Tse Keh Nay Traditional and Contemporary Use and Occupation at Amazay (Duncan Lake): A Draft Report

Amazay Lake Photo by Patrice Halley

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been written on behalf of the Tse Keh Nay to provide the Kemess North Joint Review Panel with details of Tse Keh Nay historic and current use of the Thutade and Amazay lakes region.

The Tse Keh Nay are Sekani speaking people who have lived in the Rocky Mountain Trench for many generations. The Tse Keh Nay represented here are the Kwadacha First Nation, who live at the confluence of the Finlay and Fox rivers; the Tsay Keh Dene, who live at the north end of Williston Lake; and the Takla Lake First Nation, who live in several small communities on and near Takla Lake. These three communities are closely related to each other through kinship and intermarriage.

Traditionally the Sekani were organized into regional bands that were identified with specific territories. Families within the regional bands dispersed into smaller local bands and followed a seasonal round that included hunting, fishing and gathering plants for food and medicines. The Sekani were primarily hunters and depended upon large game such as caribou, moose, mountain sheep and mountain goats, and small game such as beaver, porcupine, hare and hoary marmots (groundhogs). As well as hunting, the Sekani fished the many lakes, rivers, and creeks for white fish, suckers, Dolly Varden, and trout. Salmon was available at Bear Lake. Plant foods were also an important addition to Sekani diet, particularly at certain times of year.

The journal of Samuel Black, an early fur trader who visited the region in 1824, details “Thecannie” historic use of the Thutade and Amazay lakes region. His account notes the presence of the Tse Keh Nay, specifically Chief Methodiates and his followers who lived in the region. Chief Methodiates advised Black and his party to go to Thutade Lake and wait until the snow melted before proceeding north to the Upper Liard River. Chief Methodiates also suggested that Black establish a fur post at Thutade Lake. Black noted that Thutade Lake was a rich resource area for fish as well as caribou and other game. Black stayed at Thutade Lake with a party of “Thecannies” from Chief Methodiates band for two weeks, and observed several old “Thecannie” encampments and detailed his fishing and hunting experiences while there. He also noted the presence of a small white fish which may have come from Amazay Lake. When he revisited Thutade Lake in the fall he noted that Chief Methodiates and his band were staying on the other side of the mountain of Lake Thutade, possibly Amazay Lake. Samuel Black’s journal confirms Tse Keh Nay aboriginal use and occupancy of the Thutade and Amazay lakes region.

Current use of the area by the Tse Keh Nay shows that these lakes remain significant to them. Thutade and Amazay lakes are used by many families on a seasonal basis. In interviews with the Tse Keh Nay it was noted that the area is known for hunting caribou, moose and other large game. Groundhogs are also abundant in this region and fishing remains an important activity on these lakes. Medicinal plants, plants of spiritual importance, berries and other plant foods are also gathered here. Trap lines are maintained and continue to be productive during the winter months. The lakes are a gathering place where families meet, exchange information about resources in the area, trade and intermarry.
The Thutade Lake region is rich in oral history and place names. Thutade means ‘water den’ or ‘water hole’, or can mean ‘above the water’, in reference to looking down on the lake from the hills above. Amazay means ‘little mother lake’ or ‘very superior mother.’ At Amazay Lake there is a story about a mammoth that may be linked to the last ice age in this region. Many of the place names around Amazay and Thutade are linked to this mammoth story. The Tse Keh Nay say that Thutade and Amazay lakes are sacred places. The lakes are known as strong places for dreams and acquiring spiritual power. There are several Tse Keh Nay people who have been buried here, some within recent times. The Tse Keh Nay say that these lakes are at the heart of their territory and for this reason they must be protected.

The Tse Keh Nay have experienced increasing restrictions on the traditional use of their territory since the land was first opened to non-Tse Keh Nay in the late 18th Century. The establishment of fur trading posts, missionary contact, the gold rush, and other mining activities brought many transient visitors to the region whose interests and developments degraded the environment and depleted the wildlife. The subsequent deforestation of timber stands by the logging industry further disrupted wildlife migration and destroyed sensitive habitats. The building of roads and railroads to accommodate the resource extraction industry has accelerated these negative effects. These impacts, however, pale in comparison to the impact of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam which destroyed a way of life for many Tse Keh Nay. This dam caused the flooding of 640 square miles of productive Tse Keh Nay territory, villages, grave sites, and trap lines. It created Williston Lake, a health hazard due to the dust it creates and a transportation barrier to movement in the territory. The flooding has resulted in high levels of mercury in fish, so that the Tse Keh Nay cannot eat fish caught in Williston Lake.

The Tse Keh Nay fear that unsustainable mining and forestry practices in their land will ultimately end their ability to hunt, fish, and gather as they have always done. These industries have polluted the environment to such an extent that it is no longer safe to eat foods or drink water in the vicinity of these activities. The Tse Keh Nay have seen the evidence of this in their caribou, moose, groundhog meat and fish. They are gravely concerned over the threat to Thutade and Amazay Lakes which form part of a watershed that affects all of Tse Keh Nay territory.

This report substantiates the historic and current use of the Thutade Lake and Amazay Lake area by the Tse Keh Nay. The area has great historical and spiritual significance and the Tse Keh Nay have a strong interest in its protection. The Tse Keh Nay do not want Amazay Lake to be used as a tailings pond.

Due to time and funding constraints, this report is a draft report only. It is strongly recommended that further research be conducted so that the Tse Keh Nay can have a full voice in these hearings.
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1.0 THE TSE KEH NAY

1.1 Introduction

We are the Tse Keh Nay. We live in three communities known as Kwadacha, Tsay Keh Dene and Takla Lake. Our oral history and our people go back as far as the ice age and to a time of large wolves, big-eared foxes and mammoths. Our territory includes that part of the Rocky Mountain Trench that is drained by the Finlay and Parsnip rivers, north to the confluence of the Kechika and Gataga rivers, and to the west of Takla Lake, Bear Lake, Tatlatui Lake and Kitchener Lake. The territories of all Sekani peoples extend further, in all directions, from our territories. Our oral history tells us who we are as Sekani people. Early European explorers and historians who traveled to our home did not know us, our ways or our language. For this reason, they wrote many assumptions about our people and our ways. No one wrote down our Tse Keh Nay history. We are now only beginning this process.

Currently, our territory is under threat from mining, logging and other industrial activity. We do not oppose development. We need jobs, training and revenue for our people. However, we do not support unsustainable development that destroys our lands and waters.

Northgate Minerals is proposing to destroy Amazay (Duncan Lake) to make a waste dump for its Kemess North mine. We do not have the time or resources to prepare a full response. However, this draft report will give the Environmental Assessment Panel, Northgate Minerals and the governments a small window into our history, our culture and our vision for the future. Hopefully, this will help everyone understand why we cannot allow Amazay to be destroyed.

Amazay Lake is part of our territory and is an important place to our people. Amazay means “little mother”. We believe it is a birthing place for animals that are important to us. It is a place that we have used, managed and protected since time immemorial. It was and continues to be actively used by our people for hunting, trapping and fishing. It is a place where plants are gathered for food and medicines. It is a sacred place. Some of our ancestors are buried here and we have stories about this place. It is a known gathering place for all three communities.

The following report will give some detail about how we use Amazay Lake and the surrounding area. It will explain a bit about who we are, our history, our past and present use of the land, and our concerns about the destruction of this lake and the area around it. We want people to know how important this area is to us. It is not a remote and insignificant area. On the contrary it is the heart of our territory. It is the centre, where the territories of our three communities overlap, not only physically, but through kinship and marriage. It is known to us all. We feel responsible for this land. It was given to us by the Creator and we must protect the land and the animals that live here. These are not empty words. It is what our ancestors have taught us. When we move across the land we must leave it as it was created. We know this view is not shared by everyone but it is an integral part of who we are as Tse Keh Nay. We are connected to this world through our lands. This connection is
spiritual, joining us to our territory, our animals, our plants, our resources, and to each other. Through this connection we are shown the powers of the plants and animals. Any negative impact on Tse Keh Nay territory has an immeasurable impact on our spirituality and on who we are as a people. Using Amazay as a toxic waste site scares us. If allowed, it will not only destroy a pristine sacred site, but it will be another blow to Tse Keh Nay people and our spiritual relationship to our lands and waters. Water is vital to our well-being as it cleanses the spirit. The waters from Amazay and Thutade are at the heart of our territories and their waters cleanse and replenish as they flow through our lands. We are responsible for this land and we must work together to protect it. Unlike others who come here, we are not transients on the land. We have lived here since time immemorial and this will always be our home.
1.2 A Word From The Lawyers

This report is a draft report only. It was prepared within a very short time frame with very limited resources. It is not intended to be a complete or comprehensive history or ethnography of the Tse Keh Nay. Nor is it a complete or comprehensive report on Tse Keh Nay use, management, occupation, ownership or rights and title relating to this area. This report is without prejudice to aboriginal rights and title but one or all of the Tse Keh Nay Nations may choose to use all or part of this draft report in court if necessary.

1.3 Preparation of this Report

Unless otherwise noted, this report was prepared by Dr. Loraine Littlefield, Deidre Cullon and Linda Dorricott. Dr. Littlefield is responsible for the overall accuracy of the report and for any expert opinions expressed in the main section. Other reports, by other authors, are appended to this submission. Maps were produced by Michelle Lochhead and SLV Mapping.

1.4 Tse Keh Nay People

Tse Keh Nay represent three groups of the Sekani people, who live in the Rocky Mountain Trench of British Columbia. The term Sekani means “people of the rocks” or “people of the mountains”. There have been many variants of this name (Denniston 1981:440). In the written record it came into general use by the first quarter of the 19th century when the name ‘Sicaunie’ was used by Daniel Harmon, a fur trader who travelled in the region, to describe the people of the Finlay-Parsnip watershed (Harmon 2006). The spelling of ‘Sekani’ was adopted at the turn of the century and has been accepted by anthropologists. The Tse Keh Nay have recently adopted this different spelling, more linked to the true sounds of their name.

Photo 1: Thutade Lake, by Chief John Allen French

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1 See Appendix H for the C.V.s of the report authors.
2 The terms Tse Keh Nay and Sekani are used in this report. ‘Tse Keh Nay’ is a political term that is used to refer to the three Nations working collaboratively in the Joint Panel review process (Takla First Nation, Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha First Nation). The term ‘Sekani’ is used to refer to all groups who consider themselves, or who have been considered to be part of a larger group of people who speak the language, known to linguists, as Sekani.
The Tse Keh Nay consider themselves to be the original inhabitants of this region. Harmon (2006) and others (Morice 1895; Jenness 1937) speculated that because of similarities, the Sekani were once part of the Beaver Indians who lived to the east on the lower part of the Peace River and that they were recent immigrants. Most certainly the language of the Tse Keh Nay belongs to the Beaver-Sarcee-Sekani branch of Athapaskan and is mutually intelligible, indicating a close relationship at some point in history. However, Harris (1984:35) suggests that “that there is no evidence to support a recent migration into the Finlay-Parsnip watershed of all the Sekani bands.” Neither is a recent migration supported by Tse Keh Nay oral history and it is clear that when Samuel Black explored Sekani territory in 1824, the Tse Keh Nay fully occupied, used and managed a territory that included the lands, waters and resources in the Amazay/Thutade/ Kemess area (Denniston 1981: 435).

The Tse Keh Nay include the Kwadacha, the Tsay Keh Dene, and the Takla Lake First Nations. Following is a brief profile of their communities today.

### 1.5 The Communities

The Kwadacha people live at Fort Ware at the confluence of the Finlay and Fox Rivers. They have three reserves. The largest is at Fort Ware (958 acres) where many Kwadacha people live; the other two are small fishing stations on nearby lakes. The community is located 70 kilometres north of the Tsay Keh Dene community. Fort Ware is considered one of the most isolated communities in British Columbia as it takes from ten to twelve hours, depending, on road and weather conditions, to travel from Fort Ware to Prince George.

The population of the Kwadacha First Nation is 220 of which more than 50% are 25 years and younger. At Fort Ware the Kwadacha have a store, a restaurant, a recreation centre, a school with elementary and high school grades, and a daycare with a headstart program. They are in the process of building a new church as their old church burnt down a few years ago. The community also has an airport.

The Kwadacha participate in seasonal employment in the resource industries and a few continue to trap and live on their land. Some members are also employed in administration, education and other services for the community. To date there is little economic development in the community aside from a joint forestry project with Tsay Keh Dene.

The Tsay Keh Dene, formerly known as the Ingenika, live at the north end of the Williston Reservoir in the community of Tsay Keh Dene. It is located approximately 430 kilometres north of Prince George, a nine to eleven hour drive on logging roads. The total population of the Nation is 377 and approximately 200 live on reserve.

The creation of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and Williston Reservoir in the late 1960s flooded their lands and displaced the Tsay Keh Dene from their former village sites. The majority are presently living on crown land. The facilities at Tsay Keh Dene include a school which only goes to grade nine. Students who wish to complete their education must move to Prince
George. An RCMP detachment in the community serves the McKenzie region including Kwadacha. The Tsay Keh Dene administration offices are at Prince George.

The Tsay Keh Dene also depend upon seasonal employment in the resource extraction industries which provides some full time employment. A few individuals maintain traplines in the area. Economic development is primarily linked to the forest industry. Tsay Keh Dene Forestry Ltd. has joint ventures with Kwadacha and two local forestry companies for construction, harvesting and silviculture. Contracts for the work are divided among the Bands and it is estimated that more than fifty percent of the workers are employed full time with this company. The company is hoping to expand into log home building and log construction training programs.

The Takla Lake First Nation (TLFN) has a population of approximately 700 people. The Nation has 17 reserves totaling approximately 2,000 acres. The First Nation has been waiting for more than 30 years for Canada to replace reserve land that was taken by the predecessor of B.C. Rail. Under an agreement made in the 1970s, Canada is required to turn over 860.79 acres but has not yet done so.

Takla’s main village, Takla Landing, is situated on the northeast shore of Takla Lake. The village is isolated, accessible only by 260 kilometres of logging road from Fort St. James. Other Takla communities in the area include Manson Creek, Bulkley House and Germansen Landing. In the 1950s many of the Bear Lake people who occupied the area around the old Hudson’s Bay Company post relocated to Takla Landing and in 1959 the Bear Lake and North Takla Lake Bands amalgamated. A number of Takla members still live on the land in their territory for at least part of the year. Most facilities are located at Takla Landing and include a band office, school (elementary), community hall, store, hotel, gymnasium, teacherage, clinic, church and elders' centre.

Logging is the primary economic activity of the Takla Lake First Nation. The Nation is a partner in Sustut Holdings which has a Takla Sustut tree farm license. The Nation owns the Takla Development Corporation which has invested in commercial property in Prince George. The Corporation has a forest license, operates a log loading facility in the Takla Lake area and is involved in road construction and freighting. Other ongoing economic initiatives include a sawmill which cuts local orders, a store, a lodge and charter aircraft service. Some Band members are also involved in guiding.

1.6 Regional Bands, Kinship and Marriage

The three Tse Keh Nay communities are closely related to each other through their social political structure and through kinship and marriage.

Traditionally the Sekani lived in small hunting and gathering bands\(^3\) that moved across the land in a seasonal cycle. Anthropologists identify three socio-territorial groups for hunting

\(^3\) The term ‘band’ here is used in the anthropological sense and should not be confused with the 1876 Indian Act definition of ‘band’ with an imposed chief and council form of leadership. The creation of the Takla Lake Band,
and gathering people: the regional band, the local band and the task group (Helm 1968, Vanstone 1974). Membership in these units was not mutually exclusive and an individual could and usually did identify with all three groups. Vanstone states that:

The regional band exploited the total range of the band [sic] as identified by tradition and use. It utilized all the resources within the range, and this total territory provided sufficient food and other resources to sustain life except during periodic famines. Therefore the regional band could exist for many generations (1974:45).

He goes on to state:

Most of the time, the various families making up the regional band were dispersed in smaller units. Regional band members, however, were related through a network of primary affinal [marriage] and consanguinal [blood] ties. (Vanstone 1974:46)

In 1924, anthropologist Diamond Jenness described the geographic ranges of four such regional bands: the Tsekani, the Yutuwichan, the Sasuchan and the Tseloni:

(1) Tsekani (tsekani, Fort McLeod dialect; tsekenna, Fort Grahame dialect): “Rock or Mountain People,” who occupied the country from McLeod lake south to the divide, and east to the edge of the prairies.

(2) Yutuwichan (Fort McLeod dialect; yutuuchan, Fort Grahame dialect): the meaning of the name is uncertain, but one conjecture of the natives was “Lake People.” This band occupied the country from the north end of McLeod Lake down Parsnip and Peace rivers to Rocky Mountain canyon; westward it extended to the headwaters of Manson and Nation rivers, including in its territory Carp Lake and the upper reaches of Salmon River.

(3) Sasuchan (sasutten or sasuchan, Fort McLeod dialect; sasuchan, Fort Grahame dialect): “People of the Black Bear.” The territory of this band covered all the basin of Finlay River from the mouth of the Omineca north and west, including Thutade and Bear lakes.

(4) Tseloni: “People of the End of the Rock or Mountain.” The territory of this band comprised the plateau country between the headwaters of the Finlay and the Liard; the Fox in its upper reaches, and the Kechika or Muddy River, flow through the centre of the band’s domain, but the exact boundaries are uncertain. (Jenness, 1937:11)

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Tsay Keh Dene Band, and the Kwadacha Band by the Department of Indian Affairs is a construct for administrative purposes and not based on traditional political structure.
Jenness notes that the Thutade Lake area was within the geographic region of the Sasuchan regional band. This band amalgamated with the Tseloni regional band in 1890 when Fort Grahame was established. At this time two more regional bands emerged: the T’lotona or “Long Grass Indians” formed by intermarriage between the Sasuchan and Gitksan who occupied the groundhog country of the upper Stikine and Skeena rivers; and the Davie band, which originated from a union between a French trapper and a Tseloni woman (Denniston 1981:434).

According to the Tseh Keh Dene today, the Sekani include the “Tsay-Sa-Ut Sas-Chu-Ch-an Tsay Kehnnay, Cl-Owa-T-oh, Tsay-L-oh-nay, Tsa-U Tsay-T-oh, U-Chu-Ch-an, and there are others” (Izony n.d.:6).

Throughout the 20th century the regional bands continued to combine, split off and form again to become the present day Sekani bands, including the Takla Lake First Nation, the Tsay Keh Dene and the Kwadacha Band. The historic linkages between these groups remain to this day in spite of the continual attempts of the Department of Indian Affairs to make administratively convenient groupings and the displacement of village sites caused by the creation of the Williston Reservoir.

The families in the three communities continue to be linked through kinship and intermarriage. Many of them can trace their lines back to common ancestors who were Fort Grahame Tse Keh Nay. Today families in the three communities acknowledge that they are related to each other and have rights to the Thutade Lake area. For example, members of the Patrick family who now live at Takla Lake are descendants of the Fort Grahame Sekanis (Dewhirst 1995). The Pierre family who lives at Tsay Keh Dene is also linked to the Thutade region. Many Kwadacha families maintain that they came from the Fort Grahame and Bear Lake regions. The Poole family at Kwadacha has ancestors who lived at Fort Grahame and

5 Adapted from Vanden Berg, 2000.
Telegraph Creek. The Bob family of Bear Lake and the Massettoe’s from Kwadacha also have links to Takla Lake. Today the Tse Keh Nay continue to be closely linked as a result of intermarriage that has occurred over several centuries.

The Sekani practiced band exogamy and trace kinship through both the mother and the father. (Jenness 1937:37, Murdock 1949:371, Denniston 1981:438). Such a system of marriage and kinship rules provides flexibility for Sekani land use. Denniston (1981) notes that bilateral kinship ties allowed for maximum individual choice in harvesting resources in a territory, providing men and women opportunities to exploit different regions over their life times.

Denniston (1981) and Lanoue (1983) explain that during the early part of a young man’s life, he would hunt, fish and gather with his family in the territory of his parents. This territory included both his mother’s and father’s family territories. Once married, he hunted with his wife’s family until the birth of their first child. At this time he could, and often did, return to his parents’ territories. Throughout his life he had the option of hunting the territory of his own parents or his wife’s parents, giving him potential access to four different territories.

