Appendix 25-A

Ethnographic Overview Report

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Pretium Resources Inc.

BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
Ethnographic Overview Report

PRETIVM

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BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW REPORT

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Prepared for:

Pretium Resources Inc.

Prepared by:

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This report provides an ethnographic overview of Aboriginal groups with traditional territory around or near the proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project (the Project).The purpose of this report is to contribute to an understanding of traditional knowledge and traditional use of the area by Aboriginal groups and how it relates to their interests and concerns regarding the Project.

This study consisted of a literature review of available ethnographic and ethnohistorical information for an Ethnographic Overview Study Area (the Study Area), defined as the headwater regions of the Stikine, Nass and Skeena river drainages, an area known locally as the "Groundhog Country", which is the focus of overlapping claims of the Aboriginal groups discussed in this report.

Topics for information collection included cultural setting (history, social organization, family and kinship, spiritualism and ceremony, and language use), economic life, and subsistence strategies. The analysis included studying pre-contact culture development and culture-historic patterns that occurred in northwest British Columba (BC) through to the modern period.

Aboriginal groups closest to the Project include the Skii km Lax Ha, Nisga'a Nation, Gitanyow First Nation, Gitxsan Nation, and Tahltan Nation. Skii km Lax Ha is recognized by Canada and BC as a *wilp* or house of the Gitxsan Nation, though they have repeatedly asserted separate nationhood and ethnicity, being descended from the Tsetsaut ethnographic group. Nisga'a Nation signed a Treaty with Canada and BC in 1998, and the Gitxsan and Gitanyow are currently negotiating with Canada and BC under the BC Treaty Process. The Tahltan Nation is working to build relationships with the federal and provincial governments outside of the treaty process.

The five Aboriginal groups discussed in this report are descended from the Tsetsaut, Tsimshian, and Tahltan ethnolinguistic groups. While fundamentally different in ethnic identity and having mutually unintelligible languages, similar social and cultural patterns were observed in the Tsetsaut, Tsimshian, and Tahltan, which evolved out of the necessity to sustain a lifestyle in the upper Nass, Skeena, and Stikine river drainages that demanded specific adaptations to climate, resource availability, the annual return of salmon and oolichan, and the movement of large game such as moose and caribou.

Salmon fishing was central to the economic life of groups inhabiting the coast and inland portions of northwest BC, and allowed permanent village sites to be erected at important fishing spots. Hunting and trapping were also important in the fall and winter months. Alhough the most important land animal to the subsistence economy in the past was caribou, they have moved out of the area and have been replaced by moose. Oher large game, such as mountain goat and grizzly bear, were also prized. Hoary marmot or "groundhog" was particularly abundant and harvested in great numbers in the Study Area, hence the reason it is locally known as the "Groundhog Country". Plant and berry gathering was and is an important activity among these Aboriginal groups, and a number of different species are utilized for subsistence, utilitarian, and medicinal purposes.

It should be noted that maps of traditional territories provide a snapshot and a singular perspective that may conceal or hide centuries of movement, migration, intercultural conflict, intermarriage, and alliances. As shown through a review of oral and written history, this dynamism resulted in the formation of the Gitanyow people, the movement and assimilation of the western branch of the Tsetsaut into Nisga'a territory and culture, and the absorption of the eastern branch of the Tsetsaut into neighbouring Tahltan and Gitxsan villages. In other words, the traditional territory of each group has fluctuated over time in response to a variety of influences

Acknowledgements

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Acknowledgements

This report was produced for Pretium Resources Inc. by Rescan Environmental Services Ltd. It was written by Maurice DePaoli (B.A.) and edited by Andrew Robinson (M.Sc.) and Robin Sydneysmith (Ph.D). Greg Norton (M.Sc.) was the project manager and Nicole Bishop (B.Sc.) the project coordinator. Graphics production was coordinated by Francine Alford (B.F.A.), GIS production was coordinated by Pieter van Leuzen (M.Sc.) and report production was coordinated by Robert Tarbuck (BTECH). Any conclusions expressed in this report are Rescan's and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Aboriginal groups included herein. Rescan accepts responsibility for the content of the report.

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BRUCEJACK GOLD MINE PROJECT
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Glossary and Abbreviations

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.

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Affinal	Related by marriage (i.e., in-laws)
Avunculocal	In terms of residence after marriage, the village of the husband's mother's brother.
BC	British Columbia
BC EAO	British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office
Cambium	A layer of delicate tissue between the inner bark and wood of a tree. The cambium of some trees is edible.
Cordilleran	Refers to the northern half of interior British Columbia, the western edge of northern Alberta, and the District of Mackenzie of the Northwest Territories. The dominant geographic feature of the Cordillera is the Rocky Mountains. The Tahltan and Tsetsaut are considered Cordilleran Subarctic ethnographic groups.
Crest	An image or privilege (acquired by one's ancestors during encounters with supernatural beings) that are owned as property by a house and ceremonially displayed by its members.
Cross-cousin	A cousin who is the child of one's mother's brother or one's father's sister
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
EA	Environmental Assessment
Exogamous	In terms of marriage, outside a specific local group or similar social unit
FPHLCC	First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council
FSC	Food, Social and Ceremonial
GFA	Gitanyow Fisheries Authority
GHCO	Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Office
Ha	Hectare(s)
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
km	kilometre
km^2	Square kilometres
Levirate	Upon the death of a man, the marriage of his widow to his brother
m	Metre(s)
BC MARR	BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
masl	Metres above sea level

Matrilineal	Ancestry traced through the mother's line
Moiety	One of two units in which an ethnographic group is divided on the basis of unilateral descent
NFA	Nisga'a Final Agreement
NLG	Nisga'a Lisims Government
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic missionary order
Polygyny	The practice of having more than one wife at one time.
Potlatch	An aboriginal ceremonial festival at which gifts are generally bestowed on the guests as a show of wealth or in recognition for witnessing or attesting to a particular event.
Pretivm	Pretium Resources Inc.
Proto-historic	The period in a culture immediately before its written history begins.
Rescan	Rescan Environmental Services Ltd.
Seabridge	Seabridge Gold Inc.
Sororate	Upon the death of a woman, the marriage of her widower to her sister
Subarctic	In this report, refers to the cultures inhabiting the area immediately below the Arctic circle.
the Project	Pretivm's proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project
the Proponent	Pretium Resources Inc.
TCC	Tahltan Central Council
the Study Area	The Ethnographic Overview Study Area
THREAT	Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment Team
TK	Traditional Knowledge
Totem	A natural object or animate being, as an animal or bird, assumed as the emblem of a clan, family or group
TU	Traditional Use
WWI	World War I

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Pretium Resources Inc. (Pretivm) has engaged Rescan Environmental Services Ltd. (Rescan) to conduct environmental and social baseline studies to support an application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for Pretivm's proposed Brucejack Gold Mine Project (the Project). The Project is subject to an environmental assessment (EA) review under British Columbia's (BC's) *Environmental Assessment Act* (2002) and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (2012). This ethnographic overview has been prepared using desk-based research from publicly available information sources, including a detailed literature review.

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pretivm proposes to develop the Project as a 2,700 tonnes per day 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 Nation and Treaty Nations 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 Brucejack 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 treeline 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 m^3 of waste rock within Brucejack Lake.

Environmental baseline data was collected from Brucejack Lake and the surround 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 that have been continued by Pretivm, following its acquisition of the Project in 2010. The scope and scale of the recent environmental baseline programs have varied from 2009 to the present as the development plan for the Project has evolved.

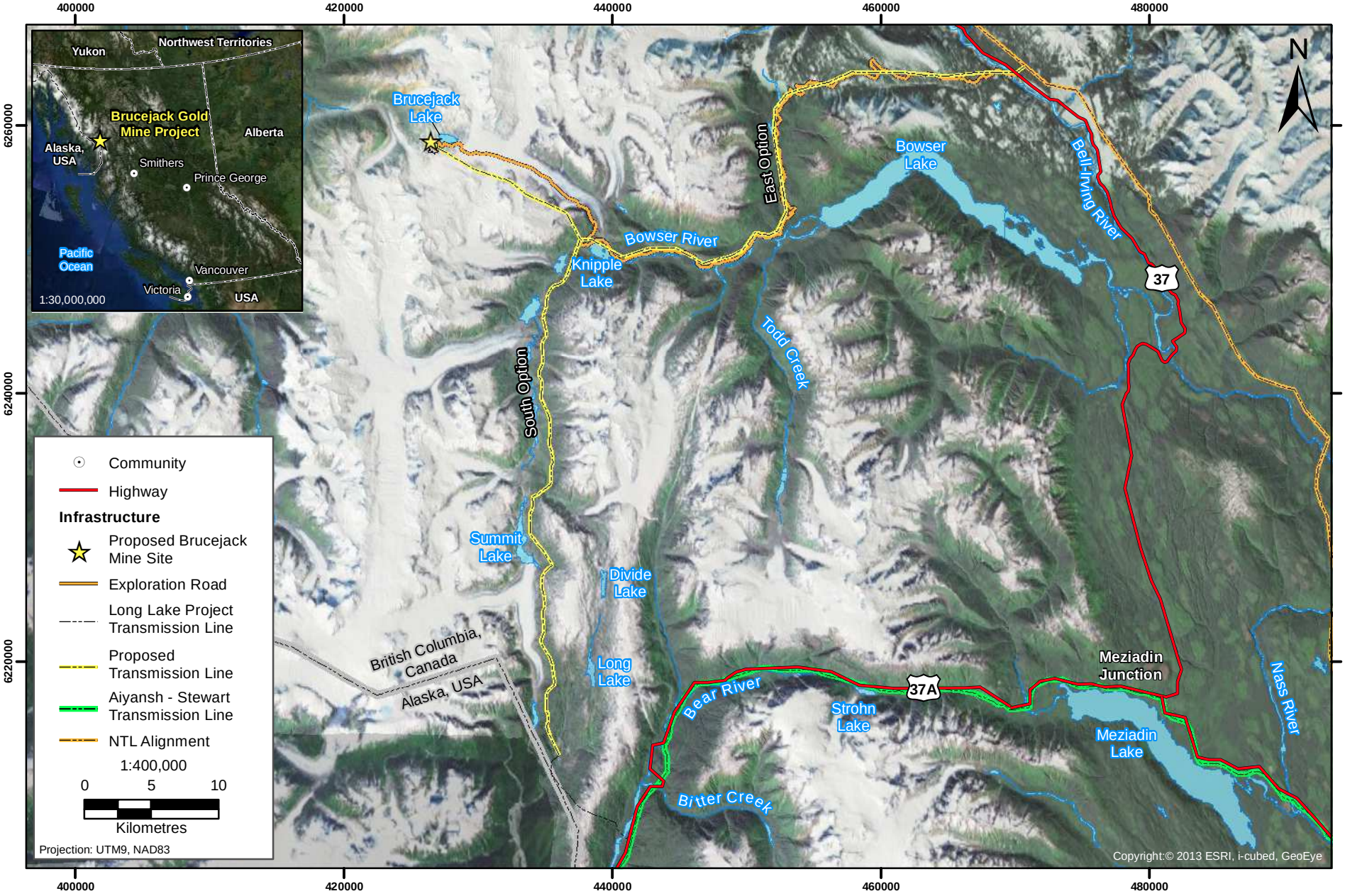

Figure 1.1-1

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Brucejack Gold Mine Project Overview

Figure 1.1-1

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2. Purpose

2. Purpose

The BC Environmental Assessment Office (BC EAO) requires a Proponent to identify and report on Aboriginal interests (BC EAO 2010a, 2010b) as part of the EA process. Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Use (TK/TU) studies can provide important information on Aboriginal interests and can elucidate technical, academic, and indigenous information about the traditional and contemporary use and knowledge of the Project and surrounding areas.

TK/TU information is used as a source of knowledge to inform all dimensions of an EA and project design. TK/TU data help to:

- inform all baseline studies, including design and historical information;
- identify or strengthen rationale for Valued Components;
- document and classify plant, fish, and animal species and their behaviours;
- understand Aboriginal values associated with the environment surrounding the Project;
- document and understand the traditional and cultural uses of the local environment;
- identify areas that will be lost or patterns that will be changed;
- acknowledge and address traditional and cultural uses and activities in the Proponent's Environmental Assessment Certificate application;
- identify potential environmental and social effects and determine significance levels;
- strengthen mitigation measures; and
- lead to improved project design.

3. Methodology

3. Methodology

3.1 APPROACH

The overall approach for this study involved a literature review and an analysis of available ethnographic and ethnohistorical information for an Ethnographic Overview Study Area (the Study Area). Primary data in the form of locations of TK/TU sites and areas, obtained from the Skii km Lax Ha through formal interview and mapping sessions, are presented in a separate TK/TU report (Rescan 2013a).

3.2 STUDY AREA

A distinct Study Area was defined for this study. The Study Area is defined as the headwater regions of the Skeena, Nass, and Stikine Rivers in northwest BC (Figure 3.2-1), also known among Aboriginal groups as the "Groundhog Country". The Study Area was created based on a reading and analysis of ethnohistorical events (see Section 4.6) and provides insight into an area claimed in part, or in whole, by the Aboriginal groups discussed in this report.

3.3 DATA SOURCES

3.3.1 Desktop Ethnographic Information

A literature review (including hard-copy and internet sources) was conducted to identify relevant ethnographic information. Topics for information collection included cultural setting (history, social organization, family and kinship, spiritualism and ceremony, and language use), traditional economy, and subsistence strategies. 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 BC through to the modern period. Based on the results of the review, an analysis and synthesis of the available ethnographic information was prepared (Section 4).

Pretivm has an information sharing agreement with Seabridge Gold Inc. (Seabridge), which allows Rescan to use ethnographic information previously collected for Seabridge's KSM Project in this report. Publically available EA documents produced for other projects in northwest BC, such as the Northwest Transmission Line and Kitsault projects, were also reviewed for information relevant to the Aboriginal communities.

Ethnographic studies have been produced for the northwest part of BC, but are limited in the vicinity of the Project. Adrien Morice, a missionary with the Catholic Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), wrote about the history and Aboriginal cultures of northern BC (Morice 1895, 1905). Franz Boas worked with Tsimshian people in Victoria in 1886 and on the Nass River in 1894, and between 1903 and 1914 he corresponded with Henry Tate, a Port Simpson Tsimshian, who sent him a large body of texts (Boas 1895a, 1916). William Beynon, a resident of Port Simpson, forwarded extensive collections of notes to Boas (some of these are in the Columbia University Library, New York, and others are in the Library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia). Edward Sapir (1915, 1920) published information on Nisga'a social organization from chiefs who visited the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. Viola Garfield worked extensively with William Beynon and published a detailed investigation of Tsimshian social organization (Garfield 1939). Marius Barbeau was an active Tsimshian scholar for a number of years. He also worked with William Beynon, and his collection of unpublished field notes is in the archives of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa (Barbeau 1910-1969). Gitxsan and Tsimshian

myths and narratives were published by Barbeau (1929, 1950, 1958); and two unpublished manuscripts by Barbeau and Beynon (1950a, 1950b) contain a wealth of information on the proto-history of the Study Area. More modern works on the Tsimshian include McNeary (1976), Seguin (1984), Miller and Eastman (1984), and Miller (1997). Halpin and Seguin (1990) summarized Coastal and Southern Tsimshian, as well as Nisga'a and Gitxsan, cultural attributes. Wilson Duff (1959) produced an ethnography of the Gitanyow. Sterritt et al. (1998b) completed an ethnographic and historic overview of the upper Nass River watershed using oral histories as interpreted primarily by the Gitxsan and Gitanyow peoples.

Ethnographic observations of the Tahltan have been published by Dawson (1889), Emmons (1911), Teit (1906; 1909, 1914, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1956), MacLachlan (1957, 1981), Albright (1984), Friesen (1985), Adlam (1985), and McIlwraith (2007). Franz Boas conducted fieldwork among the few remaining Tsetsaut living at Kincolith in 1894 (Boas 1895b, 1896, 1897). Notes on the Tsetsaut are also found in Emmons (1911), Teit (1915), Duff (1981), and Dangeli (1999).

Aboriginal groups have recently taken to publishing their own social and ethnographic accounts, as evidenced by Nisga'a Tribal Council (1992), Nishga Tribal Council and Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (1995), Derrick (1978), People of 'Ksan (1980), 'Ksan Book Builders (1977), School District 87 (n.d.), School District No. 92 (1996), and Iskut First Nation (2003).

3.3.2 Data Challenges and Limitations

Historical secondary ethnographic information from published sources has limitations and should not be considered conclusive or exhaustive, 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 Aboriginal groups.

Similarly, Aboriginal groups typically passed on 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 Aboriginal groups 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.

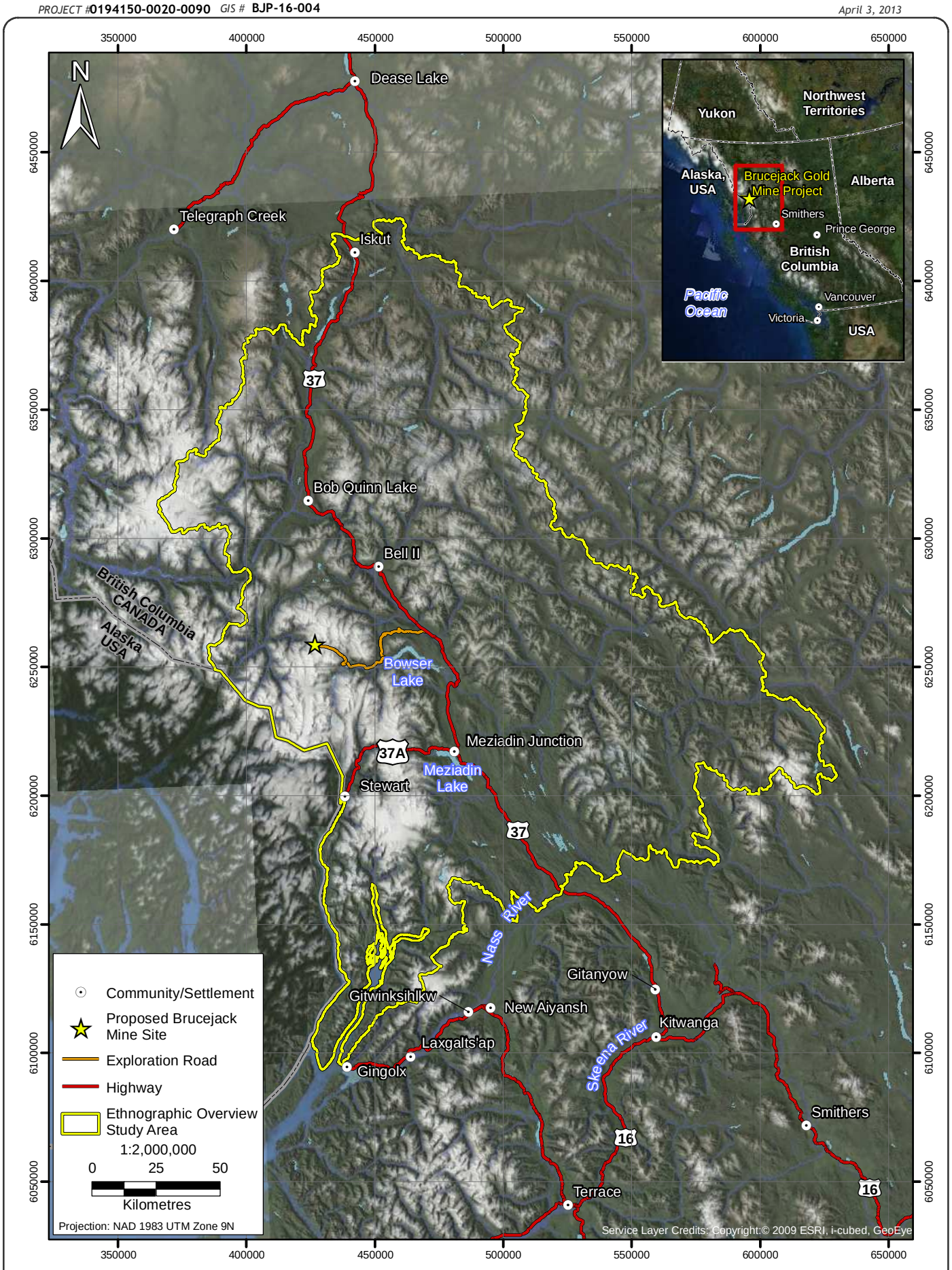

Figure 3.2-1

Ethnographic Overview Study Area

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4. Results

4. Results

4.1 OVERVIEW OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Aboriginal groups closest to the Project are the Skii km Lax Ha, Nisga'a Nation, Gitanyow First Nation, Gitxsan Nation, and Tahltan Nation. Additional contemporary information on these Aboriginal groups is included in the *Brucejack Gold Mine Project: Socio-economic Baseline Study* (Rescan 2013b).

4.1.1 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., 2013). Hazelton is approximately 208 km southeast of the Project (as the crow flies), and 71 km northwest of Smithers.

The Skii km Lax Ha assert separate nationhood and ethnicity, being descended from the Tsetsaut ethnographic group (see Section 4.3.1). They are not currently recognized by the Government of Canada as a distinct "band" as defined by the *Indian Act* (1985). Rather, they are considered both by the federal and provincial governments as a *wilp* ("house") of the larger Gitxsan Nation.

The Skii km Lax Ha understand their traditional territory to extend from the north side of Cranberry River in the south, to Ningunsaw Pass in the north. To the west it is bounded by the Unuk River, while the Groundhog Range lies on its eastern boundary (Figure 4.1-1). They refer to their entire territory as Laxwiiyiip.

4.1.2 Nisga'a Nation

Nisga'a Nation is part the Tsimshianic language family and occupies lands in the lower Nass River watershed. Nisga'a Nation comprises approximately 5,900 members (Table 4.1-1), over 2,000 (34%) of whom reside in one of the four Nisga'a villages of Gitlaxt'aamiks, Gitwinksilhkw, Laxgalts'ap, and Gingolx (AANDC 2012b; Statistics Canada 2012). Figure 4.1-2 shows the location of the Nisga'a villages in relation to the Project.

Table 4.1-1. Population of Nisga'a Villages, 2012

Village	Village Population	Total Registered Population
New Aiyansh	861	1,824
Gitwinksihlkw	184	393
Laxgalts'ap	569	1,740
Gingolx	408	1,973
TOTAL	**2,022**	**5,930**

Source: AANDC (2012b)

Nisga'a Final Agreement and Governance

Nisga'a Nation signed a Treaty with Canada and BC in 1998. Known as the Nisga'a Final Agreement (NFA), it came into effect on May 11, 2000. Key provisions include the transfer of 1,992 square kilometres (km^2) of Crown land to Nisga'a Nation (now known as Nisga'a Lands), and the protection of Nisga'a hunting, fishing, and plant resource gathering interests in the Nass Area (26,838 km^2) and Nass Wildlife Area (Figure 4.1-3; NLG, Province of BC, and Government of Canada 1998).

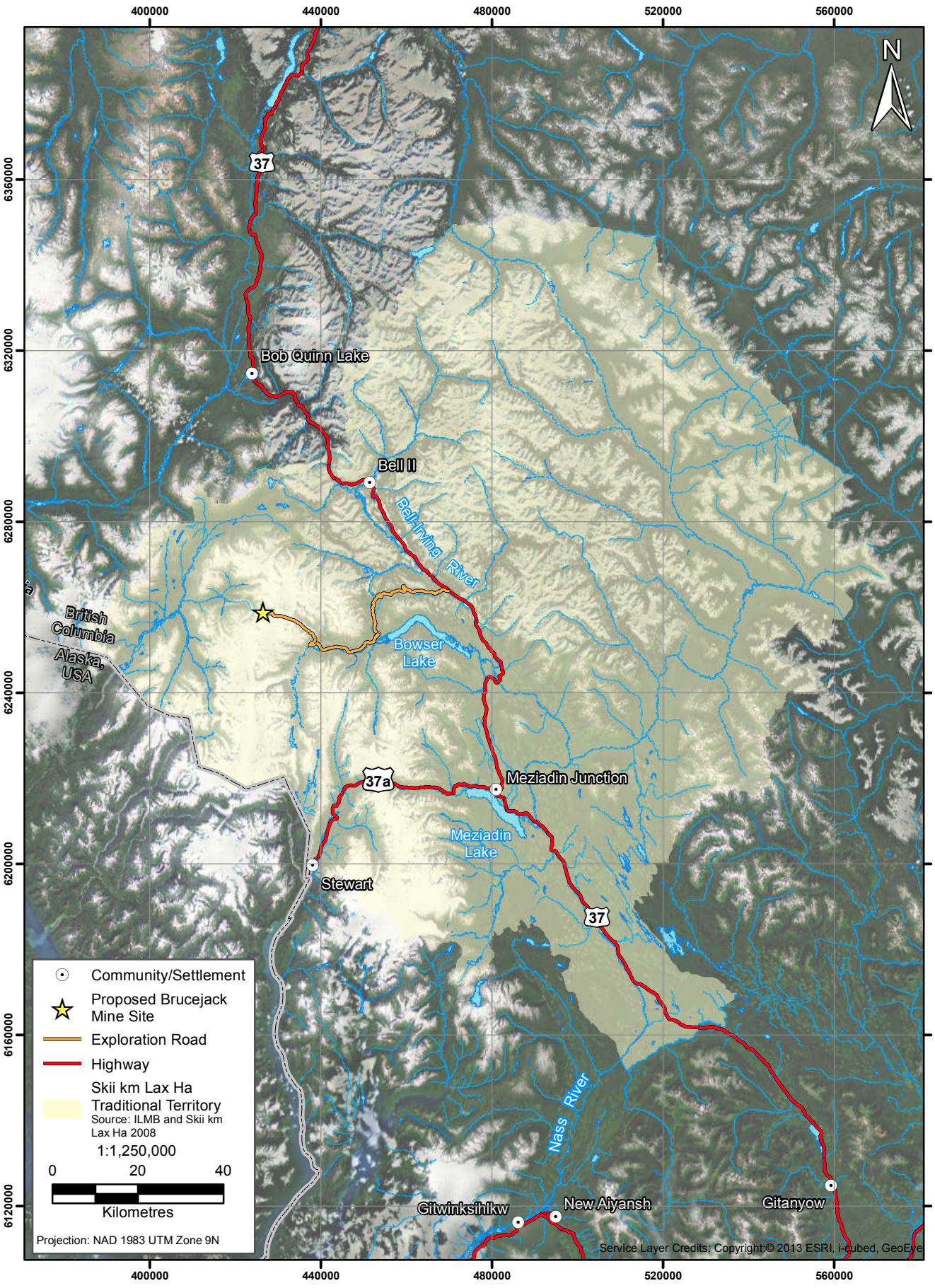

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Figure 4.1-1

Skii km Lax Ha Traditional Territory

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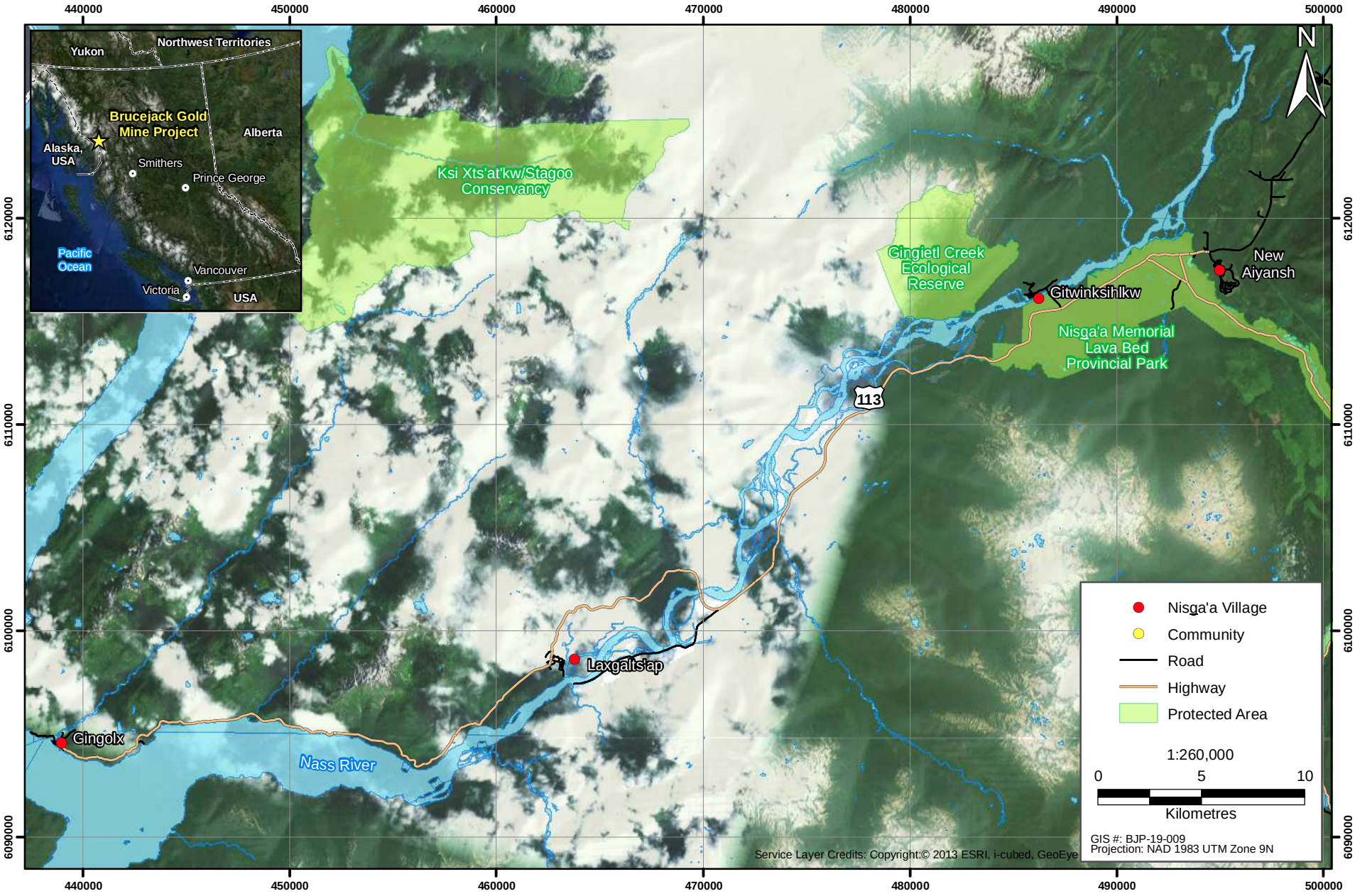

Figure 4.1-2

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Location of Nisga'a Villages

Figure 4.1-2

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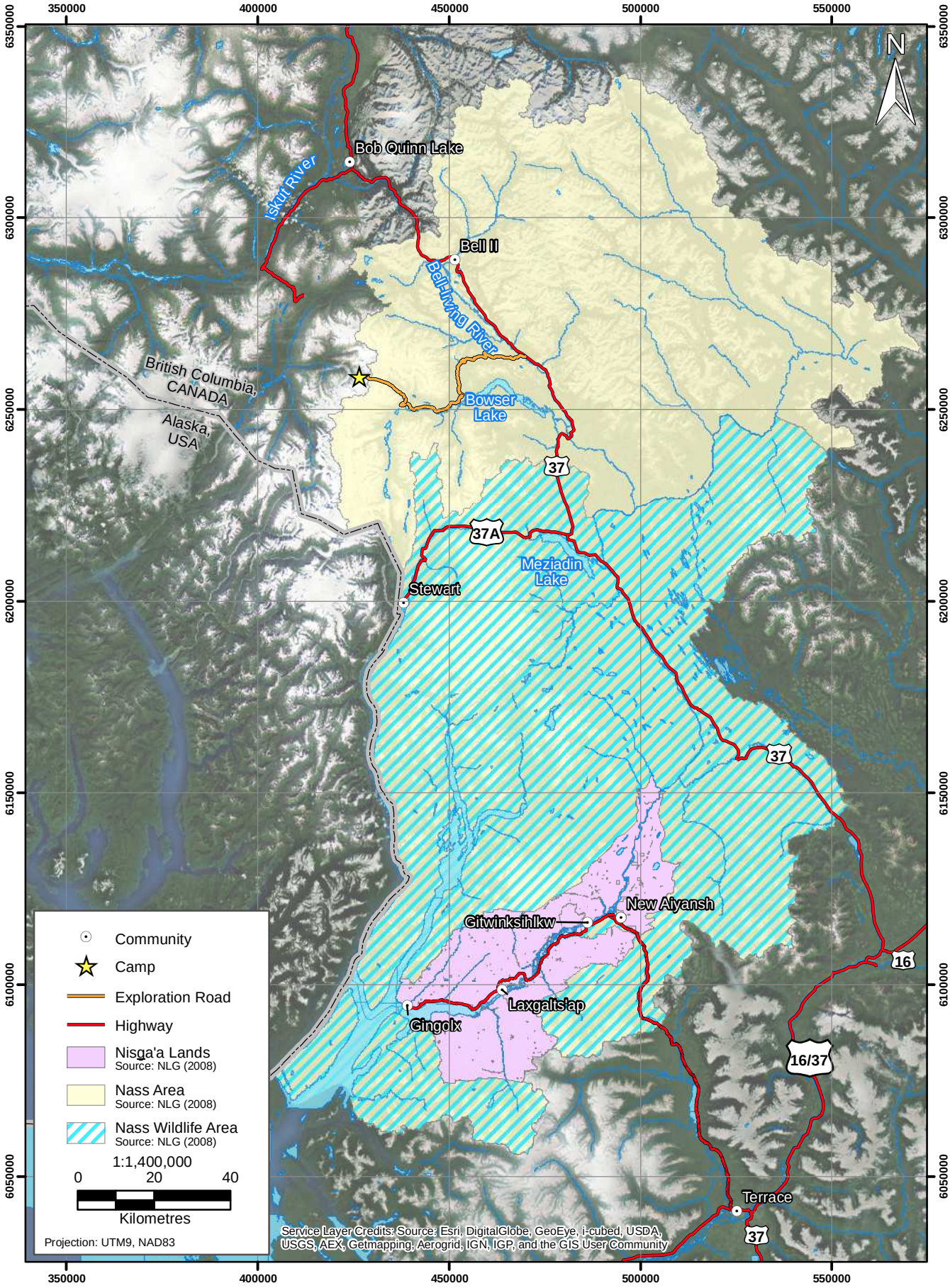

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Nisga'a Lands, the Nass Area, and the Nass Wildlife Area

Figure 4.1-3

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Nisga'a Nation is a self-governing body as stipulated in the NFA. Nisga'a Nation operates within the *Constitution Act* (1982) and its *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Nisga'a government consists of the Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) and the four Nisga'a village governments. The NLG comprises executive and legislative branches, as well as a Council of Elders. The NLG President, Chairperson, Secretary-Treasurer, and Chairperson of the Council of Elders are elected by Nisga'a citizens. Village government members are directly elected. The remaining members of the Council of Elders are appointed by NLG. The executive also includes one representative of each Nisga'a Urban Local, to represent Nisga'a citizens who do not live in the Nass Valley. The government's legislative assembly, Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a, is responsible for enacting laws within its jurisdiction (NLG 2002, n.d.-a).

