitor contaminant risk, is likely not feasible;**

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- The loss of Nabas Central will be a significant cultural effect;
- Loss of the Teztan-Y'anah Biny Fishery is significant, but the severity is uncertain;
- Displacement from Nabas Central is a significant impact; but the severity is uncertain;
- Adverse impacts on the salmon fishery would have significant cultural and economic effects on traditional use.
- The Tsilhqot'in will bear the brunt of the adverse impacts which purported benefits may not justify.