Lanoue (1983), in his research with the Kwadacha, noted that a further option existed later in the life of a hunter. Frequently a senior hunter might partner with his younger sisters’ husbands, potentially giving him access to the territories of all his brothers-in-law.

A woman also had access to a number of territories through her parents or her husband. A young woman would stay with her own domestic group until after she married and gave birth to her first child. Then she would accompany her husband as he hunted in his parents’ territories.

This relationship between marriage and resource use assured the flexibility needed to take advantage of all the opportunities in Sekani territory. Animal migrations, a diversity of habitats, and seasonal variability, were all factors that influenced the productivity of a region for hunting, fishing and gathering. While Sekani territory has a great variety of food, it was not always abundant at the same place or the same time. The ability to move from one region to another gave individuals and their families an intimate knowledge of an extensive area. This not only maximized the success of the harvest but allowed for the management of
resources over a larger area. Regions were thus never ‘empty’ but were utilized according to a complex resource management plan intrinsic to the Sekani.

1.7 Early Contact

1.7.1 Explorers and Fur Traders

First contact between the Sekani and non-native people took place in the late eighteenth century when explorers and fur traders first came to the region in search of easy trade routes across the Rockies and to expand the fur trade into the territory. In 1793, Alexander MacKenzie (1995) traveled up the Peace and Parsnip river systems on his way to the Pacific Ocean. He noted that many Sekani had never seen white men before. He called the Sekani, ‘Rocky Mountain’ Indians and made specific reference to two groups of Indians, one at Parsnip River and the other living on the shores of McLeod Lake.

Four years later, in 1797, John Finlay explored the southern portion of the Finlay River but unfortunately left no journal of his exploration of the river. He was followed by Simon Fraser who established a post at McLeod Lake in 1805. He called the Sekani, ‘Meadow Indians’ and noted several different groups including two inhabiting the upper watershed of the Beaver and Pine Rivers and two ‘Big Men’ groups, one living on the Nation River and the other at McLeod Lake (Lamb 1960:195).

Daniel Harmon (2006) encountered the Sekani when stationed at the Rocky Mountain Portage at Stuart Lake and at Fort McLeod. In 1812 he describes a village of “Sicannies” living north of Stuart’s Lake.

January 7, Tuesday. On the 4th Inst. I accompanied by several of our People sat off for Tachy a Village towards the other end of this [Stuarts] Lake, ... From where we went up a considerable River [probably the upper Stuart River] about half a Days march, where we came to another Village whose Inhabitants appear to be mostly Sicannies [Sekani], and who appear to be more industrious than the last mentioned People and therefore better cloathed and fed. (Harmon, 2006: 132)

Harmon’s journal entry is significant as it is rare for TseKehNay village sites to be mentioned in the early literature.

It was not until 1824 that fur trader Samuel Black traveled the length of the Finlay River to its source. His journal is highly informative of the lands and lives of the Sekani people at this

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6 Comments in square brackets are included in the 2006 edition. The village noted by Harmon may be the same site as the village at Trembleur Lake where, in 1893, Indian Reserve Commissioner Peter O’Reilly allotted five reserves for a “branch of the Siccane Tribe” who lived in six houses at the mouth of the Middle River. (O’Reilly, 1893)
time. He had a Sekani guide who, with his family, carried Black’s heavy packs and supplied him with meat and fish. On the upper arm of the Finlay River he met Chief Methodiates, and his band who regularly wintered in this region.

The purpose of Black’s visit was to assess whether a post should be established in the region for the Hudson Bay Company. Chief Methodiates requested that a post be established at Thutade Lake as he considered this lake the best place in the region to support a post. He promised Black that if they did so, he would remain in the area during the winter months, which he did at times, rather than travel to the plains east of the Rockies (Rich 1955:52, 58).

Chief Methodiates later changed his mind about the establishment of a post at Thutade Lake. By the time Black and his party left Thutade Lake they had caused huge forest fires that devastated the Thutade Lake and upper Finlay River area. Black notes in his journal:

I am sorry to observe that some of our Fires coming up has completely desolated these fine Vallies of Wood extending to near Thutade & up Fire steel River is completely burnt & left dreary waste discovering the bare Rocks through the Black stems of the burnt Trees” (Rich 1955: 88).

Upon returning to Thutade in early September, Black wrote that “the woods are on Fire near the Lake in the Valley” (Rich 1955:185). Later, as Black descended the Finlay River in September, he noted again that the upper reaches of the Finlay River were “completely burnt & all the fine Pine Bark destroyed. (Rich 1955:191).

Patterson, in his introduction to Black’s journal suggests that:

…[Black’s] fires were not properly extinguished …the result was that a large stretch of country below Thutade Lake was burnt over … [the fires] burnt the only stand of canoe birch that was seen in the whole length of the river…, fur-bearing animals are destroyed or driven away… [and] the burnt out territory becomes a wearisome tangle of fallen trees. The Sekani, when Black returned to Thutade Lake in September, did not seem particularly anxious to have a post established in their territory: it is possible that they have been influenced by the desolation of the still smoking valley below them, and that the occasion would be long remembered as the year the white men came and set many fires. (Rich 1955: lxxiii-lxxiv)

In 1826, the Hudson Bay Company established Fort Connolly on Bear Lake and the Sekani began to make seasonal visits to the post to trade their furs for guns, ammunition, pots, kettles, and other goods. Many of these trade goods began to replace traditional technology and increased the emphasis upon trapping for furs. In 1828, Sir George Simpson (Rich 1947:23) reported that at the trading post at Connolly’s Lake, “there were about 30 hunters of the ‘Seccani’ tribe who make their hunts in the Mountainous Country about the head Waters of Finlays branch.” These hunters were accompanied by their families.

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7 Methodiates means “Snow Came Upon Him Suddenly” (Tse Keh Nay, 2006)
Fort Connolly also attracted the Carrier from Lake Babine and the Gitksan Indians from the upper Skeena River. Despite intermarriage hostility existed between the Gitksan and Sekani and in 1870 this hostility encouraged the Hudson’s Bay Company to establish the Fort Grahame post at the confluence of the Ingenika and Finlay Rivers. Many Sekani families began to visit this post and in 1890, Fort Connolly was permanently closed. In 1920 another post, Fort Ware, was established on the Finlay River close to the confluence of the Kwadacha River.

In spite of trading posts located in their midst and their participation in the fur trade, Sekani families remained highly mobile and continued their seasonal rounds over a wide area, hunting, fishing and gathering in their traditional way.

Eventually, however, the efforts of missionaries and agents of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and the pressures of settlement in the area led to the establishment of reserves for the Sekani people.

1.7.2 Reserve History

The first reserves allotted for the Sekani were located around fur trading posts in order to accommodate their seasonal visits.

In 1892 Peter O’Reilly, the Indian Reserve Commissioner for British Columbia, set aside a 286 acre reserve for the Fort McLeod Band adjacent to the fort. Four more reserves were allotted by the Royal Commission in 1916 for the “Sicannees Band” at Fort McLeod. At that time the Band consisted of 75 members. (Canada and British Columbia, 1915, 1916; Canada, 1943)
In 1893 O'Reilly allotted five reserves for a “branch of the Sicannies” at Trembleur Lake, south of Takla Lake (O'Reilly, 1893). The literature suggests that a Sekani settlement had been in existence in this area since 1812 (Harmon, 2006:132).

Reserves for the North Takla Lake Band were not assigned until the Royal Commission visited the region in 1915. On June 14, 1915, Headman Teejee made a number of applications on behalf of the Takla Lake Band to the Commissioners at Fort St. James and in 1916 the Commission allotted seven new reserves to be held jointly with the Trembleur Lake Band (Canada and British Columbia, 1915, 1916). Although there is nothing in the Royal Commission testimony to indicate the nature of the relationship between the two groups, this joint allotment is of some interest as it connects the North Takla Lake Band, generally categorized as a Carrier group (Duff, 1969:34) to a group with Sekani origins.

In 1916 the Royal Commission also allotted seven reserves for the Bear Lake Tribe. The commissioners did not meet directly with members of the the Bear Lake Band and their reserves were set aside as a result of the testimony of the Stuart Lake Indian Agent (Canada and British Columbia, 1915).

In 1959 the North Takla Lake Band and the Bear Lake Band amalgamated to form the Takla Lake Band. Today the Takla Lake Band has 17 reserves comprising approximately 2,000 acres (Canada, 1943; Canada, n.d.).

In 1969 the predecessor of B.C. Rail, Great Pacific Eastern, approached the federal government with a proposal to extend their rail line through a number of Takla Reserves. In 1974 an agreement was negotiated whereby the railway was permitted to take land from Takla Reserves in exchange for new Reserve land to be provided by the governments. Canada is required to turn over 860.79 acres under the terms of the Agreement but has not yet done so. The railway has used and benefited from Takla's former reserve lands since the mid 1970s but, some 30 years later, Takla has still received nothing in return.

The Fort Grahame Reserves were not allotted until 1916. On May 9, 1916, the Royal Commission set aside two reserves for the Fort Grahame Band: I.R. #1, Finlay Forks, containing 168 acres on the left bank of the Finlay River at Fort Graham and I.R. #2 Police Meadows, a reserve of 640 acres located thirteen miles north of Fort Grahame. The Police Meadows Reserve was later reduced to 320 acres by the Clark-Ditchburn Commission. The Band population in 1916 was 57 (Canada and British Columbia, 1916; Canada, 1943). The following is taken from the evidence of the Indian Agent to the Commissioners:

Q. What is the nature of these Indians?
A. They are nomadic in their habits – they wander over a very extensive area of country there between the Findlay river and they go as far north as Liard and

8 It should be noted here that the term ‘nomadic’ used to refer to hunting and gathering peoples is an archaic term. Hunter-gatherers do not wander around aimlessly. On the contrary, anthropologists maintain they had intimate knowledge of their environment and occupied the lands and managed the resources during their seasonal rounds within a bounded territory. The former artificial distinction between hunter-gatherer societies
Nelson Rivers, and they generally return to Fort Graham in the spring and in the
fall time and they have two or three little houses just at the back of the Hudson’s
Bay company building.
Q. They are also Siccanese Indians?
A. Yes
Q. That if I am not mistaken is the McLeod and the Fort Connelly or Bear Lake
Indians?
A. Yes. (Canada and British Columbia, 1915)

It is clear from this exchange that in 1916, the Fort Grahame Band continued to hunt over an
extensive territory and that the Commissioners recognized the McLeod Lake, Bear Lake and
the Fort Grahame Bands as Sekani people.

In the 1920s the Fort Grahame Band split to form the Fort Grahame and Fort Ware Bands
after Fort Ware was established at the confluence of the Fox and Kwadacha rivers. However,
Fort Ware reserves were not formally allotted until 1942 when three reserves were purchased
from the Province: I.R. #1 at Fort Ware (958 acres) and two fishing station reserves on Sucker
Lake and Weissener Lake of approximately five acres each (Canada, 1943).

In 1959 the bands amalgamated again to become the Finlay River Band. When the region
was flooded in 1963 to create Williston Lake, the Ingenika group of the Finlay River Band
was forced out of their villages at Fort Grahame, Finlay Forks and Ingenika. They were
offered two new reserves, the Tutu and the Parsnip but the proposed reserves did not meet
their needs. Unable to reach a decision on a permanent location, the Finlay River Band
separated into the Fort Ware and the Ingenika Bands in 1970. The Ingenika Band became
know as the Tsay Keh Dene Band (TKD, 2002:96).

In 1989, BC Hydro, British Columbia and Canada signed an agreement that allowed the Tsay
Keh Dene Band to select 2,000 acres at the Finlay River site, 1,000 acres at Mesilinka and 5
acres at the Ingenika Point Cemetery Reserve. The cost of this project was estimated at more
than $10 million. The process of converting these federal land parcels to reserves is still
ongoing (TKD, 2002:96; Canada, n.d.).

1.7.3 Residential Schools

Catholic missionaries established churches and missions in the interior regions of British
Columbia in the 1860s but personal visits to Sekani territory were infrequent. The Sekani,
while adopting Catholic ideology early in their contact history, continued to maintain Sekani
indigenous beliefs that were strongly linked to the land.

In 1921, the Oblates established Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake. This replaced a
similar school at Fort St. James that had opened in 1917. While some Sekani did attend this

and agricultural societies has also broken down as research has revealed an increasing amount of evidence of
cultivation and management by hunter-gatherer societies.
school, the Department of Indian Affairs did not force children to attend the school until the late 1940s and early 1950s. This enforcement was not popular and many families refused to comply by remaining on the land with their children. This became more and more difficult as trapping became less economically viable and when families were forced to seek seasonal employment to supplement their incomes, their children were seized. Banned from speaking their language and forced to live in an institutional setting, many of these children were traumatized by the residential school experience. This was compounded by the physical and sexual abuse present at this school. Lejac Residential School closed in 1976.

In the 1960s the Department of Indian Affairs began to fund day schools on the Sekani reserves. Until recently these schools only taught elementary grades. To obtain a high school education, students were sent to Prince George to attend Prince George College, later named O’Grady Catholic High School. This school closed in 2001. Students who attended this school are presently ineligible for the Common Experience Payment (CEP) and the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process despite years of alienation from their families, language and culture.
2.0 HISTORICAL AND CURRENT USE OF THE LAND

2.1 Historical Use of the Land

The first ethnographic information on the Sekani is found in the journals of early explorers Alexander McKenzie and Simon Fraser, and fur traders Daniel Harmon and Samuel Black. Other sources include Father A.G. Morice, an Oblate missionary who gathered information about the Carrier and the Sekani in the 1890s; and Diamond Jenness, an anthropologist who visited Fort McLeod and Fort Grahame during the summer of 1924. This section will give a short ethnographic description, followed by a more detailed examination of Black’s journal of his exploration of the upper Finlay and the Thutade Lake area.

The main activities of the Sekani were hunting, fishing and gathering. Jenness (1937:2) describes the winter and summer seasonal round as he observed in the 1920’s as follows:

The Sekani generally spent the period from about November until mid-summer on the plateaux and mountain slopes, running down the caribou and moose on the snow, and when the snow had melted driving them into snares and trapping groundhogs. About mid-summer they resorted to the lakes to fish, or visited the various tribes beyond their borders.

![Photo 3: "dəje" Groundhog (Hoary Marmot)](https://example.com/groundhog.jpg)

The Sekani were primarily hunters, depending on big game such as caribou, moose, bear, mountain sheep and mountain goat for their subsistence. Smaller animals such as beaver, porcupine, hare, and groundhogs were also hunted. Groundhogs—were of particular importance as they were easy to hunt and abundant in certain areas.

Like other hunting and gathering peoples, the Sekani developed their hunting methods and technology over many generations. This hunting technology was not only linked to the resources in their territory but was highly specialized for the specific game they sought. The principal method for hunting big game was stalking with the aid of a dog. Harmon (2006) noted that this was made easier during the winter months when there was a crust of snow that would hold dogs but not large game. The dogs would chase the game until they became mired in the snow and unable to escape. Another technique was to set snares along a brush fence so that the game would run into a noose (Morice 1895:132). Pounds were also

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9 The Hoary Marmot, often called a ‘groundhog’ or ‘the whistler’, is a member of the genus Marmota in the rodent family of Scuiridea, species name, *m. caligata*. In Sekani the word for this animal is *dəje*. It is the largest of the North American ground squirrel.
constructed to entrap large animals. Several of these were noted by the explorer Samuel Black (Rich 1955).

The ingenuity of Sekani hunting technology is well noted in the literature. Bows and arrows of various sizes and forms were designed for large and small game including birds. Snares, traps, nets, and deadfalls were also constructed in artful ways (Morice 1895:95-104). Nets were made out of strands of caribou skin and used for a variety of purposes including the ‘babiche’ used to catch beavers. Another technique for trapping beavers was the use of a castoreum lure to attract the beaver away from its lodge (Morice 1895:66). Groundhogs were snared in their holes or were smoked or flooded out.

In the summer months the Sekani dried and cached their meat in strategic locations for later use. No part of the animal was wasted. Hides were used for tent coverings, bedding, bags, and clothing while furs from small mammals were important for clothing and later for trade. Bones were used to make scrapers and awls, while knives were made out of beaver teeth.

As well as hunting, the Sekani fished the many rivers, creeks and lakes in their territory for white fish, suckers, Dolly Varden, and trout. Except for Bear Lake there were no salmon bearing waters. Fish was abundant, particularly in the summer months when the water was high with the snow melt. Sekani fishing technology consisted of hooks, weirs, and nets made of nettles and willow roots. In the winter months they speared fish through holes in the ice using three pronged leisters.

Plants were also important for food, medicine and equipment (see Appendix A). The territory of the Sekani had a great variety of plants, and their uses were well known to the Tse Keh Nay. Both men and women participated in the gathering of plants.

The Sekani were foot travelers and did not use any means of transportation aside from snowshoes and light weight spruce bark canoes to transverse the rivers in the summer months. Foot travel was the most functional for the territory and established foot trails were well known by the Sekani (see Appendix G). This was noted by all the early visitors to the region.

The Sekani also established trade networks with their neighbours. They acquired iron and dentalium shell from the Babines, Gitksan and Carriers. In the south they traded moose hides with the Shushwap and in the north they traded with the Nahanees for salmon. Jenness noted that many mountain passes and established trade routes gave the Sekani access to their neighbours. He described these trade routes and made particular mention of the westward trails. He states:
Westward there was a route from McLeod lake via Carp lake to Fort St. James on Stuart lake…; one up Nation river to Nation and Takla lakes; one up Manson river to Manson creek, thence south to Stuart lake or west to Takla lake; one from Fort Graham up the Mesilinka to Bear Lake; one via Ingenika river and another by the Finlay itself to Thutade and Tatlatui lakes, whence there were trails across the divide to the headwaters of Stikine and Skeena rivers. (1937:2-3)

Sekani religious beliefs and world view were closely related to the land and the animals they depended upon for survival. In order to be successful in life, the Sekani believed that each hunter had to secure a relationship or power from a special animal. This is a common belief in hunting and gathering societies and is reflected in the puberty ceremony when a young man is sent out to camp alone in order to acquire his ‘hunting medicine.’ Jenness writes:

Every youth, then when he reached the age of puberty, was sent forth alone to seek a ‘hunting medicine’ that he could summon to his aid in after life. … He left in early morning, fasting, and wandered all day in the woods, beside a lake, or up the mountain side. He might return in the evening, eat a scanty meal, and go out again the next morning; or he might remain away two or three nights. Some youths were fortunate and gained their medicines in a single day; others sought for three or four weeks. Few failed…. (1937:68-69)

2.2. Samuel Black’s Journal

This section analyzes Black’s journal of his voyage up the Finlay River to Thutade Lake. The journal is a key source of information on “Thecannie” historical use of this region.

In 1824, Samuel Black journeyed up the Finlay River and west to the upper reaches of the Liard River in order to assess the potential for expansion of the fur trade. He set off from Rocky Mountain Portage in May of 1824 with his assistant Donald Manson, a Chippewyan hunter named Le Prise and his wife, and six crew members. At Finlay Rapids at the head of the Peace River he met a family of “Thecannies” fishing that became his guides. He writes:

…we are now 13 growen [sic] persons & 2 children… I had agreed with the [Sekani guide] to leave part of his relations which he has done but retained more than I wished, however they say they will walk when the River is bad, & they are the only Indians that would go…. In the afternoon the [Sekani guide] arrived… he is on bad humour & seems to regret his bargain in undertaking this voyage…. (Rich 1955:12)

As they traveled up the Finlay they ran into several bands of “Thecannie” who were eager to trade their cached beaver skins for ammunition. Black obtained a few dressed skins to equip them better for their trip but he disappointed the “Thecannie” by not trading ammunition for

10 Black used the term “Thecannie” for the people he encountered along the Findlay River and Thutade Lake region.
beaver as he had only enough ammunition for his own needs. He urged them to make the trip to Rocky Mountain Portage to acquire their needed trade goods (Rich 1955:14).