Nisga'a people are governed by their traditional laws, customs, and practices known collectively as *Ayuukhl Nisga'a*, with guidance and interpretation by the Council of Elders (NLG 2002). The *Ayuukhl Nisga'a* covers areas of respect, education, chieftainship and matriarchy, property rights, death, marriage, divorce, conflict resolution, and trade (Nisga'a Tribal Council, Fiegehen, and Rose 1993).

Management of Fisheries and Non-timber Forest Products

The Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program, facilitated through the Joint Fisheries Management Committee, uses fish wheels on the Nass River for salmon monitoring, tagging, and data collection, and conducts stock assessments on a variety of species throughout the Nass Area. The Joint Fisheries Management Committee comprises representatives from Canada, BC, and NLG (NLG 2009).

Under the terms of the NFA, Canada and BC each contributed $5.9 million to support a Nisga'a commercial fishery (NLG, Province of BC, and Government of Canada 1998). Between the effective date of the NFA (2000) and 2009, approximately $6.7 million has entered the Nisga'a economy through the harvest of salmon (NLG 2009). Nisga'a Fisheries Ltd. oversees the harvest and sale of Nisga'a fish. It operates three landing sites on the Nass River, and is responsible for grading, counting, and weighing salmon for payment and overseeing the transport of salmon to a central depot located at the Nisga'a Fresh Fish Plant at Gitlaxt'aamiks (NLG n.d.-c).

Pine mushrooms are commercially harvested in many areas throughout Nisga'a Lands. NLG manages and regulates pine mushroom harvesting within Nisga'a Lands by requiring all Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a harvesters to apply for a permit (Avanti 2012). Lisims Forest Resources LP, a Nisga'a-owned corporation, is engaged in the harvest and sale of non-timber forest products, including pine mushrooms (NLG n.d.-b). In 2008, Nisga'a harvested 11,656 kg of mushrooms, which generated over $43,000 in revenue (NLG 2009).

4.1.3 Gitxsan Nation

Gitxsan Nation is part the Tsimshianic language family and occupies lands in the upper Skeena River watershed. Gitxsan *adaawk* (oral history) states that certain clan ancestors also settled in the north areas of the Nass watershed, near its headwaters and along the river valleys (Sterritt et al. 1998a). The Gitxsan assert that they have exercised Aboriginal rights and title in the Upper Nass and Upper Skeena watersheds since time immemorial (Gitxsan Chiefs' Office 2003).

Gitxsan traditional territory is approximately 33,000 km^2 (Figure 4.1-4). It spans from the mid-Skeena just north of Terrace to the upper reaches of both the Nass and Skeena rivers in the north, and from the Nechako Plateau in the east to the Bell-Irving River in the west. Today, there are five Gitxsan communities (Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax, Kispiox, and Glen Vowell). Other villages, such as Kisgaga'as (at Kisgegas IR) and Galdo'o (at Kuldoe IR 1), were abandoned in the 20th century, the residents of these villages becoming members of other Gitxsan communities (Sterritt et al. 1998a; see also Figure 4.1-5).

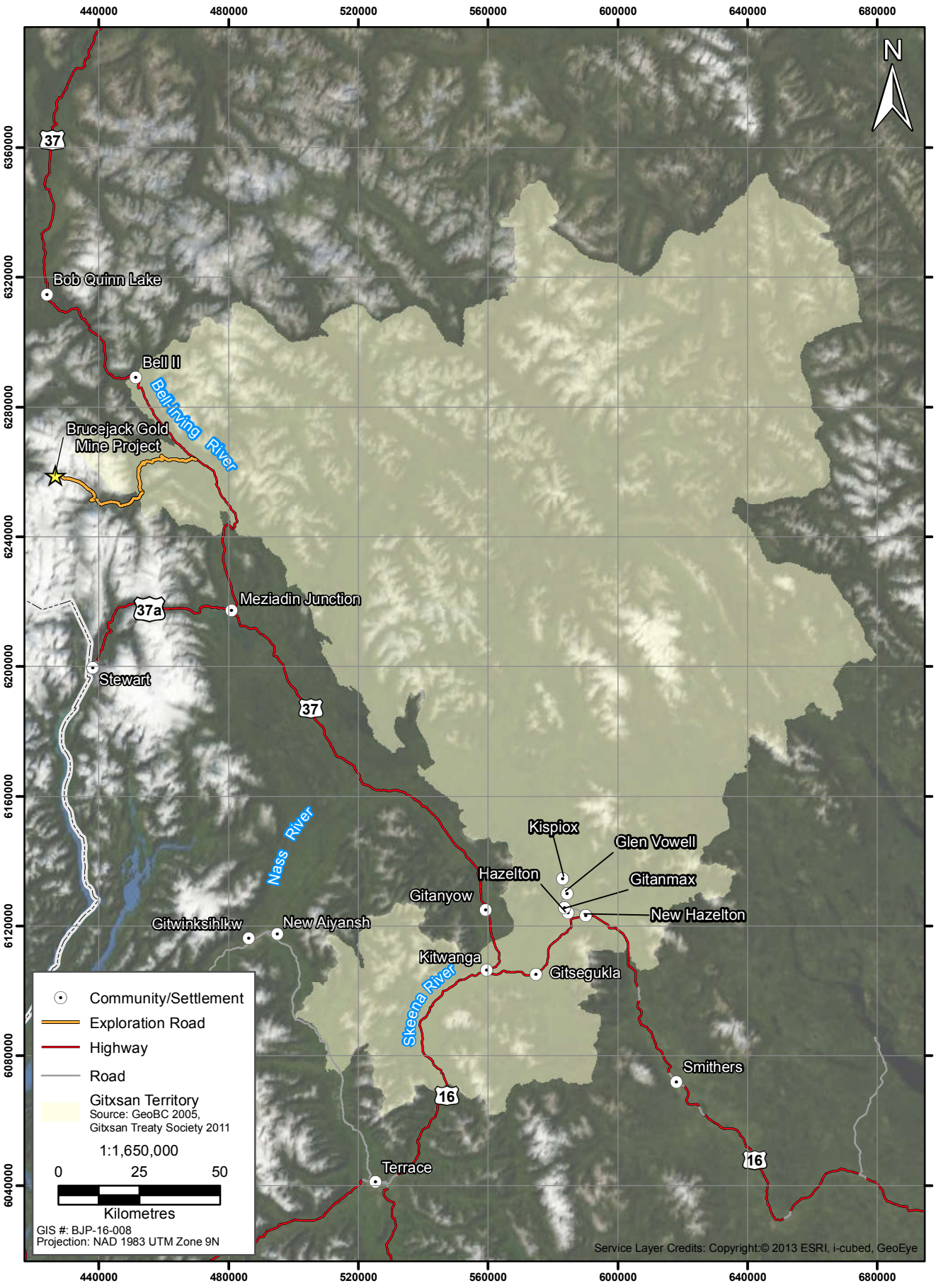

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Figure 4.1-4

Gitxsan Nation Traditional Territory

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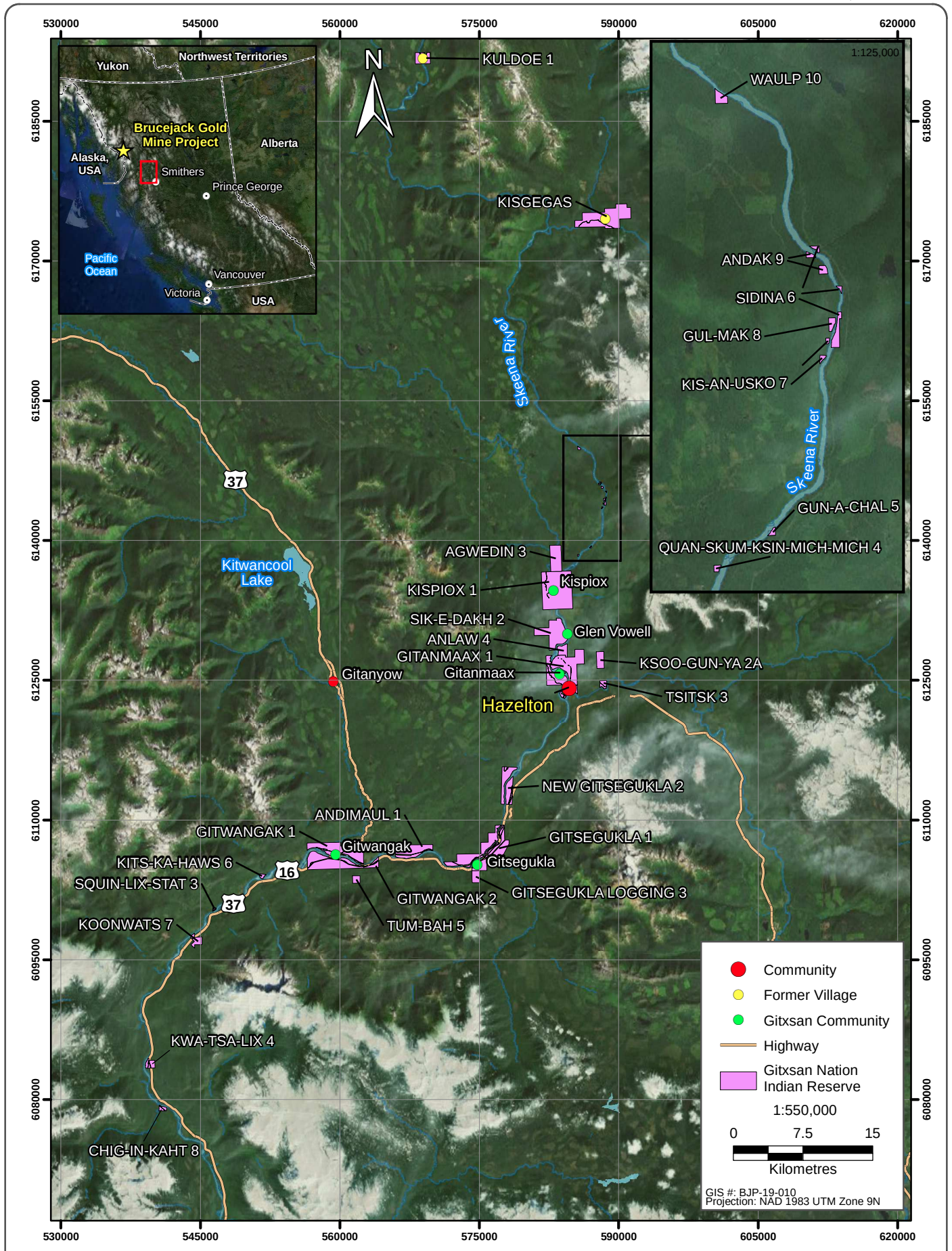

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Gitxsan Nation Indian Reserve Locations

Figure 4.1-5

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Location of Gitxsan Communities

The five separate communities of Gitxsan Nation—Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax, Kispiox, and Glen Vowell—are located in the upper Skeena River area, mostly clustered in close proximity to the Hazeltons. Each community has their own Indian reserves (Figure 4.1-5). The community of Gitwangak has eight reserves (Table 4.1-2), and the band has a registered population (on and off-reserve) of 1,216 (AANDC 2012a).

Table 4.1-2. Gitwangak Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Chig-in-Kaht	8	25.90	
Gitwangak	1	1,236.70	Primary reserve community location
Gitwangak	2	70.40	
Kits-ka-haws	6	22	
Koonwats	7	65.60	
Kwa-tsa-lix	4	79	
Squin-lix-stat	3	7.60	
Tum-bah	5	64.70	

Source: AANDC (2012b)

The Gitsegukla community has four reserves (Table 4.1-3), and the band has a registered population (on and off-reserve) of 956 (AANDC 2012a).

Table 4.1-3. Gitsegukla Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Andimaul	1	409.10	Populated reserve
Gitsegukla	1	1,025.50	Primary reserve community location
Gitsegukla Logging	3	87.80	
New Gitsegukla	2	408.10	

Source: AANDC (2012b); Stats Can (2012)

The Gitanmaax community has five reserves (Table 4.1-4), and the band has a registered population (on and off-reserve) of 2,252 (AANDC 2012a).

Table 4.1-4. Gitanmaax Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Anlaw	4	114.90	
Gitanmaax	1	1,084.60	Primary reserve community location
Kisgegas [Kisgaga'as]	n/a	977.30	Abandoned in 20th Century
Ksoo-gun-ya	2A	145.60	
Tsitsk	3	55.40	

Source: AANDC (2012b); Sterritt et al. (1998b)

The Glen Vowell community resides on one reserve (Table 4.1-5), and the band has a registered population (on and off-reserve) of 400 (AANDC 2012a).

Table 4.1-5. Glen Vowell Reserve

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Sik-e-dakh	2	632.70	Primary reserve community location

Source: AANDC (2012b)

Finally, the community of Kispiox includes ten reserves (Table 4.1-6) with a registered population (on and off-reserve) of 1,571 (AANDC 2012a).

Table 4.1-6. Kispiox Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Agwedin	3	313.70	
Andak	9	4	
Gul-mak	8	6.10	
Gun-a-chal	5	2	
Kis-an-usko	7	2.80	
Kispiox	1	1,142.30	Primary reserve community location
Kuldoe [Galdo'o]	1	180.50	Abandoned in 20th Century
Quan-skum-ksin-mich-mich	4	2.20	
Sidina	6	13.60	
Waulp	10	8	

Source: AANDC (2012b); Sterritt et al. (1998b)

Governance

Gitxsan governance is based on the *wilp* ("house") system (see Section 4.3.2.1 for more details). As of 2012, there were reported to be 64 *huwilp* within the Gitxsan Nation (Canadian Press 2012); however, it has varied in the past between 45 and 65 *huwilp* (Gitxsan Nation n.d.). All houses of the Gitxsan belong to one of four clans (see Section 4.3.2.3 for more details). Each Gitxsan member belongs to a *wilp* that has a traditional territory within the broader Gitxsan territory. The *wilp* is responsible for managing lands and resources within its own territory. Each *wilp* is led by a hereditary chief.

The Gitxsan communities follow the *Indian Act* (1985) electoral system. Each of the five Gitxsan bands is governed by a chief and councillors who are elected every two years. Each band office, as opposed to the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs' Office, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Indian reserves and acts as an agent of the federal Crown (AANDC 2012b).

The Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs' Office is an instrument of the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs, and acts as a spokesperson in matters dealing with resource management. For practical reasons, it is a centralized authority with which federal, provincial, regional, and municipal governments engage, as well as companies involved in resource development through the EA process. The Gitxsan Treaty Society was created under the *Society Act* (1996) of BC to administer treaty funds and to negotiate a Final Agreement with Canada and BC on behalf of the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs. In 2012, the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs had renewed the mandate of the Gitxsan Treaty Society to "support the Simgiigyet [chiefs] and the Gitxsan people in their efforts to advocate for Gitxsan aboriginal rights in treaty negotiations and other forms of reconciliation with the Crown" (Gitxsan Chiefs' Office 2012).

Fisheries and Watershed Management

The Gitxsan have had a Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans since the early 1990s (J. Steward, Pers. Comm., 2012). This Agreement provides for the involvement of the Gitxsan in the management, protection, and enhancement of fisheries resources and fish habitat along the Skeena River. The Agreement also outlines the provisions and process for a Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) Fishery[1] each season, and is supported by the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy[2] of the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Provisions in the Agreement stipulate how many fish (of each species) the Gitxsan are allowed to fish per year, as well as the creation of a Fishing Plan that sets dates and times when fishing can occur and the waters in which the Gitxsan may fish. Salmon or other fish caught through the FSC Fishery may not be sold, traded, or bartered. DFO provides the Gitxsan with a Communal Licence to catch the species and quantity of fish set out in the Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement. The Gitxsan designate who is allowed to fish under the Communal Licence and issue designation cards to that effect. They are also responsible for monitoring and enforcing fishery provisions and for reporting harvest data to DFO. DFO, through this agreement, also provides financial assistance to the Gitxsan to conduct fisheries management activities.

Since approximately 2007, the Gitxsan have also been provided a commercial fish allocation through a demonstration fishery, approved by DFO under an Aboriginal Communal Sockeye Salmon Fishing Licence.The 2012 commercial allocation of salmon for the Gitxsan was approximately 60,000, and they harvested all but 5,000 of it, the under-fishing caused by the a late fishing season on the Skeena River (J. Steward, Pers. Comm. 2012).

The Gitksan Watershed Authorities, established in 1992 as the Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Watershed Authorities, manages fisheries to ensure strong salmon returns to Gitxsan territories. Co-management is being attempted with DFO, primarily in the Skeena River watershed. Issues addressed in the co-management process have included power-sharing, differentiation between commercial and food fisheries, and enforcement. The Gitksan Watershed Authorities has control over collection of Aboriginal fishery and stock data.

Gitxsan traditional territory overlaps a total of nine watersheds. Several Gitxsan *huwilp* are involved in sustainable planning efforts for these watersheds, which incorporate employment for Gitxsan people. An overall goal is to develop plans for each watershed that will incorporate considerations with respect to Aboriginal title, contribute to capacity building, and enhance economic conditions (Gwaans 2007; Gitxsan Chiefs' Office 2010).

4.1.4 Gitanyow First Nation

Gitanyow First Nation is part the Tsimshianic language family and occupies lands in the upper Nass, Cranberry, and Kitwanga river valleys. Gitanyow traditional territory encompasses 6,285 km^2 between Kitwanga Junction in the south and Bowser Lake in the north (BCTC 1993; Sterrit et al. 1998; GHCO 2007, 2008; BC MARR n.d.-a; Figure 4.1-6).

[1] As opposed to a commercial fishery, in which fish can be sold, bartered or traded.

[2] The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, in response to the 1990 Supreme Court of Canada ruling on the *Sparrow* case (that Aboriginal groups had the right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes), was created to provide stable fishery management in areas of Canada where land claims settlements have not already put a fisheries management regime in place. The objectives of the AFS are to provide a framework for the management of Aboriginal FSC fisheries, provide Aboriginal groups with the opportunity to participate in the management of fisheries, and to contribute to Aboriginal economic self-sufficiency, among others.

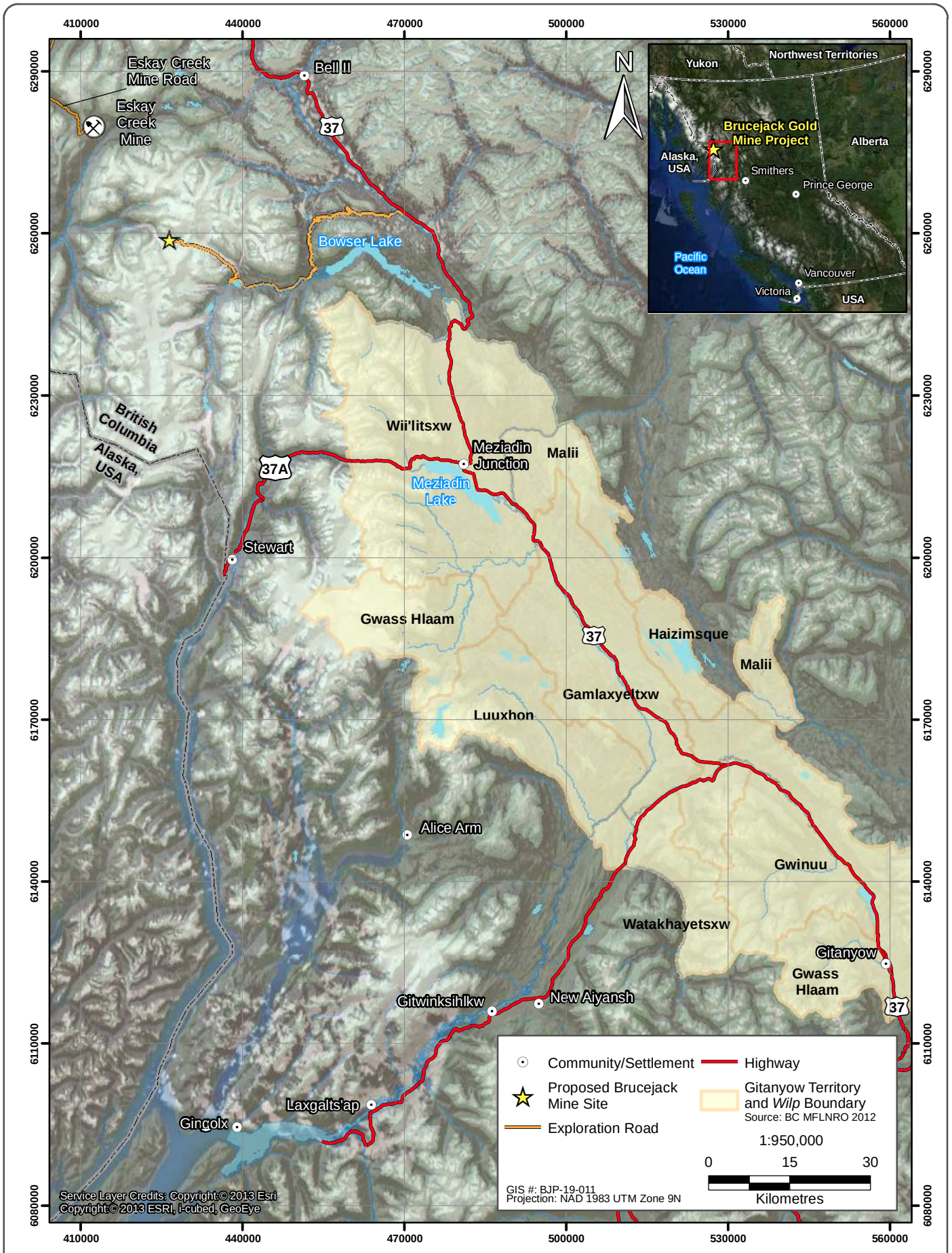

Figure 4.1-6

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Gitanyow First Nation Traditional Territory

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The Gitanyow (formerly known as Kitwancool) trace their cultural lineage closely through Gitxsan Nation and attribute much of their culture, language, and social structure to a shared heritage within the upper Nass region. They have, however, remained independent of the Gitxsan, and as early as the fur trade, Gitanyow *huwilp* dealt with issues of territorial boundaries and rights separately from the Gitxsan Nation (Sterritt et al. 1998b). Despite this separation, the Gitanyow were politically associated with Gitxsan Nation until 1993, when they officially declared themselves a separate group and began pursing treaty negotiations independently. Gitanyow *huwilp* still maintain close ties with Gitxsan communities (GHCO 2008).

Gitanyow Location

The primary Gitanyow reserve community (Gitanyow IR 1) is 463.1 ha, located on Highway 37 approximately 140 km northeast of Terrace (Figure 4.1-7). There are three reserves in total (Gitanyow IR 1, IR 1A and IR 1B) amounting to 850.4 ha (MARR n.d.). There are 799 registered members on and off reserve (AANDC 2012b); however, the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Office (GHCO) indicates that the figure may be closer to 1,200 members (GHCO 2007).

Governance

Gitanyow social organization is based on the *wilp* system. There are eight houses under two clans. Each Gitanyow member belongs to a *wilp* that has a traditional territory within the broader Gitanyow territory. The *wilp* is responsible for managing lands and resources within its own territory. Each *wilp* is led by a hereditary chief.

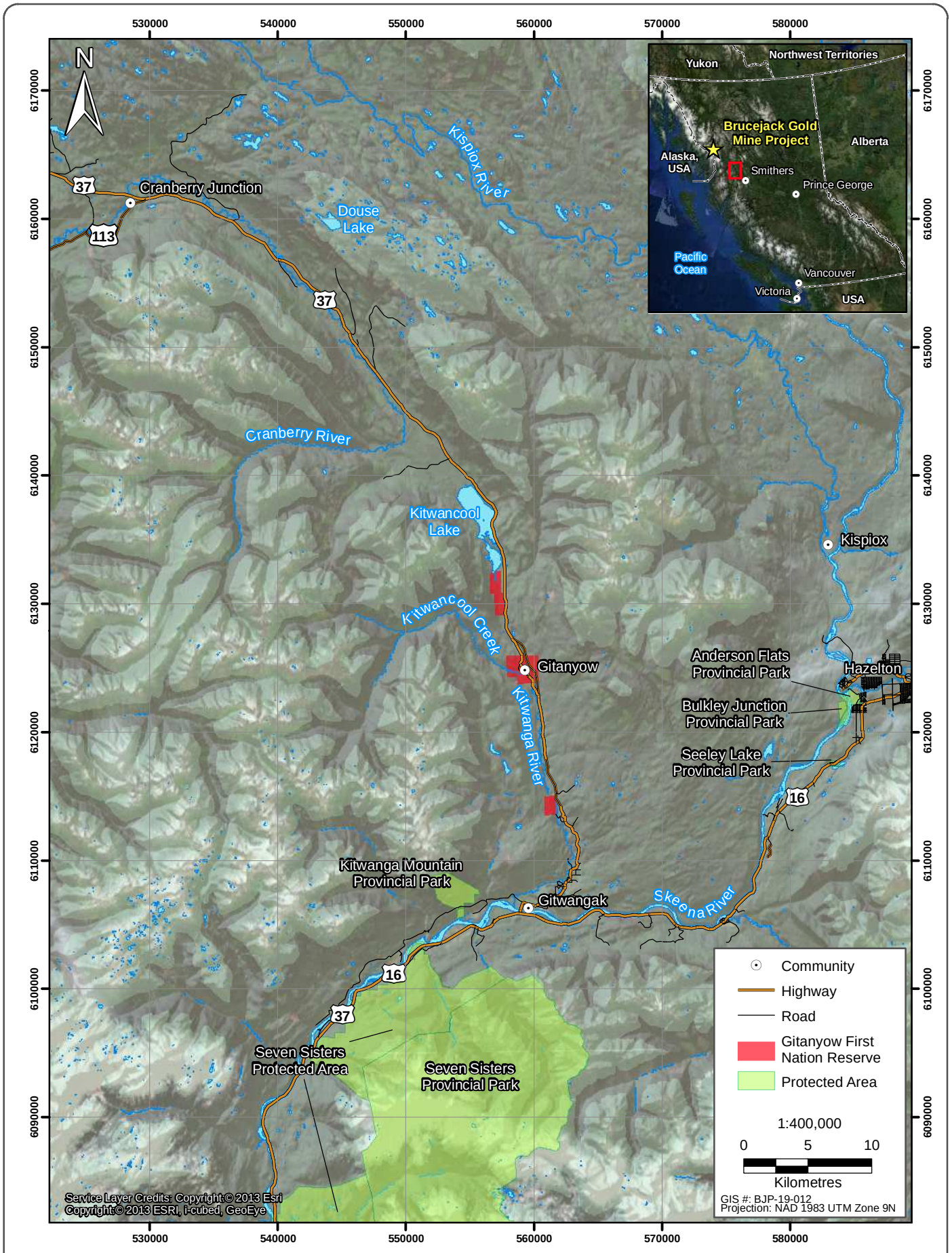
The GHCO acts as the governing body for the Gitanyow people. The GHCO upholds Gitanyow *ayookxw* law and promotes the involvement of *huwilp* in conservation, management, and sustainable development of natural resources within their territories (Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs n.d.). The GHCO has eight chiefs representing each Gitanyow *wilp*.

Gitanyow Band is a section 11 Band under the *Indian Act (1985)*. This means they use the *Indian Act (1985)* electoral system. The residential community at Gitanyow IR 1 is governed by a chief and seven councillors who are elected every two years. Gitanyow Band is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Indian reserve and acts as an agent of the federal Crown.

Fisheries Agreements and Resource Management

A Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement between the Gitanyow and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was signed on May 21, 1999. It provides the involvement of the Gitanyow in the management, protection, and enhancement of fisheries resources and fish habitat in the area. The Agreement also outlines the provisions and process for an FSC Fishery each season (see Section 4.1.3 for further details of an FSC fishery).

The Gitanyow began negotiations with DFO in 2005 to secure an economic allocation of salmon on the Nass River in their traditional territory for the Gitanyow *huwilp*. In 2009 an agreement was reached between the two parties. That same year, a fishing plan was developed and a small demonstration fishery was approved by DFO under an Aboriginal Communal Sockeye Salmon Fishing Licence (GFA 2012). The Gitanyow have obtained commercial allocations of salmon since 2009, and in 2012 they acquired offshore commercial fishing licences to use in the Meziadian River. With these additional licences, the Gitanyow estimated their salmon allocation would increase to as much as 10,000 or 12,000 in 2012 (M. Cleveland, Pers. Comm., 2012).



PRETIVM

Gitanyow First Nation Indian Reserve Location

Figure 4.1-7

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The Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) is run by the GHCO as a non-profit society that administers and implements the FSC Fishery as stipulated under the Agreement (GFA 2012), as well as the economic fishery allocation. The GFA also operates the Kitwanga River Salmon Enumeration Facility, which creates type and species counts of migrating salmon along the Kitwanga River. Spawning ground restoration and enhancement programs were also conducted by the organization and were completed in 2006.

In March 2012, the Gitanyow huwilp signed a Recognition and Reconciliation Agreement with the BC government, which provides a framework for continued reconciliation to address socio-economic, resource management, and conservation issues through better land use planning in Gitanyow traditional territory (BC MARR n.d.-a). The agreement provides funding for strategic planning and the implementation of a number of socio-economic initiatives and resource development plans as well as for the establishment of a co-management protected areas zone within the Hanna-Tintina watershed.

4.1.5 Tahltan Nation

The Tahltan are part of the Athapaskan language family, centred on the Stikine River in northwest BC. They are composed of two bands, The Tahltan Indian Band and the Iskut First Nation. The Tahltan Indian Band is more populous than the Iskut First Nation and had a total registered population in July 2012 of 1,782 (AANDC 2012a). The Iskut First Nation discontinued the provision of information to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) in December 2010, when they reported 705 band members (BC MARR n.d.-b). A census conducted by Tahltan Nation reported 2,577 people of Tahltan ancestry as of June 30, 2011 (TCC 2012).

Tahltan Nation traditional territory covers an area of approximately 93,500 km^2 that stretches from the BC-Alaska border in the west to the Stikine Plateau in the east, and from the BC-Yukon border in the north to the Unuk River and Treaty Creek areas in the south (Figure 4.1-8; Tahltan First Nation and IISD 2004).

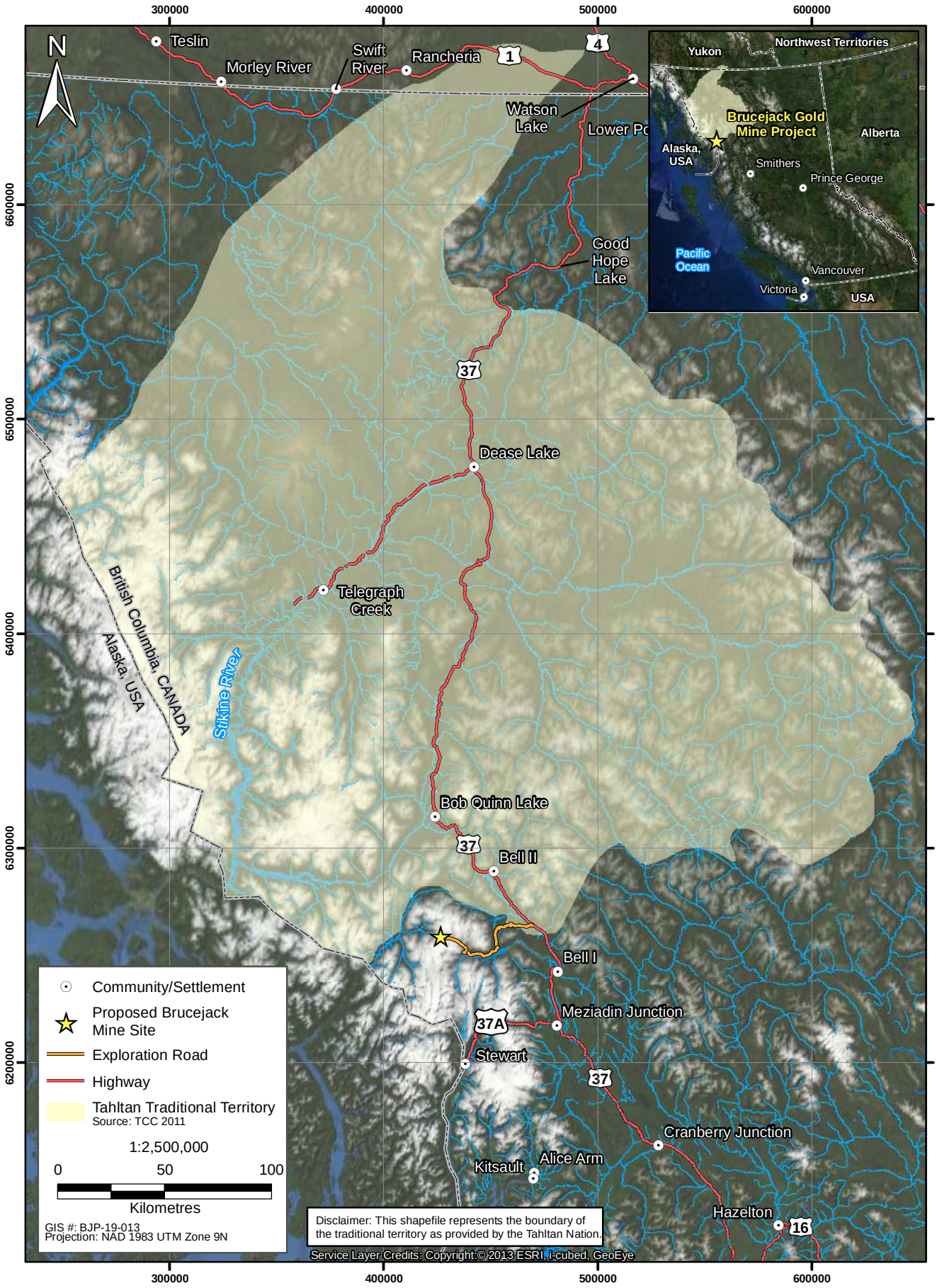
Tahltan Location

The Tahltan Indian Band has 12 registered reserves in northwest BC totalling 1,338.5 ha (Table 4.1-7). Three of these reserves are populated, including two reserves in the vicinity of Telegraph Creek (Telegraph Creek 6 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 (Figure 4.1-9).

Table 4.1-7. Tahltan Indian Band Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Classy Creek	8	259	
Dease Lake	9	129.50	Populated reserve, adjacent to unincoporated non-Aboriginal settlement
Guhthe Tah	12	30.40	Primary reserve community at Telegraph Creek
Hiusta's Meadow	2	16.20	
Salmon Creek	3	129.50	
Tahltan	1	151.70	Once populated, no current residents assessed in 2011
Tahltan	10	259.40	
Tahltan Forks	5	19.30	
Tatcho Creek	11	222.20	
Telegraph Creek	6	24.30	Formerly the primary reserve community at Telegraph Creek, few residents currently.
Telegraph Creek	6A	32.30	Populated reserved as of 2006, no current residents assessed as of 2011
Upper Tahltan	4	64.70	

Source: AANDC (2012b); Stats Can (Statistics Canada 2012)



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Tahltan Nation Traditional Territory

Figure 4.1-8

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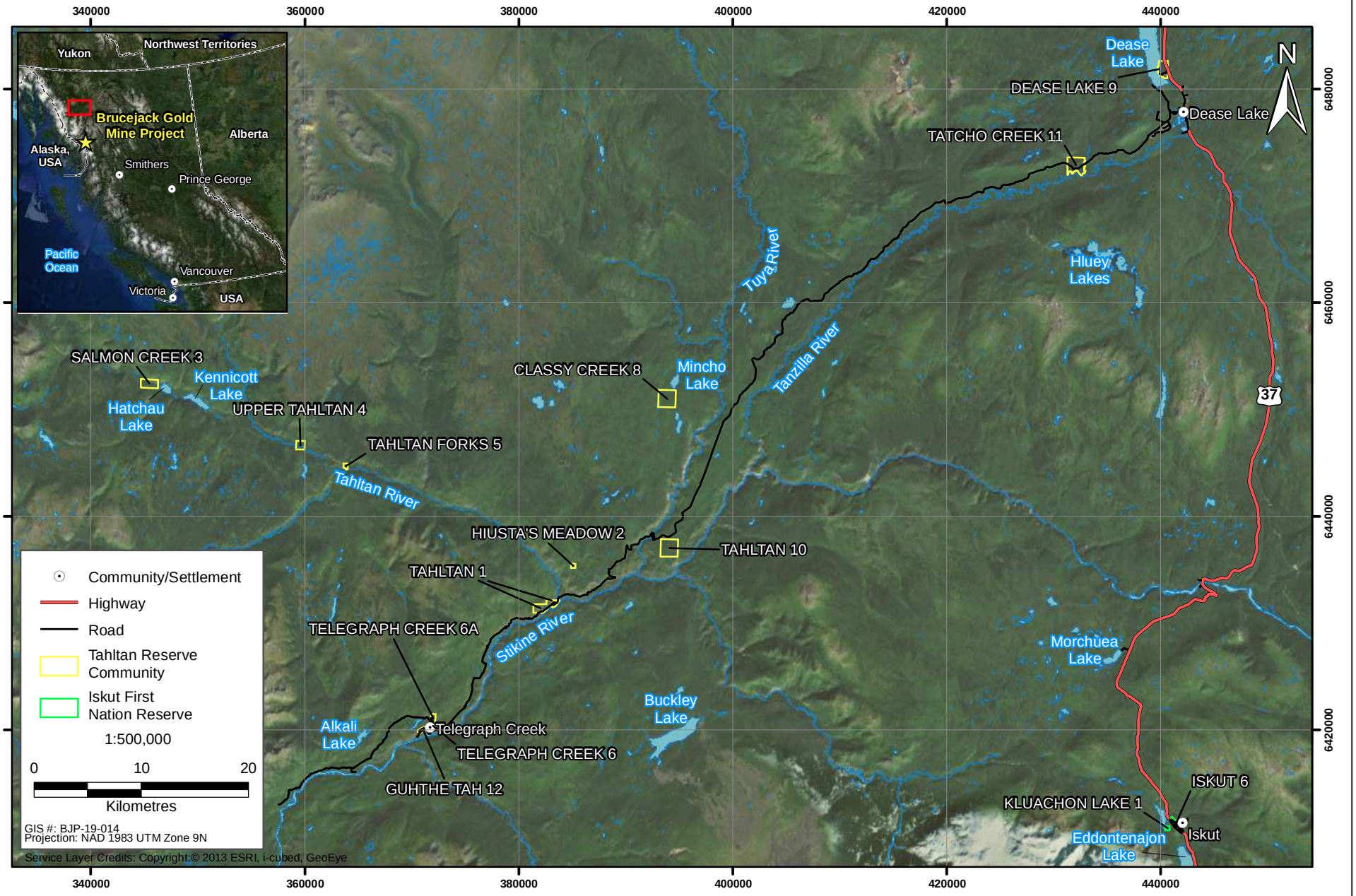

Figure 4.1-9

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Tahltan Indian Band and Iskut First Nation Reserve Locations

Figure 4.1-9

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The Iskut First Nation has three reserves totalling 107.9 ha (BC MARR 2011). On-reserve members primarily live on Iskut IR 6, located on Highway 37, approximately 83 km south of Dease Lake. Eddontennajon, a small, non-Aboriginal community, is adjacent to the reserve (Table 4.1-8).

Table 4.1-8. Iskut First Nation Reserves

Reserves	Res. #	Hectares	Notes
Iskut	6	99.8	Primary reserve community
Kluachon Lake	1	16.1	
Stikine River	7	45.7	

Source: Aboriginal Canada Portal (2012), AANDC (2012b)

Governance

The Tahltan Indian Band and Iskut First Nation are each governed by a Band Council comprised of a chief and five councillors, elected every two years. Both are section 11 bands under the *Indian Act* (1985; AANDC 2012b).

The Tahltan Central Council (TCC) was established in 1975 as an umbrella organization to collectively represent the joint interests of Tahltan Nation. Based in Dease Lake, the TCC is the central administrative governing body for the Tahltan Indian Band and the Iskut First Nation (TCC 2010). It is a registered society under the BC *Society Act* (1996) and is comprised of an executive board (President, Vice Present, and Secretary Treasurer, each elected for two year terms) and representatives from ten families. Family representatives are nominated yearly and ratified at the annual general meetings held each summer.

Tahltan Nation is not currently in the British Columbia Treaty Commission process but is working to build relationships with the federal and provincial governments outside of the treaty process. The Tahltan have been involved in a reconciliation process with the Province of BC 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 effects 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 TCC and the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines (BC MARR 2011).

4.2 ASSERTION OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND TITLE

The Aboriginal groups discussed in this report have a long history of asserting their rights and title in BC. As early as 1890, the Nisga'a formed a land committee and protested Euro-Canadian settlement of the Nass Valley; in 1913, they asserted their sovereignty through a document that has become known as the "Nisga'a Petition" (Inglis et al. 1990). As for the Tahltan, Chief Nanok and eighty other members in 1910 signed a formal "Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe" in protest to the Crown's assertion of title over all lands in their territory (Albright 1984).

The Nisga'a, along with other Aboriginal groups from the coast and southern interior, joined to form the Allied Tribes of BC to contest the findings of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia (1912-1916), which sought a final resolution on Aboriginal title in the province. They managed to delay ratification of the decisions of the Commission for several years. They prepared and presented to the federal government a summary of Aboriginal claims, which were disallowed for the first time in 1923. In 1927, the federal government heard a second submission, but again refused to recognize the need for a negotiated settlement. Not coincidentally, the *Indian Act* (1985) was amended that same year, making it illegal to solicit funds for the purpose of pursuing a land claims case (Kew 1990).

In 1931, the Native Brotherhood of BC was formed at Port Simpson on the northwest coast of BC. It soon claimed membership among all tribal groups of the coast and from some interior groups as well. It absorbed the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association in 1942, and became more firmly centred on the Aboriginal role in the fishing industry. It also strived to change legislation and government policies surrounding Aboriginal people (Kew 1990).

The Nisga'a Tribal Council was incorporated in 1955. It was effectively a council of chiefs, backed by the moral authority of the Aboriginal name-title system, continuing the assertion of title over territory. The Gitxsan incorporated a similar organization in 1968; several Carrier villages were included in this organization, called the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Tribal Council (Inglis et al. 1990).

The Nisga'a Petition of 1913 formed the basis for a Nisga'a lawsuit against BC for recognition of Aboriginal title to the Nass Valley, which was filed in 1967 (*Calder v. Attorney General of BC*). The Supreme Court's decision in 1973 had far-reaching implications for government policies. The judges were evenly split on the issue of Aboriginal title (Inglis et al. 1990). This court case initiated negotiations among the Nisga'a, BC, and Canada over Nisga'a assertions of ownership of the Nass River watershed and adjacent coast in 1976 (Inglis et al. 1990), which led eventually to the Nisga'a treaty with Canada and BC that was signed in 1998 (see Section 4.1.2).

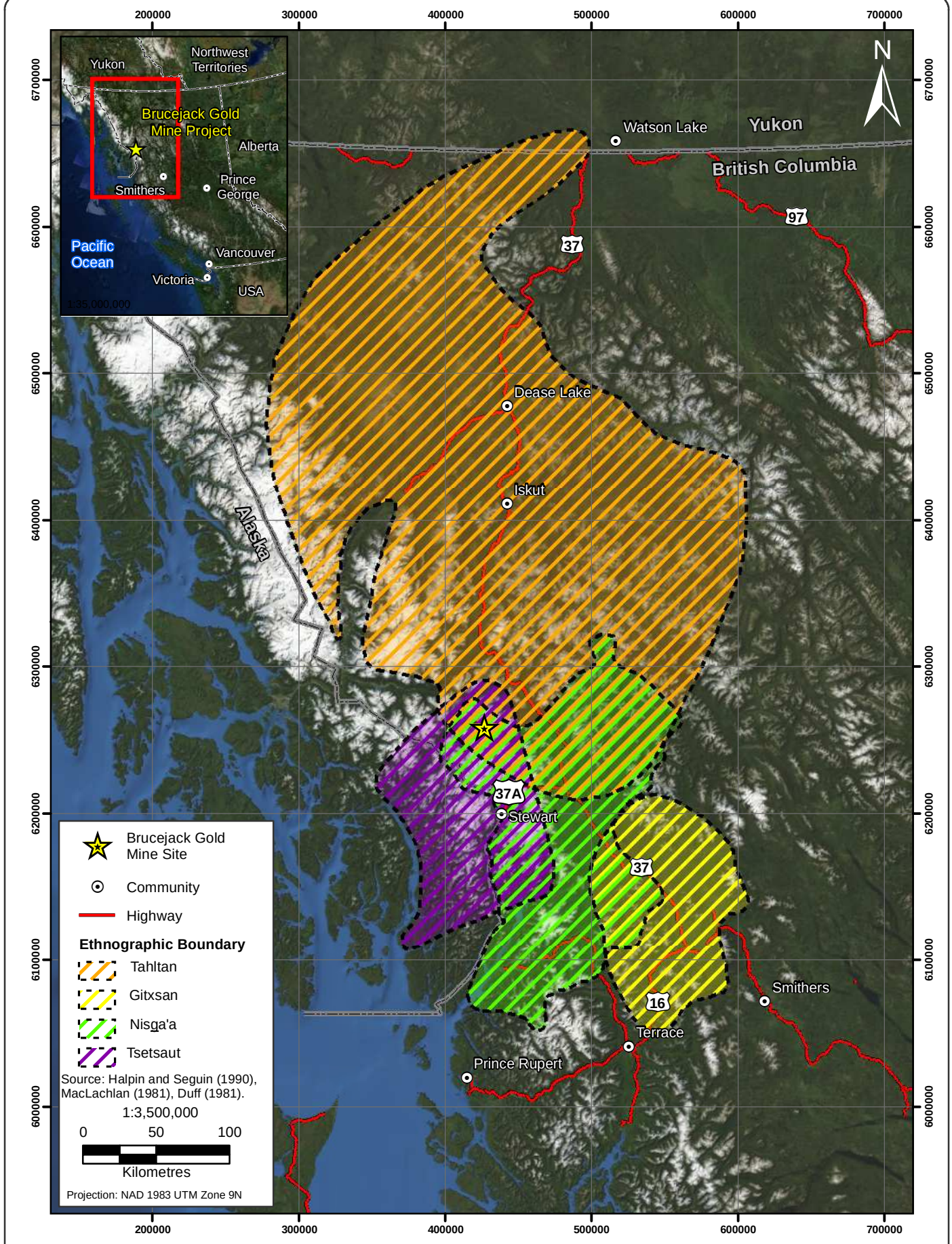
The continued assertion of the Gitxsan that Aboriginal title and rights had not been extinguished in their territory, culminated in the *Delgamuukw* case, which was initiated in 1984 and argued until 1997, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favor of the Gitxsan based on oral history testimony (*adaawk*). It is arguably the most significant court ruling affecting Aboriginal rights and title in BC, if not all of Canada. To uphold the honour of the Crown, the federal and provincial governments are obligated to consult with an Aboriginal group in any instance where Aboriginal rights or title could be affected. Moreover, wherever an infringement of Aboriginal rights or title occurs, that infringement must be justified, and compensation must occur where infringement is not justified (SCC 1997).

4.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

This section focuses on the review of documented ethnographic and historical information relevant to the Skii km Lax Ha, Nisga'a Nation, Gitanyow First Nation, Gitxsan Nation, and Tahltan Nation. The cultural background of the Aboriginal communities is primarily that of the Tsetsaut, Tsimshian, and Tahltan. The Tsimshian falls into the Northwest Coast culture group, while the other two fall into the Subarctic culture group[3] (Helm 1981; Suttles 1990). Though linguistically and ethnically distinct, similar social patterns were used among Northwest Coast and Subarctic culture groups in northwest BC to sustain a lifestyle that demanded specific adaptations to climate, resource availability, the annual return of salmon and oolichan, and the movement of large game such as moose and caribou.

Figure 4.3-1 portrays the range of Gitxsan and Nisga'a (the Tsimshian groups of relevance to this report), Tahltan, and Tsetsaut ethnographic boundaries circa 1850 (around the time of European contact) as estimated by ethnographers who have studied these groups.

[3] A "culture group" is defined as a collection of peoples with distinct ethno-linguistic identities within a specific geographic area. Peoples within a culture group share one or more cultural traits in common, which is usually the result of adaptation to similar environments. A culture group usually consists of several (often a dozen or more) ethnographic or ethno-linguistic groups, and the boundaries of culture groups can be mapped. In the case of the Subarctic culture group, the region they inhabit is vast and spans from Alaska to Newfoundland and Labrador, from below the tundra/forest boundary in the north to the extent of the boreal forest in the south. The Northwest Coast culture group, on the other hand, consists of a relatively narrow strip of land spanning from southern Alaska to California.



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Range of the Nisga'a, Gitxsan, Tahltan, and Tsetsaut Ethnographic Boundaries circa 1850

Figure 4.3-1

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4.3.1 Ethnolinguistic Divisions

4.3.1.1 Tsetsaut

The Skii km Lax Ha people assert they are descendants of the Raven Clan of the Laxwiiyiip or Eastern Tsetsaut. In historical documents, the Eastern Tsetsaut were commonly referred to as "Stickines". Boas (1895b) translates Laxwiiyiip as "on the prairie", referring to their territory, the plateau at the headwaters of the Stikine, Nass, and Skeena rivers. "The name Laxwiiyiip 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" (Sterritt et al. 1998b).

Boas (1895b) states that "Tsetsaut" is a Tsimshian word meaning "those of the interior", applied by the Gitxsan 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 1895b).

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

- **Suss to'deen-** "people of the black bear [clothing]", the Unuk River area band;
- **Tse etseta-** "people of the adult marmot headgear", farther south (presumably along Portland and Behm canals); and
- **Thlakwair khit-** "they of the double house" (most likely the Laxwiiyiip or Eastern Tsetsaut in other accounts).

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).

During the history of the Western Tsetsaut, they occupied a core area on Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet and, at various times over the centuries, extended as far west as Behm Canal, as far north as the Unuk River and the Iskut River watershed, and as far east as Meziadin Lake, including along Alice Arm (Duff 1950-1978). Boas (1895b) 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. (1998b), are founded on this amalgamation.

Wilson Duff's field notes contain a transcript of material from James Teit, regarding 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 Meziadin Lake basins, and one of their principal headquarters, especially for salmon fishing, was at Meziadin Lake (probably the south end). 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 Eastern Tsetsaut occupied areas at the headwaters of the Nass, Skeena, and Stikine rivers and at Meziadin Lake. Many of the Eastern Tsetsaut adopted the Gitxsan language and culture and came to be associated with the Gitxsan. Those who remained Tsetsaut were the northern neighbours of the Gitxsan and traded extensively with them. In the early 1900s, the remnants of the Eastern Tsetsaut left the Awiijii area and joined with the Tahltan (Sterritt et al. 1998b) and Bear Lake Tsek'ehne, eventually settling at Iskut. Those Tsetsaut with Gitxsan band membership, however, continued to use the territories of their ancestors.

4.3.1.2 Tsimshian

The Nisga'a, Gitxsan, and Gitanyow peoples are all considered by ethnographers to be part of the larger Tsimshian ethnolinguistic group, along with the Coast Tsimshian and Southern Tsimshian (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The Gitanyow are themselves considered to be a village of the Gitxsan people; however, the houses of the Gitanyow have always acted independently from the Gitxsan[4] (Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs n.d.).

The English translation of the term g*itxsan* is "People of the River of Mist" (Gitxsan Nation n.d.), otherwise known as "people of the Skeena River" (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). It is from the Gitxsan people's name for themselves in their own language, and not a term applied to them by neighbouring groups or by early explorers or ethnographers. The word "Nisga'a" is also a self-designation, though the etymology of the word is uncertain (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Gitanyow means "people of many numbers" (Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs n.d.), though the village in which they reside was at one time also known as Gitwinhlgu'l (written in ethnographic literature as Kitwancool).

Clear linguistic divisions can be found between the Coast and Southern Tsimshian on the one hand, and the Nisga'a/Gitxsan/Gitanyow on the other. The Nisga'a and Gitxsan/Gitanyow dialects of the Tsimshian language are mutually intelligible. Many Nisga'a and Gitxsan were said to have spoken Coast Tsimshian in the past, especially for ceremonial purposes (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Sterritt et al. (1998b) cites Timothy Derrick, a leading Wolf Clan chief of Gitlaxt'aamiks (New Aiyansh), who listed the tribal divisions of the Nisga'a (in 1916) as:

- **Kitxat'en (or Git-tka-den)-** "people of the fish traps", who were located at the mouth of the Nass River. They occupy the two villages of Gingolx (formerly Kincolith) and Laxgalts'ap (formerly Greenville).
- **Kitgige'nix-** "people further upstream" (from the point of view of the preceding tribe). Their village was named lax'anla'c, "mountain slide". They were considered the main tribe of the Nisga'a in the past.

[4] Possibly because they are descended from Tsetsaut as well as Gitxsan people- see section 4.6.3 for more details.

- **Kitwankci'lku-** "people of the home of the lizards". They are located at Gitwinksihlkw (formerly Canyon City).
- **Kit'anwi'likc-** "people moving regularly from and back to their home village". They occupied the two villages of Gitlaxt'aamiks (New Aiyansh) and Aiyansh.

Until the 1950s, there were seven Gitxsan groups who each occupied a single winter village, six of them on or near the Skeena River and one, Gitwinhlgu'l (Kitwancool), to the north on a "grease trail" (oolichan oil trade route) to the Nass. The traditional villages in their order upriver are Gitwangak, Gitwinhlgu'l (Kitwancool), Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax (Hazelton), Kispiox (Anspa'yaxw), Kisgaga'as, and Galdo'o (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Glen Vowell (Sik-e-dahk) is a more recent community, while Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o (as mentioned in Section 4.1.3) were abandoned in the 20th century, the residents of these villages becoming members of other Gitxsan communities.

In the interior, the Tsimshian had as neighbours the Tsetsaut and the Carrier, both Athapaskan-speaking peoples. Some items of Athapaskan material culture, such as snowshoes and work with porcupine quills, were borrowed by the Nisga'a and Gitxsan, but most cultural borrowings flowed in the other direction (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Trade and intermarriage between the Gitxsan and Athapaskan speakers on the eastern portion of the territory were common (Miller and Eastman 1984).

4.3.1.3 Tahltan

The Tahltan are a group of Athapaskan speakers centred on the upper basin of the Stikine River, and the Stikine Plateau, in northwest BC. The Tahltan speak a dialect of the Tahltan-Kaska-Tagish branch of the Athapaskan language family (MacLachlan 1981; Albright 1984).

The word "Tahltan" is taken from the Tlingit word *ta·łta·n*, the name of a flat area at the mouth of the Tahltan River that was an important trading ground (MacLachlan 1981). The Tahltan appear to have borrowed the name, unaltered, and began using it to describe themselves. Both Emmons (1911) and Teit (1956) were told that it was a foreign word.

Jenness (1932) and Osgood (1936) noted six tribal divisions (clans) of the Tahltan, based on Teit's unpublished field notes: the Tagicoten, Naskoten, Talakoten, Tudenekoten, Naloten, and Tlepanoten. The Naskoten and Naloten regional groupings persisted after 1874, but disappeared in the 20th century (MacLachlan 1981; Albright 1984; THREAT 2009). Emmons (1911) and Adlam (1985), however, group the Tagicoten and the Naskoten together into a group known as the Taxtlowedi or Doclawaadee. A segment of the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne (T'lotona[5] or "Long Grass Indians") had replaced the Talakoten Tahltan in the upper Stikine and merged with the Tlepanoten Tahltan in the Spatsizi and Klappan river regions. The memebers of Iskut First Nation are descended from this group.

According to Teit's fieldnotes, the Tahltan regional groups are ascribed certain territories. For example, the Naloten are people of the Nahlin River. The Tlepanoten are people of the Tlapan (Klappan) River (J. Teit 1915).

Early Tahltan culture would have been similar to that of other Arctic-drainage Athapaskan people; however, upon their migration into the Stikine basin, their culture began to evolve in adaptation to the

[5] McIllwraith (2007) citing Iskut people states that T'lotona is the same as Talakoten (Tl'ogot'ine). The Iskut people say that the Tlebanot'ine (Tlepanoten) were known as the Klappan River group and the Tl'ogot'ine (Talakoten or T'lotona) were known as the Spatsizi group in more recent times. In other words, T'lotona more rightly belongs to the Tahltan and not the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne.

special, more generous conditions of the Pacific drainage and in response to contact with the more complex culture of the coast (MacLachlan 1981).

Relationships with the Stikine Tlingit on one side and the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne on the other side were peaceful and commercial. On the other hand, with the Inland Tlingit, the Coastal Tlingit of the Taku River, and the Gitxsan and Nisga'a, competition and conflict were endemic (MacLachlan 1981).

4.3.2 Social Organization

4.3.2.1 Band Organization

Tsetsaut

Little ethnographic research on the social organization of the Tsetsaut was done prior to their absorption into neighbouring groups. As with the Tahltan, it most likely resembled that of other Athapaskan groups in the Cordillera (McClellan 1981); that is, a loose system of amorphous local and regional groups (Albright 1984), before they had penetrated 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 having shared territories (Barbeau 1910-1969).

Tsimshian

Each Tsimshian local group customarily occupied a single winter village, moving in the spring to fishing villages on the Lower Nass River and in the summers to fishing camps on other rivers (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The basic social unit in Tsimshian society was a corporate matrilineage called a "house" or *wilp*, the members of which, together with spouses, children who belonged to other lineages, and slaves, occupied one or more dwellings. Barnett (1938) identified the *wilp* as the functioning unit in the potlatch, in which case the term only refers to members of the same kinship group. *Huwilp* (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 *huwilp* (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Huwilp which share the same migration narratives comprise the *wil'naat'ahl* (a group of closely related houses within a clan). When a house's population had become reduced, such as occurred with disease epidemics, its numbers could be expanded by adoptions from within the *wil'naat'ahl*. Smaller *huwilp* may be subsumed by the *wil'naat'ahl* for a period of time (Daly 2005).

Each Tsimshian *wilp* owned fishing, hunting, and gathering territories and localities (*ango'osxw*), which it exploited under the direction of the *sim'oogit* or "*wilp* chief" (the man or, in some circumstances, the woman, who bore its highest-ranking name). Possession of *wilp* territory passed through the mother's line. While a *sim'oogit* was still alive, his sons were allowed to borrow his fishing, hunting and trapping grounds; upon his death, however, these had to be returned to the matrilineage. Trespass by one *wilp* on another's *ango'osxw* could be punishable by death, as many of the oral histories relate (see Section 4.6). However, the transfer of the right to use natural resources in one *wilp*'s *ango'osxw* to another *wilp*, either by gift or through seizure in payment of a debt, was fairly common (Kitsegukla Band 1979; M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; Sterritt et al. 1998b).