Black’s assignment was not to trade, but to assess the viability of the Finlay River as a transportation route. In order to do this, he was determined to make the trip solely by navigating the river. The difficulty of this mode of travel was immediately evident when two of Black’s crew deserted at one of the canyons before the Akie River. Black attributed their desertion to the “roaring of the rapid through the chasm before us and the steep hill to carry up the canoe and baggage and prelude to further toil and harder duty” (Rich 1955:19).

He noted that although “Thecannie” trails were easy to traverse by foot they were difficult for Black and his party with their large canoes and packs. Black complained that the “Thecannie” did not blaze trails but tended to follow the animal trails. He wrote:

Thecannie passes over the asperities of his Mountains and his Wild Vallies[ sic] without drawing his hatchet from his Belt or Bundle to smooth the way for his Friends or family coming behind, except when he falls on a space of natures clearing, generally a drie[ sic] level spot of Sand or gravel covered wt Pine & dry short moss when he takes his axe & cuts a branch in the way & whites the Trees by cutting a small piece of the bark & wood of each as a present and future Guide to keep the same Track, they are Natures children & have the Gift of choosing the passes in the intricate Vallies[ sic]. The Reindeer have great instinctive powers in this way, the most of any large animal…. The Indians in such cases follow the Rein deer Roads & the deer in their turn follow the Indians Roads seeming with confidence of being the best pass & already traced, hence all nature feels the effects of the curve on the earth (Rich 1955:98).

On June 1st, Black reached the confluence of the Finlay and Kwadacha Rivers. It was here that his Sekani guide advised him to take the northern route up the Fox River to reach the upper reaches of the Liard River. This was the easiest route and the one the “Thecannies” often used to reach the Liard River. As for the upper arm of the Finlay he advised:

…but that we will take a long time to get to the Rapids being very far & bad Roads on which we will find some Beaver on this Branch but not so much as we have seen coming up, that we find some Fishing Lakes about the hight[sic] of Land but few Rein deer or other animals until we get down for some distance when we will find plenty also Moose deer. That the other Major Branch cutting[sic] the mountains here confining the valley, takes its rise out of a large Lake the natives call Thutade & in which there are plenty of Fish, but that he does not know the Rout[sic] only from hear say (Rich 1955: 26).

Black however was determined to take this westerly route and continued on. After a difficult passage on the river through a series of rapids and canyons they fell upon an ‘Indian
road’ and came upon another band of Thecannies who were harvesting licorice root which Black noted was quite ‘good & palatable’ (Rich 1955:33). He went on to describe how men and women within this small band worked together. He wrote:
…they are however often going about setting snares for Siffleu [marmot] &c geathering [sic] Roots & herbs & Fishing—The women…make the encampment & cut Fire Wood also the accustomed domestic employments more congenial to their Weaker frames, otherwise they are by no means the Slaves retaining influence & seem to have much their own way…. The Thecannies … have the art of teaching their small Indian Dogs with erect Ears to hunt alone & the little hairy Beagles will sometimes go a great distance by themselves & teaze [sic] the animal they fall in with by their constant barking until their Master come up [n]or will the Thecannie stir from their seat before the accustomed signal, When they go off perhaps the whole Camp surrounding the amased [sic] Animal & drawing near on all Sides to prevent an escape made... (Rich 1955: 35-36)

During these weeks on the Finlay River, Black and his party had seen evidence of game but had not successfully shot any. He lamented on the scarcity of game but it should be noted that the “Thecannie” regularly traded large game with Black’s party. The fact that this area was rich in big game was well recognized by many big game hunters that came into the area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (see Haworth 1917). Jenness (1937:2) also made the point that the “grassy plateau to the northwest, around the headwaters of Finlay River, is still one of the finest game areas on the continent.”

That the “Thecannie” were successfully hunting large game in the region was evident by the large caches of meat that Black observed as he traveled up the Finlay River to Thutade Lake. He made particular note of the skillful way the “Thecannie” secured their caches from predators:

The Indians often secure their property in a less laborious manner by smoothing Trees by peeling of the Bark cutting [sic] off the Knobs &c so that the blows of the animals may not catch on the smooth surface, this with the Poles prepared in the same manner & different contrivances and constructions they seldom loose their Property all these kinds of caches are secured from the Earth & Rain by Bark & other coverings wood frames &c. (Rich 1955:85)

Black’s luck was to change. On June 6th by Bower Creek his Sekani guide brought back a mountain sheep weighing about 30 pounds. At this camp site he noted a Sekani caribou pound located close to two winter encampments. When he enquired if the “Thecannie” wintered in the region, he was told that the band of Old Chief Methodiates and his followers often passed the winter here and that this chief was presently at the Fishing Lakes a little ways ahead (Rich 1955:41).

The Fishing Lakes, or Tototade, are located after the big bend in the Upper Finlay River, in a valley where the Finlay River becomes a lake for six or seven miles. When Black (1955: 48) arrived at these lakes he noted the presence of two families of “Thecannie” successfully fishing in pine bark canoes. One of the “Thecannie”, who was named Menaye, brought Black and his party a mountain goat (1955:50). They next day they were joined by Chief Methodiates and his followers which included seven married men and seven young men. The
Chief told him that two other families, presently at Bear Lake, made up their band. Black does not give a total number of this group but Lanoue (1983:215) suggests a size of at least twenty-five people. Black writes:

The Old Chief Methodiates arrived with the Remainder of the Indians in this quarter in all 7 Married men & about as Many young Men, the Old Man has a prepossessing appearance, he looks like a good Man…. The Old Chiefs [sic] information is as follows, that the Band Now here are all the Thecannies in this quarter except there may be two families at Bear Lake three days Journey from the Sources of this River Lake Thutade that the Thluckdennis or Tholadennis live on the otherside of these Mountains to the North (Peak Monts) but come to these Mountains in Summer to Hunt when the Snow is melted… (Rich 1955:51)

Chief Methodiates told him that he often wintered here and that he and his followers had 160 Beaver skins to trade. He went on to say:

…that they did not want in Summer there being Fish & towards the fall plenty of fat Sifflou & some Carribou [sic] say Rein deer & Sheep & Goats in the Mountains, but in Winter it was hard, they kept moving about in the Vallies [sic] & some times fell in with a Deer a sheep or a Goat or a Partridge…. (Rich 1955:51-52)

When Black enquired about the fishing, Chief Methodiates told Black about the best fishing lakes in the area, one of which was Thutade Lake. Black writes:

…that he knew only of 3 Fishing Lakes in this quarter Bears Lake a small round Lake in which they take Sapa or Trout Testlé another kind of Trout Tadzil a kind of Carp not many Indians can live here. That Thutade Lake on the Source of this River is the best place for living, it’s a long Lake & plenty of Trout and Carp but no white Fish, that Thucatade the Place he is come from is the next best its up a River that falls into this River about one days march before us it goes through the Mountains Westward…. (Rich 1955:52)

Black discovered that fish was plentiful in the lakes and rivers if the right fishing technique was used.

This morning we had the mortification not to take a single Fish. The Indian however took five small Fish and kind of white Fish & Trout the same size as in MacLeods Lake W Caledonia…the Indians take plenty of Fish at this season in these Lakes… (Rich 1955:42)

Chief Methodiates told Black to proceed to Thutade Lake and wait until the snow melted before proceeding north. He was then to come to Thucatade [Toodogone River] where he would wait for him and introduce him to the Thloadennis who were regular summer visitors to that region. It was on this advice that Black made his way to Thutade Lake. At Delta
Creek he met two “Thecannie” people from Chief Methodiates band and together with their families they joined Black and his party at Thutade Lake. They stayed at the lake together for two weeks, hunting and fishing.

During these two weeks, Black complained about the fishing on this lake even though he reportedly caught 7 trout of good size and 10 carp of good quality on his first day. One trout weighed 14 lbs and on average they weighed 4 to 8 lbs (Black 1955: 71). He observed that the “Thecannie” were more successful at using hooks and nets so Black adopted this technique and followed them around the lake. On one occasion he observed the “Thecannie” catching a small white fish which he thought was like the fish on McLeod Lake. He noted:

…the Indians say this Fish comes from a Small Lake on the River that comes in the other side opposite before mentioned… (1955:77)

This lake may be Amazay Lake.

While at Thutade Lake, Black (1955:82) saw three old Indian encampments, evidence that the “Thecannie” were frequent visitors to this lake. Here his party was more successful at hunting and killed ‘two small grayish ducks”, “a large Buck Rein deer [caribou]”, “5 young Rein deer”, and “some partridges and Ptarmigans.” However, they missed a herd of mountain goats, which quickly climbed out of range.

It was at Thutade Lake that Black observed a large colony of groundhogs (Siffleu). He noted throughout his journal the importance of this animal for food and clothing. When he finally caught up with Chief Methodiates he wrote:

They have brought the meat of a good many Siffleu fresh & half dried which seems to be their best resource or only resource at this season & appear fat… (Rich 1955:186)

From Thutade Lake he went overland to Thucatade, or Toodogone River. Here he found more “Thecannie” encampments and evidence of more intensive fishing. He wrote:

…across these streams the Indians have throwen[sic] over Wooden Bridges, at one stream or River assisted by a large pile of drift wood, more over they have cleared the Roads of underwood & assisted by nature, for this Valley is the most civilized looking place I have seen in the Rocky Mountains (Rich 1955:98)

However, he missed Chief Methodiates and his band, who had moved on to fish Meedzinitoede Lake, or Metsantan Lake, their meeting place with the Thloadennis (Rich 1955:107). Black followed him and, eventually, with Chief Methodiates, met the Thloadennis. Black was disappointed that he could not entice any of them to guide him further north to the upper Liard River but he continued on his own to Turnagain River before retracing his steps to Thutade Lake.
Once he returned to Thutade Lake he was greeted by a “Thecannie” hunter that Black had not
seen before and whom he assumed was from further south on the Finlay River. He called him
a McLeod Lake “Thecannie”. This hunter informed Black that Chief Methodiates was on the
other side of the mountain. This is possibly the Amazay Lake area. Black wrote:

...got into view of Lake Thutade, the woods are on Fire near the Lake in the
Valley, but not near our Property, heard a shot & a Thecannie hallooing from
the Top of the mountain near us he joined us & says Methodiates & followers
except some not yet arrived are on the otherside of this mountain: this is a new
face & a MacLeods Lake Thecannie…. (1955:185)

Black noted that the water level had fallen in the lake since his stay there two months before.
His party fished the lake and again noted the presence of a small white fish which they were
told came from a smaller lake nearby:

To day made a poor Fishery; the same as yesterday but 3 small white Fish in a
Net set at the enterence [sic] of the Small River & which the Indians say comes
from a Small Lake some distance up it (1955:187).

Black also made observations about the plant life. Throughout his journal he noted the
abundance of a variety of berries, roots, shoots, flowers and mosses in the region. Crow
berries were particularly abundant around Thutade Lake. Another plant food of great
importance was mountain sorrel. He observed:

…not neglecting the Herbs of the Fields, for in all the Thecannie & Thloadenni
Tents, we find Kettlesful, Vessels ful [sic] of a Sour herb like salade which
they boil & gobble up with great avidity drawing the stalks through their teeth
& throwing away the stronger fibres … (1955:117)

As far as Black was concerned this region had limited potential for the fur trade. He noted
that the lower reaches of the Finlay River were very productive for beaver but that the upper
Finlay was much less productive. This discouraged him from recommending that a fur
trading post be established in the area. Another concern was the amount of food available. A
fur trading post must not only feed a number of men at the post but also the visiting bands that
come to trade their furs. Because the river could not be used to transport goods and food, the
post would have had to rely on local resources only. Black’s experience told him that local
food would have been too scarce for the demands of a trading post. He wrote of Thutade
Lake:

That there are Trout in this Lake is certain, but not in quantities & it would
require time to prove it thorrowly [sic] as well as the resources the Smaller
Lakes might produce: — but I am sorry to give an opinion that little
dependence can be put in the Fisheries of this Lake to support an establishment
& as to Animals of the large kind I am afraid it would require better Hunters

11 Black has made other references to this lake. Although he does not name it, it is possible that this is Amazay
Lake.
than the Thecannies to Feed a Fort in this quarter, for they can scarcely feed themselves in winter even by moving about from Valley to Valley far & near & in Summer when these Mountain Tribes generally make a little dried Provisions the Thecannies here depend more on Fish & Herbs than any thing else. Now & then killing a Deer or a Sheep & in the latter part of any time there great resource is Siffieu (1955:187).

Black's comments that there was a scarcity of resources and that the “Thecannie” “can scarcely feed themselves in winter” contradicts the statement of Jenness and the Tse Keh Nay people themselves that the area was "one of the finest game areas on the continent.” Possibly Black was mislead by his “Thecannie” advisors who, by the end of his exploration of the Upper Finlay River, were not eager for him to return. After carrying 120 pound packs, witnessing the destruction of their lands from fires, and experiencing Black’s miserly behaviour in sharing trade goods 12, Black was no longer welcome and he was told that there was very little game around Thutade Lake and in area to the north. A careful reading of the journal does in fact reveal that the “Thecannies” and “Thloadennis” were catching game to feed themselves and not sharing with Black. More than once, Black himself questions the honesty of the “Thecannie” people (Rich 1955: 115, 118) and begins to wonder if it is not that “the whole are combined against the voyage” (Rich 1955:118).

Furthermore, ethnohistorians studying fur trade journals have noted that the concept of ‘starvation’ is part of the fur trade rhetoric and can have both literal and symbolic meanings (Black-Rogers 1986). At the literal level, the inability to obtain enough food to survive could be brought about by a lack of game. However ethnohistorians have noted that statements about ‘starvation’ were commonly used by aboriginal people as an opening gambit to establish a relationship with people or spirits who had benefits to impart (Rogers 1986). Thus, they could also be said to be ‘starving’ for a relationship, a relationship that involved trade and much more. It does not necessarily imply that they were physically ‘starving’ and in fact, Black notes throughout his journal that the Sekani depended upon groundhogs and plant foods which were in abundance.

While Black did not see the region as suitable for a fur trading post he did observe the extensive use of the region, and in particular, the Thutade Lake region, by the Tse Keh Nay. He observed several campsites around the lake and witnessed the Tse Keh Nay hunting and fishing in the summer months. He noted that there were extensive trails in the area and that the Tse Keh Nay were very knowledgeable of the area. Black’s journal is a record of aboriginal use and occupancy at Thutade Lake, as well as for the Finlay and Toodogone rivers.

12 On many occasions the “Thecannie” tried to trade with Black but he was reluctant to part with his goods. He was concerned for his own needs but also believed that he should “keep them short [of his trade items] as I want them to carry for us by & by & its [sic] only this article that will induce them to take our burdens on their backs” (Rich 1955: 84).
2.3 Current Use of the Land\textsuperscript{13}

My generation have only the stories of how our territory used to look. But we can never view what their eyes saw, we can only try to imagine how it looked through the stories. Through my early teens and adult life, we were still able to trap, hunt and fish. These activities are still a big part of our life which most of us still practice and teach to our children. (TKD 2002: 8)

Hunting, fishing and gathering plants for food and medicine still remain important to the Tse Keh Nay people. Today Tse Keh Nay families continue to travel by boat on the lakes and rivers, but they also use four wheel drive trucks, snowmobiles and quads to get to their hunting and trapping lands. Many Tse Keh Nay recall a life that was always on the land. Each family had a seasonal round that linked them to land in a way that best utilized the resources in the region.

For example, a Kwadacha Elder talks about his family’s summer activities:

\textit{I was born in Fort Grahame and lived around here most of my life. When I was a boy my family, uncles and aunts traveled way up the head of Ingenika River for hunting, fishing and berry gathering during the summer. My parents and uncles made lots of dried meat and bear grease. There was too much to pack, so they made moose hide boats to bring down their supplies to Fort Grahame, it took three weeks to make the boats. They build eight boats.} (TKD 2002: 50)

He goes on to state how important it was to prepare for the winter:

\textsuperscript{13} Elders names are only included in public documents such as the affidavits of 1997.
Everything was saved up for the winter, bear grease, groundhog fat, all types of dried meat, berries and smoked fish…. The moose, deer and caribou hides we sewed into mitts, moccasins, gloves, jackets and stripped some for babiche for snow shoes. The groundhog hides we used them for liners for mitts and moccasins, also sewed them together groundsheets, they were quite warm and comfortable. (TKD 2002: 50)

Another Tsay Keh Dene, born at Fort Graham in 1922, recalls his life as a child:

My father taught me how to hunt, when I was eleven years old…. My parents used to always stay at Collins Creek, we hunted and trapped and fished there…. We hunted on the mountains, in the valleys, all the way around the mountains, as I grew older I went here and there, up and down the Finlay River, mostly hunting, making dried meats, when we hunted in the mountains we dried groundhog, moose, caribou, and packed it out everybody packed including our dogs and the dogs always packed too… for hunting we hunted all along the this Finlay River and all the mountains along that river. (TKD Report 2003:44-45)

A Tsay Keh Dene woman says:

When it was Fall we’d go up the Zekedene near Pelly Lake and up to the head of Caribou creek to a lake to dry meat and fish. Spring was the time for beaver trapping in Tucha. Also we climbed mountains in July and August, such as Teapot Mt., Chase Mt., Mt. Melvin and many more along the Ingenika and Finlay Rivers. (TKD 2002:54)

Another described her family’s seasonal round:

Sometimes my parents went up to the White River around to Akie, sometime they’d make moose hide canoe to travel with… also some people went to Tudatde [Thutade], not us but other families went to different place, some at Collins Creek, Pelly, Ospika, Alkie and Finlay Forks, people scattered, only to gather in June time and at Christmas. This was all part of their lives, that’s how they made a living…. (TKD Report 2003: 44)
An important part of the seasonal round was the opportunity it provided for families to gather together during slack times. One man spoke of how groups gathered together in June and then separated off to their individual hunting areas or trap lines. He states:

*The people used to live only in tents all summer until around the 20th of June, then everybody would go their separate ways again until next June.*

*Everybody those from Ingenika, Akie, Aken Lake those from further down the river, Finlay Forks, every family went to their trapline on their own way until next June…. (TKD Report 2003: 45)*

The seasonal round is described more fully in the interviews in the Tsay Keh Dene Traditional Use Study. The following summary is based on those interviews.

Spring was a time for trapping beaver, muskrats and otters. As the snow melted and the weather warmed families tended their trails and repaired or built new cabins. Ducks began migrating back to the lakes and rivers, so hunting them and other waterfowl became important. As the waters rose with the snow melt, families fished for trout and white fish. Fish were often smoked and stored for later use.

In the early summer the families went into the higher mountains to hunt groundhog, sheep, moose, ptarmigan, goat and caribou. Meat was dried and hides were prepared during this time. Berries and other plants were gathered alongside the streams.

During the summer slack time, families traveled down to the stores to trade their furs and replenish their supplies. This was also a time when families might meet in the high mountains at known berry sites or areas close to shared territories. Together they would share stories and catch up on family news. For those families that fished for salmon, the late summer months were spent fishing and drying salmon on Bear Lake.

In the fall many families returned to their hunting territories and trap lines. This was also a time for drying and caching meat. Mountain sheep, moose, caribou and groundhog, were actively sought. Renovation of cabins and trails continued. Snowshoes were made in preparation for winter. Plans were made for Christmas.

In the cold winter months, trapping was the primary activity. Fine fur animals such as lynx, marten, wolverine, weasel, squirrel, wolf, fisher and mink were trapped. Large game, if in range, was hunted. Winter activities ended with the spring thaw, allowing a time for rest in the spring slack period. This was the time to sell furs and replenish supplies.
Many Tse Keh Nay people were born on the trap line. Each family had a number of camps or cabins throughout the region so that they could easily cover their extensive lands. These cabins were always built close to rivers and creeks for access to clean water.

A trapper’s life is a hard one as the following account reveals:

A trapper’s day began as early as 4:00am. He would eat and prepare lunch for the trip, and be on his way by 5:30. His trail might take him through swamps and creeks, where his traps would be set. If he had caught an animal he would set the trap again, and if the animal were large he would sometimes skin it there. Smaller species would be taken back to the camp for skinning. At the end of the trapline he would eat lunch and start for home. He would arrive usually 12 to 14 hours after he began his day. He would light a fire and boil water for tea, tend to his snowshoes and outer clothes by hanging them to dry, and then begin to skin whatever he had trapped that day. The animals would then be put on stretchers to dry. After caring for the pelts he would cook and eat. Many trappers had partners with whom to share chores. Dogs were necessities for packing supplies and for companionship. Animal pelts were stored in a cool spot. (TKD 2002: 33)

The traditional use and management of trapping, hunting and fishing areas was distorted by the provincial trapline registration system which was implemented in the early 1920s (see also Jenness 1937:44). This observation is supported by the Tse Keh Nay themselves who make the distinction between the rights to a hunting territory (keyoh) and the rights to a trapline. This two tiered ownership concept is commented on by family members who own the trap lines around Thutade and Amazay Lake.