Important features of the *wilp* system, all of which help to reinforce the common understanding of history, house territory boundaries, status, and names, include *adaawk* (oral history), *ayuuk* (laws/crests), *getimgan* or *pst'aan (*totem poles), *daxgyet* (authority), and *limx'oy* (ancient songs). The *wilp* system serves an important social organizing function and is supported by feasting. *Adaawk* contain key historical events in the *wilp*, which are recounted in the context of feasts to

reinforce *wilp* title, which has occurred over several generations. Totem poles are a significant visual indication of *wilp* title and provide an account of *wilp* history. *Ayuuk* are symbolic representations of a *wilp*'s history and are for the exclusive use of the *wilp* (Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs 2007). In previous times, the chiefs would paint their crest on house fronts, canoes, totem poles, and even went as far as tattooing their crests on their bodies (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Tahltan

Tahltan social organization resembled that of other Athapaskan groups in the Cordillera; that is, a loose system of amorphous local and regional groups (Albright 1984). The largest societal group identified in the early historical accounts, the "nation", usually consisted of several regional groups, each inhabiting a particular drainage basin or other major cohesive physiographic unit. Collectively, regional groups shared a sense of common identity, language, and culture; exploited contiguous hunting ranges; and were linked by ties of kinship and marriage (Rogers and Smith 1981). The Aboriginal cultures of the Cordillera Subarctic were basically egalitarian. The value system emphasized generosity, sharing, and hospitality among kin groups and with neighbouring bands; these values were prized due to the uncertainties of life in the Subarctic (McLellan and Denniston 1981; Rogers and Smith 1981). This system is in stark contrast to the house system used by their Gitxsan, Nisga'a and Gitanyow neighbours.

4.3.2.2 Status and Hierarchy

Tsetsaut

While ethnographic sources provide little to no information on Tsetsaut class and chief systems, it is reasonable to assume that they shared many of these aspects in common with the Tahltan. With protracted contact and interaction with the Gitxsan and Nisga'a, however, the status and responsibilities of Tsetsaut chiefs would have resembled those of their Tsimshian neighbours.

Tsimshian

The Tsimshian recognize four named social distinctions, often called classes. Women were of the same levels as men, although their names and status did not ordinarily entail the same sort of political power. *Smkikét* ('real people', from *sim'oogit* 'chief') were the chiefly class, compared to *liq'akikét* or "other people", that is, those who had names of lesser rank. Free people who had not taken ancestral names in the potlatch system were termed *wahɔ́ɔayin* or "unhealed people" (explained as "without origin" or "having no relatives"). Slaves (*χa·* or *łú·nkit*) were captives taken in war or purchased from slavers, especially from the south, and their children (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Slaves were at the bottom of the class system, and being a slave was hereditary, meaning that the child of a slave was also a slave. One could not escape from the slave class or reach a higher class through the obtaining of wealth, skill, or supernatural power.

Tsimshian *simgigat* (chiefs) managed the diverse resources available from house territories to provide food throughout the year, surplus for trade, and delicacies served at feasts (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Chiefs were responsible for the economic welfare of their people, and were obliged to put aside supplies for this purpose (Garfield 1939). Matters of mutual interest, such as defence, were discussed with the chiefs of other houses in a Tsimshian village.

Gitxsan chiefs were not organized above the clan level; the chief of the highest ranking house in a clan did not have authority over the other clans. Nisga'a chiefs, however, appeared to emulate the Coast and Southern Tsimshian, where the village chief was the chief of the highest ranking house in the village, and the other houses, in all clans, were ranked under him in descending order (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Duff (1959) states that each clan of the Gitanyow has its own hereditary chief with separate responsibilities. The two clan chiefs of the village would confer at times of great concern.

The feast complex (*yukw* or "potlatch") was the core around which the Tsimshian social system revolved. Through various types of feasts the social order was maintained and expressed, inheritance and succession were validated, and conflict was expressed and managed (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). At the death of a chief, for example, a *yukw* would be celebrated for the chief's entire clan, and the living chiefs of the clan would meet during the *yukw* to select the new chief (usually the chief's oldest maternal nephew) who would hold the chief's name and crest (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Tahltan

Tahltan society was comprised of similar individual and group ranking systems. Social position was indicated by a set of titles for which eligibility was inherited; however, assumption of titles had to be validated by appropriate behaviour, distribution, and consumption of symbolic and utilitarian goods. The most important and valued rights were exercised by the leaders of families and clans. Holders of important hereditary rights were thought of as an aristocratic class as contrasted with ordinary individuals. Slaves, acquired through capture or exchange, formed a third category. In practice, however (and indicative of their past egalitarian roots), class boundaries were indistinct; mobility was achieved through aggressiveness, skill, acquisition of wealth, marriage, and trade. The most dramatic expression of social arrangements and of attempts to manoeuver within the arrangements was the ceremonial distribution or destruction of property at a feast given for members of the opposite moiety (MacLachlan 1981), similar to those of their neighbours on the coast, though not as ostentatious.

Each Tahltan family and clan had its leader. The leaders of clans constituted an informal council for the combined clans. Inter-clan disputes were mediated by the clan leader. Disputes involving individuals of different clans were regarded as corporate responsibilities of the clans, represented in their negotiations by their respective leaders (MacLachlan 1981). Historically, decisions were led by the headman, often his assistant or second headman, and a council. The council consisted of wise men, but could also include women with specialized knowledge or wisdom. Decisions were made by consensus through a process of "collective wisdom" where all had to agree (School District 87 n.d.).

Tahltan hunting territories belonged to the whole clan in common, although generally each family had its favourite and customary hunting and fishing grounds. The chief of each clan directed the hunting and trapping so that he knew where each household was. These matters were arranged before families dispersed from the major village in the fall. Usually the family let the chief know where they proposed to hunt that season. The chief made regulations concerning the use of hunting grounds and settled any disputes, although he himself had no special privilege or ownership of hunting grounds (Albright 1984).

4.3.2.3 Family and Kinship

Tsetsaut

With regard to the Tsetsaut, Duff (1981) states that the Tsetsaut had been divided into two matrilineal exogamous clans, Eagle and Wolf. 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 Laxwiiyiip) were descended from the Raven Clan, from which the present-day Skii km Lax Ha claim descent. Matrilineal succession was confirmed by Boas in his work with the Western Tsetsaut (Boas 1895b).

Tsimshian

Tsimshian society has a four-fold structure, being divided into four exogamous matrilineal clans (Garfield 1939), or phratries (Barbeau 1917) by anthropologists, and "tribes" or *pdeek* by the Tsimshian

themselves. The Nisga'a recognize the killer whale (*gisk'aast*), wolf (*laxgibuu*), eagle (*laxsgiik*), and raven (*ganada*) phratries in their society (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; Nisga'a Tribal Council 1992). The Gitxsan recognize the Fireweed (*Gisgaast*), Wolf (*Lax Gibuu*), Eagle (*Lax Skiik*) and Frog/Raven (Lax Seel or Lax Ganeda- M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; Daly 2005).

The kinship system of the Tsimshian was of the "Iroquois" type[6] (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; Haviland 2002). The relationship with the father's side was extremely important throughout an individual's life. Affinal relationships between clans were expressed in a relational naming system unique to the Tsimshian on the Northwest Coast. Children's names, which were owned by the matrilineage, referred to physical and behavioural characteristics of the two major crest animals of the father's clan (Sapir 1915). Succession to a man's names and position went in theory to a younger brother or a sister's son (Garfield 1939).

Crest images (*ayuuk*) were often worn in the Tsimshian potlatch, used in the feast, and represented on the houses where potlatching occurred. Each clan was associated with and identified by two primary crest animals:

- **Fireweed or Blackfish clan-** Grizzly Bear and Killer Whale (or "blackfish");
- **Wolf Clan-** Wolf and Bear;
- **Eagle Clan-** Eagle and Beaver; and
- **Raven Clan-** Raven and Frog.

These animals were the building blocks of the Tsimshian crest system and with rare exceptions could be displayed by all members of the clan (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Tahltan

During the proto-historic and early historic periods, a system of matrilineal descent groups was emerging among the Tahltan out of the looser system of amorphous local and regional groups. It probably developed soon after contact with the Tlingit and was well established before 1800, and culminated in the 1870s. Until then the local/regional groups of the Tahltan probably were the effective groups. Of the subdivisions extant in the 19th century, Tagicoten, Naskoten, and Talakoten have been reported as descent groups of the Wolf (Chiyone) moiety, while Tudenekoten, Naloten, and Tlepanoten were descent groups of the Raven (Cheskie) moiety. Several of the clan names have been adapted from Tlingit terms for clans known on the coast (MacLachlan 1981; Albright 1984; THREAT 2009).

Each clan of the Tahltan had its own names, stories, songs, dances, and crests, which were presented at feasts held in the large communal houses when families gathered at the major villages and camps (Albright 1984). Each clan also had several caribou fences. They were the communal property of the clan in whose territory they were built. The snares in the fence were made and set by individuals. The meat was shared among all the families that used and helped to maintain the fence. The skins belonged to the person who owned the snares in which an animal was caught, but skins might be given away to anyone in need (J. Teit 1915).

[6] In addition to gender and generation, "Iroquois" kinship also distinguishes between parental siblings of opposite sexes. Parental siblings of the *same* sex are considered blood relatives (i.e., 'Parents'). Parental siblings of *differing* sex are labeled as "Aunt" or "Uncle" as the situation necessitates. Thus, one's mother's sister is also called mother, and one's father's brother is also called father; however, one's mother's brother is called uncle, and one's father's sister is called aunt. Children of the parental generation (that is, children of parental siblings of the same sex) are considered siblings (parallel cousins). The children of an Aunt or an Uncle are *not* siblings, they are instead cousins (cross-cousins specifically- Haviland 2002).

The Tudenekoten clan (from the word Tudessa, meaning “long river”, the Tahltan name of the Stikine) had prior rights to the Stikine River in the vicinity of the Tahltan confluence where many of the fishing and trading camps are located, and in which various clans gathered. It became the highest ranking and most dominant Tahltan clan in tribal activities during proto-historic times (Albright 1984).

4.3.2.4 Marriage

Tsetsaut

Boas (1895b) stated that when a young Tsetsaut man desired to marry a girl he would ask her parents, to whom he gave presents of meat at intervals during the year. The bride’s parents would then invite him and his clan to a feast at which the marriage was celebrated. Levirate and sororate were practiced as among the Tahltan. However, a man was not supposed to marry his brother’s widow until a certain period of time elapsed, for fear of the deceased man’s ghost staying with them and doing him harm. Mothers-in-law avoided contact with sons-in-law, a typical feature which Boas observed in all northern Athapaskan groups.

Tsimshian

All Tsimshian marriages were supposed to be between social equals; the children of marriages of unequal rank inherited rank no higher than that of the lower-ranked parent. It was unthinkable for free persons to marry slaves, since the children of the marriage would have the rank of slaves. Class ranking was maintained through intermarriage with other chiefly families, including those from Tsimshian-speaking as well as other language groups (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). One could not marry another from one’s own tribe (*pdeek*) (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Tsimshian marriages were arranged. The boy’s mother and her brother made the initial call upon the girl’s relatives, bringing gifts. Several further gift exchanges between the relatives of the bride and groom were made, including at a potlatch or *yukw* when the marriage was announced to others. Cross-cousin marriage was usually the preference. The goal of marriages was the consolidation of wealth and position. The ideal post-marital pattern, at least for high-ranking men who inherited noble names, was one of avunculocal residence; a boy went to live with his mother’s brother as a child, later inheriting his name and position. Polygyny was permitted for chiefs, although it was apparently rare, and a widow was expected to marry her husband’s successor or brother (otherwise known as the levirate system; M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Garfield (1939) reported that divorce was probably frequent.

Tahltan

Among the Tahltan, all succession to titles and inheritance of significant rights were matrilineal. Access to resources and trading channels was along lines established between descent groups by marriages, especially “noble” marriages. Moiety exogamy was strict. Polygyny was rare but permissible. Proper marriage was negotiated between responsible clanswomen of the parties. A disapproving family could block almost any union (MacLachlan 1981).

Similar to the Tsimshian custom, a Tahltan man assuming a deceased maternal uncle’s title was expected to marry his predecessor’s widow; it would be quite proper for him to marry a second woman closer to him in age, however. A widower was expected to marry his deceased wife’s sister, if he remarried (otherwise known as the sororate system). In both cases, the governing consideration seems to be continuation of the attachment of the male to the wife’s matrilineal group. Cross-cousin marriage may have been preferred (MacLachlan 1981).

Initially, and for an indefinite period, the Tahltan groom was expected to "work for" and live with the wife's parents. Later he would establish an independent household, if possible. However he would be limited by the location of hereditary or marriage-acquired privileges (MacLachlan 1981).

4.3.2.5 Death, Burial, and Mourning

Tsetsaut

When a Tsetsaut person was about to die, the person's house was abandoned by friends and family, and everything in that house was left behind for fear of ghosts. The body was sometimes placed in a hollow tree and stones were piled in front of the entrance; the butt of a tree could also be hollowed deliberately for that purpose. The knees of the deceased were doubled up so that they touched the chin. A chief was cremated by the opposite clan, and the chief's clan fasted for two days. On the fifth day, they prepared a feast in honour of the dead chief. Those who burned the body received payment. Mourners sat around the fire wailing while others danced around them (Boas 1895b).

Tsimshian

Among the Tsimshian, death was announced by the distribution of marmot skins by a deceased's own lineage, which contributed to a funeral fund. Other clan relatives were also expected to contribute. The preparation of the body and the coffin and related tasks were the responsibility of the deceased's father's lineage, for which it was compensated from the funeral fund. Traditionally, cremation was practiced (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Boas (1895b) notes that among the Nisga'a, the body of the deceased was bent with the head down and knees up, and then placed in a box. Chiefs lay in state for some days, while others were buried without delay. They burned food and clothing for the deceased, and then burned the box containing the deceased. Men and women sat around the fire singing all the mourning songs (*limx'oy*) of their clan that are contained in their legends. The remains were then put into a small box and placed in trees, usually cottonwood. The widow or widower could not remarry until a year after their spouse died (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

If an important Nisga'a chief passed away, traditionally the next chief in line would invite people from the entire Nass Valley to a settlement feast (*yukw*). Contributions were collected and used in part to settle the estate of the deceased person. This is an ancient economic custom that is still in use today (Nisga'a Tribal Council, Fiegehen, and Rose 1993; School District 92 1996). A memorial pole was usually erected over the remains of a chief, typically four years after their death. With the influence of missionaries, however, the memorial pole was replaced by a tombstone (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Gitanyow ancestral remains were traditionally cremated in cremation pits that were used multiple times, as a graveyard. This practice was in use until European contact, at which point human remains were interred in graves (GHCO 2009). At Gitsegukla, prior to 1884, the bodies of the dead were cremated at the far end of the western side of the old village. The body was placed on a funeral pyre and burnt, then buried on the same spot. Following the arrival of missionaries, they buried their dead in a cemetery located above the village (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Tahltan

While the corpse of a Tahltan person was cremated within a few days of death, wherever the deceased's family might be at the time, the ashes were carried back to Tahltan territory for ceremonial burial, and a funerary feast was held in the deceased's honour (Albright 1984). Funeral arrangements were made by older people of the opposite moiety. Before the influence of Christian missionaries, the dead were wrapped in hides, new moccasins were placed on the dead

person, and the body would lie in a place of honour for one or two days. At this time, a large pyre was built and the body was cremated with items needed for the journey such as new moccasins, clothing, and/or household items. The cremated remains would then be collected and stored in a grave house (School District 87 n.d.).

4.3.3 Spiritualism and Ceremony

Spiritualism was ever-present in the lives of the numerous Aboriginal groups in the region, and all Northwest Coast and Subarctic ethnographic groups typically observed a holistic cosmology in which all phenomena are connected and empowered. Though representations of this worldview varied between culture groups, the general theme of an inter-connected universe was always present. Given the ubiquity and complexity of how spiritual life is tied into the daily practices of Northwest Coast and Subarctic groups, it is impossible to fully describe its significance. As such, attention will be given to some of the more distinctive themes in Northwest Coast and Subarctic spiritualism.

4.3.3.1 Spirit Powers

Tsetsaut

Being part of the Athapaskan linguistic group with a matrilineal kinship system like the Tahltan, it would be safe to assume that their spiritual worldview was similar to the Tahltan and other groups of the Cordilleran Subarctic. 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 were also thought to have brought the weather out of the sky. Physical or spiritual cleansing of individuals also appears in the Tsetsaut tales (Boas 1896, 1897).

To secure good luck in hunting (i.e., to avoid offending the spirits of the animals they hunted), 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 Tsetsaut never ate the head of a mountain goat as they believed doing so would turn their hair grey prematurely (Boas 1895b).

Tsimshian

Among the Tsimshian, establishing and maintaining supernatural power and well-being was the responsibility of the chiefs. Their religious responsibilities included demonstrating respect for animals and spirits in all activities (such as hunting, fishing, and the consumption of animal foods), and also during the particularly volatile periods around rituals, birth, and death (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

The Gitxsan, for example, referred to *Wii sim'oogit* or the Great Spirit in the sky; they thanked the Great Spirit for any food they harvested by lifting it up to the sky (Kitsegukla Band 1979). The Gitxsan returned bones of fish and aquatic animals, such as beaver, to the river, or burned them so that the animals would return. "Out of respect for the animal's sacrifice… no usable part of the animal was wasted and unused parts were burned or placed out of the way of predators and dogs" (People of 'Ksan 1980).

One story from Nisga'a oral tradition tells of children who disrespected salmon coming up the river by using them in cruel ways for entertainment. An elder witnessed this and warned the children that the Creator would respond in kind for upsetting nature's harmony. And so it is told the volcano *Gennu'axwt* began to smoke and lava poured forth from its crater covering local villages[7], and the people had to

[7] This volcanic eruption most likely happened approximately 250 years ago and is described in further detail in section 4.6.6.

flee. The story concludes with *Gwats'agat* (a powerful supernatural being) emerging to stop the lava flows' advance by cooling it with its breath and retreating to the mountains once this was accomplished (NLG, Province of BC, and Government of Canada 2004).

The Tsimshian had a strong belief in reincarnation. The traditional belief seems to be that people were reincarnated in their lineage grandchildren, although other connections are also reported. Seguin (1984) goes so far as to suggest that the potlatch was structured so as to "make it possible for lineage members to be reincarnated properly". The same terms are used to refer to a cradle and a grave box (*ẇo*), and a person's baby song and mourning dirge (*limx'oy*) are the same song (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Tahltan

Among Cordilleran groups, every person acted privately to come to terms with the world of personified power. A successful hunter had at least one spirit helper and often more (McLellan and Denniston 1981). Young Tahltan men actively sought patron spirits and personal songs in the wilderness (MacLachlan 1981), usually upon reaching puberty.

Tahltan people believed that with death the spirit did not disappear, but instead entered the spirit world. If a person was left uncremated, their ghost was believed to wander the earth (MacLachlan 1981). The Tahltan also believed that spirits could be reborn, and shared stories about people who could account for events in a past lifetime.

Tahltan oral traditions indicate that giant toads once inhabited certain areas of the country, and that people were afraid of toads because they used to steal people (J. Teit 1921). A salamander seen along one's path was interpreted as an omen of death within the family (J. Teit 1956). The consumption of ants was thought to lead to death, and mosquitoes were thought to originate from the brains of cannibal giants (J. Teit 1921).

4.3.3.2 Ceremonies and Feasting

For groups along the Northwest Coast, the potlatch or feast system incorporated a combination of spiritual, ceremonial, social, and political elements, as discussed in earlier sections (e.g., Sections 4.3.2.2 and 4.3.2.3). Balanced reciprocity, not competitiveness, is the ethos of the feast system (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The Gitxsan sometimes refer to the feast system as "social insurance". Similarly, Daly (2005) refers to the "prevalent form of positive reciprocity" within the feast system, with its "complexity of giving and receiving, paying and paying back, discharging and creating indebtedness [that] allows for the achievement of status within a framework of ascribed rights and responsibilities associated with a hierarchy of family names." He notes that the most intense competition does not occur between clans, but generally occurs privately within a clan, and focuses on the succession to high names and the associated rights and duties. There are two types of feasts: *yukw*, where serious matters of an economic, social, political or spiritual nature are addressed; and *li'ligit*, which are of a less serious nature and may include internal gatherings to plan for *yukw*. Today, the most highly regarded feast is the one related to stone raising; in the past, this distinction was reserved for the raising of a totem pole (Rescan 2009a).

The Tsimshian leaders or *simgigat* were responsible for the conducting of ceremonies and dances. In their role as house chiefs they were active in ritual occasions such as the feasts and naming ceremonies. At these occasions they wore their crests and ceremonial robes and headdresses. In their role as *naχnóχ* or "power" dancers, they dramatized and validated the powers of their ancestors and their house by masked dances and dramas. As *smhaláit* or "real dancers" they initiated young people

into ritual roles. As a *wihaláit* or "great dancer", he was the leader of four secret societies, into which many of the people were initiated (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Among Cordilleran groups, individual skills in singing and dancing were valued. Dancing was lively and often imitative. Men and women did various round and line dances as well as solos. Musical instruments were drums, beating sticks, clappers, and whistles (McLellan and Denniston 1981). Among the Tahltan, concentrations of people were exploited for dances and feasts, which were instrumental and expressive as well as recreational and convivial. Feasts or potlatches were held on occasions such as the assumption of a title, completion of a girl's puberty seclusion, marriage, or the anniversary of a death. Formal dances with appropriate songs were integral to the death feast and the peace feast (MacLachlan 1981).

4.3.3.3 Shamanism

Shamanism is a term adopted in ethnographic research to describe individuals in a community with supernatural power and who have a strong connection to spiritual forces. Among Northwest Coast/Subarctic groups, shamans were public religious practitioners who undertook to control the spirit powers so as to locate game, change the weather, cure sickness, or perform other marvellous acts. Each shaman had his individualized way of "knowing" aspects of the universe, and had a series of spirit helpers whose aid he might enlist in dreams or who might possess him while he and his audience sang the spirit songs (McLellan and Denniston 1981).

Tsetsaut

The Tsetsaut called upon a shaman in case of sickness. He would sing certain songs, but did not use a rattle. Rather, he used an eagle's tail as a wand. His hands and face were painted red. He fanned and blew on the patient or blew water onto him. Then he would take the disease out of him with both hands as though dipping it out, and blow it into the air. He would use a square drum as an accompaniment to his songs (Boas 1895b).

Tsimshian

The Tsimshian chief's roles in ordering sacred relations were complemented by the activities of specialists called *swánsk haláit* or "blowing shamans", who were particularly active during serious illness or during times of "bad luck" (such as the failure of a salmon run). Illness was believed to be at least partly due to spiritual weakness or impurity, and the practices of the shaman marshalled the spiritual resources of the community to strengthen and purify the spirits of the patients, who were symbolically cleansed by the shaman sucking "dirty" objects from them and rubbing them with clean substances. The *swánsk haláit* were not a separate social stratum like the *simgigat* and in fact some *simgigat* were shamans as well (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Boas (1895b) stated that among the Tsimshian, only a man whose father was a shaman could become a shaman. Shamans typically wore stone and bone amulets and did not cut their hair.

Tahltan

Among the Tahltan, otter, mink, weasel, marten, wolverine, wolf, and dog were considered to have supernatural qualities. Otter especially was a potent form of spirit that entered women and caused both good fortune and illness. Possession by spirits and sorcery were recognized causes of illness, and shamans performed public ceremonies extracting alien objects from sufferers (MacLachlan 1981).

Monotheism

To some extent, all Christian missions sought to change Aboriginal morals and beliefs, and some of the successful missions were at Metlakatla (founded by William Duncan), and other Anglican missions along the Nass at Greenville (later Aiyansh) and Kincolith (see Section 4.3.5.2 for more details). Personal conversion and reform were promoted, and whole villages under the influence of these missionaries became materially and socially transformed (Kew 1990).

Many Aboriginal people, however, did not take eagerly to Christian concepts that appeared to ignore their own fundamental religious concern, which was the proper relationship between human beings and nonhuman spirits, such as the powerful spirit owners of game and fish. Aboriginal beliefs about illness and reincarnation did not align with Christian tenets. As such, missionaries attempted to repress longstanding Aboriginal social customs and ritual that were integral to the core of Aboriginal culture, such as polygamy, girls' puberty seclusions, hand games and gambling, native dancing and singing (especially that associated with the potlatch cremation), and, above all, shamanistic performances. In some places, Aboriginal religious practitioners independently borrowed bits of Christian ritual and belief to develop their own prophet movements. A number of these movements surged through the Cordillera during the 19th and early 20th centuries, evoking a fervour and excitement in their participants (McClellan 1981). There is no evidence, however, that any of these prophet movements reached the Tsimshian.

4.3.4 Language Use

English is now the dominant language of Aboriginal groups discussed in this report. Most of the traditional Aboriginal languages are now spoken as a second language at best.

4.3.4.1 Aboriginal Languages

The Skii km Lax Ha have indicated that previous generations of their people spoke the Tsetsaut language, also known as *Wetalh*, a dialect of the Athapaskan language family (FPHLCC n.d.-d). The language is no longer spoken and is thought to be extinct. It was studied by Franz Boas (in the late 1800s), who was only able to collect a fragmentary amount of linguistic information (Boas 1895b; Boas and Goddard 1924; Duff 1981). Linguists who have studied the information collected by Boas 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 to its immediate Athapaskan neighbours, the Tahltan and Kaska (Krauss and Golla 1981).

The Gitxsan (and Gitanyow) speak a dialect of the Tsimshianic language family, which is said to be very similar to that spoken by the Nisg̲a'a. The two dialects are so similar that some linguists consider them the same. As such, much of the literature refers to the two dialects together as Nass-Gitxsan. Halpin and Seguin (1990) described the Gitxsan and Nisg̲a'a languages as mutually intelligible. The Gitxsan refer to their language as *Gitxsanimaax* or *Gitsenimx̲*. There is reportedly a western and eastern dialect of *Gitxsanimaax* (FPHLCC n.d.-d). The Nisg̲a'a language is called *Nisg̲a'amx* (Marsden, Anderson, and Nyce 2002)

The Tahltan speak a dialect of the Athapaskan language family. The Tahltan language is typically grouped with Kaska and Tagish, and is described "as a former dialect of a single language" (Krauss and Golla 1981; Alderete, Bob, and McIlwraith 2004). The Tahltan language has been described as endangered, and efforts are being made to continue and revitalize the Tahltan language (Alderete, Bob, and McIlwraith 2004; TCC 2006). Most speakers of the Tahltan language live in Tahltan territory in the main communities of Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake, and Iskut. As well, some speakers are reported to live in Lower Post, BC and in Watson Lake, Yukon (Alderete, Bob, and McIlwraith 2004).

4.3.4.2 Numbers of Speakers

According to recent language surveys (2011 and 2012) conducted by the Gitxsan in their communities, of the 6,610 registered members of the communities making up Gitxsan Nation (including the Gitanyow), there are 338 fluent speakers of *Gitxsanimaax*. The surveys revealed that 542 people understand and speak the language somewhat, and 734 people identify themselves as "learning speakers". This amounts to about 24% of the Gitxsan people having any knowledge of their traditional language. Upon further analysis of the survey, it shows that all of the people who spoke *Gitxsanimaax* fluently are aged 55 and over. Furthermore, only 1.3% of the members who "understand and speak the language somewhat" are under the age of 45. More than 30% of "learning speakers" are under the age of 19 (FPHLCC n.d.-a).

The Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl ("House of Wisdom") Nisga'a Institute conducted a language needs assessment in their communities in 2011. Of the 5,778 Nisga'a citizens surveyed, there were 1,107 fluent speakers of *Nisga'amx*. The assessment revealed that 2,572 people understood and spoke the language somewhat, and 752 people identified themselves as "learning speakers". This amounts to about 77% of the Nisga'a people having any knowledge of their traditional language. Analysis of the survey results show that only 16% of fluent speakers are under the age of 55, and less than 1% are under the age of 45. However, 65% of partially fluent speakers were 45 and under. However, a notable 90% of learning speakers are under the age of 19 (FPHLCC n.d.-b), which is indicative of the commitment of Nisga'a Nation to teach *Nisga'amx* in their schools. School District 92, established in 1977, was the first Aboriginal-run school district in Canada. The school is bilingual, with education in English and *Nisga'amx* (Nisga'a Tribal Council, Fiegehen, and Rose 1993).

The Nisga'a Social Econmic, Resource Use, and Cultural Survey, conducted in 2011, noted that of the 405 respondents, 72 (17.8%) understood *Nisga'amx* completely with 42 (10.4%) able to speak *Nisga'amx* completely; 28 respondents (6.9%) could write and read the language completely. The survey results, as opposed to those found in the language needs assessment, indicate that the majority of respondents (65%) have limited ability to understand, speak, read, or write *Nisga'amx*. Nisga'a citizens living on Nisga'a Lands have a comparatively higher comprehension of *Nisga'amx* compared to those living off Nisga'a Lands.

There are various sources which have estimated the number of people who speak Tahltan. The TCC (2006) asserted that there were 55 people in Tahltan territory that spoke the language fluently. Of the 55 people who spoke Tahltan, 53 were above the age of 65, and only two were younger than 50. An additional seven of the Tahltan speakers lived outside of Tahltan territory, and included three non-Tahltan linguists.

Both the Iskut and Tahltan bands conducted language needs assessments in 2010. Of the 2,212 registered members of the Tahltan and Iskut communities, there were 99 fluent speakers of Tahltan. Nearly 190 people understood and spoke the language somewhat, and 252 people identified themselves as "learning speakers". This amounted to 24% of the Tahltan people having any knowledge of their traditional language in 2010 (FPHLCC n.d.-a). The Iskut First Nation, notably, reported 95% of the fluent speakers of the Tahltan language, with 89% of these being over the age of 55. Nearly all of the Tahltan Indian Band (98%), on the other hand, reported that they do not speak or understand the language. However, 99% of all "learning speakers" within Tahltan Nation were under the age of 19, which is indicative of language revitalization efforts in Tahltan schools (FPHLCC n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

4.3.4.3 Legends and Stories

Tsetsaut

Every Subarctic group of the Cordillera had oral traditions about the nature of the universe and the beings within it. Each told of a trickster-transformer or culture hero who changed the world and its inhabitants to the state in which the recent Aboriginal groups knew it. He often put the heavenly bodies in position, altered geography, killed off or reduced in size giant man-eating animals, and saw to it that people would be able to eat, talk, and give birth in human fashion. People believed that animals and a great many other natural phenomena were inhabited by powerful spirits and that dwarves, giants, and other superhuman creatures lived in the world (McLellan and Denniston 1981).

Boas (1896, 1897) recorded many traditions of the Tsetsaut during his brief time with them. He stated that their traditions resemble very much in character those collected from the Athapaskan tribes of the Mackenzie basin, but also greatly influenced by Tlingit tales. 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 1895b). 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.

Tsimshian

There are two types of Tsimshian oral traditions: those that were known generally and could be told by anyone, such as the Raven cycle (Boas 1916), and those, called *adaawk*, that were owned by a particular *wilp* and could be told only by a trained and authorized *wilp* member. The *adaawk* are historical in nature, telling of the original home of the lineage ancestors, their migration to and possession of their present territories, and their acquisition of power crests from supernatural ancestors (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

The Raven cycle tells of the exploits of *wigat* (“great person” or “giant”), a trickster and shape-changer. One of his accomplishments was the liberation of light from a box in the Sky Chief’s house. He also brought fire to humans and taught them the use of the oolichan rake. He was not a Creator per se; however, he put the world in its present order (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Nisga’a oral traditions speak of *K’amligihahlhaahl*, a Creator or Supreme Being, pure in spirit (School District 92 1996). *K’amligihahlhaahl* was evoked to ask for help when in dire need. The culture hero *wigat* was also known as *Txemsem*, and he was summoned by *K’amligihahlhaahl* to help the Nisga’a by making the Nass Valley a better place to live. He was thought to have made the mountains and rivers abundant in food, and to have brought fire to the Nisga’a. Because of the importance of *Txemsem* the Nisga’a are also known as the *Gitxsitxemsem* (or “people of Txemsem"; Sterritt et al. 1998b).

Tahltan

Tahltan oral literature was usually recited in a recreational context, but it was overtly moralistic, and was used for making topical points. The competitiveness of the Tahltan was sometimes manifested in storytelling contests to see which side knew the most stories. Many of the stories are in the Northwest Coast tradition (for example, the Raven cycle), but the inland setting and interior origins of the Tahltan are also reflected. Although most of the original man-animals were destroyed in a great flood, there were animal spirits that could appear in human form. Game Mother controlled the animals, and would recall the game if hunters lacked respect (MacLachlan 1981).

4.4 TRADITIONAL SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY

4.4.1 Annual Cycle

4.4.1.1 Tsetsaut

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. Boas (1895b) makes it clear that the Western Tsetsaut economy was based on inland game hunting. Their principal food was the marmot, though they also relied on mountain goat, bear, and porcupine. In more recent times, species that the Skii km Lax Ha people are reported to have hunted and trapped include caribou, moose, grizzly bear, black bear, grouse, rabbit, beaver, marten, wolverine, fisher, muskrat, and groundhog (Rescan 2013a).

Only in the summer when they descended the rivers to Portland Inlet did the Western Tsetsaut take any salmon, drying their excess catch for winter use. 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. Salmon, steelhead and trout continue to be important to the Skii km Lax Ha (Rescan 2013a).

4.4.1.2 Tsimshian

At the end of winter before the river ice breaks up (usually February to April), the main activity of all Tsimshian groups was fishing for oolichan (also known as eulachon or candlefish; scientific name, *Thaleichthys pacificus*) on the Lower Nass River. The fish were either dried or processed into a nutritious oil or “grease” that was highly prized. The Tsimshian monopoly on the grease trade brought them wealth. A large proportion of the winter village travelled down the Nass River to fish for oolichan, then returned to their winter villages and stored the grease and oolichan in their winter houses (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

For the Gitxsan, no food outranked oolichan in prestige or food value. The preparation of oolichan is a speciality of the Nisga’a, and the Gitxsan traded oolichan with the Nisga’a for prepared dried fish, meat, tanned hides, and soapberries (People of 'Ksan 1980). The Gitxsan were also known to fish for oolichan beside the Nisga’a at various spots on Fishery Bay. There was so much oolichan that there were no restrictions placed on access by neighbouring Aboriginal groups. They were even known to share nets with each other (Daly 2005)

As the salmon began to enter the rivers in early summer, people moved to the traditional fishing sites where seasonal camps were maintained. The sites for fishing were under the control of the houses and were managed by the chiefs. Also during the summer, women were active in harvesting berries from house territories, beginning with the early-ripening salmonberries and continuing through the summer until the wild crab-apples and high-bush cranberries could be gathered and stored in the autumn. The collecting of large stores of berries involved the congregation of groups at productive berry batches, a sustained harvesting effort, and processing of berries into large dried berry cakes which were then transported back to village sites for winter provisioning (L.M.J. Gottesfeld 1994). Blueberries and huckleberries could also be preserved in grease. Various roots and shoots were collected for fresh consumption, particularly early in the season. Among the Nisga’a and Gitxsan, certain plant foods such as soapberry were available in greater abundance and were processed for trade with Coastal Tsimshian groups, as well as for local use (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Bulbs such as wild onions and “Indian rice” (Northern Rice Root or *Fritilleria cmaschatcensis*) were ready to be harvested toward the end of summer, though the digging season varied considerably from group to group (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Early autumn (September/October) was a period of intense activity, including the preservation of the major supplies of salmon. Chum salmon was ideal for preservation as the fat content was lower and was less likely to go rancid; these salmon were smoke-dried in great quantities. The failure of a salmon run could result in a winter of starvation. However, since each house controlled several different fishing stations, access to all five salmon species (chinook, sockeye, coho, chum, and pink) provided some insurance against famine (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

After the supply of preserved salmon had been safely stored, the territories for hunting game were used. Hunting groups were smaller than fishing groups. Permission to use hunting territories was granted by the house chief. The Gitxsan and Nisg̲a'a, whose territories were further inland, had a greater emphasis on land hunting and a somewhat greater variety of game available (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Mountain goats, deer, bear, and caribou (if present) were the species most commonly hunted by the Nisg̲a'a and Gitxsan. More recently, moose have displaced caribou and deer populations; they are hunted in the fall and winter, and contribute significantly to the present-day Nisg̲a'a diet. Beaver, porcupine, rabbit, and hoary marmot were hunted as well. Seal and sea lions were taken at spots along the coast by the Nisg̲a'a. Birds hunted seasonally included grouse, ducks and geese, ptarmigan, and sawn (McNeary 1976; People of 'Ksan 1980).

The Gitxsan trapped beaver, mink, marten, fisher, fox, wolf, coyote, weasel, and otter for their fur (People of 'Ksan 1980; M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The marmot or groundhog was of particular importance for the Nisg̲a'a, as they were used for making robes and were given as ceremonial gifts. Other fur-bearing animals trapped for their pelts included fisher, marten, mink, and weasel (McNeary 1976).

Sporadic hunting was an option through the winter, but most people spent the season in permanent winter villages. Shellfish and seaweed, which were not available in the Nisg̲a'a and Gitxsan areas, were obtained by trade with coastal groups. Many individuals were occupied by weaving and carving in the winter months, and midwinter was the period when most ritual and ceremonial events were held. Potlatches and secret society dances were only held during the winter. The long period of relative inactivity was also a favoured time for gambling and storytelling (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

Daly (2005) describes the annual round of the Gitxsan in particular. As recently as the 1930s, around the end of April, Gitxsan went to their fishing sites to fish for spring salmon and steelhead and to ready themselves for summer fishing by cutting wooden poles for their weirs. Burning of berry patches and insect-infested stands of trees also occurred in early spring, as well as beaver hunting. In summer and fall, the Gitxsan fished for salmon; gathered berries, bark, and roots; hunted; and trapped birds and animals. Women in the western villages would pick blue huckleberries and blueberries at traditional sites in the mountains for several weeks. In fall, hunters tended to make short trips based out of the village. The feast season began in late fall and at the beginning of winter. Trapping began again with snowfall and intensified in January. Most Gitxsan would trap and hunt in the late winter after a period of feasting. Steelhead was principally caught in winter through the ice (People of 'Ksan 1980). Char, Dolly Varden, and whitefish would also be taken (Daly 2005).

4.4.1.3 Tahltan

The Tahltan were traditionally semi-nomadic in their yearly round of subsistence activities, with a pattern of aggregation at summer and winter village sites, located in areas of abundant and reliable resources, and dispersal into smaller family groups during spring and early fall (Albright 1984). Before 1874, the Tahltan dispersed at about the beginning of October to their hunting grounds, usually in groups of two families. The summer season (June to September) at the fishing stations was marked

by feasts, visiting, and trading. The climax of the season was the great trading rendezvous with the Tlingit in September, with a sub-peak of trading activity in June (MacLachlan 1981).

From mid-June to mid-August, approximately 100 to 150 people, comprising 4 to 6 extended families, congregated at permanent fishing villages. Village sites were generally located at major creek and river confluences and at outlets of lakes where large runs of salmon passed on their way to spawning grounds, where they could be easily caught in weirs and basket traps. Summer was also a time of ceremonies, feasting, and trading (Albright 1984).

Generally, fishing occurred along the Stikine River and its tributaries, in areas that allowed for fishing camps to assemble (i.e., between the Tahltan and Tuya Rivers; Emmons 1911; Friesen 1985). Anadromous or migratory fish, which came in their respective cycles into Tahltan territory to spawn, included several varieties of salmon, including pink, chum, coho, chinook (or king or spring), and sockeye as well as steelhead trout. Most of the fish came up the Stikine or Iskut River and followed tributaries back to the river and creek beds of their origin, including the Tahltan, Nahlin, and Shesley rivers (School District 87 n.d.).

In mid-August families dispersed from the large village sites to the smaller seasonal camps in alpine areas. These camps were located near the heads of the many small creek valleys of rivers such as the Tahltan River, Klappan River, or Mess Creek. Each extended family of about 25 people occupied a separate camp for a period of two-to-four weeks. Smaller hunting parties travelled out from these based camps to more alpine areas where temporary camps of one-to-several days' duration were made (Albright 1984).

The Tahltan were, by origin and preference, exploiters of land resources and eaters of big game-caribou, moose, bison (in the northeast portion of their territory), black bear, grizzly bear, mountain sheep, and mountain goat. Smaller animals, such as beaver, muskrat, and marmot were also taken (MacLachlan 1981). Emmons (1911) noted that Tahltan people greatly valued the caribou whose habitat was found to the north and east of Dease Lake where moss was available. Mountain goat was prized for its meat and hair, and required great skill and knowledge to hunt in the challenging alpine terrains (School District 87 n.d.). Historically, bear was a regular part of the Tahltan diet (Albright 1984).

The Tahltan exploited marmots in early fall, from mid-August to mid-September, when animals had accumulated stores of fat just prior to hibernation. As many as 200 to 300 marmots and ground squirrels were split and dried for storage during a fall hunt (Albright 1984). Among the wide variety of carnivores that occur in the Stikine area, lynx was the only species that was traditionally used as a source of food, and even its consumption was restricted by many regulations (J. Teit 1956). Marten, fisher, and fox were captured for their fur only (Albright 1984).

Major fall and winter camps were located within the protection of forested valleys, where firewood was abundant, and in the vicinity of caribou yarding areas or migration routes where fences were constructed. Abundant resources at these locations and the need for cooperation in capturing and processing animals allowed larger groups of 50 to 100 people to come together. In some localities major village sites may have been occupied both in summer, during salmon fishing season, and in mid-winter (Albright 1984).

During midwinter, when weather conditions were bad and hunting poor, stores of preserved and dried food were relied upon extensively. Fresh supplies of food were hunted whenever weather conditions allowed, including moose, caribou, beaver, hare, grouse, and porcupine, as well as ice fishing in the lakes (Albright 1984).

A variety of resources became abundant and available again in the spring. In late April families dispersed to smaller seasonal camps located near good fishing lakes and streams. Large numbers of trout and grayling were fished from the lakes. Birds were also hunted in the spring and summer months. All bird species were of the greatest economic importance to the Tahltan. Blue, spruce, and ruffled grouse are readily available and easy to locate during spring mating season when the male "drumming" can be heard from a distance. All three species of ptarmigan in this area were also harvested. Ducks and geese are said to be fat and good eating in the spring when coming from spring feeding grounds (Albright 1984).

Roots, leaves, tender shoots and stems, and cambium of several different plant species were all gathered and eaten fresh in spring. Large quantities of berries were gathered and preserved for winter use. Several species of migratory waterfowl were abundant in April and May in the many small lakes and marshes. Bears were also hunted in spring after coming out of their dens. Beaver were hunted in the small lakes and tributary streams. The trapping of large numbers of beaver in spring helped to keep streams open to spawning grounds of salmon and freshwater fish. Beaver were split and dried whole over an open fire (Albright 1984).

4.4.2 Subsistence Strategies and Technologies

4.4.2.1 Hunting and Trapping

Large Game

Besides lances and clubs, the Tsetsaut employed the sinew-backed bow when hunting large game (Duff 1981). Sheep, goat, and caribou were hunted by the Tahltan in alpine areas. Bears were taken with snares set in the general vicinity of the camp, although they were also killed with a bow and arrow wherever encountered. Moose and goats were taken with snares set along their trails, or by stalking with bows and arrows, in early fall when the animals had the highest fat content (Albright 1984).

The snare and deadfall, seconded by spear and bow and arrow, were the most productive hunting tools among the Tahltan. The most effective techniques with caribou involved channelling the herds with brush surrounds of stake-and-brush fences at suitable locations. Natural impediments, including deep, soft snow, were also extensively exploited. Groups of men could then slaughter several animals at one time with spears or bows and arrows (MacLachlan 1981).

Small Game

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 1895b).

The Tahltan used snares for marmots, ground squirrels, and ptarmigans. Beaver were hunted in the small lakes and tributary streams (Albright 1984). Teit (1956) notes that the Tahltan captured foxes by means of hide snares; the skins of foxes were used for robes and bedding. Marten, fisher, and wolverine were captured by means of deadfall, and their skins were used in making warm winter robes (J. Teit 1919, 1956).

4.4.2.2 Fishing

The Gitxsan were known to use spears, gaffs, dip-nets, weirs, and basket traps to catch fish in the past; today, gaffs, dip-nets, and gill-nets are used (Daly 2005). Beach seining is also done in some years as part of a selective, in-river commercial fishery. Fish wheels have also been used recently. Oolichan were fished from canoes in shallow areas of the Nass River using a *k'idaa* or oolichan rake (Nisg̲a'a Tribal Council and Wilp Wil̲xo'oskwhl Nisg̲a'a 1995).

Tahltan prehistoric fishing employed traps, gill nets, barbed spears, toggle spears, and gaff hooks, with large traps and weirs built and tended by men at the major salmon fisheries (MacLachlan 1981).

4.4.2.3 Plant and Berry Gathering

Tsetsaut

The Tsetsaut used cedar bark 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 (Boas 1895b). Berries traditionally collected (and still collected today by the Skii km Lax Ha) include huckleberries, blueberries, and cranberries. Soapberries in particular were an important plant resource, with harvesting success related to weather and temperature (Rescan 2009b).

Tsimshian

Berries were the most important plant-derived foods for the Nisga'a, including huckleberry and bilberry. Berries picked in the late summer and fall were dried and preserved in oil for winter use. Several varieties of greens and roots were harvested in the spring and early summer; however, these were usually eaten fresh and not preserved (McNeary 1976).

A wide variety of berries were harvested and preserved, including salmonberries, strawberries, soapberries, raspberries, huckleberries, and blueberries. Other plants gathered included Labrador Tea, cow parsnip, skunk cabbage, wild celery, and seaweed (School District No. 92 1996). Saskatoon berries, hazelnuts, chokecherries, rosehips, gooseberries, squash berries, raspberries, thimbleberries, and soapberries were among those eaten by the Gitxsan (Rescan 2009a). They also collected wild crab-apples, swamp cranberries, Saskatoon berries, and soapberries in the valleys. Thorn-berry and rosehips were also taken (Daly 2005).

Prior to laws put in place in the 1930s and 40s, the Gitxsan used fire throughout their traditional territory as a management tool to enhance the growth of low-bush blueberries and black huckleberries (L.M.J. Gottesfeld 1994). Soapberries may also have been managed by burning at least in some locations. Given the low caloric value and small size of individual fresh berries, the location and maintenance of large and productive berry patches with predictable harvests was necessary, so that enough fruit could be collected and processed to be worth the time involved in travel, picking and processing the fruit. One of the duties of the house chief was to decide when and where to burn berry patches.

Today, people collect berries in clear-cut areas opened by forestry and along roadsides (Daly 2005). Moreover, Gottesfeld (1994) states that annual spring burning of sites around modern villages continues, largely on reserve lands that are not subject to BC Forest Service regulations. Most burning is now undertaken to clear areas for gardens and to encourage grass growth for forage. Clearing of floodplain sites for gardens may have antecedents in management of floodplain meadows for rice root (*Fritilleria camschatcensis*) bulb production (L.M.J. Gottesfeld 1994), though this plant has not been actively gathered for about 60 years.

Red willow branches and willow bark were used as construction materials (MacDonald 1989), in addition to cedar. Tsimshian baskets that were used for various functions were made of plant fibre from western red cedar, maple, and birch bark (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Of particular importance is the red cedar; the bark was used to make rope, clothing, baskets, and roofing, while the wood was used in fish traps, nets, house construction, poles, masks, bowls, and storage boxes (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; L. M. J. Gottesfeld 1992; Daly 2005). Hemlock and pine cambium were used

as food (People of 'Ksan 1980; L. M. J. Gottesfeld 1992). Dried moss was used for babies' diapers, and protected infants from the cold (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

People of 'Ksan (1980) list many species of plants used for food and medicine. Medicinal plants were generally harvested in summer and in early fall (Daly 2005). Medicinal plants used by the Gitanyow include water lily, skunk cabbage, lodgepole pine, bearberries, and stinging nettles (GHCO 2009). Plants used for medicine were usually boiled in water to make a tea, applied directly on the skin, or mashed and mixed with grease and other ingredients to make a poultice. Devil's club stalks were chopped and boiled in water, which is then drunk as a tea. It was thought to treat lung and digestive system ailments. Finally, pine tree sap was used for cuts, burns and boils (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Tahltan

Plants represented an important part of the Tahltan diet. Green vegetables were gathered mostly in spring time with the emergence of new shoots. Vegetable greens that were collected included wild rhubarb, nettles, lamb's quarter, mountain sorrel, and dandelion. Roots were collected primarily in spring time and sometimes with the aid of a sharp digging stick. Berries that were and still are consumed today in Tahltan territory include raspberries, strawberries, low and high-bush cranberries, low, mid and high-bush blueberries, saskatoons, and soapberries (School District 87 n.d.). Cambium was also consumed as a food, and Teit (1956) has noted that cambium was an important springtime resource. The collection of bark and roots, from a variety of tree species in June was a major activity in which everyone participated (Albright 1984).

The pitch of pine, spruce, and alpine fir was commonly chewed soft, heated on rocks, and used as an antiseptic on open sores and wounds. Bark of spruce and alpine fir was dried, powdered, and used externally to stop bleeding, or the bark was boiled and the tea drunk for chest colds. Spruce needles were crushed and put on bad burns. The pitch of alpine fir was also used for mosquito bites, and smeared around the eyes to prevent snow blindness (Albright 1984).

Branches and berries of juniper were boiled and the tea was used as a tonic for cleansing the liver and blood. The leaves of Labrador Tea were boiled and drunk as a tea for colds. The bark and sap of mountain ash (*Sorbus sitchensis*) were boiled and the decoction drunk for lung troubles. The roots of the water lily (*Nuphar polysepalum*) were mashed and boiled and a poultice was made for congestion and chest pains (Albright 1984).

One of the most popular medicinal plants is *Artemisia telesii*, commonly known as "caribou leaves". The leaves were mashed with a little water, heated on rocks, and used as a poultice on cuts and on open wounds. There are many stories told describing the miraculous healing power of this herb, which is still commonly used today. The leaves were also boiled and the decoction taken internally for infection, colds, and stomach ache (Albright 1984).

The leaves and flowers of yarrow were crushed, heated, and mixed with water into a poultice that was also used on cuts and wounds. In making a poultice with yarrow or caribou leaves these were sometimes mixed with pine or spruce pitch to combine the antiseptic and healing powers for bad wounds (Albright 1984).

4.4.2.4 Butchering, Food Preparation, and Storage

In winter, the Western Tsetsaut lived to a great extent upon meat dried during the summer months, primarily marmot. The meat was mixed with marmot grease, boiled, and preserved in marmot intestine for future use (Boas 1895b). The collection of vast quantities of salmonberries by the Tsetsaut, and their preservation by mixing them with bear grease, was noted in a legend recorded by Boas (1896).

Presently, the Skii km Lax Ha would smoke beaver meat prior to consumption. A beaver would be butchered immediately after it is killed, the meat being removed from the back to the front, to prevent it from tasting gamy (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2009).

The Gitxsan rendered grease from various species, including groundhog, beaver, goats, bear, and salmon. Of particular importance was the oil from oolichan (People of 'Ksan 1980; Daly 2005). *People of 'Ksan* (1980) describes food processing methods for fish, berries, meat, and plants in detail. Of particular importance was dry-smoke salmon. Large quantities of dried salmon were traded in both directions from Gitxsan territory (Daly 2005). The Nisga'a traditionally dried and packed salmon into bentwood boxes to use the salmon as food for the winter (McNeary 1976). Berries were preserved by drying them in the sun or over a small fire (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

Among the Tahltan, larger animals, such as caribou or moose, were skinned and butchered into major body parts at the kill site. Smaller animals were generally brought back to the camp to be dressed. Animals were skinned before cutting them open. The hide of the larger animal was used as a temporary toboggan to transport it back to the camp or village (Albright 1984).

The principal Tahltan methods of cooking food included roasting, baking in hot ashes, and boiling in birch bark baskets with hot stones. Layers of fat from the larger game animals were pounded, boiled, and stored for use in bladders, stomachs, and intestines of large animals. Berries gathered in the late summer and early fall were often mixed with the fat of bear caught at the same time. Berries were most often boiled in birch bark vessels, and then mashed and spread out in bark trays to dry slowly into thin cakes. They were then soaked in water before using (Albright 1984).

4.5 POST-CONTACT HISTORY

Aboriginal peoples enjoyed wide access to the coast, river valleys, and mountains that make up the Study Area before reserves were created in the late 19th and 20th centuries, and before the land was occupied through European settlement and industrial development. The establishment of fur trading posts and mission communities, the incursion of non-Aboriginal commercial fishermen along the Nass and Skeena rivers, and the transition to a wage economy all had a strong influence on traditional land use patterns (W. Duff 1964; Fisher 1977).

4.5.1 The Early Period (1790s to 1857)

The Fur Trade

Captain George Vancouver was the first European to explore Coast Tsimshian waters and sail up the Portland Canal in 1793, but he recorded little information about the Aboriginal people he saw (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). Vancouver mapped the many shoals and channels of the Stikine estuary, but he did not recognize the existence of a large river there.

The sea otter fur trade had an enormous influence on subsequent exploration of the North Pacific Coast. Ship journals indicate that the Stikine delta was visited by various fur trade ships in 1799 (Dawson 1889). The Russian American Company, created in 1799, had a monopoly of the sea otter fur trade on the Pacific Coast north of 55 degrees latitude, which it held until 1839 (Albright 1984). During this period, the coastal tribes' role as middlemen in the trade intensified, and the gradient of power, prestige, and wealth from coast to interior groups steepened (MacLachlan 1981). McClellan (1981) states that the coastal Aboriginal groups almost always prevented the interior groups from trading with Euro-American sea captains.

The Tsimshian built fortifications at Kispiox, Kisgaga'as, Gitlaxt'aamiks, Gitwangak, and Kitselas, probably in response to trading networks that brought European goods into the area in advance of settlement. They were connected by "Grease Trails", 22 of which have been plotted for the Skeena-Nass-Stikine river systems (MacDonald 1984). The fort at Gitwangak was located on a hill a few hundred metres from the Grease Trail connecting the Skeena and Nass rivers (MacDonald 1989).

The Gitxsan were in contact with Europeans at Fort McLeod and Fort St. James during the first decade of the 19th century; however, the documented history of the Gitxsan and Nisga'a began in earnest with the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) at Fort Simpson on the Nass River in 1831. (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The Gitxsan's fortuitous location provided a favourable position to trade with groups both on the coast and in the interior (Daly 2005).

By the 1830s, the sea otter fur trade was coming to a close; the continuous commercial demand for sea otter, and the ability of the Aboriginal groups to hunt the animal with increased efficiency, led to its virtual extinction. Even before the depletion of the sea otter, however, the fur trade was shifting to land mammals, especially the beaver. European technology, such as traps and guns, was of greater use to Aboriginal people in trapping these animals (Cole and Darling 1990).

In an attempt to reach the Stikine fur trade from the interior, John McLeod set out from Fort Halkett on the Liard River in 1834, discovered Dease Lake and followed Aboriginal trails to the Stikine River. However, it was not until 1838 that Robert Campbell made his way from Fort Halkett to the Stikine and was the first non-Aboriginal to make contact with the Tahltan. His relations with them, however, were unfriendly, and he was forced back to Fort Halkett in the winter of 1839 (Albright 1984).

Intensified trade between the Tlingit and Tahltan brought about increased intermarriage between the two groups, the use of Tlingit as the language of trade, and the adoption of many aspects of Tlingit social customs and organization, including displays of wealth and status (Albright 1984).

Introduction of Diseases

A number of new diseases were introduced by Europeans against which the Aboriginal groups in this area had no immunity. Smallpox, influenza, measles, and venereal and other infectious diseases made their impact almost simultaneously with contact, perhaps indirectly even before contact. Smallpox seems first to have struck the Northwest Coast during the 1770s. The second smallpox epidemic (1836 to 1838) reached the Tsimshian people through Fort Simpson; by the beginning of 1837 it had run its course in Tsimshian territory. HBC officials estimated that the 1836 to 1838 epidemic claimed one-third of the population of the north coast (Cole and Darling 1990). Measles was present at Fort Simpson in 1848. About 10% of the Aboriginal peoples around Fort Simpson were estimated to have died in the outbreak (Cole and Darling 1990).

MacLachlan (1981) estimates that the Tahltan population had been reduced by as much as 75% during the 19th century. An epidemic of smallpox (perhaps the same as the 1836 to 1838 epidemic among the Tsimshian) arrived in Tahltan territory between 1847 and 1849. Their population decreased from between 1,000 and 1,500 before the epidemic, to not more than 300 to 325 after the epidemic. The rapid decline in population meant that there was not enough manpower to maintain the more elaborate fishing stations at villages in the Stikine Canyon, so that at least two of these fell into disuse. External pressures on territory increased as coastal Aboriginal groups, Tsimshian as well as Tlingit, pushed more aggressively into the interior.

4.5.2 The Gold Rush Period and Colonization (1857 to 1880)

William Duncan, an Anglican missionary and lay preacher, arrived at Fort Simpson in 1857 and, in 1862, led a group of about 50 converts to establish a village at Metlakatla. Soon after they departed, smallpox hit Fort Simpson, and others followed Duncan to the new village (Wilson Duff 1964; M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The 1862 smallpox epidemic first reached BC through Victoria and was transmitted by Aboriginal groups returning home to northern BC. No fewer than 500 Tsimshian people at Fort Simpson were killed in May of that year; however, inhabitants of the missionary settlement of Metlakatla were spared infection due to the vaccinating efforts of William Duncan (Cole and Darling 1990).

Missions to the Nisga'a and Gitxsan people quickly followed on the success of Metlakatla. In 1864 Reverand Robert Doolan, of the Church Missionary Society, founded a mission in the vicinity of present-day Laxgalts'ap (Greenville). Kincolith (Gingolx) was established in 1867 with people from the Greenville area. Greenville itself was founded in 1872 by Reverand W. S. Green, with inhabitants of the Nisga'a village of Gitiks.

The appearance of white prospectors in the Skeena River valley had an immediate effect upon one Gitxsan village in June of 1872. The careless tending of a campfire by a group of prospectors near the village of Gitsegukla led to the complete destruction of the village by fire (including 12 long houses and 12 totem poles). As a result, the Gitxsan blockaded the Skeena River, preventing all traders and prospectors from going upriver. They demanded compensation from the Provincial government for the loss of their property. Eventually, a settlement was reached at Metlakatla in August of that year with Lieutenant Governor Joseph Trutch (Kitsegukla Band 1979; Galois 1992).

Northern BC remained almost totally isolated until the Cassiar gold rush. Then in 1873 to 1874, the population of non-Aboriginals suddenly ballooned from a handful of prospectors to 2,000 or more. The village of Gitanmaax became the site of the Skeena River trading town of Skeena Forks (later Hazelton). A trading post had been established by the HBC at Hazelton in 1872 (Williams 1982). Regular steamboats were instituted in 1874 to service the gold mining activity, running from Wrangell, Alaska to Telegraph Creek, BC. The first steamboats placed on the Skeena River could not pass through the Kitselas Canyon, so Aboriginal canoeists were hired to handle and ship freight from Port Essington on the coast to Hazelton. In 1875, the Provincial government bought and improved the horse trail from Telegraph Creek to Dease Lake to further ease transportation problems in the area (Kitsegukla Band 1979; McClellan 1981; MacDonald 1989).

With the entry of BC into Confederation in 1871, Aboriginal peoples became the administrative responsibility of the federal government, and during the next two decades the Tsimshian villages became "bands" under the *Indian Act* (1985). Reserves were established for each band at traditional village, burial, and subsistence sites, and the bands came under the administration of Indian Agents (Inglis et al. 1990). In 1884, the *Indian Act* (1985) was amended to prohibit major Aboriginal ceremonies, in particular the potlatch and the winter dance (Fisher 1977). By 1895, the Northwest Coast Indian Agency had been created by the Department of Indian Affairs and included the Nisga'a and Coast Tsimshian among others. The Gitxsan were included with the Carrier ethnolinguistic group in the Babine and Upper Skeena Indian Agency (Kew 1990).

In 1874 Reverand Thomas Crosby, a Methodist, went to Port Simpson. Within a few years, Port Simpson resembled Metlakatla as a model Christian community. By 1878, according to Dawson (1880), most of the original totem poles at Port Simpson had been cut down as missionary influence spread among the people.

Although Tlingit control of the Stikine River had been weakened before 1874, it was broken by the Cassiar gold rush, which brought thousands of non-Aboriginal people through and into the region (MacLachlan 1981). In about 1875, the remnants of several Tahltan bands, decimated by repeated

epidemics, coalesced into a single unit or "tribe", with a paramount chief. They built Tahltan Village with European-style log houses. The subdivisions of the Tahltan, having lost much of their territorial rights, became groups defined almost entirely by descent (MacLachlan 1981).

Further up the Stikine River, a segment of the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne (T'lotona[8] or "Long Grass Indians") had replaced the Talakoten Tahltan, who had moved permanently to Tahltan Village. The Bear Lake Tsek'ehne merged with the Tlepanoten Tahltan in the Spatsizi and Klappan river regions. These people ranged the Groundhog Country at the sources of the Stikine, Nass, and Skeena rivers. When the HBC withdrew from Fort Connelly (near Bear Lake) in about 1890, this group settled at Caribou Hide and *Me'etsendane*, both of which were hunting camps along a well-worn trail between Telegraph Creek and the Finlay River. More recent accounts indicate that members of the Eastern Tsetsaut also merged with this group at the beginning of the 20th Century (Sterritt et al. 1998b ;see section 4.6.11).

In 1880 Reverend William H. Collison, who had assisted Duncan at Metlakatla since 1873, was sent to Hazelton. Another mission in the Gitxsan area was founded north of Kispiox in 1879 by Robert Tomlinson, who had moved the mission founded at Greenville to Aiyansh in 1878 (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990; Inglis et al. 1990). In the 1900s, many Gitxsan people from the Skeena River watershed moved to Aiyansh and its mission (Barbeau 1929).