Sandra Teegee states:

[O]ur keyoh and trap line are different. The keyoh are sustenance areas which have been handed down to our families from generation to generation. Trap line licenses are issued by the provincial government which can be issued to either the white man or to the Indian person. The trap lines are owned by specific people. (Affidavit 1997: para13)

Peter Abraham adds:

[T]he provincial trap line is something I own personally and is not owned by the Indian people. However, the kayoh in which my provincial trap line exists is in the territory of the Sekani people.... Each Sekani person has a birthright to the land and the succeeding generations have the right to use the land for their sustenance. (Affidavit 1997: para 22)

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14 A keyoh is a Carrier term used by some Tse Keh Nay to denote an inheritable subsistence area. Anthropologist, Doug Hudson, writes that “the term keyoh means, at various times, my land or country, and the ‘place where I get my living from the land’(Hudson 1983:158)
William Charlie states that this ownership was linked to kinship and family connections. He says:

> While our family were the ones with rights to the land, it was also our people’s way that other members of our family and members of neighbouring villages who were connected to us could have privilege to come and use the land for hunting and fishing or food foraging. (Affidavit 1997: para 17)

> When a person came into a traditional kayoh, they would have to show the connection to the family members and it was the family that was important and would allow them the use of the land. (Affidavit 1997: para 19)

Another use of the land that should be noted here is the spiritual use of the land. The Tse Keh Nay continue to link their spiritual life to the land and the animals on it. Solitary journeys, vision questing and fasting on mountain tops in order to acquire hunting medicine are still practices of the Tse Keh Nay.

The seasonal round described above has changed somewhat since the 1960s with the decline in fur prices. Families continue to hunt, fish and gather, but many now spend shorter periods of time on the trap lines. Many young men and women no longer participate in trapping but seek wage labour in the seasonal industries in the area. Some Tse Keh Nay have found full time employment working in band office administration and other service related band departments.

Families today are restricted by the need to keep children in school for 10 months of the year. Now the only time families go out to hunt and fish together is in the summer months. This is a time when many families look forward to reacquainting themselves with their traditional lands. They show their children the places where animals frequent and where plants can be gathered, telling them place names and stories associated with their lands and teaching them how to survive on the land.

It should be stressed that hunting and fishing remain important activities for the Tse Keh Nay. ‘Country’ food is not only a desired food but a necessary one as many families cannot afford to live off store bought food. The freight costs added to imported foods make them prohibitive to families on limited incomes. The importance of using ‘country’ food to supplement bought food was noted by Harris in her study of the Kwadacha in the early 1980s.
“If there were no wild game, residents would be reduced to eating canned food purchased at inflated prices from the band operated store. …the high prices in 1983 reflect, to a degree, transportation costs since all goods are transported at a cost of $0.76/lb ($0.60/lb air freight from Ingenika to Fort Ware plus $0.16/lb barge cost from McKenzie to Ingenika” (Harris 1984:70).

As supplies of game and fish become depleted due to increased population in the region and environmental impacts caused by industry, the Tse Keh Nay acknowledge that their life on the land is at risk and they are being forced into wage labour. William Charlie observed that:

[W]e sometimes need jobs because the hunting and fishing is getting harder and our way of life of supporting ourselves from the land is becoming so difficult that it cannot be done any longer without large amounts of effort. (Affidavit 1997: para 60)

Tse Keh Nay current land use is clearly illustrated on maps of the many hunting and trapping trails throughout their territory. These trails are known and travelled today by Tse Keh Nay hunters, often by snowmobile or quad (see Appendix G). As Black had noted, trails are used by the Sekani and animals alike and are usually found to be the quickest and simplest path between locations. For the Tse Keh Nay it is obvious that both humans and animals would use the same trails. During the research for this study, Tse Keh Nay advisors also explained that it is not possible to use the presence of blazes to distinguish an animal trail from a human trail because not all Tse Keh Nay trails were blazed. There was often no need to blaze trails within a transportation network known to those who had traveled it since infancy (see Appendix G for more information on the extensive trail network around Thutade and Amazay that connects to the rest of Sekani territory and beyond).

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15 This is supported by Samuel Black (Rich 1955: 98).
2.3.1 Thutade Lake and Area

Thutade Lake is derived from the Sekani word *Chuu dade*, which means ‘water den’ or ‘water hole’, or can mean ‘above the water’, in reference to looking down on the lake from the hills above.” As Samuel Black noted in 1824, it was an important area to the Tse Keh Nay for hunting and fishing. It remains so today.

William Charlie says:

*[T]he best hunting in the area was always thought to be at Thudade Lake. This was an area that remained good hunting and fishing for many years.*

(Affidavit 1997: para 37)

He also makes the point:

*[T]he Thudade Lake area and the mountains around Thudade Lake…is our last area in our traditional lands where we can go to hunt…in the traditional way.*

(Affidavit 1997: para 53)

One of the factors that make this a good hunting area is that Thutade Lake is on the seasonal migration route of the caribou herds as they move south into Moose Valley.
William Charlie remembers:

*Thudade Lake is also on the seasonal migration pattern of the caribou. That is why the hunting of caribou was particularly good in September.* (Affidavit 1997: para 42)

The area is known by Tse Keh Nay hunters as a favourite caribou area. One Elder was told by his grandmother that one August she saw 40 caribou swimming across the lake. (Tse Keh Nay 2006) A hunter from Takla Lake recalls meeting a Tsay Keh Dene hunter on the west shore of Thutade Lake opposite Attychika Creek. They maintain that this part of the lake was always a good place to find caribou. It was in fact the same place where Black saw a herd of caribou “frisking” in the water (Rich 1955:82). Another Tse Keh Nay who hunted the region regularly for caribou was Alex Masatoe. A Takla Lake man recalls a time when he was young and camping at Thutade Lake at Attichika Creek that he and his father heard a 30:30 rifle shot. He remembers:

*My Dad says, ‘no danger, they’re my people.’ It was Alex Masatoe from Fort Ware[Kwadacha]. Every year he came in up the Finlay from Fort Ware—but not since my father died.* (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

William Charlie noted that other game, aside from caribou, could be found at Thutade, particularly in September. He states:

*[T]here were many different species of animals that we have always hunted and trapped which included mountain goat, caribou, moose, beaver, and bear. The best hunting for caribou, mountain goat and groundhog was in September up at Thudade Lake.* (Affidavit 1997: para 41)

The importance of the groundhog, or daeje, at Thutade Lake is also noted. Groundhog meat and fur were both important resources for the Tse Keh Nay.

*[T]he area was the best area for groundhog which provided for our clothing and food. The groundhog meat was a delicacy.* (Affidavit 1997: para 40)

It should be noted that the species of groundhog (marmot) at Thutade Lake is a darker species and known as *Marmota caligata oxytana*. It differs from the species found in northern British

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16 A recent study conducted by Roberts & Turney for Northgate Minerals Corporation confirms that throughout the area there are known trails used by caribou but they are not considered migratory corridors for large herds (2006:95). Twenty caribou nevertheless, regularly winter at the north end of Thutade Lake and evidence points to a year round occupation of the region by as many as 100 caribou (Roberts & Turney 2006:97-99).

17 This story illustrates the right of Tse Keh Nay people from different regions to use the Thutade area for hunting. It further exemplifies the important difference between family rights to a hunting territory and rights to a trapline.
Columbia (Cassiar, Dease Lake and McDame Creek) which belong to the subspecies 

Fishing has also remained an important activity at this lake. William Charlie commented on the good fishing at this lake:

> [T]he dollivarden at Thudade Lake are very special because they grow up approximately thirty inches long. They have always been an important fish to our people and one of the reasons we go to Thudade Lake. I have never seen dollivarden that large in any other portion of the country that I have traveled. I am also told that it is a species of dollivarden found nowhere else in the world. (Affidavit 1997: para 44)

> [I] still hunt and fish every year up at Thudade Lake. This year, in April, we went up there for food and were able to get fourteen dollivarden…(Affidavit 1997: para 57)

Amelia Bob Patrick states:

> [I] used to set nets for fishing in Thudade Lake when I was young and continued to do that all through my life. (Affidavit 1997: para 5)

An elder from Takla Lake confirms the good fishing at Thutade:

> Yeah, we go fishing there, they set nets in them little creeks. They catch...lots of fish, they get trout and suckers and all that, they catch dollies. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Thorne Lake was another important fishing lake.

Other resources at Thutade Lake are the berries and other plants that are harvested during the summer months (see Appendix A).

Trapping at Thutade is also highly productive. Thutade Lake and the surrounding area is the registered trap line of Joe Bob Patrick. His trap line includes Thutade and Amazay Lake and extends south to Moose Valley. Joe Bob inherited the use of this area from his father and his Tsay Keh Dene grandparents, Ooschayta, known as Farther Marten, and Lootsma, or Mary (both of Fort Grahame). After the death of Ooschayta, Lootsma divided the land between her son Robert Bob Patrick and her daughter Amelia Charles. Peter Abraham is the registered holder of the adjacent trap line.

Evidence of cabins and trails at Thutade were also recorded by Frank Swanell, a surveyor in Tse Keh Nay territory in the early 20th century. On a 1932 map attributed to Swanell, an

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18 Many Tse Keh Nay people interviewed for this report commented on the lack of scientific research on the groundhog. It was said that the Tse Keh Nay have requested and proposed in-depth studies of marmot population, habitat, health, etc. but that these requests have not been fulfilled.
“Indian House” is noted at the mouth of the Niven River. The Tse Keh Nay have many cabins around the Thutade Lake area. There is one cabin at the north end of Thutade Lake, one on Thorne Lake, another at the south end of Thutade Lake and one at the confluence of the Firesteel and Finlay River. Fred Patrick states that all his extended family uses the area:

\[
\text{I have seven sisters and two brothers. All of them use Thutade Lake and are registered up there. We protect each other in the bush. (Affidavit 1997: para 19)}
\]

The women in his family are also good trappers. Fred plans to take his daughter out of school for a year to teach her how to live on the land. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

There are many Tse Keh Nay trails on both sides of Thutade Lake (see the trail map in Appendix G). In 1932, Swanell mapped many of the trails around Thutade and throughout Tse Keh Nay territory. The lake itself intersects two well used and ancient trails: one leads south to Attichika Creek to Thorne Lake, to Moose valley; and another leads north to Toodoggone Creek and links up with the Caribou Hide trail. The Tse Keh Nay people say that where these trails intersect are gathering places. One of the main gathering sites was at Cascadero Falls. Another was on the shores of Thutade Lake.

Gathering, as noted above, occurred during slack time, particularly during the summer months. Families came together and it is here that relationships leading to intermarriage were made and exchange of information about animals and other resources in the region was conducted. Using this information, decisions were made on how best to manage and utilize the resources for the upcoming season. The gatherings were also an occasion for trade as both the Gitksan and the Tahltan people visited this area.
Relations between the Tse Keh Nay and the Gitksan were often hostile and the Tse Keh Nay tell stories of a great battle that took place at Thutade Lake. There are several variations of this story.

Another story speaks of how the Tse Keh Nay and the Gitksan made peace.

_There was a dispute with the Gitksan people in this place [Thutade Lake] over territorial rights and there was [a] fight. Before there was too much bloodshed the elders told me and it was agreed that one woman be given to the [Tse Keh Nay] as a peace offering. This woman married a [Tse Keh Nay] man and after he died the woman was returned to her family._ (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

There are sites linked to these stories: the place where the Tse Keh Nay were camped at the time of a battle; the site where the battle took place, and a burial site.

There is another burial site at Thutade at the north end of the lake, on the eastern side just before the mouth of the Finlay River. Other burial sites at the source of the Finlay River have been recorded in the Tsay Keh Dene Traditional Use Study. Burial sites are considered sacred areas by the Tse Keh Nay.

Thutade Lake is also known as a very strong place where dreams and spiritual powers can be acquired. One Elder tells two dream-related stories about the lake. The first story is about his father and his relationship to the otter. When only a young boy of eleven, he remembers his father complaining about his chest hurting.

_My dad... said, my chest bothering me... he went like this... a little baby otter come out of his T-shirt... small but he looks like a grown up one. What am I going to do with this... you belong to the water. ... as soon as that otter touched the water it disappeared, it dissolved right there... so that’s just the spirit of the otter that he seen in his hand... that animal belonged to my Dad’s body the rest of his life. That’s his dream... that’s what it means._ (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

The same Elder tells another story, one more recent, about his sister’s grandchild:

...last summer when we’re camping... at Thutade Lake. That little guy wake up in the middle of the night... and a great big frog stuck on his [touches the side of his neck] while he was sleeping. When he pull it out he said, “Grandma, I’m going to put this caribou heart on top of the cooler. I don’t know where it come from... but it’s a caribou heart.” That’s in his dream.... What that means, you know, is my grandfather is showing his family that he is still there... If you ever see my grandfather... he has a big frog imprint on his hand... when he was young that frog stuck to his hand when he was asleep in the same place at Thutade Lake. This time it stuck on [the boy’s] neck... that shows that my grandfather is showing a signal that he’s still there, he’s still at Thutade Lake. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)
Jenness (1937:71) recorded that the mountains around Thutade Lake were an important area for acquiring hunting medicine. In 1924, Jenness (1937:71) recorded the following story from an Elder at Fort Grahame:

My grandfather had loon as his medicine. When his people were starving near Thutade Lake he said to them, ‘Don’t go out on the ice. I shall get fish alone. In the morning he went out alone, wearing a hat of loon skin, dug a hole in the ice and speared many fish. He left them on the ice, and, returning to camp, sent his people out to bring them in. For more than a month he supplied the camp with fish. The people then wandered away to hunt caribou. They discovered a large herd, and built two fences with inset snares. One of the hunters then said ‘let every one remain in camp while I go after the caribou alone, for I have medicine.’ He went out alone and said to the caribou, ‘Go down yonder and be caught in the snares.’ Later the people went out to see what had happened; every snare had caught a caribou.

This story which takes place in the winter time shows that the Tse Keh Nay people lived around Thutade Lake for extended periods of time.

The Thutade Lake area has remained important for the Tse Keh Nay. In some ways it is even more important now than it was in the past because it has become a wildlife refuge and one of the last places where Tse Keh Nay people can reconnect with their ancestors and live a traditional way of life. William Charlie put it this way:

[N]ow, logging has come up Stuart Lake so far that most of the moose have been driven away at Takla as well. This means that when we are wintering at Takla, we have to travel further in our territory up to Thutade Lake to get Moose for our sustenance. (Affidavit 1997: para 47)

... [T]he Thudade Lake appears to be one of the best and last areas where we can hunt, fish, gather plants and trap in our traditional territory relatively well and undisturbed. (Affidavit 1997: para 66)

The Tse Keh Nay are closely tied to this area for hunting, fishing, gathering, and for sacred reasons. It is an area rich in oral history and tradition.
2.3.2 Amazay Lake

Amazay Lake is well known to the Tse Keh Nay, and like Thutade Lake, is a site for hunting, fishing and gathering that is rich in oral history. Amazay in Sekani means “little mother lake” or “very superior mother.” It is, according to the Tse Keh Nay, “right in the centre of our Tse Keh Nay territory.” (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

According to a Tsay Keh Dene Elder, the English name for Duncan Lake is associated with the story of a young Yutwichan boy named Duncan who walked from McLeod Lake to Duncan Lake to visit his family who were wintering around the Lake. Another explanation is given by Joe Bob Patrick, who says his father named the lake after his good friend Duncan Pierre from Ingenika (Jennifer Hill, 2005 cited in Dewhirst, 2006:54). It should be noted that Duncan Pierre’s gravesite is reported to be at Amazay and that the recent archaeological research by Frank Craig suggested that site HgSq-10 "may be the final resting place of Duncan Pierre" (Craig 2006).

Many Tse Keh Nay have hunted and fished at Amazay Lake. An Elder from Takla Lake remembers that her parents took her there when she was a child. They stayed there all year because there was game and fishing all year round:

*They camp around that lake. They do a lot of trapping, all around that lake. ....all winter they stay there, winter and summer. I remember I was just a little girl, my dad brought us up there.... And I remember that area... they go hunting and there’s a lot of all different kind of animals around there. They go trapping, there’s marten, there’s everything... around there. And there was*
lots of fish in that lake, I can remember…. In Duncan Lake, there a lot of fish in there before, that’s just now, not much, but there is some... I was just like about six or something like. And on and off I go up there with my parents, they use toboggan I remember. I remember in summer time too, we used to walk days at a time…. There was no road up there, nothing…. Really lots of animals in that area up there. Lots of moose... everything, bear, grizzly... groundhog, everything.(Tse Keh Nay 2006)

The area is known for its caribou. Caribou not only migrate through here but the Tse Keh Nay know the area as a caribou calving ground. Calving occurs in late May and the area is avoided at that time. This is the custom of the Tse Keh Nay. They must respect calving and spawning sites and only enter if they have to pass through them. (TKD, 2002:58) A Takla Lake Elder recalls a large herd of caribou here:

There was so much caribou up there. Amazay Lake they call it because there’s lots of caribou around that area. They say about 300. Sometimes, they say they all go around it. Now there’s nothing. You go there and nothing. They don’t see nothing anywhere around that area. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Other elders from Takla Lake recall that there were good berry sites at Amazay. On the eastside of the lake is a small trail that was used for berry picking. They also gathered juniper for heart medicine and for making tea (see Appendix A).

Amazay is also known as a sacred place because there are many burials there. There are two known contemporary burial sites. One is possibly for Duncan Pierre, and the other is a cremation site at the north end of the lake pointed out by a Tsay Keh Dene man. A Takla Lake woman remembers a story about this cremation site. She believes it was the great great grandmother of Grand Chief Gordon Pierre:

Her name was Mitsəgalı mamasəda. She was an old woman at the time of the story and was “holding everyone up.” For this reason, Mitsəgalı mamasəda asked to be burned. So they lit a fire and waited for all her remains to be completely gone and for the smoke to stop. After the fire, her remains shrunk down into a small stone. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

At the southwest end of Amazay Lake is the burial site of Naatsəbyta. Naatsəbyta was a big Tse Keh Nay Chief known as a great medicine man and war chief. A Tsay Keh Dene Elder tells the story:

Our people were camping there one time... and Naatsəbyta was there... he camped outside from our people because of his medicine... he was just a very respected man.... One day... Cree warriors came upon our people there at Duncan Lake... tried to intimidate our people with their war paint and their weapons... our people they didn’t know what to do.... They called for...

19 It was not uncommon for old or very sick people to ask to be left behind. This was for the good of the larger group for whom moving might be necessary.
Naatsəbaytə….  He said, “Don’t be intimidated by these dogs.”  Our people always call the Crees dogs.  “If they want war, I’ll show them war.”  So he told our people to spread a blanket there in front of him and he went to the spiritual site for guidance and he somehow confiscated all the gunpowder and all their weapons from the Cree and all that stuff ended on a blanket beside him.  And he told the Cree to look for their weapons.  The Crees looked… for their shot in their pouches… but they didn’t find anything.  And he told them… “When we want to make war, that’s what we do.”  That’s what he told them.  And the Crees… they took off.  And they say that’s how Naatsəbaytə saved bloodshed by that action.  And that’s what he did.  (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Amazay Lake is also a sacred area used today for spirit questing for young men.  A Takla Lake Elder says that “If you become a hunter…they bless you on the hills of this Amazay Lake.”20 Details of the ceremony related to this particular spirit questing is private knowledge but Jenness describes a puberty ceremony as it was told to him at Fort Grahame in 1924:

Every youth at the age of puberty was sent to climb a mountain, either alone or with a companion of the same age.  He carried with him, or found on the mountain, a flake of obsidian, with which he cut out the tongue of a ptarmigan, an ermine or an owl.  He threw the tongue into the fire and as it burned he prayed:  “May I become a swift runner, an accurate shot, a powerful medicine-man able to cure all diseases.”  For four days and nights he fasted, neither eating nor drinking.  The higher he ascended the mountain the more certainly his prayer would be answered.  (1937:76)

The oral history of Amazay Lake is a rich one. One story that is strongly linked to this lake is the story about the mammoth.