With the establishment of Christianity in the village of Gitsegukla, a dispute arose among those who had converted and those who maintained traditional beliefs. The Christianized villagers were encouraged by the missionaries to quit participating in feasts and to give up many other customs such as traditional dancing. In 1898 this eventually led to a rift with those affiliated with the United Church moving to Carnaby (or Siits'eet'ixs) and those affiliated with the Salvation Army moving to Andimaul (or Taxh'loauliitxw'). At Carnaby, a church and a two-story mission house were erected by the United Church, the latter being used as a residential school for children from the surrounding areas. By 1924, however, nearly all of the members of Gitsegukla had returned to live there (Kitsegukla Band 1979).

4.5.3 Changes to Traditional Economy and Settlement Patterns (1876 to 1946)

The first salmon cannery was established along the Skeena River in 1876, to be followed by a number of others (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990). The first cannery operated on the Nass River in 1881 (Inglis et al. 1990). The labour of the local Aboriginal groups was sought by the new industry, and a pattern of summers spent residing in company houses was quickly established (M. M. Halpin and M. Seguin 1990).

The technology of commercial fishing was developed from the expertise of Aboriginal peoples, and it was their equipment that helped start and build the industry. Especially important was their knowledge of fish movement and small boat navigation in the uncharted tidal channels of the coast. Aboriginal women were skilled in fish cleaning and preservation and needed little or no training to work in canneries and salteries. Additionally, Aboriginal peoples were accustomed to traveling in family groups to fishing stations and to working and living together cooperatively in makeshift camps. These capacities suited perfectly the labour requirements of the cannery operators (Kew 1990).

Of additional significance was the fact that this new economic activity did relatively little to impede Aboriginal peoples' capabilities to obtain salmon for their own food supply. In fact, sail boats (and later motorboats), factory-made nets, new techniques of preservation by salting and "canning" in jars, as

[8] McIllwraith (2007) citing Iskut people states that T'lotona is the same as Talakoten (Tl'ogot'ine). The Iskut people say that the Tlebanot'ine (Tlepanoten) were known as the Klappan River group and the Tl'ogot'ine (Talakoten or T'lotona) were known as the Spatsizi group in more recent times. In other words, T'lotona more rightly belongs to the Tahltan and not the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne.

well as a multitude of other innovations, only enabled greater efficiency of subsistence activities. Moreover, there remained abundant fish for local use, particularly coho, pink, and chum, which were in little demand by the canneries and often ran abundantly after the seasonal peak of sockeye runs and commercial fishing (Kew 1990).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Tsimshian villages enjoyed affluence fed by income from fishing, trapping, freighting, and commerce. However, technological changes such as the introduction of gasoline-powered fishing boats, and the growth of large non-Aboriginal populations at Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Hazelton after World War I (WWI), brought about a centralization in the economy of the area, drawing employment and capital away from the villages (Inglis et al. 1990).

Hunting, trapping, and fishing remained basic to the Tahltan subsistence from 1874 through to the middle of the 20th century. In addition, the Tahltan were drawn into the wider market, wage, and welfare economy. Guiding, packing, and wrangling for white prospectors and sportsmen, and government jobs, became wage sources (Muir 1917).

By the beginning of the 20th century, Tsimshian villages were organized units in which the Aboriginal kinship and political systems, and the Canadian-influenced institutions and organizations, fit together in a community structure. Traditional chiefs and leading men were elected to the village councils or, if they were not, exerted much influence over elected councillors (Inglis et al. 1990). The Gitxsan community of Glen Vowell, for example, was established around 1900 as a Salvation Army village by people from Kispiox (Inglis et al. 1990).

In 1896, Reverand F. M. T. Palgrave established an Anglican mission at Tahltan Village. Palgrave was replaced by T. P. W. Thorman in 1903, who built a mission house and church for the Tahltan. The Presbyterian minister and doctor F. Inglis arrived in Telegraph Creek that same year (Albright 1984). Following WWI, Tahltan Village was gradually abandoned in favour of Telegraph Creek, where a school for Tahltan children was established in 1906 and a regular school district in about 1915 (MacLachlan 1981).

With the completion of the Grand Trunk Railway from the coast to Hazelton in 1912, the entire shipping and transport business changed forever in the Skeena Valley. As the train was much faster and cheaper, it quickly replaced the Skeena riverboats for the transport of both freight and passengers between the coast and interior. Cannery workers in particular went to the lower Skeena by train to work in the canneries during the summer (Kitsegukla Band 1979). Trails that used to be travelled on foot were widened and cleared to enable travel by horse-pulled wagons purchased from nearby trading posts.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the number of canneries declined on the northwest coast from 76 to 44. Aboriginal incomes were severely cut as a result. The continued reliance on subsistence activities by Aboriginal peoples may well have reduced the relative effect of the economic decline on the coast. With the onset of World War II, the economic picture changed dramatically. Aboriginal people benefited from the demand for labour and from the low prices placed on confiscated Japanese-Canadian fishing boats. This period marked the peak of Aboriginal participation as owner-operators in the fishing industry (Kew 1990).

During World War II, supplies for the construction of the Alaska Highway were shipped to Telegraph Creek for trucking to the highway. Many Tahltan people were involved in the construction and freightage (MacLachlan 1981).

4.5.4 The Modern Period (1946 to the Present)

After the war, Aboriginal peoples became concentrated in the fishing, logging, and sawmill industries as casual, unskilled, and seasonal workers (Kew 1990). Tsimshian fisherman have, since the 1930s,

faced stiff competition from better-financed and better-equipped non-Aboriginal fishermen, and have suffered from a lack of interest among the cannery companies in the small, company-owned gill netters that provided a major part of Aboriginal participation in the fishery. In the late 1940s, logging commenced in the Nass region, accelerated by the construction of a road from Terrace in 1958 and by the creation of logging camps (Inglis et al. 1990).

The village of New Aiyansh (Gitlaxt'aamiks) was created in the early 1960s and was connected by road to Terrace. The previous village, across the river, had been flooded out, and the move was made to facilitate access to services (Inglis et al. 1990).

The opening of the Cassiar asbestos mine in 1951, and construction of the gravel highway connecting it with Stewart on the coast (300 miles to the south), provided temporary as well as some permanent employment for the Tahltan. As the road became more and more practical for the transportation of goods, the Stikine saw its last days as a transportation route to the interior. River boats stopped running on the Stikine in 1972 (Albright 1984).

Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o, traditional Gitxsan villages further up the Skeena River, were abandoned around 1949 and 1939 respectively (Inglis et al. 1990). Due to population decline and non-Aboriginal settlement along the Skeena River (which began in earnest following the construction of the railway in 1914), Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o members moved southwards to Kispiox and Gitanmaax, where they have, over the past century, integrated their respective houses and clans from the northern villages into the interclan relations of these villages. During feasts, however, they continue to be recognized as descendants of their village of origin (Inglis et al. 1990; Daly 2005).

By 1932 the Iskut people (consisting of Bear Lake Tsek'ehne, Tlepanoten Tahltan, and Eastern Tsetsaut peoples), who resided in Caribou Hide and *Me'etsendane*, were trading regularly at Telegraph Creek, and in 1952 they settled across the river from the town (known historically as "Iskut Commonage"). In 1962, this group, accompanied by a missionary, withdrew to Eddontenajon Village on Kinaskan Lake, reportedly to minimize unnecessary contact with Euro-American civilization (MacLachlan 1981; McIlwraith 2007). This group is now known as the Iskut First Nation.

4.6 ETHNOHISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF EVENTS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW STUDY AREA

The ethnohistory of the Study Area includes that of the pre-contact Aboriginal peoples that lived throughout the region: the Tsetsaut, the Tsimshian, and the Tahltan. Prior to European contact, all three ethnographic groups engaged in warfare, migration, and intermarriage in the region, and territory changed hands on occasion. Over time, the traditional territory of each group fluctuated in response to a variety of influences including encroachment by other nations, trade or social ties with neighbours, and the influence of the fur trade.

4.6.1 Disclaimer

The Study Area, which includes the headwater regions of the Nass, Skeena, and Stikine rivers, is in an area known colloquially as the "Groundhog Country". This area is unique in that the oral histories surrounding it are quite detailed and have been meticulously recorded[9]. One drawback of an oral

[9] Partly due to necessity, as the *adaawk* literally "went on trial", being utilized and also derided as evidence in the *Delgamuukw* case (see 4.2.3.4). Please refer to Daly (2005) and Sterritt et al. (1998) for a more complete discussion of the Gitxsan/Gitanyow *adaawk* and its usage in modern ethnography and Aboriginal politics.

history, however, is that each Aboriginal group with competing interests in an area have their own versions of it and have used it to advance their own claims or refute those of other groups. Despite assurances from Aboriginal groups that only certain people are permitted to narrate and interpret an oral history to ensure accuracy, discrepancies have nevertheless crept into the dialogue surrounding the Groundhog Country, as evidenced by the overlapping and competing assertions to ownership of these territories.

Where possible, an attempt has been made to connect the stories that make up the collective oral history for this region to determine where there is overlap or agreement on chronology and loci for events. This effort is not intended to provide an opinion or conclusion as to the validity of any oral history. Rather, it is meant to provide insight into the possible use and/or possession of the region by various Aboriginal groups over time. Figure 4.6-1 is a map of the places identified in this ethnohistorical analysis.

4.6.2 Eastern Tsetsaut, Gitanyow, and Gitxsan Progenitors

Sterritt et al. (1998b) present a detailed account of the *adaawk* (oral history) of the village of Gitanyow, and of the Gitxsan villages of Galdo'o, Kispiox, and Kisgaga'as. He states that all of the houses of Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o, as well as certain houses of the Gitanyow, trace their ancestry back to early Raven and Wolf Clan peoples who lived on the upper Nass and Skeena rivers. One of the earliest settlements was Gitangasx, on the Skeena River just south of the headwaters of the Nass, Skeena and Stikine watersheds. He quotes Charles Martin of the Gitxsan house of Wiik'aax, who said that his house originated from here "thousands of years ago", and that they were originally called Laxgitangasx ("people of wild rice"). David Gunanoot identified the location of Gitangasx as along the Skeena River near the 4th Cabin along the old Telegraph Trail (UBCLDC n.d.). Many of the Wolf and Raven Clan houses were thought to have originated from the villages of Gitangasx, Gitwinhlt'uutsxwhl'aks (which Sterritt places at Blackwater or Damdochax Lake), and Ts'imanluuskeexs[10] (which Sterritt places along the Bell-Irving River near Bowser Lake). Some of these houses, according to Sterritt, established themselves further south along the Skeena River and later helped to found the modern-day Gitxsan villages. Of those that remained in the north, some founded the villages of Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o.

The village of Ts'imanluuskeexs, according to Sterritt et al. (1998b), was closely associated with the villages of Gitangasx and Gitwinhlt'uutsxwhl'aks, and also had close ties with their Raven Clan relatives among the Tsetsaut at Meziadin Lake. The Skii km Lax Ha assert, to the contrary, that Ts'imanluuskeexs was a Tsetsaut village, and that it was actually located where Sterritt places Gitwinhlt'uutsxwhl'aks, in the Blackwater River/Lake area (Rescan 2009b). Ambrose (also known as Arthur) Derrick (Gamlaxyeltxw, from Gitanyow) places Ts'imanluuskeexs at Blackwater River, and the mountain Ts'imanluuskeexs in the Groundhog Range (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Fred Good (Gitanyow, Wolf Clan), however, stated that this village was near Bowser Lake (Duff 1950-1978). The reason for the discrepancy is unknown, yet it appears that this entire area was considered collectively as a place where the Gitxsan and Tsetsaut progenitors lived and intermingled. This length of interaction between these Raven and Wolf Clan people in the headwaters of the Nass and Skeena is indefinite, as the interaction appears to extend beyond any period recorded by even the earliest ethnographers.

George Derrick (Tsiiwa, from Gitanyow), in his interview with Barbeau and Beynon (1950a), states that "Tsem'anlusraerhs" (Ts'imanluuskeexs) means "very shallow water where the people could wade and leave their footprints." He stated that the village was simply "in the Groundhog Country (far inland)".

[10] The spellings of these ancient place names can vary dramatically depending on who recorded them. The author has attempted to calibrate them as accurately as possible.

This was a great, populous village, and the men of the village were great hunters. The territory in which the men of the village hunted was rich in game and furs. This village, according to Derrick's *adaawk,* was near a boiling spring that bubbled in shallow water. Further on, however, he differentiates this village from "Gitwindotshlaks" (Gitwinhlt'uutsxwhl'aks), which he says means "People-of-Black-water or Black-water people". However, he also identifies the people living near here as "the tribe of the Stikine, and the Tsetsaut." This *adaawk* further typifies the interrelationships between the Gitxsan and Tsetsaut in the area, though they are still considered distinct groups.

Matthew Gurney and Emma Wright (Eagle Clan, Gitlaxt'aamiks; Barbeau and Beynon 1950a) confirm that two clans of Raven originated from the headwaters of the Stikine River. Fred Johnson (Lelt, from Gitwangak), in his 1923 interview with Beynon, describes that "in very olden times, the [Raven] people lived most of their lives at Meziadin Lake and towards the headwaters of the Stagyin [Stikine] River. This was the border line, as the next people were the Dzedzaot [presumably the Western Tsetsaut, composed of Wolf and Eagle clan peoples] whose border began at Meziadin Lake and went farther into the interior over the high mountain range" (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

If this *adaawk* is accurate, the proto-historic Tsetsaut (both Western and Eastern) occupied the Upper Stikine/Nass headwaters beside and even among the proto-historic Gitxsan, who resided in the Upper Nass/Skeena headwaters. How long this situation persisted is unknown, but it was disrupted by the migration of one of the Raven clans from Ts'imanluuskeexs to (eventually) the village of Gitanyow.

4.6.3 Raven Clan Migration and Founding of Gitanyow Villages

Many versions of the *adaawk* relates how two Tsetsaut Raven clans, both of the Laxwiiyiip (Eastern) Tsetsaut, inhabited the Ts'imanluuskeexs area, with one of the clans (usually identified as that being made up of the houses of Gamlaxyeltxw, Luuxhon, Ts'iiwa, Sindihl, Gyabask, Hlewa'nst, and Hlamii, all of which are now affiliated with the Gitanyow) migrating away from the area as a form of compensation for a murder. Several interviews conducted by Barbeau and Beynon in the early 1920s (compiled in the 1950s) reflect the peaceful co-existence of the two Raven clans in the Groundhog Country, followed by the sudden departure of one of the clans as compensation for the killing of a member of the other clan (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). This migration is agreed upon by all as happening some time before European contact. Considering the timing of the events that followed, the migration probably occurred at the end of the 18th or early 19th century (see below).

Sterritt et al. (1998b) states that Gamlaxyeltxw[11] and Luuxhon[12] abandoned Ts'imanluuskeexs after the killing of Skawill[13] and eventually helped to establish Gitanyow. However, he states that those who remained at Ts'imanluuskeexs retained their territories and ultimately established the Gitxsan village at Galdo'o. This statement is in contrast to claims by the Skii km Lax Ha that the Tsetsaut occupied this village and had rights to this area. At any rate, there appears to be agreement about which houses originated at Ts'imanluuskeexs, and to which clans they belonged. The dispute seems to be over whether those houses were originally Gitxsan or Tsetsaut in origin (or even a combination of both). There is also dispute about how long ago this migration occurred. If the Tsetsaut and Gitxsan were interrelated at Ts'imanluuskeexs as Sterritt claims, then the Tsetsaut, if they were migrants to the area, had already inhabited it for generations, if not centuries.

[11] The characters described in the *adaawk*, while thought to be historical individuals, also take on a semi-legendary nature and, at least in the earlier *adaawk*, individuals and houses of the same name can be viewed as one and the same.
[12] See above.
[13] See above.

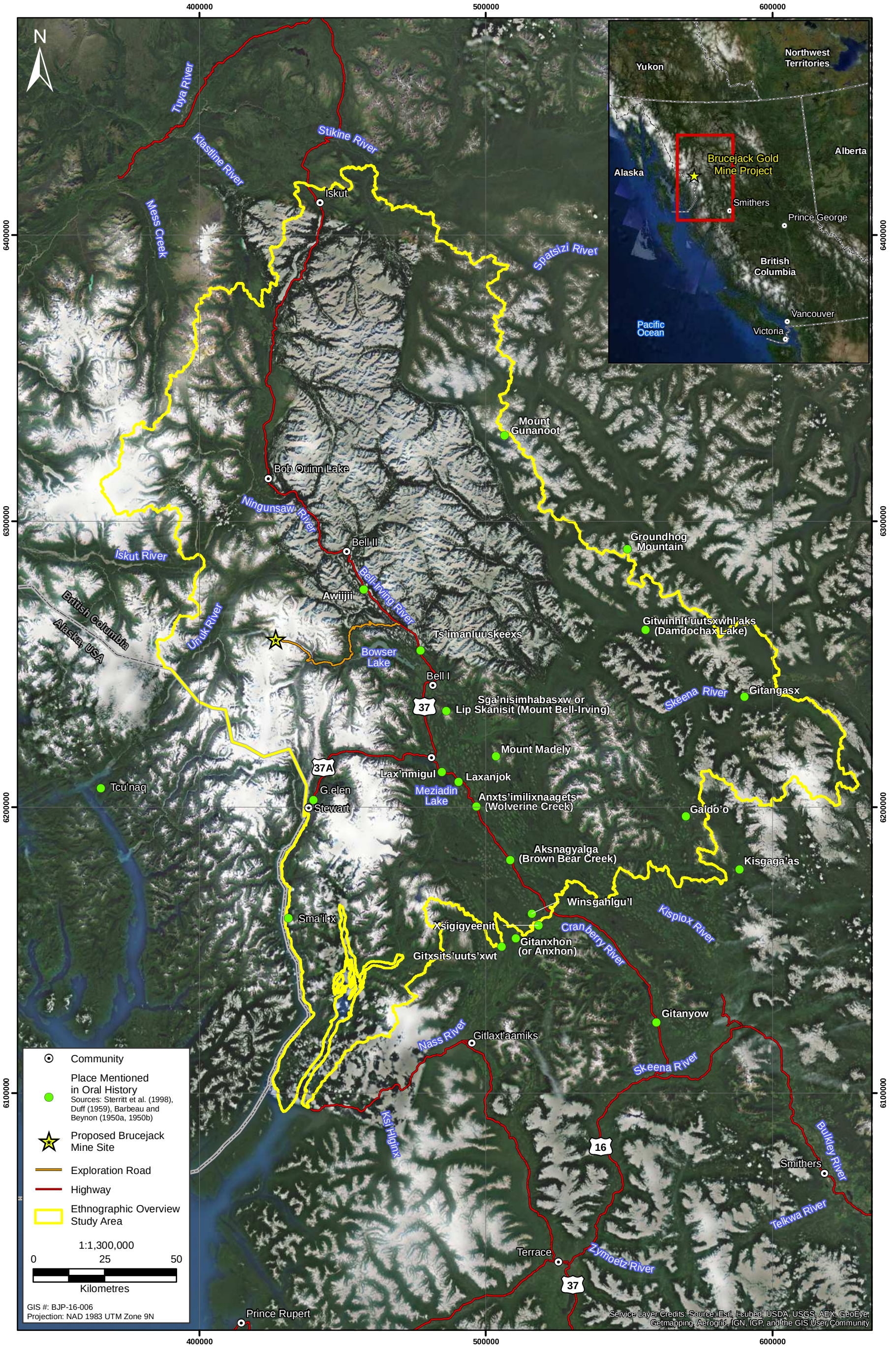

Figure 4.6-1

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Approximate Locations of Places Mentioned in the Oral History

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According to the account given by George Derrick to Barbeau and Beynon in 1924, the wars between the Tsetsaut and Gitanyow happened after the Tsetsaut Raven Clan houses migrated to Kitwancool [Gitanyow]. These houses fled the Meziadin and Upper Nass fearing retribution for the killing of Skawill (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

George Derrick describes the killing of Skawill as a crime of passion. After hearing the news of their dead clan member, the relatives of Skawill arrived in Gamlaxyeltxw's village to avenge his death. The Raven Clan whose member (reported in George Derrick's version as Luuxhon) had killed Skawill, realizing the severity of the retribution that was customary, began to prepare for their departure; knowing that the only way to save their lives was to give up their land as compensation (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Matthew Gurney and Emma Wright (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a) confirm that "[o]ne of them [the Raven clans] came to [the village of] Larh'nmelgul in the vicinity of Lake [Meziadin]."

Fred Johnson also confirmed the killing of Skawill (mistakenly identified as Lurhawn by Johnson) as being linked to a crime of passion. When the culprit (identified in Johnson's version as Kam'naerh'yaeltk [Gamlaxyeltxw]) discovered the affair upon returning to his village after a hunting trip, he killed Lurhawn (Skawill). Kam'naerh'yaeltk was afraid to return to his village at Meziadin Lake (most likely Larh'nmelgul) and became a wanderer and avoided visiting with neighbouring groups, because they held Lurhawn (Skawill) in high esteem and Kam'naerh'yaeltk feared that Lurhawn's (Skawill's) friends would kill him as retribution for the murder of his brother. Eventually after many years of wandering, Kam'naerh'yaeltk "chose a new village site and established the village of Gitwinhlkul [Kitwancool, or Gitanyow]" (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

George Derrick (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a) describes that the fleeing Tsetsaut clan was sad to leave their homeland. Before leaving the area, they stopped on top of Lip Skanisit (translated as "standing alone mountain"- Sterritt et al. 1998b), or Sga'nisimhabasxw ("grass mountain"), both of which refer to Mount Bell-Irving. They composed and sang a mourning song (*limx'oy*) about the event and about their grief for having to leave due to the killing of Skawill. After completing their dirge song, they moved permanently out of the area.

According to Duff (1959), the house of Gamlaxyeltxw wandered, marking certain areas they travelled to as their own, including Aks-na-galga (Aksnagyalga, or Brown Bear Creek), Wens-ga-lgul (Winsgahlgu'l, the narrows on the upper Nass River), Ks-gay-gai-net (Xsigigyeenit, at Cranberry River), and Lak-getk-kse-dzozqu (most likely [Lax]Gitxsits'uuts'xwt, at the Nass/Kinskuch junction). George Derrick (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a) describes that they eventually settled in the place that has been described by different names, including Gitanyow and Kitwancool. These groups became the Frog Clan (Lax Seel) in Gitanyow. The Skii km Lax Ha also understand the Gitanyow Frog Clan to be ancestors of the Tsetsaut Raven Clan (Rescan, Simpson, and Simpson 2010). The names of the victim and the culprit have been confused, but all of the versions of the *adaawk* point to the same event: a crime of passion that led to the displacement of one Tsetsaut Raven Clan, which travelled down the Nass River and eventually established themselves in Gitanyow.

Sterritt et al. (1998b) quoting the *adaawk* told by George Derrick (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a), states that Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon, after fleeing Ts'imanluuskeexs, travelled south along the Nass River looking for new and unoccupied lands that would sustain them. Over "many generations", they established villages at Anxts'imilixnaagets (Wolverine River or Creek) and Aksnagyalga and laid claim to the surrounding lands. Finally, they settled, "after a number of generations", at Winsgahlgu'l and Gitxsits'uuts'xwt, and established formal ties with the people of Gitwilaxgyap, a village near what was later Gitlaxt'aamiks (New Aiyansh) on the Nass River.

It is interesting to note that the people at Gitwilaxgyap (presumably progenitors of the Nisga'a) spoke a different language than the Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon houses, which were Athapaskan Tsetsaut. Both Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon gave feasts at which they identified themselves to these people and formalized ties of friendship. The presence of Gitwilaxgyap at these feasts, according to Sterritt, represents the acknowledgement of Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon's ownership of the lands they had claimed along the Nass River. Eventually they arrived at Gitanyow, following the Cranberry River (or Xsiyagasgiit, meaning "river that descends gradually"). When they arrived at Gitanyow, some Wolf clan houses were already living there. The Frog/Raven Clan built a house close to that of Gwashlaa'm, and established themselves at Gitanyow. They then raised their poles, which gave them the power and ownership of all the lands, mountains, lakes, and streams through which they had passed (Duff 1959). This power ranges as far as Gitxsits'uuts'xwt (near the Nass/Kinskuch junction) and includes Xsigigyeenit (at the headwaters of the Cranberry River).

Barbeau (1929) confirms that there were two leading chiefs of the Frog-Raven Clan (Gamlaxyektxw and Luuxhon) in Gitwinlkul (Gitanyow), which he refers to as Larhsail (Lax Seel). "They are close relatives, claiming the same remote origin, though their families have lived independently, side by side, from time immemorial. They originally belonged to the Wild-rice tribe (Git'anrasrh, a variation of Gitangasx) at the headwaters of the Skeena, in what is now called the Groundhog [C]ountry – on the interior plateaus." Barbeau notes that they were of Athapaskan origin, speaking Tsetsaut and residing in a village called Tsem'anlusraerhs (i.e., "footprints-in-shallow-water"; see Ts'imanluuskeexs earlier). Barbeau also confirms the migration of one of the Tsetsaut clans to Kitwancool, later also called Gitanyow. Barbeau notes the family names of those related to Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon, who used to live with them at Tsem'anlusraerhs, including Hrtseewae (Tsiiwa), Ksemgunaeq (Ksemgunqweek), Sqawil (Skawill), and Gitemraldo (Gyetem Galdo; Barbeau 1929).

Wolf Clan Chief Walter Derrick (Duff 1959) made reference to a migration and to travels of Gitanyow people from their origins in Zem-an-lu-sqaks (i.e., Ts'imanluuskeexs), meaning "wading in water":

> *In their travels they reached a grassy mountain named Sga-nest-sun-habausq ("mountain of grass") [Sga'nisimhabasxw, or Mount Bell-Irving]. They went along the top of the mountain to the other end, which had timber, and gave it the name Lak-wee-yep [Laxwiiyiip]. When they left the mountain, they came to a river flowing south, named Anuk-gemelik-nagag [Anxts'imilixnaagets] or Wolverine River. Looking back, they could see the grass mountain and they felt a great deal of sorrow in their hearts and sang their first funeral song, Gam-lu-gal-dal-good, referring to the heaviness in their hearts. They sang it because they were leaving that country and felt very sad.*

This *adaawk* is commemorated on Skawill's (Skii km Lax Ha's) totem pole (carved circa 1880) and on Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon's totem pole, the oldest known totem pole in Gitanyow, named "People of the Smoke Hole" (carved c. 1850; Rescan 2009b). The oral history of the killing of Skawill is documented in the figure at the top of both totem poles. The top figure in Skawill's totem pole is split in half depicting the separation of the Tsetsaut Raven Clan over this killing. This figure is called Gistaluc (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a), meaning "to wander around" or "migrating down river".

4.6.4 Tsetsaut/Gitanyow Hostilities Begin (circa 1800)

Sterritt et al. (1998b) recount a conflict in the *adaawk*, similar to that mentioned above, this time between the houses of Gamlaxyeltxw and Luuxhon (now at Gitanyow). This dispute also arose out of a crime of passion, which resulted in the killing of Luuxhon (the perpetrator of the first crime) by Gyabask, a Gamlaxyeltxw house member (recounted by George Derrick in 1924; Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). When Luuxhon's Tsetsaut relatives found him dead in his village, they immediately set out to

exact revenge on Gyabask, who had escaped to Gitanyow after setting fire to and abandoning his village at Winsgahl'gu'l. They made a retaliatory raid on Gitanyow, significantly diminishing their population. Many of the survivors moved to the Gitwangak area but, eventually, returned to Gitanyow.

George Derrick stated that this event happened "many years after Lurhawn's yaeok [*yukw*, or settlement feast, referring to the potlatch mentioned in Section 4.6.3]". If the Luuxhon who killed Skawill is the same Luuxhon who was killed by Gyabesk, all events (the murder of Skawill, the migration through the Upper Nass Valley and the formation of new villages, the settling of Raven Clan people at Gitanyow, and the destruction of Gitanyow) happened within one persons' adult lifetime, fifty years at the most. All of the oral histories mention the same historic figures, and none of them imply that the similarly named characters of the second event were descendants or different people from the first. Therefore, there is some uncertainty as to why Sterritt discusses the migration and founding of villages in the Upper Nass occurring over "many generations".

Duff (1959) recounts this *adaawk*, but identifies the murderer as Shen-dil instead of Gyabesk. The man who is killed is identified as Shin-ge-win, the brother of Shen-dil (as Luuxhon is identified as the brother of Gyabesk in the George Derrick version). He also states that the Gitanyow undertook a revenge attack on the Tsetsaut camped at Lak-an-zoq (or Laxanjok, at the junction of the Meziadin and Nass rivers) after the destruction of the village of Gitanyow. At any rate, it appears the same events are being narrated, leading to the destruction of Gitanyow by the Tsetsaut.

4.6.5 Gitxsan/Gitanyow Alliance (circa 1840)

The next incident happens within two generations of the murder of Luuxhon, as it relates to the successor of Luuxhon's name (most likely a nephew if naming conventions are followed; see Section 4.1.4). Details in the account indicate that the event took place shortly after fur trading activity commenced in the Upper Nass and Stikine rivers circa 1840. This younger Luuxhon, at the time of the story an elderly man, built a permanent home at the village of Gitanxhon (or Anxhon), at the junction of the Cranberry and Nass rivers. For reasons unexplained, he was attacked and killed here by the Tsetsaut (George Derrick, Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Duff (1959) places this attack of the Tsetsaut on the Gitanyow at Ks-gay-gai-net (Xsigigyeenit), further up the Cranberry River towards Gitanyow. Gwiinu of Gitanyow planned a retaliatory attack against the Tsetsaut, and they allied with the Gitxsan villages of Gitsegukla and Gitwangak under the Gitxsan war-chief Ksu, who proceeded to Meziadin Lake and killed all of the Meziadin Tsetsauts. Neither Duff nor Derrick notes where this battle took place, but like the first battle, it also most likely happened at Laxanjok.

This victory, according to Sterritt et al. (1998b), solidified the Gitanyow claim to the Cranberry and Upper Nass river territories, forcing the Tsetsaut back to their original territories at Meziadin Lake. Duff (1959) states that the reward for the Gitanyow victory was the lands in the region of Meziadin Lake. However, there is no mention of a formal handing over of territories, and there is no indication that this incident was anything more than the settling of a feud. Duff mentions a peace ceremony in which the Tsetsaut promised they would never make any more attacks on the Gitanyow. Whether this is a *xsiisxw* (formal cessation of territory) is unclear, and considering lives were taken as a payment for lives taken, the *ayookw* (law) would not require a transfer of territory, since the debt was already paid (Sterritt et al. 1998b). It is also telling that this transfer of territory has not been commemorated on a totem pole, and the *adaawk* does not mention any raising of totem poles to commemorate the event, which would have been customary (see Section 4.4.1.1).

The peace ceremony, according to Duff (1959) was made around the time that white people arrived at Telegraph Creek and the HBC erected a store there. Duff's informants indicated that the Tsetsaut purchased gunpowder and guns from the HBC store at Telegraph Creek and traded these with the

Gitanyow at Meziadin Lake (Duff 1959). This statement, however, is inconsistent with the timing of events. The HBC took over the Stikine fur trade in 1840 after the creation of Fort Stikine on Wrangell Island, but due to conflicts with the Tlingit, could not establish trade upriver. A miner named Choquette operated a small trading post on the Lower Stikine River (probably at Glenora) during the brief Stikine gold rush of the early 1860s (Albright 1984); however, the HBC store was not built at Telegraph Creek until during the Klondike Gold Rush (sometime between 1898 and 1900; Stikine RiverSong 2011; RDKS n.d.). The timing of events, however, could not have placed this incident later than circa 1850. Therefore, Duff's informants must have been referring to the introduction of HBC trade goods into the Stikine River area and not necessarily to Telegraph Creek.

4.6.6 The Tahltan Migration and the Naskoten Tahltan

Sterritt et al.(1998b) notes from a reading of the various *adaawk* of this area, a fresh migration of new people into the Upper Nass. The readings show that the identity of these people is unclear, being unable to determine whether they are Tahltan or Tsetsaut. However, if the Tsetsaut were already living in the area at the time of the incursion (which is apparent from the oral histories compiled by Barbeau and Beynon), they can only be Tahltan, as they are described as having no territory of their own. They are said to be from the Wolf Clan and to have come originally from the headwaters of the Stikine River, but instead of traveling down the Stikine River toward the coast like other Wolf Clan groups, they went overland and reached the headwaters of the Skeena River near Kisgaga'as, and further towards Gitwinhlt'uutsxwhl'aks (i.e., the Blackwater area). They were rebuked and taunted by surrounding tribes. They then travelled down the Skeena, and went overland, exploring the Nass territory, which was inhabited by "those that had lived with them on the Tahltan and had also taken to flight when they had fought with the Raven group at Tahltan…" (Matthew Gurney and Emma Wright, Barbeau and Beynon 1950b). This implies that the Tahltan had engaged in intra-clan warfare prior to their migration into the Groundhog Country. Members of this Tahltan group resided and intermarried with Gitxsan and Nisga'a (and presumably Tsetsaut) at various locations along their route.

Robert Stewart (a Nisga'a from Gingolx), in an interview with Beynon in 1948, stated (Barbeau 1910-1969): "[The Western Tsetsaut] were not really t'set'sa'ut, but were laxgibu of t'alt'a'n origin, from a country known as laxwi'yi'p. It was in this country that sqa'u'7's people fought and she [sqa'u'7] as sole survivor wandered about and finally founded the village of temlaxam at the headwaters of the Skeena."

This description, while not lending credence to the Portland Canal people being Western Tsetsaut, does correlate with the *adaawk* recounted by Sterritt above. Stewart goes on to say that these people fought with the Raven Clan while at Laxwiiyiip, and that another group of Laxgibu had already fled the area, having "gone under a glacier." This other Laxgibu group fled down the Stikine River past the "feared Stikine village" (most likely Tlingit) at night, and south for many days along the coast.

While the oral histories in this area view the Tahltan as "wanderers" or "refugees", ethnographers such as Duff and MacLachlan give them a domineering presence in the Upper Nass. The latter characterization seems to rely mainly on Thorman (1915), who states regarding the Naskoten Tahltan:

> *Driving the* Suss to'deen *[a branch of the Western Tsetsaut] mercilessly before them to the Ningunsaw River and beyond, they slaughtered the adult males and aged females, making slaves of the younger women and children, many of whom were taken to Tahltan. They penetrated the Suss to'deen country to the Ocean Water at the Unuk River, from which inhospitable country they quickly returned. Farther south they harassed the* Tse etseta *into retreat among the crags and forests of the coastal range, also taking slaves.*

This account conflicts with Robert Stewart's contention that the Portland Canal people were actually Tahltan, since Thorman claims the Tahltan, even if they did reach the ocean, left the area quickly. Thorman further states that on the other flank of their advance: "[T]hey harassed a small group, the *Thlakwair khit* (they of the double house, double in the sense that they were reinforced in strength to withstand the very heavy snowfall of that area)."

Duff uses this to theorize that the Laxwiiyiip mentioned by Boas' informant was actually the Naskoten Tahltan, when in fact Boas distinguishes between the Laxwiiyiip and Tahltan (Boas 1895b).

Emmons (1911) refers to the Naskoten Tahltan as the "Tuckclarwaytee," and states that these are the progenitors of the present-day Tahltan, but there is no mention by Emmons of an incursion into the Laxwiiyiip area. Teit (1906; 1914) identifies the Taxtlowedi (meaning "wolf" or "real wolf", in reference to being of the Wolf Clan, similar to the Tsimshian Lax Gibuu) with the Tagicoten clan, and cites Tagicoten as "people of Tagish, [or] Tagish clan". Adlam (1985) states that Emmons' reference to the "progenitors of the Tahltan" remark stems from the Tahltan legend about the meeting of two women near the junction of the Tahltan and Stikine rivers. One of these women had travelled south from the source of the Nass River. Emmons (1911) writes: "She had journeyed over a great sand country and that she was worn and tired, and now that she had met her sister from the north they would stop here and make their home, and they would call themselves, from the region of travels, Tuck-clar-wat-tee, 'black sand family'".

This legend is strikingly similar in events to the *adaawk* related by Sterritt et al. (1998b) as well as by Robert Stewart, as the woman (who represents the Naskoten Tahltan) travels through the Nass (or Skeena) area (the other woman, representing the Tagicoten, descending the Stikine). What is also interesting is the notion of "black sand" and traveling over a "great sand country". Sterritt et al. (1998b) identify the route the Tahltan people took as going overland from the Skeena River to Kisumkalum Lake and down the Tseax River to Gitlaxt'aamiks. The Tseax River valley is covered by the black basalt lava beds which are now within Nisga'a Memorial Lava Beds Provincial Park. The eruption that created the Nass Valley lava flow happened approximately 250 years ago (BC Geological Survey 2007). However the *adaawk* related by Sterritt states that this group ended their journey near Gitwinksilhkw and erected a village there. There is no mention of a return to the Tahltan area; however, these are *adaawk* of Nisga'a people, which may not have been concerned further with events on the Stikine River.

The Tagicoten and Naskoten are both of the Wolf moiety, and they may have warred with the Tlepanoten Tahltan (who are of the Raven moiety) in the Iskut and Klappan headwaters of the Stikine, as in the *adaawk,* prior to their migration. Emmons noted the fact that a separation of the Tahltan occurred, and one of the parties that separated went down the Stikine until they reached a great glacier that spanned the river valley and blocked their progress. They decided to canoe under the ice bridge and survived, following the Stikine to its mouth (Emmons 1911). This "glacier/ice bridge" impeding the progress of these people is also mentioned in Robert Stewart's account (see earlier, this section).

Adlam (1985) sums up the problem best:

> *…the question of there being a 'Tagish' people or a 'Nass people' only emerges in the context of the account of the meeting of two women and then not with reference to either 'people', but rather with respect to the 'Doclewaadee' [Taxtlowedi]. Indeed Teit seems to offer support for this situation when in contrast to the other local descent groups…he refers to the 'Naskoten' as 'said to be descended from a Nass woman' and 'Tagicoten' as 'said to be descended from a Tagish woman'…Clearly, though, there are two circumstances here: one, a localized notion of the 'Naskoten' as*

> *occupying a country of the Nass River as well as the 'Tagicoten' whose country is in the area of Tagish Lake; and two, a notion of descent, that is to say, people who are 'Naskoten' or 'Tagicoten' by virtue of their being the descendants of a 'Nass woman' or a 'Tagish woman'. In this last circumstance, however, what emerges is the 'Doclawaadee' and then not in association with either 'locality' as such but in association with 'Tahltan' and the very 'origins of the Tahltan people'.*

In fact, in Adlam's map of the Tahltan divisions, he places none of the Tahltan groups in the region usually outlined as Naskoten territory. The Naskoten/Tagicoten are grouped together as Doclawaadee and are placed in the centre of Tahltan territory. The Tahltan group farthest south, the Tlepanoteena (Teit's Tlepanoten), are placed at the headwaters of the Iskut and Klappan rivers, and around Kluachon Lake. This corresponds with McIllwraith's (2007) description of the Iskut First Nation's use of the area and the Spatsizi Plateau, in the Stikine headwaters. Iskut camp sites in the historic past included Caribou Hide and *Me'etsendane*, which Duff (1950-1978) translates as "full belly". However, it is well north of Treaty Creek, which the Tahltan state is their southern boundary.

4.6.7 The Western Tsetsaut

Chief Mountain of the Nisga'a, in an interview with William Beynon in 1927 (Duff 1950-1978) remarks about the Western Tsetsaut:

> *These people were of two crests, laxkibu [Wolf Clan] and laxskik [Eagle Clan]. These Tsetsaut were of two families. They had an adaox [*adaawk*] that they had always been in that country. During the Flood they never drifted away. They got to the highest mountain…They have hunting grounds on the west side of Portland Canal. Both groups had same hunting grounds. Sometimes they went away to the head (of Alice Arm). All along* galant *and* gidzoł *[Kitsault].*

Boas recorded the legend referred to by Chief Mountain (Boas 1896). The children of the Wolf and Eagle clans were put away in the hollows of trees, which were sealed so that they could escape the rising waters. Herbert Barton (Eagle Clan, from Gingolx), in an interview with William Beynon in 1954 (Barbeau 1910-1969), states about the Tsetsaut of Portland Canal:

> *The group of people who originally came from the Interior settled at the head of the Unuk River and lived in two groups, ganha'da [Raven Clan] and laxski'k [Eagle Clan]. Conflicts over hunting grounds led to fighting, and the smaller laxski'k group fled across the country until they came to a body of water which they found to be salt water. The ganha'da went south and joined the ganha'da group of henadzu, who later established Tongass village. The laxski'k made their village at the head of Portland Canal…*

In a footnote in Boas (1895b), he presents a description from J. W. McKay, an HBC trader, of what McKay said were the origins of the Western Tsetsaut:

> *These Indians belong to the Kunana, a tribe which inhabits the lower Stikine Valley, and whose headquarters are at Tahltan, on the first north fork of the Stikine River. About forty years ago [i.e., circa 1854] three or four families of these Indians were hunting in the neighbourhood of the head waters of the Skoot [Iskut], a large tributary of the Stikine. Game was scarce, the prospect of a hard winter stared them in the face; they accordingly decided to make for Chunah, on the sea-coast, at the head of Behm Inlet. They took a wrong direction and struck the coast on the west shore of*

> *Portland Channel. They were then discovered by one of the headmen of the Naas tribe, who arranged with them to protect them from molestation provided that they sold all the product of their fur hunts to him at his price.*

Boas did not agree with McKay's description of the Western Tsetsaut origins, and it is more likely that McKay confused the Tsetsaut with the Tahltan, a common error in the history of this area. The long history of interaction between the Western Tsetsaut and the Tlingit and Nisga'a, as implied by Boas, seems to add weight to the idea that they were two distinct groups with different origins. The fact that McKay later goes on to describe an altercation with the Tahltan and the Western Tsetsaut circa 1874, the latter wishing to exploit hunting territory around Dease Lake, adds further weight to the argument that the Western Tsetsaut were not truly Tahltan in origin.

Boas (1895b) recounts how, sixty years prior to his work with the remaining Western Tsetsaut (circa 1830), they numbered about 500 people, but they were exterminated by continued attacks of the Sanya *q^{w}an* (or "tribe") of the Tlingit, and attacks from the Laxwiiyiip. The Nisga'a, in response, began to claim Portland Inlet as their territory. In the pre-contact era, the Western Tsetsaut lived much more frequently on Behm Canal than on Portland Canal. At the time they were on friendly terms with the Sanya, and used to stay with them on occasion. After the death of the Sanya chief, however, the rest of the tribe intended to kill the Western Tsetsaut and enslave the women and children. The chief's nephews, however, informed the Western Tsetsaut of this plan, and from that time they hunted more frequently around Portland Canal and associated themselves with the Nisga'a for the first time. An attempt to return to their village near the mouth of Behm Canal resulted, after feigned friendliness by the Tlingit, in the assassination of several Western Tsetsaut men. When the Western Tsetsaut heard of this incident they attempted to ambush the Tlingit at the mouth of the Nass, where they would come annually to purchase oolichan grease from the Nisga'a. The Tlingit, however, avoided coming for several years. From that point on, the Western Tsetsaut made Portland Canal their headquarters. The Tlingit attacks continued, however.

Robert Pearl ('Wiixa, Wolf Clan, from Gitanyow), in his interview with Barbeau and Beynon (1950a) states: "Gat'o is another place. The people there were the Tsetsaut of the Nass. Their family on Portland Canal was nearly ruined by the Larhsail [Lax Seel or Raven Clan] of the Gidaranits (Tlingit) and by the Larhiyip [Laxwiiyiip] Tsetsaut, who murdered many of them. They did not retaliate."

Nisga'a traditions tell how Eagle clan chiefs of the Kitxat'en or Downriver Nisga'a, while scouting for new territories, discovered the Western Tsetsaut at Tombstone Bay on Portland Canal (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). Later Beynon indicated to Duff that Sag.au'wen (Chief Mountain) of the Nisga'a came upon the Tsetsaut at g.elen (translated as "in behind"[14]), the village where Stewart, BC lies today (Duff 1950-1978). This is also implied in the account of Herbert Barton (Barbeau 1910-1969). This canal, and the Salmon and Bear rivers at its head, were claimed by Chief Gitkun. When his family declined in numbers he permitted another Eagle chief named Sagawan (also known as Chief Mountain) to use the area, and the Western Tsetsaut came to be known as the "vassals" of Chief Mountain. Sagawan lived for a time at the site of Gingolx, to be close to the trading ships and the HBC post at Port Simpson, and he held a monopoly of trade with the Tsetsaut. When William Duncan established the village of Metlakatla in 1862 and entered the competition for furs, the monopoly was broken. In anger, Sagawan moved back to Gitiks on the Nass. Robert Tomlinson, who established the mission at Kincolith in 1867, was in frequent contact with the Tsetsaut, and in 1885 his successor, W. H. Collison, invited the last 12 men and their families to take up residence in Kincolith (Duff 1981).

[14] The name of the village may refer to the Salmon Glacier and the Bear River Ridge "behind" the town of Stewart.

McCullagh (1907-1910), from a story told to him by Wii'litsxw in 1905, adds further weight to the Nisga'a tradition, stating: "Chief Leduk of Git-tka-den, the leading chief of the Nishgas, used to go up to the head of what is now called Portland Canal to trade with the Tennes [Tsetsaut] whose territory reached that limit."

4.6.8 Appearance of the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne

Another series of disputes arose between the Gitxsan and a people that Sterritt (Sterritt et al. 1998b) identifies as the Ts'imlaxyip (most likely the T'lotona or Bear Lake Tsek'ehne), when the latter began hunting groundhogs on Gitxsan territory. An initial victory by the Gitxsan over this group led to a Ts'imlaxyip retaliation on the village of Gitangasx, forcing the Gitxsan people there to move to Galdo'o and Kisgaga'as (Sterritt et al. 1998b). David Gunanoot says that those remaining at Gitangasx were "wiped out" by the invaders, though he identified them as Tsetaut or "Laird people" (UBCLDC n.d.). Simon Gunanoot (house of Geel, Fireweed Clan, from Kispiox) states that the Gitxsan of Kisgaga'as and Galdo'o then retaliated against the Ts'imlaxyip, slaughtering everyone in a camp they encountered, except for the children, whom they used as guides to show them where the other Ts'imlaxyip villages were (Barbeau and Beynon 1950b). That these people belong to the T'lotona or Bear Lake Tsek'ehne is further strengthened by the fact that, according to Sterritt, they lived in a type of house never seen before by the Gitxsan, and that they did not eat fish, indicating that they were recent arrivals in the area. The Tsek'ehne rarely ate salmon as most (if not all) streams in Tsek'ehne territory drain into the Arctic Ocean, thus containing no salmon (Jenness 1937).

A story obtained from the Tsek'ehne states that the battle which occurred between the Gitxsan and the T'lotona happened at Thutade Lake, just on the eastern side of the Continental Divide. It also states how it was agreed that one woman would be given to the Tsek'ehne as a peace offering. The woman married a Tsek'ehne man and, after he died, the woman was returned to her family (Littlefield, Dorricott, and Cullon 2007). The Tsek'ehne have identified sites around Thutade Lake that are linked to this story, such as the place where the Tsek'ehne were camped at the time of battle; the site where the battle took place; and a burial site. David Gunanoot also mentions Thutade Lake in his description of the Gitxsan battles with these people (UBCLDC n.d.)

David Gunanoot stated in his testimony at the *Delgamuukw* trial that the first time the Gitxsan saw white people was when the people from Kisgaga'as went to retaliate against the "Stikines" at Bear Lake (UBCLDC n.d.). By that time, the HBC fort (Fort Connelly) was already constructed and manned. Therefore, the fighting with the Bear Lake Tsek'ehne people could not have occured earlier than 1826.

Jenness (1937) recounts a story told by a Gitxsan woman who lived with the T'lotona, also known as the "Long Grass Indians" or Bear Lake Tsek'ehne. The woman was born circa 1854 and states that when she was eleven years old (i.e., circa 1865) a fight occurred between the T'lotona and the Kispiox people. This feud was later settled by a feast held in the Groundhog Country (it is unknown exactly where). This event is believed to concur with the *adaawk* mentioned above. The woman was sent to live with the T'lotona, where she married one of the men and spent years hunting and trapping in the Klappan mountains and trading furs at Telegraph Creek. This is congruent with McIllwraith's (2007) description of the historic annual round of the Iskut First Nation, who claim the T'lotona as some of their descendants (see Section 4.2.2.2).

Williams (1982) describes an incident involving Simon Gunanoot's family that contains many similarities to the account recorded by Jenness:

> *Before Simon's birth [i.e. before ca. 1874]…an uncle had shot dead a man whom he found poaching on his hunting ground. Blood called for the return of blood, and Simon's parents delivered their small daughter to the relatives of the dead man, who*

> *had lived in the Sekani region, 300 miles or more east of Hazelton. There…she dwelt in exile, a virtual slave.*

Williams goes on to say that a daughter of this woman married Peter Himadam, who became implicated with Simon Gunanoot in the alleged murders he committed in Hazelton in 1906 (Williams 1982). He also states that the woman was Simon Gunanoot's niece, meaning the woman sent to live with the Tsek'ehne man was Simon's sister.

4.6.9 The Problem of Meziadin

During the fur trade period, the Eastern Tsetsaut (Laxwiiyiip) were led by the powerful Wolf Clan chief, Saniik. This man may have been a descendant of the Tahltan that migrated into the area some years before (see Section 4.6.6); this theory is supported by Robert Stewart's account of the Laxgibu (Wolf Clan) Tahltan who were headed by a chief named Se'niq' (Barbeau 1910-1969).

Sterritt et al. (1998b) state that Saniik and the Eastern Tsetsaut attempted to increase their prestige in the fur trade by eliminating the Western Tsetsaut middlemen. Boas (1895b) recounts a war between the Western Tsetsaut and Laxwiiyiip in the historic period when his informant, an elderly man in the 1890s, was only a boy. The Western Tsetsaut were hunting in the upper reaches of the Nass River. When they returned to their village at Portland Canal a party of Laxwiiyiip arrived accompanying a Tsetsaut hunter. They claimed to want to make peace with the Tsetsaut and to pay for those who had been killed in previous wars. The Tsetsaut fell for the trap and let the Laxwiiyiip stay with them, which resulted in the killing of two Tsetsaut men.

The efforts of Saniik and the Laxwiiyiip to establish a key role for themselves in the fur trade at Portland Canal came to a sudden end around 1852, when a Nisga'a chief, Hlidax (also spelled Leduk), killed Saniik and his son Amintah in the upper reaches of Portland Canal, apparently in self-defence (it could also have been in retaliation for the killing of Western Tsetsaut men, who at this time were "wards" of the Nisga'a, by the Laxwiiyiip-; see Section 4.2.7). A similar telling of this part of the story was recorded by Reverand McCullagh, who heard it from Wii'liitsxw, and refers to Hildax as "Chief 'Leduk of Git-tka-den" (McCullagh 1925).

The death of Saniik, according to Sterritt et al. (1998b) led to a botched attempt at retaliation on the Nisga'a at Meziadin Lake by the Laxwiiyiip Tsetsaut. At this time, apparently, the Laxwiiyiip Tsetsaut lived at Meziadin Lake in the summer (presumably to fish) and were established at Awiijii (the area around Oweegee Creek and Skowill Creek, north of Treaty Creek along the Bell-Irving River; Barbeau and Beynon 1950b; Sterritt et al. 1998b). Meziadin Lake was also known to be a trading centre for a number of Aboriginal groups during this time period, as mentioned by Robert Pearl in his 1927 interview (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

In this incident, the Nisga'a and Gitanyow came to trade with the Tsetsaut at Meziadin Lake. The Gitanyow were camped with the Nisga'a, and some of the Gitanyow were killed by the Tsetsaut by mistake. Duff (1959) identifies the two Gitanyow men who were killed as Tka-waakq (Txawok) and Hai-zimsq (Haizimsque), whereas Barbeau and Beynon (1950b) identify them as Txawok and Ligigalwil. McCullagh (1925) said that Wii'litsxw[15] (the uncle [?] of his informant Wii'litsxw) was one of the few Gitanyow that survived the incident. The Tsetsaut placed bear-skins over the Gitanyow they killed as a

[15] McCullagh (1925) appears to think Wii'litsxw was Nisga'a, since he mentions that the peace that occurred following the incident was between the "Tenne and Nishga". As will be seen later, this confusion between Tahltan and Tsetsaut, and between Nisga'a and Gitanyow has led to conflicting accounts about who were actually the rightful parties to a treaty/truce, as well as when the treaty/truce took place.

sign of remorse for their deaths. According to Duff (1959), the Gitanyow appreciated the gesture and did not retaliate. McCullagh (1925) said "after the massacre the Tennes [Laxwiiyiip Tsetsaut] struck camp and moved away to their winter habitat on the Stickine River [Awiijii] and only hunted in couples on the Lakwiyip for many years subsequently." This is reiterated in Robert Pearl's interview (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a).

It should be noted in Robert Pearl's version of the Meziadin killings that Gunanoot (Gwunarhnot or Kwunarhnat) was identified as Tsetsaut. Most likely this is an ancestor of the well-known Simon Gunanoot. If naming conventions are followed, he would have been Simon's maternal uncle (though this is incongruous with the fact that Simon Gunanoot's mother came from the Gitxsan house of Geel). Gunanoot camped with the Gitanyow who were supposed to have been spared in the attack, and might have been killed himself if he did not escape undetected.

Robert Pearl stated that the Gitanyow and the Gitlaxt'aamiks regrouped and returned to where the Tsetsaut were camped at Meziadin Lake to retaliate, but, finding that they had left, returned home (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a). An attempt by the Tsetsaut to make peace with the Gitanyow at a later date, due to mutual suspicion, led to the killing of a number of Tsetsaut by the Gitanyow near Awiijii and at Laxanjok. The term used by Pearl to refer to the making of peace was Gawayaeni, which appears to be the same term recorded by Duff (Gha-wa-gharney- Duff 1959). Sterritt et al. writes (1998b):

> *The Tsetsaut later attempted to make peace with the Gitwinhlgu'l but they wanted them to travel with them to Awiijii, where they were then established. The Gitwinhlgu'l were reluctant but agreed to send emissaries if they could keep one Tsetsaut chief, and the Tsetsaut women in the party, at their camp. On the trail, the Gitwinhlgu'l emissaries suspected treachery and, rather than complete the journey, killed their Tsetsaut guides. On their return to the Gitwinhlgu'l camp, the Tsetsaut chief was also killed and the women taken prisoner and sold as slaves.*

In Robert Pearl's version of events, the Tsetsaut and Gitanyow were camped at a little mountain called Lepra'niset (most likely Lip Skanisit or Mount Bell-Irving) when the Gitanyow killed their Tsetsaut escorts. It is curious as to how Sterritt et al. could have concluded that a peace was made between the two groups, considering the event noted above.

Dawson (1889), in describing the history of wars among the "Tahltan", describes a feud between the "Tahltan" and the "Indians inhabiting the Upper Nass". He does not refer to them specifically as the Nisga'a, and admits he is uncertain about the tribal boundaries in the upper Nass watershed. Nevertheless, his description of the feud's cessation sounds remarkably similar to the event described above:

> *For a long period preceding 1856 there had been peace between the Tahltan and Nass Indians, but in or about that year the latter, following up one of the branches of the Nass River into Tahltan territory, killed two individuals of that tribe, who happened to be men of importance. Two or three years later, the Tahltan found an opportunity of killing in retaliation four of the Nass. In 1861, the year preceding the first gold excitement on the Stikine, a peace having been meanwhile concluded, the Nass Indians induced some of the Tahltan to visit them in their own country, a short distance from the recognized boundary, at a place called Yak-whik [possibly Awiijii], which is the furthest up fishery of the Nass Indians and at which they have a large house. The Nass people then persuaded two of the Tahltan men to return some distance into the Tahltan country, ostensibly that they might bring their friends to engage in a peace talk and dance, two of the Nass Indians accompanying them. The Nass, however, killed both Tahltan Indians the first night out, and then turned back. When they arrived at*

> *the house, the remaining Tahltan men were killed and their women…and children…were made prisoners.*

During the course of the 1956 Royal Commission on Forestry, Peter Williams and Walter Douse, on behalf of the Gitanyow, said regarding the Meziadin Lake area (Sterritt et al. 1998b): "The Kitwancool beg to inform the Government that the [Meziadin] Lake region was the price of the Kitwancool blood caused by the people now known as 'Stickine People' after they massacre the Kitwancool which resulted in war until the said 'Stickine People' surrender [sic] the [Meziadin] Lake region to the Kitwancool people."

Robert Pearl, however, says about claims to the Meziadin area (Barbeau and Beynon 1950b):

> *So they, the Gitlarhdamks [Gitlaxt'aamiks] have the right to take whatever rights the Larhwiyip Tsetsauts had at [Meziadin], and the other hunting grounds of the Tsetsaut, near the head of the Nass, for the killing of Qalre and Traldedao [the Nisga'a men killed in the attack], who were both Larhkibu (Wolf). In fact they took those territories from the Tsetsaut as compensation. Now they are in possession of the Gitlarhdamks.*
>
> *As the trouble had arisen through Qanuraerls killing San'aw [Saniik] and Ametawt [Amintah], the Gitwinlkul [Gitanyow] for that same reason also have a right to [Meziadin] and they are still there…(Sqawil [Daniel Skowill], of Gitenmaks [Gitanmaax], does not hunt there, but he goes at the head of the Nass.).*[16]

E. N. Mercer, Nisga'a chief of Aiyansh in 1920s, stated in an interview with Barbeau and Beynon (Barbeau 1910-1969): "The Gitwinklkul [Gitanyow] and Nass river people had [a] fight [at] Mets'ia.dan Lake. Some other tribe lived at Meziadin Lake; the Gitwinklkul fought them, and since they won they have kept that place for hunting; these people were the lax'wiyip; they are of different language. They are the T'set'sa.ot."

The information provided by Peter Williams, Walter Douse, Robert Pearl and E. N. Mercer suggests that either the Nisga'a or the Gitanyow (or both) won the Meziadin territory through the victory over the Tsetsaut. Sterritt, on the other hand, recounting the testimony of Wii'litsxw to McCullagh (McCullagh 1925), and the Delgamuukw testimony provided by a descendant of Wii'litsxw, concluded that a ***xsiisxw*** was established between the Gitanyow and the Laxwiiyiip, the latter ceding their Meziadin Lake territory to the Gitanyow. Nisga'a claims to the Meziadin Lake area, because of the same sequence of events, were refuted by Sterritt et al., as the Tsetsaut were retaliating for the death of Saniik and his son, and because there was no formal ***xsiisxw*** between the Tsetsaut and Nisga'a. Reverend McCullagh was told of these events at Meziadin Lake, and stood on the spot of the original attack. Wii'litsxw of the Gitanyow lived with his family at Meziadin Lake at the time (McCullagh 1907-1910). If this ***xsiisxw*** was made, however, it does not explain the historical events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (see Sections 4.6.11 and 4.6.12).

Walter Douse informed Wilson Duff in 1958 that "eventually there were so few [Laxwiiyiip Tsetsaut] left they left their village at Meziadin Lake and retreated to Stikine. Wilits [Wii'litxsw] and others moved into the abandoned Laxwiyip lands, but they really belong to the whole [Gitanyow] tribe" (Duff 1950-1978). He stated in 1952 that in the war between the Gitanyow and Tsetsaut, both sides were decimated. The "Stikines" migrated north, and the Gitanyow took over Meziadin. There is no mention of a formal cessation of territory to the Gitanyow.

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[16] The last statement about Daniel Skowill is contrary to historical documentation (see Section 4.6.12).

Fred Johnson, in his testimony at the *Delgamuukw* trial, stated that Wolverine Creek (Anxts'imilixnaagets) was the boundary between the "Stikine" people and the Gitanyow, even when he was growing up at Meziadin Lake (UBCLDC n.d.).

This event and the subsequent peace ceremony between the Gitanyow and the Tsetsaut, if one actually occurred, appears to be the basis for the "treaty" concluded between the Tahltan and Nisga'a. Both groups mutually acknowledge this peace treaty, which they assert was proclaimed at a place known as "Treaty Rock", now a provincially designated heritage site along Treaty Creek. Sterritt et al. (1998b) also refer to 1861 (as mentioned by Dawson) as the date of the *xsiisxw* between the Gitanyow and the Tsetsaut, and notes Dawson's confusion of the Aboriginal peoples in the Upper Nass area. Dawson, however, did not mention any ceding of territory.

4.6.10 The Emergence of Historical Records

Colonel Robert W. Scott of the United States Navy made a report in 1867 on the Aboriginal peoples of this area, obtaining much of his information from HBC men at Port Simpson. He states among other things (Duff 1950-1978):

> *There is a tribe of about two hundred souls now living in a westerly branch of the Nass, near Stikeen River. They are called 'Lackwaips', and formerly lived on Portland Canal. They moved away in consequence of an unsuccessful war with the Nass [Gitanyow], and now trade exclusively with the Stikeens [Tahltan]. The H.B. Co. is making strong efforts to reconcile this feud, in order to receive their trade.*

This statement lends credence to the fact that the Laxwiiyiip Tsetsaut and the Portland Canal or Western Tsetsaut were of the same ethnolinguistic origin. However, this is not congruent with the fact that there were still Western Tsetsaut people living at Portland Canal in 1885, when they amalgamated with the Nisga'a (see Section 4.6.7). The "westerly branch of the Nass" is most likely the Bell-Irving River, and he is most likely describing the village of Awiijii.

A. J. Gardiner, a surveyor with the provincial government, travelled through the Groundhog Country in 1875, presumably after the last war between the Gitanyow and the Eastern Tsetsaut. On July 31, he was at the Nass River near the Cranberry River junction, where he states (Gardiner 1875): "We saw an Indian this afternoon who told us to go up the [Nass] river to [Meziadin River] where the Trail crosses to the other side and there we can go up a large stream the head of which is as far as their country goes and then it is the 'Tal tan' country."

> *Sterritt et al. (1998b) identify this "Indian" as a Gitanyow person, and the "Tal Tan" as the Eastern Tsetsaut. However, Gardiner states later states: "The Indian does not know whether we can get through…as they the 'kit-Man-kools' never go beyond their own Country since the 'Stickeens' killed some of them 20 or 25 years ago. I think it is up in where we are going that…the Kit-Man-Kools were killed."*

The fact that Gardiner distinguishes the "Tal Tan" and the "Stickeens" is inconsistent with Sterritt's argument that the "Tal tan" of Gardiner's account were the Eastern Tsetsaut. Rather, considering the Eastern Tsetsaut were involved in the attack on the Gitanyow referred to by Gardiner, they are more likely the "Stickeens" that could impede Gardiner's progress through the Meziadin Lake area. If this is the case, then the Eastern Tsetsaut still used the Laxwiiyiip area around Meziadin Lake, Bowser Lake, and Bell-Irving River. It is telling that no guides from Gitanyow accompanied Gardiner on the trip, which led to their party's traveling the wrong way and eventually having to return back down the Nass.