*Our people used to hunt mammoth in that area there... there was two distinguished hunters in the Tse Keh Nay band... one they called Thunder and the other one they called um, I can’t remember.... The story went... they saw the mammoth and ... they ran at it and they passed under his belly, I guess, with their spears upright and when they ran underneath the mammoth that’s how they gutted it and that’s how they killed it.*  (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Place names around Amazay attest to this story.  *Atöči* in Sekani means ‘mammoth.’ Kemess creek is known as *ačiseče* which means ‘refuge of the mammoth’.  There are several place names around Amazay Lake that echo this story.  The mountain east of Amazay is called *ačiseče?se* which means ‘big animal sleeping’.  Attycelley and Attichika creeks are also linked to the mammoth story.

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20 See Appendix A for further information about this rite of passage at Amazay Lake.
3.0 IMPACT OF INDUSTRY IN THE REGION

3.1 Early Mining

In the 1860s the discovery of gold on the Peace River brought a different type of visitor to the region. Mining prospectors camped out along the rivers and creeks, working the bars looking for gold. In 1869 the Omineca gold rush began when the first strikes were found east of Takla Lake on the Omineca River. The following year, more than 350 miners were in the region and by 1872 more than 1,200 miners were working claims. It was as if the floodgates had opened. While there were opportunities to participate as packers and casual workers the Tse Keh Nay did not greatly benefit from this gold rush. On the contrary, miners were cutting new trails and roads for their pack horses and wagons, hunting game to scarcity or extinction, causing forest fires out of carelessness, and for those who stayed through the winter months, trapping out fur bearing animals. So began a difficult time for the Tse Keh Nay people.

Mining continued in Tse Keh Nay territory long after these early prospectors had left the area. Small scale gold mining operations continued in the region, including Amazay Lake. By the turn of the 20th century mining interests had turned to coal and as early as 1919, miners began tunneling through the mountains. The demand on resources continued as trees were logged to build mine shafts and buildings. Whole areas of Johnson Creek and the surrounding region were quickly logged out. Also the transportation of coal barges on the river led to accidents and coal and slag began to pollute the once pristine waters.

3.2 Early Forestry

Logging has also taken its toll on the land. Small scale logging companies moved into the region in the early 1900s. A number of small sawmills were established to mill wood for buildings, mines and railroad ties. However, it was not until after the Second World War that large companies started to take an interest in the forests in Tse Keh Nay territory. Tse Keh Nay people began to augment their traditional hunting and gathering activities with part-time work in the sawmills. One Tse Keh Nay remembers:

[W]e used to go out in the summer to work and come back in the fall with what money they had made and go trapping. They used to go out from the river boats from here (Ingenika) and from Fort Grahame and Fort Ware all the way down to McLeod Lake for jobs in the sawmills and all that when Catermole(sic) timber moved to Finlay Forks in 1965. We lived in Finlay Forks for a couple of years, with the men working in logging camps (Pollon & Matheson 1989:336 in TKD, 2002:81)

After the 1960s companies such as BC Forest Products, Cattermole Timber Company, Bowater Canadian Corporation and Consolidated Bathurst, Balfour-Guthrie, Netherlands Oversea and Ferguson Lake Sawmills, with headquarters all over the world, began logging
huge tracts of the forests. They set up sawmills, built towns to house their employees, and built miles of wide dusty roads throughout the territory. Logging became intensive. As a Tse Keh Nay member noted:

_The Omineca is one of the major rivers that runs in about halfway, right across the Finlay Fork. There’s a big bay at Omineca that runs eleven miles, and there are camps everywhere, logging trucks by the hundreds, skidders and fallers and diesel oil and leakages’s and nobody cares, nobody gives a damn..._ (Pollen & Matheson 1989:230 cited in TKD 2002:83)

The Tse Keh Nay found some jobs, but at great loss to the land from the deforestation of timber stands, the disruption of migration patterns of wildlife, the depletion of fish stocks on the rivers and streams and the destruction of sensitive habitats where important plants grew. There were no environmental assessments, impact studies, or best forestry practices and this is apparent today on the physical landscape of Tse Keh Nay lands. Many of the companies have moved on but the Tse Keh Nay remain.

### 3.3 Roads and Railways

Roads and railways have also had a negative impact upon wildlife and have restricted Tse Keh Nay land use.

Roads, particularly dirt roads, were constructed throughout Tse Keh Nay territory during the first gold rush in the 1860s to accommodate pack horses and wagons of mining prospectors. Dusty roads began to appear throughout the region bringing miners, loggers and other visitors into the area. However, Tse Keh Nay territory remained fairly inaccessible to the general public and to the resource extraction industries until the building of the Alaska Highway. The Alaska Highway brought new economic opportunities to the region as well as an influx of tourists, big game hunters and fishermen. The completion of the Hart Highway through McLeod Lake and Summit Lake added to this traffic. Forestry and mining companies built roads that crisscrossed the mountain slopes of every region, increasing erosion and impacting sensitive habitats and animal migrations. The impact of the Sloan Connector Road on Tse Keh Nay territory was noted by William Charlie:

_Because I have been a guide for hunters for twenty-two years, I know that people who want to hunt and fish use whatever roads are available to get into new areas. When there is a new area opened up, there is huge number of people who want to get here and hunt before the animals are killed off. The better the road into that area, the more people come because the travel is easier and the more animals are killed. _ (Affidavit 1997, para 55)

The road to McKenzie and along the Williston Reservoir has caused dusting and pollution of large parts of Tse Keh Nay territory, and road kill of many animals.
Railroads also increased traffic in the region. The railway at Fort St. John was a boon to the forestry and mining industries. Once it connected to Hudson’s Hope and Chetwynd the region became even more attractive for resource extraction. The railway through the Takla Lake Reserves had a number of negative impacts, including increased logging activity, the destruction of ancient rock paintings, injuries to Takla Lake members, access problems at railway crossings, pollution, increased risks from the transportation of hazardous goods through communities and loss of Reserve land. William George says:

*When the railroad was built all the game left this area. Logging also began here when the railroad was built, in around 1973. The logging also drove the game away.* (Affidavit 1997; para 7)

### 3.4 W.A.C. Bennett Dam

The construction of the W.A.C. Bennet dam had a massive impact on Tse Keh Nay land and its people. In 1957, Premier W.A.C. Bennett announced to the world that “the greatest hydro-electric power project in the world… would produce four million horsepower and create a reservoir 250 miles long that could change the climate of the north” (Pollon 1989:192). At that time the main concern was the impact of the dam on Fraser River fish stocks. Little thought was given to what it would do to Tse Keh Nay communities. It was not until 1962 that the Department of Indian Affairs informed BC Hydro of the devastating impact this project might have upon Tse Keh Nay lives.

> Loss of the age-old pursuit of trapping and hunting either wholly or in part, constitutes a real problem to those who follow this vocation. Replacement is virtually impossible. While traplines encompass many square miles, flooding usually annexes the productive low-lying areas including trails, trapsets and in many cases, cabins…Older trappers among them women, set in their ways and unskilled in present day crafts, are the main victims of this proposed change. (Koyl 1992: 86-87)

The dam eventually flooded not only a 168 acre reserve but 640 square miles of productive Tse Keh Nay traditional territory. The old settlement of Fort Grahame ceased to be. Villages, sacred sites, hunting grounds and trap lines were flooded and it was the end of hunting, fishing, trapping, and life as they knew it.

Most notably, the dam and the lake had a damaging impact upon the wildlife in the area. It is estimated that the dam, which inundated approximately 1400 square kilometers of Class 1 to 3 habitats, resulted in the loss of 12,500 moose (Harris 1984:46). Other wildlife was also affected including bear, beaver, marmot, squirrel, etc. Figures for the loss of wildlife are unknown but they are considered substantial, especially in view of the fact that the flooding occurred in the spring when animals were having their young. Fish stocks were impacted as well. Arctic grayling, mountain white fish and rainbow trout declined because of unsuitable habitat. They have been replaced by Dolly Varden, kokanee, lake trout, ling and other
species. However, many of these fish are contaminated by mercury or other pollutants and are not safe to consume.

The dam ended a traditional way of life for many Tse Keh Nay people. Places that people had known their whole lives were now gone: hunting grounds, trap lines, trails, cabins, houses, safe places to cache food, berry patches, places associated with names and stories were now completely underwater.

When people were first informed about the flooding they did not understand its full impact or how it was going to change their lives. When it occurred it was a tremendous shock and left many distressed as they saw their lands disappear. According to a Tse Keh Nay who remembered the time:

_The Sekannis were told their houses would be burned, but their belongings would be put in a safe place where the men could pick them up. They burned our houses with everything in them. Some of the men had guns and stuff underneath the floorboards, so nobody would know where they were, and all that was burned. And our pots and pans. Everything. There were five houses, our church and everything, burned in Fort Grahame, and another five or six houses burned-six houses to be correct-right here in Ingenika Point_ (Pollon & Matheson 1989:338)

Grave sites were also lost causing great anguish. Many gravesites were located along trap lines. All are now underwater. The graveyard at Fort Grahame was flooded. The graveyard at Ingenika Point was moved inland but BC Hydro underestimated the extent of the flooding and the new graveyard slid into the reservoir. As one Tse Keh Nay remembers:

_They [BC Hydro] told us they were going to take the bones out and take them down to the Parsnip reserve and rebury them. I think they just made a mass grave there, of all the bones of our peoples. We don’t know who’s where or anything. I mean, nobody likes their dead to be desecrated. Because the graveyards are sacred places._ (Pollon & Matheson1989:343-344)

Offers of cash and land were eventually made in compensation for the lost reserves but the new reserves offered were inappropriate to the needs of the Tse Keh Nay. They were unable to trap in the surrounding areas that were either flooded or logged or devoid of game. The community dispersed with one third moving north to live at Fort Ware. The reserve issue was not resolved until 1989, but new reserves have still not been confirmed. The Tse Keh Nay people who once lived at Fort Grahame are considered squatters on their own lands by the federal government.

As well as losing all they had, many Tse Keh Nay people were separated from their relatives due to the creation of an artificial lake that made transportation difficult. Many Tse Keh Nay lament the fact that the dam has created a huge barrier because of ‘the plug’ - floating debris and log jams that occur on the upper end of the reservoir. The following warning is posted on the BC Hydro Recreation online site:
Williston Reservoir is a very large and potentially hazardous reservoir for the unwary. Boaters are cautioned that when the reservoir is not at its maximum level, snags and stumps may lie just below the water surface. Floating and submerged debris may be encountered in all areas of the reservoir. Boaters should also be aware of strong winds that occur suddenly, causing high waves (over 2 metres) and strong currents.

The banks of the reservoir are easily eroded and subject to sloughing from reservoir actions. If wave action is severe and you need to reach shore, it may be difficult to make a safe landing due to cliffs, unstable banks and/ or floating or submerged debris along the shoreline.

Snowmobiling and other winter activities are common on Williston Lake. When using the frozen surface of the reservoir extreme caution must be exercised as winter hazards include pressure ridges, gas holes, open water, and broken shoreline ice. Rapid temperature changes that may cause ice melt and extreme cold and wind are also hazards to the wintertime users. (BC Hydro 2005)

The Williston Reservoir had many other impacts. The flooding resulted in mercury poisoning in the water. Many of the fish in the reservoir are now unfit for human consumption. The rapidly changing level of the Reservoir has created severe dust problems. When the waters fall, large amounts of dust particulate from the barren shoreline and subsurface are carried into the community at the Tsay Keh Dene Village. Many members and Elders have respiratory and skin problems from this dust and are forced to wear dust masks in their own homes.

3.5 Current Impacts of Forestry and Mining

Over the last decade the Tse Keh Nay have voiced their concerns about the negative impacts of forestry and mining in their territory. The following quotes speak to the issues and explain why the Tse Keh Nay believe they must save Amazay Lake.

3.5.1 Forestry

William Charlie:

[D]uring the 50’s and 60’s, the logging was starting to interfere more and more with our people’s way of life. In the early 1950’s the logging companies started to clear cut large pieces of land...and in the early 1970’s it came into Takla and our kayohs. This made many of the lands in which we hunted, fished and trapped the wrong kind of place for the animals or fish to live. As a result, the animals were being pushed up the valleys into less developed areas
and hunting and fishing generally was not as good as it used to be. (Affidavit 1997: para 33)

Now, logging has come up Stuart Lake so far that most of the moose have been driven away at Takla as well. This means that when we are wintering at Takla, we have to travel further in our territory up to Thutade Lake to get Moose for our sustenance. (Affidavit 1997: para 47)

Don’t see much groundhog around any more – you have to harvest them to keep them plenty – hardly see robins, sparrows, squirrels – moose and caribou are depleting– moose are getting meaner – usually a gentle animal maybe stress of noise maybe the logging. Grouse and pygmy owl are gone. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Peter Abraham:

I have hunted and trapped all my life and I have seen tremendous changes in our people’s way of life. Before logging and mines came in to our area, there was lots of wildlife. After the logging and the mines come in, the wildlife is chased away because of the noise of the machinery, the industry, and also because their habitat is taken away. (Affidavit 1997: para 26)

William George:

The animals go away if there is machinery operating, because they don’t like the noise. Newborn animals don’t like the noise. The beaver and other animals get killed by the trucks. Some animals die out when they move to different area- like marten, wolverine, and big game. (Affidavit 1997: para 6)

3.5.2 Mines in the Area

Many of the Elders also speak to the impact of mining in the area and its effects upon the caribou.

William Charlie:

Down at the Cheni Mines which is close to Takla, the mining has stopped. The mine company did not put the land back into the condition that it was. Last year, there was hunting taking place for caribou down at the Cheni mines and the caribou from that area were gutted to find that the stomach and intestines were green and yellow as if they had been poisoned... the only place that the caribou could get poisoned is at the old tailing pond. It looks as if the caribou have been drinking from that tailing pond... because the caribou have
been poisoned, we cannot eat that poisoned meat and therefore the people are afraid to hunt caribou near a mine because we have seen with our own eyes that the animals are poisoned. (Affidavit 1997: para 61, 62, 63)

Peter Abraham:

[A] few years ago I shot a caribou at the end of the strip at Cheni Mines which is close to Takla and started to gut it. It was green and yellow inside and it looked as if it had been poisoned. We never used the meat because we were frightened that we too would be poisoned by the chemicals in its body...the only place the caribou could have got the poisons was at the Cheni tailings pond. We know that they drink from it. (Affidavit 1997: para 13, 14)

William Charlie:

[B]ecause the caribou have been poisoned, we cannot eat that poisoned meat and therefore the people are afraid to hunt caribou near a mine because we have seen with our own eyes that the animals are poisoned. (Affidavit 1997: para 63)
3.5.3 Kemess South Mine

As well as concern for mining in general the Tse Keh Nay also have concerns about the impact of the Kemess South mine upon the land and the fish and animals in the area.

Fred Patrick:

[T]hat they have already damaged the area [his keyoh] by building roads and removing the trees that are not supposed to be removed. The chemicals, machinery, leaking oil, gas, and explosives are not supposed to be put there in the country. A tall guy at a meeting told me it was not poisonous. He thinks we know nothing, but we know what is poison. (Affidavit 1997: para 12)

Takla Elder:

Yeah, we go fishing there [Thutade Lake], they set net in them little creeks. They catch… lots of fish, they get trout and suckers and all that, they catch dollies, (Interviewer: At Duncan Lake?), yeah, they catch all kinds of fish, they catch, I don’t know where, real big ones…they set net all every time, they make raft. I remember things like that. They get real big one, real fat. Now they say real skinny, I don’t know why. Them dollies what they catch it’s real skinny from Thorne Lake, Joe get one real skinny…. Something’s going on over there…. We told them in a meeting, it’s in the moose too. They’re not so good
as, the meat and that, they’re not so good sometimes I think because the fat is sometime yellowish colour and the groundhog too. The fat in the moose used to be real nice and white but it sometime yellow colour. And somehow and some other places we shoot, and it’s white and the same with the groundhog specially, real yellow, and some have no hair on their body, just the wool.... Antoine or Mathew shoot one that is really skinny and it has those yellow [illegible] fat…it’s real skinny, really skinny. It looks like lack of eating something or eating something. It’s maybe from what they eat. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

3.5.4 Final Comments

Mike Teegee:

[T]he Thudade Lake area is a very sensitive watershed area. All the band members have repeatedly indicated that they are most concerned that the hunters and other recreators will go to the area when the roads are built. This, on top of the mining and logging, will decimate the animals in the area and make it very hard for the people of our Band to sustain themselves on hunting and fishing in the Thudade Lake area. (Affidavit 1997; para 14)

William Charlie:

[I] believe that our ways will have to change if the land up in the Thudade Lake area is going to be used for a mine. The mine will chase away the animals and will make our hunt harder. Also, the land will be taken away. When you take away the land you also take away the source of food and the source of furs. You also take away our fundamental connection to the land. (Affidavit 1997: para 75)

Mike Teegee:

[A]t this time our community still needs its wildlife for sustenance and food purposes and the other developments are lessening very much the availability of wildlife. Further degradation of the source of their sustenance will force more people to leave our community and therefore undermine the very existence and cultural identity of our community. (Affidavit 1997, para 23)

Takla Elder:

We have to be really firm and strong about it. That’s only way we’ll get to the bottom of it. Line up what they’re trying to do. They’re going to mess up the whole thing...Our animals are everything.... Our grandchildren are going to suffer a great deal of loss. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)
4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sekani people have lived in their territory for many generations prior to contact and have developed a culture that is well adapted to the environment of the Rocky Mountain Trench. They utilized and managed all of their territory. No area of their territory was ‘empty.’ The communities of the Tse Keh Nay, the Kwadacha, Tsay Keh Dene, and the Takla Lake First Nation, are today related to each other through kinship and marriage. Their use of the land has changed little since the time of contact. They continue to hunt, fish, trap and gather plant foods and medicines, as they have done for many generations. Spiritually they are still connected to the land and animals that live on it. Historical and current use research reveals that the Thutade and Amazay Lake region was a significant area for the Tse Keh Nay. They used this region for hunting, trapping and fishing, often living there for extended periods. The area is also important as a gathering place for Tse Keh Nay families and neighbouring tribes. The Tse Keh Nay have a rich oral history attached to the region and many place names attest to their knowledge of the landscape.

Industrial impacts over the last century have led to environmental degradation of their territory which has affected their culture and lifestyle. This degradation has increased drastically over the last fifty years as a result of clear cut logging, damming of rivers, construction of roads and railways, and pollution from mine tailings. Wildlife has significantly decreased because of these activities. The Tse Keh Nay people believe that their people and culture are at risk if they have no input into development within their territory.

What has been described in this draft report is only part of the history, culture and current land use of the Tse Keh Nay. This report was completed to meet the deadlines of the Panel hearing but because of insufficient time and funding, the report remains in draft form and the work is incomplete. It is recommended that the following studies be completed on behalf of the Tse Keh Nay people so that they can adequately voice their concerns in these proceedings. Research is required in the following areas:

Archaeological Research

As stated in Appendix E, archaeological research in this region is far from adequate to fully understand the pre-contact use of the Thutade and Amazay lakes region. There are also concerns about the quality of the work that has been conducted on behalf of Northgate. It is recommended that a comprehensive archaeological impact assessment be conducted with the full participation of the Tse Key Nay people to determine the impact of any potential mining operation and that a full archaeological inventory be compiled for the Amazay and Thutade areas. Such an inventory must include the higher terraces that were well used and occupied by Tse Keh Nay people. Additionally, the information found in Samuel Black’s 1824 journal and traditional use information reveal a use of this area that would have left a physical, archaeological expression. This information must be considered when developing a strategy to locate and identify archaeological sites.
Ethnographic Research

Interviews with the Tse Keh Nay were limited and this report has had to depend heavily upon previous statements made in affidavits and gleaned from other researchers’ reports. There was no examination of the interviews used for the Tsay Keh Dene Traditional Use Study as only the report was accessible. Recent interviews were conducted in group sessions but individual follow up interviews are required. Due to travel costs, time limitations, and unavailability of individuals who are out trapping and hunting on the land, there was an unequal representation of interviews among the three communities. This needs to be addressed to give balance to the history.

Ethnobotanical Research

A cursory review of the ethnobotany of the Sekani was conducted for this study. (Appendix A) This work is preliminary. Although one study was conducted with the Tsay Keh Dene, it is believed that there is much more to learn. This work also relied heavily on the ethnobotanical research conducted for neighbouring Nations. To understand the ethnobotany of the Amazay region, it is important to conduct further ethnobotanical research. This research would help fill the gaps that were identified in this report regarding the names and uses of some particular plants.

Place Name Research

Place name information for the three communities is uneven and incomplete. It is quite evident from the limited interviews and hearings that there are a number of place names not yet recorded. Greatly needed too, is linguistic analysis of these place names. A brief linguistic analysis of place names around Amazay shows that many place names are linked to oral history and land use. To date, there has been no comprehensive linguistic analysis of Tse Keh Nay place names.

Genealogical Research

There is general understanding by all Tse Keh Nay families that they are linked together but many families cannot provide details of that relationship. Genealogical research is needed to understand how the families are related. This includes gathering family history from the members themselves, as well as searching missionary records, government census records and band lists. This would require a linguistic methodology as well as the assistance of Sekani speakers and linguists to decipher name alterations and equivalences. Also there is a need to understand traditional naming practices and the history of the adoption of western names. Among First Nation peoples elsewhere, western names are adopted from missionaries, settlers, or are closely linked to the phonetic sound of their indigenous names. In the case of the Tse Keh Nay, some names indicate the influence of the French Oblate missionaries, but others do not. Analysis of western names may help reveal where people were in the territory and their relationship to each other.

21 Traditional names had important cultural and spiritual significance for First Nations people and the adoption of western names was often linked to ‘guidance, protection or power’ (see Rogers & Rogers 1980: 198-230).
Archival, Fur Trade and Oblate Mission Records Research

This report has been written with no examination of archival records. Fur trade records, correspondence and post journals, not only in Tse Keh Nay territory, but outside, can offer supportive evidence of Tse Keh Nay movements and use of the land. Missionary records are also a rich source of information. Aside from the published records of Rev. Morice, Catholic missionary records include official reports of activities, correspondence and parish records. Many of these are still held by the Oblate order. It is also unknown at this time if other denominations visited this region and left records. A cursory review has identified some sources from visitors to the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These have not been examined. It is speculated too that many of these visitors were Americans, especially during the gold rush of the 1860s, and it is possible that more accounts are held in American archives.

Government Records Research

The records of the Department of Indian Affairs are a key source of information on the movements and activities of the Tse Keh Nay people from the late 19th century through to the present. Census Records, Annual Reports, Indian Agent journals and correspondence, and correspondence and reports of the Indian Reserve Commission and the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, are only some of the resource materials found in these Government Records.

Historical Geography and Mapping

It is highly recommended that research of historical geography and mapping be undertaken. This research has huge potential for understanding Tse Keh Nay use of the land. The fur trading companies often made detailed maps of specific regions, sometimes marking where First Nations people lived. Time did not permit this research to be conducted. Also research for this report revealed several old published maps of Sekani territory, but it is unknown who produced them or why they were produced. One map, for example, dated 1848 shows trails to Tse Keh Nay lands from the upper Stikine River. Also, due to time constraints, only two contemporary maps of Tse Keh Nay use of the land were created. Appendices F and G include maps of trails and placenames but there is much more information to gather to ensure comprehensive mapping of the area. Additionally, more time is required to effectively map the information gathered during the research for this study. A great deal of traditional use information was gathered and more time is required to consult with the Tse Keh Nay on how best to share this detailed information.

To conclude, the Tse Keh Nay have a rich history that this report has only touched upon. Much of the history still remains in the memory of the people themselves. The materials gathered here reveal that much more work needs to be done to adequately understand Tse Keh Nay historic and current uses of the Thutade and Amazay Lakes region. Their strong voices of concern attest to the importance of this region. Without this research, the full impacts of this mining development upon their lives will not be fully understood or addressed.
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Van Stone, J.  

APPENDIX A: ETHNOBOTANICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SEKANI

Sekani people are known as hunters, and as with most hunting and gathering societies, researchers and historians have focused on their hunting methods, practices and beliefs. In part, this is because hunting is held in such high esteem. However, in most hunting societies, the role of plant foods is very important in maintaining the health and nutrition of its members. Aboriginal hunting peoples of the interior of northern British Columbia are no different and use plants for food, medicine, technology (MacKinnon 1999:7) and spiritual purposes. This use “was and is, selective, being neither random nor all-encompassing” (Peacock and Turner 1999:146) and was based on complex management strategies. For the Sekani “[p]lant foods were… an important element within the… diet” (Davis 1993:11). “The Sekani acquired much of this plant knowledge through animal observation as well as through cultural diffusion, and have passed this information on generationally until the present day” (Davis 1993:11). In fact, “the knowledge of particular plant species and their medicinal or other uses cannot really be separated from the larger knowledge systems that include the specific locations where plants have been traditionally harvested, certain seasons for harvest, and the belief systems (of which animals are key) that underlie the power and usefulness of the plants. Thus, it is important to realize that impacts to any one of these interrelated components are seen as impacting the whole” (Bannister 2006:42).

To date, very little research has been conducted to document Tse Keh Nay knowledge and use of plant foods. In 1993, Alison Davis, in cooperation with the the Tsay Keh Dene, Fletcher Challenge Canada, Finlay Forest Industries Ltd. and Ministry of Forests, conducted a study to begin to document this use, but little has been done since. Other sources are the plant books by MacKinnon and Pojar, but the information is limited. These books include a section on ethnobotany: a discussion of how First Nation peoples utilize plant resources. For the current project, time and resources do not allow for an in-depth study of ethnobotanical uses and knowledge of Tse Keh Nay people. For this reason, Davis’ 1993 report and MacKinnon and Pojar’s book, “Plants of Northern British Columbia,” are relied upon for the majority of information. Other information is taken from ethnobotanical studies conducted among Tse Keh Nay neighbours. All of this is supplemented by information gathered by researchers for this submission.

Traditional Resource Management

_The Tse Keh Nay Dene were there, the Creator put us there with ... all the other life forms. We are there to be the caretakers of this life. In return, we pass respect to every species that's in our area.... Our laws met the ecosystem laws, and that's the way we've guided ourselves in being the caretakers of that vast area that belongs to us and we've been that way since time immemorial._ (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

With their close bond to the land, Sekani people managed the resources. As the quote above indicates, this management was based on the needs and best interests of the ecosystem.
According to Peacock and Turner (1999:134), “a growing body of ethnobotanical evidence from British Columbia… suggests indigenous peoples actively managed the resources of their environment to ensure a reliable, predictable supply of culturally significant plants…. Management decisions were not solely economic ones, but were embedded in social contexts and encoded in religious philosophies and oral traditions.” Some management strategies employed by Sekani are summarized by Alison Davis in her 1993 report:

Like other Indigenous groups of British Columbia… the Sekani are aware of ecological variation within their environment (Turner, 1990). In order to ensure a relatively constant supply of subsistence foods, the Sekani adapted conservation measures to guarantee the sustainability of their resources. In addition, various methods of resource management were also employed, such as landscape burning, rotational harvesting, and careful harvesting techniques.

The ancient practice of landscape burning usually took place during the spring thaw when the brush was dry enough to burn, and the forests too humid to pose any real threats of a wild fire. When traveling through the region in 1924, Diamond Jenness observed that: “Along the riverbank and on burnt areas are many blueberries and Saskatoon berries…” (1937:2). There are three main motives behind landscape burning: first, to enhance various human food plants; second, to create and/or intensify game animals’ foraging grounds; third, to keep game animals at a close proximity to the village site (Hunn, 1990; Turner 1990; Cohen, 1989; J. Isaac, 1993). Francis Isaac remembers that his father-in-law, Thomas Toma, used to landscape burn: “How do you think they’re [past generations] going to live? If you don’t burn an area and create good grazing, the animals will just pass on through.” (F. Isaac, 1993)

Another method of resource management is that of rotational harvesting. Jean Isaac states: “We have various gathering grounds because we like to rejuvenate the area we picked one year and [so we] let it rest the next [year]. This causes larger, better berry crops and also creates a richer top soil.”

When plant foods are harvested, care is taken to avoid damaging the plant and its surroundings. For example, digging sticks made from goat horn or

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22 Frank Swanell, a surveyor in Tse Keh Nay territory in the early 20th century noted a number of burns in the Thutade area. On a 1932 map attributed to Swanell, there are numerous areas marked as either “new burn” or “old burn.” Each of these is along a lake or riverbank, in a confined area. Although time did not permit research of Swanell’s journal, it is believed that these areas are sites managed and cultivated by Tse Keh Nay, confirming the practice of burning in resource management to the very recent past. Importantly, as Davis points out, these burn areas ensured that resources stayed close to where people were living. This further suggests that the Thutade area was well known and utilized by Tse Keh Nay.

23 One Elder interviewed for this study noted that as a child, she and her family picked berries “in the burned areas” in the vicinity of Amazay Lake (Tse Keh Nay 2006).

24 This statement is supported by Sandra Peacock and Nancy Turner (1999) who write: “It has always been puzzling to us that the most productive, prolific areas to find particular edible or useful plants, especially wild root vegetables, are invariable in those localities where they have been traditionally harvested in immense quantities. One might logically assume that such populations, having been intensively exploited, might show decline compared to places where they were not harvested, but this does not seem to be the case” (133) Later, they state “specific root digging beds, once harvested, were left to develop for a few ‘fallow’ years” (153).
mountain ash (*Sorbus scopulina*) are used to pry up roots and are more sensitive to the surrounding ground than modern implements like the shovel (Chingee, 1993; Ford, 1993; Jenness, 1937). Another example would be the harvesting of cambium, during which the tree is incised only on the sunny side (and not girdled) in order to expedite the healing process (Alexis, 1993; Pierre, 1993; Isaac, 1993). (11-12; footnote added)

Recent ethnobotanical research in British Columbia has identified other management strategies. Although their work was in the Interior Plateau of British Columbia, Peacock and Turner discuss many strategies employed by First Nations to improve crops. Pruning is one such strategy. For example, one Elder recalled her mother stating that the Saskatoon bushes were overgrown so she cut the older stems back to the ground. The following year, the new shoots were the perfect size for basket rim hoops and a few years later, berry production on these plants was excellent (Peacock and Turner 1999:150). “Certain species of berries… were harvested by breaking off the berry-laden branches. This, too, was a form of pruning” (Peacock and Turner 1999:151).

Another management strategy discussed by Peacock and Turner (1999) was management on the broad scale, which included all members of society, within the entire territory. Again, although their research focused on the Interior Plateau of British Columbia, many of their findings about resource management apply to Sekani people. This management strategy “included a planned and patterned seasonal round, the rotation of harvesting locales… and religious ceremonies and moral sanctions” (1999:156). Thus, contrary to common stereotypes about hunters-gatherers, people did not move aimlessly through a vast wilderness in search of food. Instead, “seasonal movements of people across the landscape were linked to the temporal and spatial availability of culturally important plant resources” (Peacock and Turner 1999:156). 

Further, “peoples’ movements… through the season, and the alternation or rotation of specific harvesting locations, over multiyear cycles, were in fact forms of broad-scale resource management” (Peacock and Turner 1999:157). During research for this submission, it was stated by Elders on numerous occasions that the annual gatherings were for this purpose. At these gatherings, many social events occurred, but importantly, the meetings included discussions of the lands and resources and how these resources would be managed for the upcoming year.

Some comments made by Elders during the Ethnobotanical studies done among the Dene of the Prophet River also reveal a strong responsibility for managing the plant resources. For example,

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25 The Tse Keh Nay are just north of the Interior Plateau. Turner (1997:16) notes that although the peoples of the sub-arctic (including Tse Keh Nay) rely heavily on moose and caribou, and traditionally did not rely as heavily on plant foods as the peoples of the Interior Plateau, they still used many different species of plants. This is supported by Bannister, 2006 and Black (Rich 1955:12) who notes that “their principle subsistence is that of Roots & Herbs, this is some consolation, we may only starve above in this Country of the Thecannies, provided always these means of subsistence may be found all over…. This... is a question they do not seem to understand[,] perhaps... they find subsistence on every point, they will not allow however of their having ever eaten Frogs or Mice, indeed they do not require it, for they have a large Bundle of a kind of Water Hemlock (but not poisonous) and what the Canadians call Chou Creux.”

26 In fact, this movement was linked to the temporal and spatial availability of all culturally important resources.
Blueberries are highly valued as a food item and seen as important food for both humans and bears. They are eaten in a variety of ways, raw or processed and they make excellent jam (PN). Elders believe that people have a responsibility to their berry patches and that “you always got to think about next year.” They expressed concern about the increasing garbage and litter that they find in their traditional berry picking grounds. If berry patches aren’t managed appropriately, Elders say the berries won’t grow back again. (Bannister 2006:23)

In short, the generations-old, traditional management strategies of the Sekani resulted in a continual, reliable resource, that was vital to their well-being.

**Plants as Food**

First Nations in the interior of northern British Columbia used plant foods to supplement their predominately protein diet (MacKinnon 1999:7). Plant foods provide important vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates and, following a long, cold winter, fresh plant foods were a welcome addition to a diet consisting largely of meat and dried foods.

With the return of spring, fresh greens are still collected by many families. These greens include plants like thimbleberry shoots, cow-parsnip (Indian Rhubarb), fiddleheads and fireweed. A short time later, the sap of the lodgepole pine, black poplar and birch (Davis 1993:12) begins to run, signaling that the inner bark (cambium layer) is sweet and ready to eat. Often, the bark was mashed, cooked and dried in cakes for winter storage (MacKinnon 1999:8). These cakes provided an important source of carbohydrate in the winter months.

As the days warm and lengthen, other foods like berries, roots, seeds, fruits, flowers, cattails, mushrooms and lichens (Davis 1999:12) become available to be eaten fresh or preserved and, in the old days, cached for the upcoming winter. Traditionally, berries were a common plant food and were often traded (MacKinnon 1999:7). Today, many families continue to gather berries and prepare them for storage by canning or freezing. Some families still trade canned berries with other First Nations for traditional foods that are unavailable in their territories. The area around Thutade Lake is an ideal berry gathering site. Some of the berries gathered here include Rose Hips, Lingonberries, High-bush Cranberries, Soapberries, Strawberries, Raspberries, Huckleberries, Kinnikinnick, and Crowberries (Tsay Keh Dene 2002).

During the growing season, other plants are utilized and often preserved for the winter months. Some edible roots harvested by Sekani people include: Bracken Fern, Venus’ Slipper, Spring Beauty, Wild Onion, and Sweet Alpine Vetch (Davis 1999:13). Many of these roots are a good source of carbohydrates in a protein rich diet.

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27 For example, soap berries might be exchanged for smoked salmon or oolichan grease.
Other plant food sources are various varieties of mushrooms, fungi, lichen, flower petals, and plants used in beverages, like Labrador Tea, Canada Mint, and Red Raspberry (Davis 1999:13).

Because plants were such an important addition to the winter diet, a number of preservation methods were employed. Berries and other plants might be dried, stored in animal fat or boiled to extract the juice. Some recall their mother pounding fresh berries with dried moose meat then rolling it flat with a birch rolling pin to dry (Davis 1999:14). Today, canning and freezing offer an effective alternative to traditional preservation methods.

**Plants in Technology and the Household**

Plants were utilized for technological purposes and “provided a wide array of materials important for everyday life” (MacKinnon 1999:8). They provided the basic necessities of shelter and fuel for the fire, and comfort in the home. Spruce, Lodgepole Pine and Sub-Alpine Fir were “of primary importance for the construction of shelters” (Davis 1993:15). Birch bark was used to “sheath” the dwelling (Jenness 1967:91). Wood was used to heat the homes and tree boughs lined the floor and created beds. Some clothing and many household implements were made from plant products (baskets, mats, cord etc.). Other household products like glue, caulking, dyes and stains came from plants. Others, like mint and bluebells were common for washing hair. Women also relied on plant products in food preparation, both as food and as tools ‘in the kitchen.’ Sir Alexander Mackenzie writes about ‘the kitchen’ in his journal, which notes the importance of plant resources:

Their kettles are also made of wapate 28, which is so closely woven that they never leak, and they heat water in them, by putting red-hot stones into it. There is one kind of them, made of spruce-bark, which they hang over the fire, but at such a distance as to receive the heat without being within reach of the blaze; a very tedious operation. They have various dishes of wood and bark; spoons of horn and wood, and buckets; bags of leather and net-work, and baskets of bark, some of which hold their fishing tacking, while others are contrived to be carried on their back. (1970:291)

Plants were important for hunters and fishermen because they were used to make their tools, nets, fishing line, hunting gear, and snowshoes. According to Davis, traditional snowshoes are still “widely used” among Sekani people (1993:16). Alexander Mackenzie recognized in his journal the quality of hunting and fishing implements made from plants when he states that the “nets and fishing lines are made of willow-bark and nettles; those made of the latter are finer and smoother than if made with hempen thread” (Mackenzie 1970:291). Spears, bows and “excellent arrows” were made from wood, and canoes were made from bark, sealed with pitch (Mackenzie 1970:291).

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28 In Alison Davis’ 1993 report, she notes that wapate is woven spruce roots (16).
Plants for Medicine

Many Tse Keh Nay people today continue to rely heavily on traditional medicines derived from plants and animals, and sometimes a combination of both. Their knowledge of the medicinal qualities of plants has been passed down through the generations. Often, the medicine is a mixture of plants that have various medicinal qualities. They might be brewed into a tea, dried and ground into a powder, mixed with animal fat to make an ointment, burned to make a smudge for inhalation or mashed to extract juices. Sometimes, the medicine is obtained via an animal. For example, it is said that although there is a plant that is not suitable for humans, for particular illnesses, the prescription is to eat the meat of a groundhog that has been seen eating this same plant. Tse Keh Nay’s intimate knowledge of plants and the environment allows them to have a virtual pharmacy at their doorstep.

During research for this project, there were several examples of the use of plants for medicinal purposes. For example, one story recorded what happened during the gathering in 2005 at Thutade and Amazay when two people got sick with what seemed to be the same illness. One person went to see a doctor and was prescribed antibiotics. The other person opted to use traditional medicines. This included the use of a plant. Interestingly, in the area of the gathering, the only place where this particular plant was found was the shores of Amazay Lake. Also of interest was that the person who chose to use the traditional medicine recovered more quickly than the person who used antibiotics (Tse Keh Nay 2006).

Jastats is another plant available at Amazay. It is good for the body and soul. It is taken as heart medication but also has a property called notsine. This means that not only is it physically good for you, but it is good for your spirit, and gives an overall good feeling.

Other stories were recorded during research for this project. For example, one man discussed “gun medicine” that grows around the Amazay and Thutade areas. Although more research is required to identify the exact plant, the story is interesting. To make “gun medicine” the leaf and berry are burned down to ashes. The ashes are put in the chamber of the gun and someone who has not shot a gun before shoots his first moose with that gun and “that gun gonna be lucky” for as long as the new hunter owns it (Tse Keh Nay 2006). This ties into the importance of Amazay as a hunting and spiritual place. An important quality of Amazay is that it is a place where boys spend four days on the mountain, fasting and praying in a ritual that is generations old29. During this rite, the boy receives a warrior’s name and he will, through vision questing, receive an animal helper that will be a part of him for the rest of his life. As part of this rite, the boy will shoot his first big animal, likely with a gun that has been cleansed with “gun medicine.” This is a transition in the boy’s life. It is his “rite of passage” from boyhood to manhood. Amazay, as a rich hunting area, contributes to the success of this rite of passage. Today, among Tse Keh Nay, there are people who go to Amazay for this rite.