When Gardiner arrived at Meziadin Lake on August 7, he noted that there were no Aboriginal people there, but noted an "Indian House" on the point between the Meziadin and Nass rivers (most likely the site of Laxanjok). He also noted that a quarter of a mile above where the Meziadin River hits the Nass there are two falls where the "Indians" catch salmon. On August 10, he climbed Mount Bell-Irving. He states the "La wee eap" Valley is 3 to 5 miles wide and full of meadows. He also states that there is a low range of hills running along the other side of the valley [most likely Hanna Ridge] "where the Indians go to kill marmots but they don't go far as they are afraid of the Stickeens" (Gardiner 1875).

This excerpt indicates that both the Gitanyow and the Tsetsaut used the area, and that the Gitanyow were afraid of running into them. If this is true, then this is inconsistent with Sterritt's contention that the Tsetsaut ceded this area in a *xsiisw* to the Gitanyow.

The Gitanyow fear of the "Stickeen" is reiterated by Arthur Wellington Clah, a Tsimshian trader from Fort Simpson, who travelled through the area in 1880. Upon reaching the Laxwiiyiip area, Clah was convinced by the Gitanyow members of his party to turn back and descend the Nass River (Sterritt et al. 1998b).

J. McEvoy, an employee of the Geological Survey of Canada, spent part of the 1893 field season conducting surveys in the Nass River Valley. He followed the main Grease Trail over the Cranberry River, then left the branch and followed "an old indistinct trail" to Meziadin Lake. Of this area he states: "The ownership of this place has long been a disputed point between the [Eastern Tsetsaut] and the Kit-wan-cool peoples, and here many battles and massacres have taken place" (Selwyn 1894).

4.6.11 Dissolution of the Eastern Tsetsaut as a Distinct Group

In another *adaawk* recounted by Sterritt et al. (1998b) the house of Skii km Lax Ha (xskiigmlaxha, or Sgawil) lived at the village of Galdo'o. According to the *adaawk* (apparently recorded by Sterritt himself with David Gunanoot) they were on friendly terms with the Eastern Tsetsaut, who at the time were living at Awiijii (Oweegee) along the Bell-Irving River. Most likely, the house of Skii km Lax Ha had some time previously migrated to Galdo'o, splitting off from the remainder of the Eastern Tsetsaut but retaining their Tsetsaut identity. When this occurred is unknown; however, it was previous to the 1890s, as indicated by the events that followed. Nevertheless, they would have considered the Tsetsaut of Awiijii their kin and not merely friends. Moreover, the Skii km Lax Ha people still used the Awiijii area as shown below.

A Kispiox man (not named by Sterritt) started coming over to Awiijii to hunt and trap, and was trespassing. The Tsetsaut at Awiijii (one of them named was named Taashuuts) decided to kill him, but they shot xskiigmlaxha (Skawill) by mistake. After a year the Galdo'o and Kispiox went to avenge the murder. They apparently confronted Taashuuts at his cabin at Awiijii. The Tsetsaut in return offered gifts to the new xskiigmlaxha (the nephew of the murdered xskiigmlaxha, or Daniel Skawill) and vacated the Awiijii area. Those present at the peace ceremony were members of the war party that Nagan (Johnson Nagun) and Sgawil (Daniel Skawill) had organized to avenge the death of their uncle[17]. The war party included Solomon Dick, Tom Sampson (or John Simpson), and Walter Laats (Latz; Sterritt et al. 1998b). This was thought to have occurred a few years prior to 1897 (see Section 4.6.13). The Eastern Tsetsaut who were living at Awiijii eventually merged with the Tahltan and Bear Lake Tsek'ehne and ended up at Iskut.

Adlam (1985), in his interview with a Tahltan elder by the name of Benny Frank noted that a Peter Tashoots founded the village at Iskut, being the first man to put up a home there. He married Susie

[17] David Gunanoot also recounted this story at the *Delgamuukw* trial (UBCLDC n.d.).

Quok, from the Tlepanoten (Klappan) group of the Tahltan. They were the parents of Jack Pete, who in an interview with Sterritt said, "We follow Creek Ningunsaw down to head of Nass River. We never go to Nass River because they fight before and Tahltan [Iskut people] nearly clean them up. They [the Skii km Lax Ha] go as far as Bell II and Tahltan quit too, they move away from there" (Sterritt et al. 1998b). This information shows a clear line of events that saw the remainder of the Eastern Tsetsaut move away from the Awiijii area and merge with the Tlepanoten Tahltan at Iskut. Gerry Gunanoot confirmed that the Tahltan territory does not extend south of Bell II (UBCLDC n.d.), and mentioned Owl Creek specifically, near the Highway 37 junction with the historic Telegraph Trail. David Gunanoot stated that the line between the Stikine (now the Iskut Tahltan) and Skowill (Skii km Lax Ha)'s territory is the mouth of the Salmon River, up towards the 9th Cabin on the Telegraph Trail (UBCLDC n.d.).

Barbeau (1929), writing about the Gitemraldo (Gyetem Galdo) of Gitanmaax, stated that the kinsmen of Gitemraldo were Sqawil (Skawill) and Sanaws (Shanoss) and that they "came originally from the Groundhog country, at the headwaters of the Skeena…the Wild-rice (*Git'anrasrh*) tribe, which antedated Qaldo. They still retain their hunting grounds in the Groundhog." Gyetem Galdo's other clan relatives included Gamlxyeltxw, Luuxhon, and Ksemgunqueek.

This retention of territory is displayed on their totem pole erected circa 1880 in Gitanmaax. The house of Gyetem Galdo (or Gedimgaldo'o), according to Barbeau, ended up merging with the village of Gitanmaax. The name Gedimgaldo'o is also held by a descendant of Albert Allen at Gingolx (Sterritt et al. 1998b). However, the Skii km Lax Ha recognize that the name and territory of Gyetem Galdo was originally Tsetsaut (Rescan 2009b). Sterritt (1998b) notes that those who migrate away from their original territories and join other villages do not take ownership of their territories with them. In other words, the adoptive nation does not retain the title to the house territory of the migrant.

4.6.12 The Twentieth Century

A reading of the oral and written histories reveals some discrepancies around the nature of the "treaty" concluded at Treaty Creek. Around 1930, P. Monkton, a registered BC land surveyor, said in regard to Treaty Creek (GeoBC 2012): "The name refers to a treaty or convention between the Skeena and Stikine Indians; neither group is supposed to trap or occupy this area; a sort of no man's land and breeding ground for beaver between the two tribes."

Note that Monkton mentions "Skeena" and "Stikine" Indians, but not "Nass Indians". The name was entered into the BC Gazetteer that same year. If it had referred to a treaty concluded in 1861 as others have asserted, it is curious as to why it would have taken so long for the name to be changed. Sterritt et al. (1998b) states that Treaty Creek was so named because of the peace ceremony held circa 1900 between the Eastern Tsetsaut (rightfully now associated with the Iskut Tahltan at Caribou Hide) and the Gitxsan (holders of Skii km Lax Ha's name).

Ian McLeod (McLeod and McNeil 2004), from information obtained from David Gunanoot, writes: "Treaty Creek is a tributary of the Bell-Irving River and was named to commemorate the peace negotiated between the Stikines and the Gitsan who had a fight over rights to the valley. David showed me the gun pots that his people had dug at Owee Gee River for their defence."

Jessie Sterritt in her testimony at the *Delgamuukw* trial (UBCLDC n.d.), showed the "peace feather" that Daniel Skawill gave her before he died. The feather was presented to Skawill's family by the "Stikines" and represented the *xsiisxw* or cessation of territory to Skawill's family.

Owee Gee River, now known as Oweegee Creek, was the location of the Tsetsaut village of Awiijii. The Skii km Lax Ha still have smokehouses here and claim this place as an ancestral village.

The “Gitsan” in this case are almost certainly the ancestors of David Gunanoot, being his father Simon and Simon’s father Johnson Nagun, all of whom are claimed as Skii km Lax Ha ancestors. Note that McLeod does not use the word “Tahltan”; the “Stikines” in this case are believed to be the Bear Lake Tsek’ehne/ Tlepanoten Tahltan/Eastern Tsetsaut group that eventually settled at Iskut.

David Gunanoot (Niik’yap), as related by Sterritt et al. (1998b) was the son of Simon Gunanoot (Geel) of Kispiox, and a woman from Kisgaga’as. His grandfather, Naagan (Johnson Nagun) lived at Galdo’o. He was raised by his father and his great uncle Sgawil (Daniel Skawill) at Awiijii, and spent much of the rest of his life there. Daniel Skawill and Simon Gunanoot described the Awiijii territory to David as going up the Bell-Irving River to Owl Creek, and the up to Ninth Cabin Mountain, then following the height of land at Oweegee Peak to the Nass River. Bowser Lake is in this territory as well.

In 1934, John Simpson and Walter Latz declared in an official government document that they had witnessed a meeting 35 years earlier between Simon Gunanoot and his father (Johnson Nagun) and the Stikine (now the combined Tlepanoten Tahltan/Bear Lake Tsek’ehne/Eastern Tsetsaut people camped at Caribou Hide) Indians who claimed his trapping grounds. This is almost certainly the same event recounted in the *adaawk* (see Section 4.6.11). It was at this meeting that Simpson and Latz witnessed the terms of peace between the two groups and that Gunanoot’s heirs were entitled to hold the hunting grounds “running 40 miles north and south from Bowser Lake, BC” (Simpson and Latz 1934; Williams 1982). However, this declaration was followed up by a four year investigation, culminating in a letter from G. C. Mortimer, the Indian Agent at Hazelton, in 1938 further clarifying the matter (Mortimer 1938):

> *Simon Gunanoot had no claim to this hunting ground as he was descended from the Gail [Geel] family [a Gitxsan house of Kispiox, through his mother] who hunted at the headwaters of the Skeena River…Daniel Skawill, who now owns the hunting ground in question – and rightly so according to information received – was the brother of Simon Gunanoot’s father and proved claim to this hunting ground on the latter’s death. However, Simon Gunanoot was allowed to trap there during his lifetime, of which he took advantage. He died and was buried there.*
>
> *“Since that time Mrs. Sarah Gunanoot, widow of the late Simon Gunanoot, and her grownup children have been warned by the Game Warden and myself to keep off this hunting ground…”*

Despite the fact that Johnson Nagun raised Simon Gunanoot at Meziadin Lake (Cox 1958), the original settlement of the dispute was apparently incorrect because territory in this area is handed down through the matrilineal line (see Section 4.3.2.3); therefore, Nagun’s territory would have gone to his siblings or, if none were alive at his passing, his sister’s children, but not his own children. Mortimer and the Game Warden both took this ruling seriously and enforced it with fines and threats of imprisonment to ensure that Simon Gunanoot’s wife and children did not use the hunting and trapping area in and around Bowser Lake. The Skii km Lax Ha consider this historical document a key piece of evidence in support of their matrilineal right to use and occupy this territory (Rescan 2009b). Darlene Simpson (current holder of the name Skii km Lax Ha) links her maternal family line back to Johnson Nagun, Daniel Skawill, and Johnny Wilson, all previous holders of the name Skii km Lax Ha (Rescan 2009b). The underlying issue, as stated earlier, is that the Skii km Lax Ha consider themselves to be Tsetsaut, while the Gitanyow and Gitxsan identify the Skii km Lax Ha as having intermarried with the Gitxsan at Galdo’o and therefore to be a *wilp* of the Gitxsan.

Simon Gunanoot's friend, George Bierns, drafted a map for Pinkerton detectives during the hunt for Simon Gunanoot[18]. The map depicts Simon's use of the area in the headwaters of the Nass River and refers to it as Simon's hunting grounds. Constable Kirby also produced a map around the same time as George Bierns, depicting Simon's occupation at the head of the Nass and a trail to one of his cabins (Williams 1982). The cabin location appears to be the same as identified on George Bierns' map. These hunting grounds would have been those previously owned by his father, Johnson Nagun, and which Simon was allowed to use during his lifetime. Simon himself in an interview with Barbeau (Barbeau 1910-1969) states that his father hunted these grounds at the head of the Nass. Provincial Police records state (Sterritt et al. 1998b):

"Burns also told us Simon had hunting grounds about due west of this place, on Nass River, where he got Moose in February and March. He gave us details of the Indians never hunting on each other's hunting grounds."

A 1926 report to the Assistant District Engineer, Department of Public Works, Province of BC that recounts the reconnaissance survey of T. D. McLean describes an encounter with Gunanoot, and provides evidence of Gunanoot's use and knowledge of the Bell-Irving and Teigen area. The report states that (GeoBC n.d.): "...right alongside Graveyard Point we discovered a freshly blazed trail, and having followed it we met a party of Indians camped on Bell-Irving River. These Indians, Gunnanoot and party, have trapped in this country regularly for a number of years, and know it thoroughly."

4.6.13 Competing Claims of Wii'litsxw and Nagun/Skawill

4.6.13.1 Historical Record Pre-1900

According to a letter from J. B. McCullagh in 1897 (Sterritt et al. 1998b), Johnson Nagun (Skii km Lax Ha) found Peter Wii Litsxw (a Wolf Clan member from Gitanyow) trapping in an area over which Nagun held tenure. Nagun, consequently, chased him out of the area and took his traps. This led to a dispute between Nagun and Wii'litsxw that McCullagh, as magistrate for the District of Cassiar, was required to settle. Wii'litsxw stated that an agreement had been reached between Indian Agent Loring, Nagun, and himself in which each agreed to respect the rights of the other on the hunting grounds in question. However, Wii'litsxw claims Nagun crossed the boundary (Sterritt places this boundary at Surveyors' Creek), said to have been decided by Loring. Why Sterritt identifies Surveyors' Creek as the boundary is not explained.

4.6.13.2 McCullagh's 1905 Expedition along the Nass River

J. B. McCullagh himself travelled along the Nass River to Meziadin Lake in 1905, on behalf of the Dominion Fisheries Department, to inspect the various spawning grounds along the Nass River. He was accompanied by William Gogag, Edwin Haizimsqu (Haizimsique), Arthur Gwisilla (Gwass Hlaam), and James Nakmanz, all of whom Sterritt et al. (1998a) identify as being Gitanyow. They followed what was most likely the old Grease Trail that ran along the Nass River. On September 23, they reached the south side of the Cranberry River, where an "Indian suspension bridge" used to hang. This location would have been near the Gitanyow village of Anxhon. After crossing over to an island in the river and then over to the north side, he remarks (McCullagh 1907-1910): "Strapping on our packs again we renewed our journey. 'Now then, brethren,' cried William [Gogag], 'we are in the enemy's country;

[18] For a detailed description of the crime, pursuit and trial of Simon Gunanoot, accused of killing Alex MacIntosh and Max Leclair outside of Hazelton, please refer to Williams (1982).

keep a sharp look out and a ready rifle!' and suiting the action to the word, he filled the magazine of his rifle with a ball cartridge, the others doing the same."

If these men were all Gitanyow, and were entering Gitanyow territory as Sterritt claims, it is curious that they would state they were in "enemy country" and proceed to load their rifles. The Skii km Lax Ha assert that the "enemy" they were referring to were the Tsetsaut (or Tenne or Stickine, as they are referred to in other places in the journal). In fearing for their safety they were freely admitting the use of the territory (if not the actual presence in the territory) by Tsetsaut people or their descendants who claimed the territory north of the Cranberry River (G. Simpson, Pers. Comm. 2013).

On September 25, McCullagh notes: "We halted for a rest in a charming little grove where, not many years ago, a party of Gitwinlgols [Gitanyow] was surprised and massacred by some Tenne [Tsetsaut] who took away some children as captives, one of whom is still alive at Tahl Tan, the Tenne village on the Stickine River."

Sterrit et al. (1998a) notes that this place was near the village of Xsigigyeenit. This story was recounted in Duff (1959) as occurring after the events at Meziadin circa 1861. If there was a peace settlement and ceding of territory by the Tsetsaut, it is inconsistent with the fact that there were still Tsetsaut raids against the Gitanyow like the one recounted to McCullagh.

On September 27, the party reached Wil-sga-lgol (Winsgahlgu'l), the narrows on the Nass River, after climbing over a small plateau separating it from the Cranberry River to the south. Later, on the 28, after camping for the night at a place called Ksi-an-k-gasq ("Lilyroot Stream"), they carried on and struck the Nass again, where they came upon some cottonwood canoes bushed there and used them to canoe 15 miles upriver. At the end of the canoe navigation, they came upon "Diwen's hunting lodge". Diwen was from the village of Gitanyow, and is known as "a necromancer, insomuch that very many members of his tribe would go a day's march out of their way to avoid meeting him, or having anything to do with him. He is said to have obtained possession of his hunting grounds by means of the black art." In other words, he is considered an outcast from the larger Gitanyow population, and is not occupying the area on behalf of the Gitanyow.

On October 1, it snowed on them for the first time, to a depth of four inches. McCullagh writes:

> *When the boys saw that it was snowing in downright earnest they shrivelled up into themselves and scarcely spoke the one to the other all day. William [Gogag] especially drooped- the great heart of the party! …Once, in order to feel the temper of the men, I remarked, "I seem to be the only happy man in camp today; I wonder how that comes to be so?" For a while nobody replied to this, but presently James [Nakmanz] said, "Because you don't understand the serious nature of our position, therefore you are happy." To this they all grunted assent.*

William Gogag wanted to return home immediately, but McCullagh persuaded him to continue on. McCullagh thinks they are guarded because they don't want to travel in snowy weather, but this is inconsistent with ethnographic data which shows that Tsimshian people frequently spent time in the winter hunting, and especially trapping (Section 4.4.1.2). Rather, if the Skii km Lax Ha assertion of Tsetsaut use of the area is correct, the Gitanyow were most likely concerned because they were trespassing and would be much easier to track in the snow.

On October 3, McCullagh remarks after descending below the snow line, and travelling for a few hours, resting "beneath a large spruce tree where a party of Stickine Indians (those comprising our late mission at Telegraph Creek) massacred a party of Gitwinlgols and Gitlakdamiks" (this event is

recounted in Section 4.6.9). The Stickines he mentions forming his mission at Telegraph Creek were the remnants of the Tsetsaut that merged with the Tlepanoten Tahltan and eventually moved to Iskut. He goes on:

> *This country (the Lak-wi-yip) once belonged to the Stickines, and the Falls [Laxanjok], where I am camping tonight, used to be their summer camp where they caught and dried all their salmon, and did some trading with the Gitlakdamiks and Gitwinlgols…but after the massacre just mentioned, the Stickine Indians made reparation to the Gitwinlgols by handing them over to them the whole of the Lak-wi-yip, and have come here no more. Wi-lizqu [Wii'litsxw] (Blue-grouse) a chief of the Gitwinlgols has a smoke-house here at the Falls. He and his family have been here since the spring all alone…*

Wii'litsxw, of course, was the man who had a dispute with Johnson Nagun in 1897 (mentioned earlier) over the use of trapping territory. In fact it is curious as to the discrepancy between being "in the enemy's country" immediately on the north side of the Cranberry River, to being in Gitanyow territory at Meziadin Lake.

On October 11, McCullagh and Wii'litsxw chatted, the latter "narrating the history of Meziadin Lake and the country of Lak-wi-yip, and teaching me the Tenne song of expiation, the tune and vocables of which I have managed to learn, but my knowledge of music is not sufficient to enable me to set it forth here."

The printed version of *Autumn Leaves* (McCullagh 1907-1910) omits the telling of the "Tenne song of expiation" by Wii'litsxw found in the version typed in 1906. In the latter, the murder of Saniik and Amintah by the Nisga'a chief Leduk is described, as well as the massacre of Gitanyow and Nisga'a at Meziadin Lake by the Tsetsaut. However, this is where the similarities end between this version and those told by Duff (1959) and Robert Pearl (Barbeau and Beynon 1950b). Wii'litsxw goes on to describe the *xsiisxw* ceremony in detail. This appears to be the only place where it is recorded in historic literature.

On their return to Diwen's hunting grounds, McCullagh's party found their old camp tossed up in a heap, and later, as they approached Diwen's smoke house, they found everything had been deliberately burned. William Gogag blamed Diwen himself, in that he was a sorcerer and meant their party harm by sabotaging their provisions. However it seems counterintuitive for Diwen to have set fire to his own hunting lodge. McCullagh then surmises that the fire must have been accidental, the work of a still-lit ember from the camp fire, and that Diwen's hunting party returned to Gitanyow. Later, however, they found a message from Diwen on the paddle of their canoe beached on the Nass that said Diwen and his two helpers had paddled downriver, with no mention of the fire. If, rather, the Skii km Lax Ha assertion of Tsetsaut use of the area is correct, it is more likely that a group of Tsetsaut destroyed Diwen's lodge and their party's camp and provisions for the reason that the party was trespassing on their territory.

4.6.13.3 Emmons Papers 1907 to 1909

Ethnographer G. T. Emmons studied the Tsimshian as well as the Tahltan people during this time period (leading to his publication on the Tahltan in 1911). His manuscript on the Gitxsan and Nisga'a, however, was never published. In his description of the Gitanyow he states (Emmons 1908): "[Gitanyow territory] includes the Kitwancool lake and they hunt and trap well in towards the head waters of the Nass and Skeena in what might be called 'no man's country' as it is claimed by both the upper Niska and Kitiksahn [Gitxsan] as well as the Tahltan [Eastern Tsetsaut]."

Further he states:

> *Their [Gitanyow] country includes the valley of the Kitwin kool river some twenty two miles in from the Skeena River, the Kitwankool lake and well in towards the Nass, and some of these people hunt on the head waters of the Nass. In 1907 I met an old Kitwancool man at Aiyansh who hunted well in towards the head waters of the Stickeen and had in a war with the Tahltans [Eastern Tsetsaut] killed two of the latter family when a young man…in maintenance of [his] claim…he had killed two Tahltan [Eastern Tsetsaut] whom he found there.*

Most likely this man was Wii'litsxw, whom McCullagh found with his family at Meziadin Lake.

4.6.13.4 Historical Record Post-1920

In a statement provided to Barbeau and Beynon in 1924, Chief Albert Williams described the territories of Malii and Wii'litsxw as follows (Barbeau 1910-1969): "Besides this, the laxkibu [Wolf clan] have hunting territories among the Tsetsaut towards the Nass and Meziadin Lake. That is Mali and Wilits and all the laxkibu. And they claim that region surrounding Meziadin. They had a battle with the Tsetsaut at that place and that is the reason why they claim it."

Note that Albert Williams says that is why they "claim" it, but did not say that is why they "own" it. He also states that the territory is "among the Tsetsaut", which infers the Tsetsaut (more accurately their descendants) used it alongside the Gitanyow.

The first trapline at Meziadin Lake was recorded on December 28, 1925 by "Chief Wee-Litsque [Henry Wii'litsxw]…of Kitwanga Village" and is described as "the shorelines of Meziadin Lake, Cottonwood Creek, and short creeks running into Meziadin Lake". It says the applicant has trapped in the area "for 20 years or more" and that it was trapped by the parents of the applicant (BC Fish and Wildlife Service 1925-1926). Sterritt et al. (1998b) identifies Cottonwood Creek as Surveyor's Creek. Cottonwood Creek, however, was actually much further south than Surveyor's Creek, according to a map of the area created by Provincial surveyors circa 1910. This map is shown in McLeod and McNeil (2004) and depicts Cottonwood Creek flowing into the Nass River below Meziadin Lake, south of Wolverine Creek but north of Brown Bear Creek. The name "Cottonwood Creek" is no longer used on maps of the area, but it is most likely the same as modern-day Kitanweliks Creek.

On April 26, 1926, the application was changed (or amended) to describe the extent of the trapline as the "shore lines of Meziadin Lake, also Cottonwood Creek and ten miles along east side of Naas River south from Cottonwood Creek." Then, on August 25, 1926, another application was made by Chief Weelitsque, for "all the territory lying on the shore of Meziadin Lake and at Meziadin Falls also including the Hanna and Beaver [Tintina?] creeks running into the Lake and Grassy Mountain [Mount Bell-Irving]." This time, the application says he has trapped on this line for over forty years and that it once belonged to the uncle of the present applicant (BC Fish and Wildlife Service 1925-1926).

According to Provincial Police records, Daniel Skowill and Peter Shanoss in 1926 were charged and convicted of assaulting Henry Wii'litsxw [Benson] and Edward Benson in Stewart, BC. The Skii km Lax Ha assert the latter two were assaulted because they trespassed on Skowill's hunting and trapping territory (Rescan 2009b).

William Beynon in a preface to Fred Johnson's narrative writes (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a):

> *For some time, there has been a controversy as to the rights of certain Kanhada (Raven-Frog) and Larhkibu (Wolf), originally from Gitwinhlkul, but who have through marriage moved away from there. Those remaining at Gitwinhlkul have challenged the rights of*

> *those moving away, to go to their former hunting and trapping territories of Meziadin Lake…It has developed considerable feeling…the parties have aired their claims, each trying to establish their rights…The controlling group of the Meziadin Lake territory has always been the subject of dispute between the Raven and Wolf groups. And now that many of the two groups have moved away for various reasons, those remaining at Gitwinhlkul feel that those who have moved away have forfeited their rights.*

Fred Johnson, whom the Skii km Lax Ha state is the brother of Henry Wii'litsxw (D. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2013) states in his narrative (Barbeau and Beynon 1950a):

> *The Larhkibu and the Kanhada of Gitwinhlkul, who have left there to live at other places, have not forfeited their rights, and privileges. By continually contributing to dewel [?] and marriage and to feasts, they are entitled to the same privileges as if they were residents of Gitwinhlkul. There are many of these living at Kispayaks [Kispiox], which fills their tribal obligations, even though by law, owing to marriage, the Department of Indian Affairs does not recognize them as Gitwinhlkul, they themselves maintain their right by keeping their obligation to their Gitwinhlkul relatives. In fact there is a Gitwinhlkul family who first moved to Gitwanrarh [Gitwangak], then to Stewart, at the head of Portland Canal, so that they could take the short trail to Meziadin Lake, via the glacier behind Stewart. Their rights are a constant source of dispute, yet they are of the family of Kam'naerh'yaeltk [Gamlaxyeltxw], the Kanhada chief of Gitwinhlkul.*

The Skii km Lax Ha claim that this family who moved to Stewart was that of Daniel Skowill, who had competing claims in the area (G. Simpson, Pers. Comm., 2012). Why he is identified here as a Gitanyow individual, however, is not explained. Nevertheless, it is clear that there were dissensions even among the Gitanyow about the use of the Meziadin Lake area. Duff (1959) mentions that the Cranberry River is the boundary line between the Wolf Clan (south) and the Frog Clan (north) territories. Wii'litsxw and Txawok, however, are members of the Wolf Clan (Barbeau 1929). Despite this, Wii'litsxw registered his trapline around Meziadin Lake, far north of the Cranberry River. Johnson continues: "…this family [Wii'litsxw]'s head had the foresight to register his rights to trap and hunt in that area through the proper channels [the Provincial trapline registry], and also he has met all his tribal obligations at Gitwinhlkul, so that none can overrule his claim, though disputing it."

Daniel Skowill applied for his own trapline in 1929, three years after Henry Wii'litsxw registered his trapline around Meziadin Lake. The length of Skowill's trapline is 30 miles, and it states that Daniel Skowill had already been using the trapline for 50 years. It commences "about 15 miles up the Bell-Irving R., from mouth; thence N NW to a point about 5 [miles] above the mouth of Creek emptying out of Todedada Lake thence SW & S to source of [creek] flowing into Todedada L.; thence SE to source of [creek] draining Bowser L. thence NW to point of comm[encement]" (BC Fish and Wildlife Service 1929). The Skii km Lax Ha assert that, as the Meziadin Lake area was already registered by Henry Wii'litsxw, Daniel Skowill was prohibited under the provincial trapline rules to include the area as part of his trapline (Rescan 2009b).

5. Summary

5. Summary

On the Coast Mountain landscape that characterizes the Study Area, Aboriginal peoples have developed similar cultural and social adaptations throughout history. This has included similar patterns of community organization and patterns of territory use throughout northwest BC. Common seasonal cycles, hunting methods, and ceremonies were identified by ethnographers among the Tsetsaut, Tsimshian, and Tahltan ethnolinguistic groups. The development of seasonal cycles tailored to the landscape was an important element of Northwest Coast and Subarctic culture groups, and significant events in these cycles included the gathering of people during the summer or winter months; the catching, processing and storage of salmon in the summer; and the hunting of moose, caribou, and other ungulates in the fall/winter.

Fishing, hunting, and trapping have always been central to the economic life of Aboriginal groups inhabiting the upper Nass, Skeena, and Stikine drainages. The most significant species hunted in this area was "groundhog", or hoary marmot, which was plentiful and whose furs were highly prized for ceremonial regalia. Other species hunted included caribou (prior to their disappearance from the area), mountain goat, and more recently, moose. Beaver was commonly trapped along the creeks and at lake edges. All of these were harvested using snares, deadfalls, spears, or bows-and-arrows. Fishing was common at the Nass River near its junction with Meziadin River, and a major fishing camp and village was located there. Fish were also harvested along all the major tributaries of the Nass, Skeena, and Stikine rivers using a variety of methods including nets, spears, gaffs, and weirs. Groups congregated at productive salmon fishing spots during the summer months, many of these also being permanent winter villages.

Plant-derived foods and medicines were used extensively by the Skii km Lax Ha, Nisg̲a'a, Gitanyow, Gitxsan, and Tahltan. These Aboriginal groups relied on a number of food plant resources, including a variety of berries, edible tubers and bulbs, and cambium from trees such as pine and hemlock. The bark and wood of various trees, particularly red cedar, were used to create baskets and other implements, canoes, and house structures.

The Aboriginal groups discussed in this report enjoyed wide access to the coast, river valleys, and mountains that make up this region before reserves were created in the late 19th and 20th centuries, and the land occupied through European settlement and industrial development. The establishment of fur trading posts and mission communities, incursion of non-Aboriginal commercial fishermen along the Nass and Skeena rivers, and transition to a wage economy all had a strong influence on traditional land use patterns.

The Groundhog Country (of which the Study Area is a part) was the scene of numerous movements of peoples over time in the oral histories of the Skii km Lax Ha, Nisg̲a'a, Gitanyow, Gitxsan, and Tahltan. The Meziadin area was of particular importance as a resource harvesting centre, and as a result ownership of this area and access to it grew in significance up to contact with Europeans. Oral traditions confirm that it was the object of extensive conflict. By the end of the nineteenth-century the conflict appears to have abated, and the oral traditions speak of truces between Aboriginal groups.

It should be noted that maps of modern-day traditional territories provide a snapshot and a singular perspective that may conceal or hide centuries of movement, migration, intercultural conflict, intermarriage, and alliances. As shown through a review of oral and written history, this dynamism resulted in the formation of the Gitanyow people, the movement and assimilation of the western branch of the Tsetsaut into Nisg̲a'a territory and culture, and to the absorption of the eastern branch of the Tsetsaut into neighbouring Tahltan and Gitxsan villages. In other words, the traditional territory of each group has fluctuated over time in response to a variety of influences.

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