*If you become a hunter and they bless you on the hills of this Amazay Lake that’s what they do they camp around here at that Duncan lake they used to dry meat here, they fast, they give people names. If you’re a good hunter they give you a Big Man name.*

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29 See Jenness (1937:68-69, 76) for further information.
They bless you up here in their own way, the Indian way. They pray for you, you became a hunter, give you a name and they let you go after that, do your own hunting like when a father baptizes you. That’s the way they do it, the Indians. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

This same plant can be used to “doctor” a gun. A gun needs “doctoring” when you shoot at a moose and “he walks away, walks maybe one mile before he die”. The ash from the root of this same plant is put through the gun, and in the process, the gun is cleansed (Tse Keh Nay 2006). It was noted that this is important for “ground-hog” hunting to ensure the immediate death of the animal. Although the use of this plant has a spiritual function, it is seen by Tse Keh Nay as being “medicine” for the gun. This same plant is used to cleanse the gun if a menstruating woman touches it. Thus, Tse Keh Nay people use plants as medicine to heal the body, soul and material items that are of great importance to Tse Keh Nay well being.

Other Tse Keh Nay people spoke about using Labrador Tea, or Red-Osier Dogwood (“Red Willow”), Devils Club, Cow Parsnip (“Wild Rhubarb) and many other plants for medicine. It is obvious that the close connection Tse Keh Nay have with their territory has resulted in a myriad of pharmaceuticals.

Plants and Spirituality

Spirituality pervades Sekani life. In many cases, the preparation of medicines is “strongly tied to religious and spiritual beliefs” (MacKinnon 1999:9). Some plants were, and still are, used specifically “for their spiritual, protective or medicinal values” (MacKinnon 1999:9). “Collection, preparation, and administration of these plants… involved a great deal of ritual, as it was believed that they lost their medicinal and spiritual powers if these traditional rituals were not observed” (MacKinnon 1999:9). For example, “when medicinal plants are retrieved, in order to create the most effective medicine, something is always returned to the ground as a gesture of gratitude and replenishment of the soil” (Davis 1993:18). This same practice is found further north:

Elders indicated that when a plant is collected, it is important to leave a small offering (such as tobacco) in place of what is taken. It was explained that this ritual shows respect for the plant and increases the healing power of medicine made with the plant material. Mary Chipesia explained it this way: ‘You put tobacco there, you pay him back and he help you. It’s a life, eh. Everything is a life.’ Mary later added, ‘If you don’t put snuff, sometimes it don’t grow back and it loses its power.’ (Banister 2006:10)

The preparation of the medicine also requires ritual observances. “In order to maximize a medicine’s potency, some choose to prepare their healing blends in privacy” at a certain time of day (Davis 1993:18).

…[T]he culture of plants was, and is, an all pervasive element amongst the Sekani. This is exemplified by the role of plants in ritual beliefs and
ceremonies. During menstruation, women would traditionally separate themselves from the village and reside in small brush huts, where they would drink from special birch bark cups (Jenness, 1937). Young men were sent out on vision quests in order to get blessed by certain animal spirits. If the vision proved elusive, a number of frogs were rounded-up and placed inside a circular birch-bark encasement in which the young man would sleep overnight. This method was supposed to rapidly induce visions (Jenness, 1937). A fungus from the birch tree (unspecified) is one ingredient in what is sometimes known as “Indian potion”, which is reportedly good for “catching women” (Solonas, 1993). And if this fungus is burned in the house, no bad spirits will get to you (Solonas, 1993). There are other plants, such as the devil’s club (Oplopanax horridus), which are believed to have strong enough powers so as to ward off illness, or to indicate threatening weather, such as baneberry (Actaea rubra), or “thunderberry”. (Davis 1993:19)

As noted earlier, some plants are used to cleanse the body and soul. For example, during the gathering at Amazay and Thutade Lakes, Tse Keh Nay people gather datsənangə along the hillsides of Amazay. This plant is used in the ‘brushing ceremony’ held at the lake. Datsənangə is used because it is one of the first plants to grow back following a fire, and thus has an ability to endure through the worst of conditions.

A lot of this stuff, a lot of our culture, it goes back to the religion, even similar to the bible if you really understood it. So if you read the bible after the Noah’s Ark, the flood and all that, the bird came back with a little plant sort of thing, the first plant he came back to tell there was life. It’s sort of that….after the burn went through, it’d be the first berry to grow back…. It’s important to our beliefs. (Tse Keh Nay 2006)

Many ceremonies, rituals and beliefs are still alive and well among the Tse Keh Nay. Many of these are private and personal and in this report, only some are shared. Sharing their spirituality is not easy for Tse Keh Nay people. It is hoped that in sharing this small amount of information, an understanding will be gained of Tse Keh Nay ways and what they call their “intangible resource”, the spiritual, intangible connection to their lands and resources.

Plants, Animals, People: Their Interconnections

Just as each culture has a different perspective of how the world is supposed to function, so too are there different cultural conceptualizations of plants. Since the Sekani were traditionally dependent on animals for their well being, it should come as no surprise that many plants were classified as belonging to important game animals. For example, the fruits of the mountain ash (Sorbus scopulina) are called “moose berries”; the sitka valerian (Valeriana sitchensis) is known as the “caribou plant”; ?Icelandmoss (Cetraria islandica) is known as “caribou lichen”; ?alpine sweet-vetch (?Hedysarum alpinum) is known as “grizzly bear root” and heart-leaved arnica (Arnica cordifolia) is known as “porcupine feet” (H. Chingee, 1993; J. Isaac, 1993). Some plants have
humorous connotations such as the mature puffball mushroom (*Lycoperdon perlatum*), which is sometimes known as the “fart” plant, and the lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum canadense*), sometimes known as “dog’s kiss” because it has a foul smell (Solonas, 1993). (Davis 1993:19)

As the above quote describes, Sekani people have always recognized a strong link between plants and animals. Their ancestors watched the animals closely and as a result, they know the plants and medicine necessary for life. Although the following excerpts are from Prophet River area (Bannister 2006), it is believed that they apply to Sekani people and help to demonstrate the connection between plants, animals and people.

Moose is a staple part of the local diet and considered a very healthy type of meat. According to Mary Chipesia: “If I eat straight dry meat, you see me about a hundred year old, and never get old too… straight meat, you can live on it. Moose eat them leaves, they eat medicine. They eat the top of the water lily and some kinds of roots. They eat leaves, that’s medicine, all the healthy stuff. Not like meat in stores, that makes you sick.”

Alex Chipesia explained that animals also have a key role in traditional healing as they provide part of the power for cures: “The old people got a power to cure. They got the power from the animals for cures to survive, like a doctor. Hard to believe but you gotta get that power from the animals”. The repeated references to animals during the study clearly indicates that animals remain integral to the way of life, and essential to the continued well-being of Prophet River community members.

Given the integral role of animals in Dene Tsaa Tse K’nai culture, it is not surprising that many ecological concerns of participants were as much for the welfare of local animals. (Bannister 2006:14-15)

An important concept to understand when considering Sekani culture and their tie to their lands and resources is that nothing is seen as standing alone. Throughout the research for this submission, Tse Keh Nay Elders continually referred to the “ecosystem.” It was obvious from their comments that it is impossible to discuss one area, one animal or one resource, as an isolated part. To Tse Keh Nay, all is integrated and any change will have an impact on the entire ecosystem. It is a holistic view of their world.

**Traditional Plant Use Today**

Today, Tse Keh Nay people live in a world where there are many alternative food sources. However, “due to the high prices of store-bought foods, and the Tse Keh Nay’s relative seclusion, many traditional foods are still relied upon” (Davis 1999:15). Moose meat is still a staple and berries are still widely picked and preserved by many Tse Keh Nay people. In 1993, following her field work among the Tse Keh Nay, Davis notes:
Other foods which were observed to be still exploited include: mushrooms, tree cambium, various leaves – consumed both raw and in the form of a beverage (usually tea) – other plant foods may also still be exploited that I did not observe during my research. These local plant foods play an important role in that they are easily accessible, cheap to process, permit self-sufficiency, and propel the Sekani’s cultural plant knowledge. (15)

Of course, there continues to be extensive use of plants for medicinal purposes, with many people choosing traditional medicines over western medicine.

Plant Use At Amazay

During research for this submission, information was gathered about plant use around Amazay that might be impacted by the use of Amazay as a toxic waste site. There are many accounts that indicate that the loss of habitat around Amazay would be a loss to the Tse Keh Nay use of plants. One account describes the use of datsənətə in the ceremonies that take place at the annual gatherings. Datsənətə is gathered on the hillsides around Amazay and is used in ceremonial brushing that is observed by the Tse Keh Nay.

Another account describes the plant used as “gun medicine.” The advisor was clear that this plant is obtained around Amazay and is used in cleansing a gun and preparing it for the owner. This is inextricably connected to the important rite of passage for boys on one of the hills above Amazay, and is one reason Amazay is seen as a sacred, spiritual place.

Another account is that of the two people who got sick at the gathering. The plant used by one of these people was only found on the hills of Amazay. Jəstəts is another plant that is available at Amazay. This plant is important for your heart, but it was clear that this medicine has both physical and spiritual properties. A primary use of the plant is to “make you feel better” emotionally. This is said to be ‘nonsine’ and is a result of the spiritual properties of Jəstəts. As one person said, ‘It’s how you believe in then it works.’ (Tse Keh Nay 2006).

Other accounts record berry picking sites at Amazay. An earlier study, commissioned by Northgate recorded a small trail “on the east side of Duncan Lake… [where] Joe Bob Patrick and his family would collect blueberries, blackberries, huckleberries and Saskatoon berries” (Jennifer Hill, 2005 cited in Dewhirst, 2006:54). Research for the present study confirmed this statement.

Although it is unclear if the plants that grow around Amazay are available elsewhere in Tse Keh Nay lands, it is clear that the Tse Keh Nay know of and utilize plants at Amazay. Loss of the habitat for these plants will force Tse Keh Nay to find other sources of these plants, if they are available at all. As Bannister states, …simply identifying a specific plant or pinpointing the location(s) where it grows will not lead to an adequate strategy of ecological protection. Traditionally
important plants and associated cultural knowledge cannot exist in isolation of the cultural and ecological contexts where they originated. That is, the way to protect traditional plant knowledge is not through documenting it in reports or handbooks, but in protecting the integrity of the cultural groups and the ability of local communities to learn and practice this knowledge within intact forests, mountains, lakes and rivers. (Bannister 2006:41)
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Expanding the Mine, Killing a Lake:
A Case Study of Competing Environmental Values,
Perceptions of Risk and First Nations’ Health

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes the findings of Master’s thesis research conducted with Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene in northern British Columbia. The aim of the project is to better understand the perceptions of risk and environmental values of these two First Nations in the context of a specific resource development proposal, the Kemess North gold and copper mine. The report provides a brief overview of the study’s context and research methods. A discussion follows that links the findings to current bodies of literature to argue that perceptions of risk and environmental values are inextricably linked to health and well-being. The report concludes that the social, cultural and health impacts to Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene are not adequately incorporated into the Kemess North environmental impact assessment (EIA).

STUDY CONTEXT

In British Columbia, uncertainty concerning the long term future of the province’s forest industry has led to renewed interest in the mining sector as a means of generating economic growth. Kemess Mines Limited, a subsidiary of Northgate Minerals Corporation, carries out mining and exploration on its 35,312 hectare property in the Omineca Mountains (see Figure 1) (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005). This region – the Toodoggone – is well known for its abundant mineral resources, and the Kemess property has several substantial reserves of copper and gold ore (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005). Only one of the reserves – an open pit mine called Kemess South – has been developed. It is one of Northgate’s principal assets with proven reserves of 87 million tonnes of gold-copper porphyry (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2006). However, it is estimated that there is only enough ore at the Kemess South site to continue operations until 2009 (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005).
The development of another mineral reserve is necessary if production at Kemess is to continue. Northgate plans to expand their operations and prolong productivity by developing the Kemess North site where 414 million tonnes of proven and probable reserves have been found (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005). The Kemess North deposit is approximately 5 kilometres north of Kemess South and it is estimated that the development of this site will sustain mining operations until 2020 (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005).

Gold and copper mining produces a large amount of waste material that can have a detrimental affect on the environment if not handled properly (Environmental Mining Council, n.d.). Open pit mines, such as Kemess, extract the desired mineral from “waste rock” by crushing the ore into fine particles, called tailings, which are then treated by chemicals to separate out the target metal (Environmental Mining Council, n.d.). The waste from this process contains acid-generating sulphides that react with air and water to produce sulphuric acid that can leach out of the waste and pollute the surrounding environment (Environmental Mining Council, n.d.). This process is called Acid Mine
Drainage (AMD) and is the main threat to water bodies and groundwater in areas where open pit mining occurs (Environmental Mining Council, n.d.).

The EIA for the Kemess expansion indicates that a “waste disposal facility in the Duncan Lake valley will be developed” (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005, 1). This plan involves the construction of a large dam (90 metres high) and two smaller ones to block creeks flowing in and out of Duncan Lake – known as Amazay Lake in Sekani – thus creating a “zero-discharge” waste disposal facility (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005, 1). Waste would be dumped into the tailings disposal facility where it would be stored under water, thus reducing the AMD.

Amazay Lake is a natural, fish-bearing water body near the proposed site of Kemess North. Dolly Varden, rainbow trout and whitefish populations inhabit the six kilometer long wilderness lake which is located at the headwaters of the Findlay watershed. Using Amazay Lake as a waste disposal site would effectively eliminate the lake’s ecosystem and make it uninhabitable for fish.

Northgate asserts that this proposed method of waste management is the only viable option. It is claimed to be the safest and least environmentally damaging, and it is an estimated to be $800 million cheaper than the second option (Northgate Minerals Corp., 2005a). However, the transformation of Amazay Lake into a waste disposal facility is a point of contention with the region’s First Nations because it is seen as a threat to the environmental integrity of their traditional territories (BC First Nations, 2005). Of the First Nations who have declared their opposition to the waste disposal plan (i.e., Takla Lake First Nation, Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha First Nation), the concerns of Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations are the focus of the research that this report summarizes.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to determine how the proposed mine, Kemess North could impact the health and well-being of Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene. The research questions are:

1. What are the risks associated with the expansion perceived to be?
   a. What cultural activities are threatened?
   b. What social impacts would the Kemess expansion have?
   c. How will these perceptions of risk and the social and cultural impacts affect health?

2. Do the mechanisms for regulating the Kemess expansion acknowledge First Nations’ environmental values and perceptions of risk?

3. What are the implications of these existing frameworks for the health and well-being of First Nations people and communities if they do not?

In other words, are Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene’s environmental values and perceptions of risk acknowledged in the environmental review process, and how is this related to the overall health and well-being of Tse Keh Nay people.

METHODS

This project is an ethnographic case study which links First Nations’ perceptions of risk to broadly-defined health outcomes in the context of resource development. The primary qualitative methods for data collection were in-depth interviews and participant observation. Several qualitative techniques for enhancing reliability and rigour were employed; these included participant checking, investigator checking, source triangulation and methods triangulation (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). This multiple methods approach serves as a means to triangulate the findings (Hay, 2000; Baxter & Eyles, 1997).
The Tse Keh Nay are a group of three Sekani Nations: Takla Lake First Nation, Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha First Nation. While it would have been preferable to work with all three Tse Keh Nay Nations, Kwadacha First Nation was unable to participate. The findings presented here are from interviews with Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene, as well as from conversations and informal interviews with some Kwadacha members. Thus, while Kwadacha First Nation did not formally participate in the research, they have contributed, and the findings may be considered to extend to all three Tse Keh Nay Nations.

Purposeful sampling was employed with the goal of targeting people who have particular knowledge of the region, also known as “key informants” (Hay, 2000). These people included elders, trap-line holders, and Chief and Council members of Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene First Nation. Snowball sampling was also employed whereby key informants directed the interviewer to other key informants (Hay, 2000). The goal was to reach saturation, which occurs when no new themes are emerging from the interviews (Hay, 2000).

The interviews were semi-structured; that is, a set of questions provided the basis for the interviews (Hay, 2000). However, the interviews also diverged from the prepared questions and the interviewer was able to follow up on themes that emerged during the discussions (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Nine participants from Tsay Keh Dene and seven participants from Takla Landing were interviewed. Data collected on behalf of the Tse Keh Nay also contributed to the findings presented in this report.

Data analysis involved transcribing interviews and analyzing them to determine emergent themes. A coding system for identifying key phrases and themes was developed. Background literature about Takla Lake First Nation, Tsay Keh Dene, northern resource development and mining practice and policy informed the coding and analysis of primary data (i.e., interviews and observations). Notes taken during interviews and research journal entries were consulted to ensure that the themes identified were in context and matched the observations noted at the time of the interview.
POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Political ecology examines the scientific evidence informing environmental issues for political, economic and cultural influences. Forsythe (2003) argues that environmental science is socially constructed and a powerful political tool, and that science can be used to legitimize a variety of environmental policies without sufficient acknowledgement of the biophysical uncertainties or political conflicts behind them (10). Critical political ecology seeks to integrate the social and biophysical explanations of the environment.

Through its theoretical link to political economy, political ecology has a fundamental interest in distribution, for example of risks or negative externalities, and thus, it focuses on aspects of social justice in environmental disputes involving state, industry and local stakeholders. Where there is environmental injustice, political ecology seeks to empower by giving the information gathered through the research process to the people being impacted so that they can, in essence, have more power to affect the change they are seeking.

First Nations generally have a strong cultural attachment to place and their identities are often tied to the land and land-based activities (Wilson, 2003; Elliott & Foster, 1995). First Nations people often consider their environment to be inextricably linked to their overall health, and, generally speaking, from a First Nations’ perspective, it is impossible to separate the biophysical and socio-cultural aspects of the environment. As a result, environmental degradation is of particular consequence for First Nations peoples’ health because the physical environment is an important source of food, medicine, cultural identity and spiritual expression (Kelm, 1998). Thus, when First Nations lack power, or agency, to protect their environment according to their own values, there can be significant health consequences. Empowerment, or sense of control over one’s destiny, is also a significant indicator for health outcomes. Thus, health and well-being (broadly defined) is impacted through a sense of disempowerment to express and protect environmental values, as well as by having reduced access to land-based resources and greater exposure to contaminants.
Political ecology fits as a framework for understanding how Kemess North will impact the Tse Keh Nay’s health because it tells us that health cannot be considered outside of time and place or in a context independent of the people who define those localities. It also acknowledges that human agency, which is at the heart of political ecology, is a significant indicator for health outcomes. As Richmond et al. (2005) argue, “good health and well-being is dependent not only on economic development, but also on participation in the political decision-making that fundamentally undermines environmental resource development” (361).

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Four key themes emerged from the interviews:

1) Perceptions of Risk
   a. Environment
   b. The Kemess North proposal
   c. Cumulative impacts

2) Health
   a. Physical health
   b. Social issues
   c. Stress and worry

3) Politics and Power
   a. Frustration with EIA process
   b. Compensation

4) Environmental Values
   a. Connection to land/environment
   b. Long-term vs. short-term
   c. Homeland vs. uninhabited/unused land
   d. Use
1. Perceptions of Risk

The study of risk has its roots in fact-gathering; risk researchers compiled injury and mortality information for insurance companies, health planners and safety engineers (Krimsky & Golding, 1992). This coincided with the quantitative revolution of the 1950s and 1960s whereby positivist research was considered more rigorous, and was thus more highly valued. As the field of risk study expanded, however, the focus shifted from measuring risk to understanding how people experience risk. Human response to, and perception of, risk became increasingly important to risk studies as the awareness of the social dimensions of risk became more widely recognized.

Risk is, in part, due to measurable physical processes, but whether an environmental hazard poses a risk to a human group is heavily dependent on social and cultural processes. Usher et al. (1995) point out that environmental contaminants are of particular concern to First Nations because of cultural practices such as subsistence hunting that increase their exposure to the physical risk. Thus, when environmental hazards are distributed to First Nations their health is impacted by physical, social and cultural processes that they may not have the political power to alter.

Members of the Takla Lake First Nation and the Tsay Keh Dene are very knowledgeable about their territories including the landscape and resources contained within them. They have extensive experience with resource development, much of which is not positive. Thus, when a new development is proposed, people from Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene consider the risks and try to weigh the potentially positive and negative impacts. When asked to describe what the main impacts would be, the interviewees always expressed concern for the environment. These responses are summarized next.

a. Environment

The integrity of water systems in the region is of primary concern. Every interviewee spoke about the contamination of Amazay Lake that would result from using it as a
tailings disposal facility. Amazay Lake is valued as an individual water body and also as an integral part of the Findlay watershed. Participants expressed concern for the fish in the lake, for the wildlife who drink from the lake and the connected creeks, and for the people who depend on the fish and wildlife. Most importantly, however, people were afraid of potentially degraded downstream water quality because it supplies the drinking water for Fort Ware and Tsay Keh Dene.

Amazay Lake’s important location at the headwaters of the Findlay River was mentioned in every interview. Every participant expressed concern for the whole system that is connected to the lake, explaining that polluting the watershed would cause irreparable damage to the fish, wildlife and human populations that rely on it. Amazay Lake, where caribou come to deliver their young, was once considered a caribou corridor and an abundant hunting ground. According to some interviewees, Amazay, meaning “mother” in Sekani, refers to caribou mothers who would find shelter at Amazay Lake to calve. Signs that Amazay is a caribou calving ground is evident to many of the people who frequent the area, and this would be directly impacted by Kemess North.

People speak with concern about the poor health and declining populations of fish and wildlife species that they have noticed. Interviewees noted declining populations of caribou and moose, yellow fat, bald spots, cysts and tumours in moose, caribou suffering from blindness and significantly reduced populations of arctic greyling and porcupine. The diminishing health of groundhog, which is a staple for Tse Keh Nay people, is of particular concern and is an example of the link between the health of plants, animals and First Nations people. According to several interviewees, the groundhog eats plants that have strong medicinal properties for humans; the plants are toxic if eaten directly, but the plant’s medicine is obtained when groundhog flesh is eaten. Moreover, participants made it very clear that it is not possible to contain water, fish or wildlife within abstract boundaries (e.g., property lines), and movement from a polluted area into a pristine areas can easily occur.
Concern for ground water integrity was mentioned by a third of the interviewees, all of whom assert that Amazay Lake is connected to underground streams. It is believed that the groundwater is not safe from the waste that would be stored in the lake. The quality of drinking water from the Findlay is considered at risk, and many interviewees commented on the irony of having to pack bottled water into their camps. There is a general sense that water in the bush is no longer safe to drink due to all the resource extraction projects in the area; Kemess North is seen as a potentially huge contributor to this trend.

b. The Kemess North proposal

While the primary concern is for the environment, a related concern is that the proponent will not sufficiently monitor the site, including the dam. Both participating First Nations have extensive experience with other companies that have left their operation sites contaminated. Several participants cite Cheni Mine as an example of an operation that promised to clean up, but did not. The majority of interviewees are concerned that the waste disposal facility, the dams and the mine site will be insufficiently monitored, increasing the perception that the project poses a high-level risk to them, particularly in the case of a dam failure. There is a deep understanding of long-term time frames among the two First Nations, because they have been in their territories since time immemorial and cannot imagine a time when will they move away from their homes. Therefore, the monitoring plans are of great importance, and the general sense is that Northgate, when speaking about long-term monitoring, may not, in fact, be defining long-term to suit the needs of the First Nations. This contributes to the level of risk related to the project.

The same logic is applied to reclamation. For the communities who live near the proposed mine site, the notion of reclamation is not always comforting. There is a great deal of concern that once the area is degraded, further environmental degradation will be more readily accepted. Many interviewees expressed concern that the site could never be reclaimed to a level that meets their values. For example, participants worry that reclamation cannot recover lost artifacts or burial sites, nor can it return the site to its
original state, a state that has always been, and continues to be, valued by the Tse Keh Nay First Nations.

c. Cumulative impacts

Nearly every interviewee spoke about the impacts from other activities taking place in their territories. In Takla Landing, the participants spoke about current and historical mining activities near their community. The interviewees gave examples of contaminated sites they had seen and talked about how their way of life is constantly under pressure from resource development. In Tsay Keh Dene, the biggest negative impact has been the Williston Reservoir. The community has had to move more than once and has lost trap lines, trails, burial grounds, cabins and transportation routes in the flooding following the construction of the WAC Bennett Dam. The reservoir rises and recedes leaving great quantities of debris on fine silt beaches. With the forest under water, there is nothing to stop the wind from causing severe dust storms which the residents of Tsay Keh Dene live with on a daily basis. Community members have many health problems as a result, such as asthma, chronic coughing and head sores.

For people who live in relatively remote communities and who rely a great deal on a traditional food system for a healthy, economically feasible source of nutrition and for whom the land is an integral part of their cultural identity and social fabric, it does not make sense to measure the risks of one project without considering the cumulative impacts of all the development in their territories. For example, for the Tsay Keh Dene participants, the pressures and constraints they are currently dealing with have reached the maximum threshold that the community can bear. There is the perception that one more project, especially one the size of Kemess North, will literally wipe them out.

Many interviewees spoke of the declining populations of moose, caribou, and groundhog; they told stories in which past abundance was contrasted with the current challenge of getting even one moose in a season. Thus, it may be that one mine alone can not cause these declines, but in conjunction with other mining, forestry, and road building activities
one more project may not be able to proceed without jeopardizing the sustainability of already precarious food systems.

2. **Health**

The meaning of health, once defined biomedically as “the absence of disease,” has evolved to incorporate physical, cultural, social and economic processes (Gesler & Kearns, 2002; Meade & Earickson, 2000). Culture and place are increasingly recognized as having fundamental roles in how health and health care are defined and experienced (Gesler & Kearns, 2002; O’Neil et al. 1993; Macintyre et al., 2002; Elliott & Foster, 1995). Although culture is a “notoriously difficult concept to define” (Gesler & Kearns, 2002, 12), there is general agreement that it involves all the socially produced values and beliefs that a group of any size possesses collectively (Lemert, 1997 cited in Gesler & Kearns, 2002). It influences, and is influenced by, political, economic, historical, geographical and social processes (Gesler & Kearns, 2002, 12). According to Meade & Earickson (2000), human behaviour is constructed culturally and “includes mobility, roles, cultural practices, and technological interventions” (26). Culture molds human behaviour and thus determines how social groups interact with their environment (Meade & Earickson, 2000).

First Nations’ spaces are, in large part, produced by the dominant society; the reserve system is just one example of how First Nations’ territories have been reduced, bounded and shaped by government policies (Harris, 2002). However, First Nations should not be seen as neutral entities acted upon by colonial powers; as Morris and Fondahl (2002) and others (e.g., Harris, 2002) argue, resistance to government policies by First Nations peoples has resulted in “spaces of negotiation” where First Nations engage in a continuing battle for the protection of their cultural and environmental values (109). Protecting cultural and environmental values is directly linked to protecting the health and well-being of First Nations members.
a. Physical health

Both Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene participants noted numerous examples of game that showed signs of poor health. As a result, there is growing fear that traditional food sources are not safe, and many people claim that they are not hunting in areas that are feared to be contaminated, or that they are not hunting at all. Contamination and fear of contamination both act to jeopardize the health of First Nations people. It is known that most contaminants impact human health through the food they eat (Chiu et al., 2004; Kuhnlein & Chan, 2000). Thus, First Nations with diets based largely on wild game and fish may have a higher risk of ingesting unsafe levels of contaminants (Usher et al., 1995; Harris and Harper, 2001; Mos et al., 2004). Fear of contaminants also causes people to avoid wild game and fish, thus removing a valuable source of nutrition which is often replaced with lower quality foods (Arquette et al. 2002). In fact, it has been argued that fear of contaminants that causes a change from a traditional to a western diet poses the greater health risk (Kuhnlein & Chan, 2000; Fallon, 2003). There was general consensus among all the interviewees that traditional food sources are preferable, but that there is an overall fear that they are becoming increasingly contaminated by industrial activity.

The area around Amazay Lake is a well-known and well-used hunting area that people frequent yearly. However, there are more instances every year of groundhogs that are underweight and have bald spots, and of moose that have soft, mushy meat or signs of disease, such as tumours in their organs. When game is found to be unhealthy like this, people develop a sense that participating in traditional food systems is risky. Interviews reveal that many people fear contamination and hunt less, which jeopardizes their health as they spend less time on the land and have less nutritious diets.

b. Social issues

Participants were asked whether they believed that Kemess North would have positive impacts on their communities. Each interviewee noted that there were jobs and training
available, but that this did not compensate for the long-term negative impacts that they believed Kemess North would have. Employment opportunities were generally not seen as viable for many residents, and thus, unable to benefit the community overall. Housing, health care and education would not be improved by prolonging the mine life, according to the interviewees. Not one interviewee felt that the mine would improve the social problems facing the communities of Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene. A participant from Takla Landing explains that social problems like drug and alcohol misuse are a result of not spending enough time on the land; he said, “the cultural part, living off the land, is missing.” It was also noted several times that kids who get to go out and learn traditional activities “do better.”

c. Stress and worry

Land based activities not only promote physical health but they also reduce stress and generally increase one’s sense of well-being. One participant said that going to the land helps to “relieve stress.” He continued by explaining that “you get rejuvenated when you go out on the land and into the bush.”

The participants’ sense of disempowerment and their concern that their values and their perceptions of risk were not important was evident. Each interviewee expressed their anxiety about Kemess North and their hope that they would be heard. The stress that individuals are under is evident in this interviewee’s statement: “If the government tells them to go ahead and use Duncan Lake, they might as well sign our death warrant.” The communities themselves are under stress as well, and struggle with limited human and financial resources to participate in the environmental assessment process. The situation has resulted in conflict among some community members and overall increased levels of stress, which is detrimental to human health.
3. Politics and Power

This examination of the environmental concerns of Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations is informed by aspects of political ecology that seek an understanding of positional environmental knowledge and the power relations involved in environmental practice. This project examines the politics and power relations involved in risk assignment and risk management in the case of Kemess North.

While political ecology involves the political and economic processes that inform land management decisions, environmental justice includes the social issues that drive these concerns. Environmental justice literature examines the power differentials that cause some people to suffer a greater burden of environmental pollution and degradation and argues that important social processes contribute to the contamination of First Nations’ territories, such as the marginalization of minority groups such as Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations (Ali, 2003). The framework offers an explanation for the difficulty experienced by these two First Nations to have their concerns addressed by the dominant society. O’Neill (2003) argues that environmental justice encompasses a different set of issues for First Nations peoples than for other groups because they have special historical and contemporary circumstances. She states, “Environmental justice requires attention to the interrelated cultural, spiritual, social, ecological, economic, and political dimensions of environmental issues” (1). In other words, the effects of the Kemess expansion must be considered in the specific context of the Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations; it is not sufficient to judge the impacts of the mine from the perspective of the dominant society and its values only.

a. Frustration with EIA process

“They have their own agenda already. What impressed me the most about any kind of industry moving in, whether it be logging, BC Hydro, or mining people, is they already have their plan. They have already made long term plans about what they’re going to do […] and then way after – it’s almost as an after thought – they come and see First Nations people.”
The overall message from the interviewees is that the environmental impact assessment process and government consultation are not effectively including First Nations knowledge or values. Both the Tsay Keh Dene and Takla Lake First Nation have extensive knowledge of the region where Kemess operates; for example, they know about fish and wildlife populations, health and migration patterns (discussed in previous sections), as well as areas of archaeological importance. However, this knowledge belongs to Tsay Keh Dene and Takla Lake First Nation. They want to be in control of the research and how it is used. Unfortunately, insufficient resources and ineffective consultation practices make it difficult to participate.

There is frustration that traditional environmental knowledge (TEK), cumulative impacts and acknowledgement of title and rights are not effectively included in the process. Often, mistrust in the government is expressed. As one participant explains, working with the government means working in accordance to “their policies, not ours.” He goes on to say that First Nations have an emotional connection to the land that the government doesn’t understand. Another interviewee sums up her feelings thus:

“We want to be dealt with truthfully and we want our issues looked at. It’s not that the people here are against any kind of economic development. We realize that there is jobs needed, money is needed. This is right in our face every day because we have no economic base right now here, so we understand that; that is very clear. But the most important thing to us, that takes precedence over everything, is safety.”

b. Compensation

Compensation is an issue that was mentioned by several interviewees. There is fear based on experience that resources that are extracted from the First Nations’ territories benefit only the companies, and not the First Nations. One interviewee claimed that if there was compensation in the form of annual monetary supplements controlled by the band and distributed equitably towards housing, the mine might be worth it. The overall perception, however, is that the mine will benefit very few community members and only for a short time; when it is finished operating, even those few benefits will cease and
there will be a great deal of environmental contamination left behind that will serve to diminish any independence the communities have.

4. Environmental Values

a. Connection to land/environment

“They want to get ahead and they don’t think about what they’re doing to the beauty of the land, how they’re destroying it.”

Each of the previous sections in this report is directly related to this section about values. This is the most important section, because it is the particular way in which the environment is valued by Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene people that defines what is at risk for them. Through discussions and interviews with members of Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene, it is evident that the environment is valued holistically. In other words, the environment is connected to physical and emotional health, culture, identity and social infrastructure, and moreover, each of these is interconnected.

For example, having access to a healthy environment is important to physical health because it supplies excellent sources of nutrition (wild game, fish and plants), which require exercise to acquire. It is also important to maintaining culture and identity because the act of participating in traditional food systems is based on cultural knowledge and inheritance that contributes to having a First Nations identity. As one interviewee explains, “The land is really important. It’s who we are.” Another says, “Our culture is keeping us alive. Our traditions keep us alive, focused and awake.”

Access to a healthy environment is important to maintaining the social infrastructure as well, because it contributes to individuals’ health, and also because being on the land is a social activity that families do together. Older generations pass knowledge on to the younger generations so that the younger generations can also have access to a healthy way of life, and an understanding of their culture and identity. When young people are on the land with their elders, they learn how to hunt and process meat, but they also learn
important social values, like sharing the meat with the community and important cultural values, such as showing respect by “giving back” to the land after an animal is killed.

Since the environment is valued holistically, cumulative impacts are vitally important to assessing the risk a project has on the local residents. Furthermore, an impact assessment that only recognizes the values of non-First Nations will not adequately calculate the impacts a project will have on First Nations, and thus it has a greater chance of impacting their health, particularly in the long term.

The environment also has spiritual value. Several interviews spoke about their connection to the land as a connection to their Creator. The environment is a crucial part of spiritual practice and experience, and the ability to act as a steward of the environment is a vital part of this connection. Many interviewees stated that they believe that First Nations people are responsible for protecting the land and that doing so is fundamental to their spiritual identity. One interviewee explains her frustrated spirituality like this: “God has made First Nations people stewards of the land. And right now industries are making it really hard to be a good steward, you know?”

b. Long-term vs. short-term

Time frame reflects environmental values. Because the environment plays such a central role in the overall health and identity of Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene people, there is a strong understanding in these communities of the importance of long-term sustainability. The phrase “long-term” for these two First Nations refers to thousands of years into the future. This is an example of how different values lead to different meanings for the same words, and thus, if the meaning applied by Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene are not acknowledged, the outcome of the environmental impact assessment lacks relevance for these two Nations.
c. Homeland vs. uninhabited/unused land

The area around Kemess South and the proposed Kemess North operation are not uninhabited. Company and government representatives have attempted to characterize the area as remote and not regularly used. Frequently, non-First Nations people identify locations of importance only through their direct and continued use, but residing in a precise location and using it every day (i.e., a house inside a picket fence) is only one way that a place can be perceived as valuable. It does not, however, reflect the First Nations’ view. The Amazay Lake area is regularly used and occupied, and has been for thousands of years. It is considered the heartland of the Tse Keh Nay territory and reflects a different way of using and valuing the land; it is considered a homeland and vitally important to the people who have frequented the area their entire lives.

d. Use

The land is used by both the Takla Lake First Nation and the Tsay Keh Dene. Up until recently, these Nations lived entirely on the land, returning seasonally to regularly used hunting, fishing and gathering sites. Land use has changed in the last century as the two First Nations were sedentarized by the reserve system, however, many people continue to spend a great deal of time on the land participating in traditional ways of life.

The notion that the land is uninhabited and unused is false. The people of these two communities hunt and fish regularly, each year at various times staying in family camps. Amazay Lake and the surrounding areas are covered in trails, burial sites and camp sites, as well as fishing, hunting and plant gathering areas. During an interview that took place on the shore of Thutade Lake (near Amazay Lake), the participant noted that he had found many arrowheads and other artifacts in the span of two days. Another well-known story tells of two young hunters killing a mammoth by running past each other under its belly with their spears sticking up. Thus, there is both physical evidence and oral histories that confirm the long term use and occupancy of this land by Tse Keh Nay people.
Other interviewees mentioned places and trails that they regularly visited and used, and that their ancestors regularly visited and used. The trails were how the Tse Keh Nay people stayed connected to each other. According to one participant, the family system was maintained by “the pathways and highways of our elders.” It is an important area to gather “mountain medicine,” which is herbal plants that are found in the mountains and used for healing. There are sacred places where people will not go and stories about the lakes and rivers in the Amazay Lake area. For example, many people spoke of the area as being an important location for the region’s First Nations to gather, feast, share information and arrange marriages.

**CONCLUSION**

This project with Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene explored the perceptions of risk in the context of the proposed Kemess North mine. Through interviews with participants from both communities it is determined that perceptions of risk are influenced by environmental values. This research revealed how the values and perceptions of risk of the dominant culture are privileged by the environmental assessment process, while the values, perceptions of risk and knowledge of the two First Nations have generally been excluded. Moreover, it is argued that environmental values and perceptions of risk are inextricably linked to the overall health and well-being of the two First Nations.

The findings of this research indicate that current models of risk are limited by the popular notion that risk is a measurable property because it fails to account for important cultural factors that contribute to the construction of risk. Cultural characteristics, such as food preferences, play a significant role in how risk is perceived, and yet these realities continue to be left out of risk assessments. Such omissions result in risk management strategies that are culturally discriminating, prescribing lifestyle changes to the less dominant culture such as risk avoidance (i.e., avoiding contaminated country foods).
Environmental impact assessment is the primary political process through which issues of competing environmental values and perceptions of risk are assessed. These risk assessments tend to represent the values of the proponents of resource extraction and development, and, as a result, First Nations are systematically ignored in official processes of project approval.

In the case of Kemess North, the risk assessment undertaken by Northgate Minerals failed to effectively represent risk to First Nations on several key issues. For example, the value assigned to Amazay Lake did not reflect Takla Lake First Nation or Tsay Keh Dene values, which resulted in strong opposition to the project. Determining the risk of transforming a lake into a tailings disposal facility is a subjective process and Northgate’s environmental impact assessment weighs the costs and benefits of the plan according to its own values and understandings.

Northgate also failed to include groundhog in its wildlife studies, and thus, completely omitted this species from the risk assessment because it was not deemed important. Groundhog, however, is a staple food that continues to be hunted and eaten regularly by Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene. It is part of Tse Keh Nay cultural heritage, and its flesh and fat are considered to have medicinal properties. People from both Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene have noticed a decline in groundhog population and signs of poor health are evident. Northgate’s exclusion of the groundhog clearly reveals the subjectivity of risk assessments. The dominant culture does not eat groundhog and, therefore, it is not valued; the risks to it, and to the people who rely on it, are not weighed. The social and cultural aspects of risk need to be acknowledged in environmental impact assessments and other risk assessments to foster a more inclusive model and to protect the health and ways of life of non-dominant and marginalized groups.

The findings of this case study also support other research that conceptualizes First Nations’ health as inextricably linked to the land through physical, spiritual, cultural, social and economic processes. This research proposes that health is also greatly
influenced by political processes. That is, the failure to include First Nations’
environmental values and concerns in the process of EIA results in inadequate risk
assessments that undermine First Nations’ health and well-being.

While it could be argued that this study is limited by the exclusion of Northgate in the
interviews, it was decided that Northgate’s viewpoints have been clearly expressed in
various public forums (e.g., their own publications, studies, public presentations, letters to
the editor and media accounts). The First Nations’ perspectives, on the other hand, were
not as well represented in these different public forums. This research brings to the fore
the subjectivity present in Northgate’s environmental impact assessment and suggests
that Takla Lake First Nation and Tsay Keh Dene have valid claims of knowledge and
values that should be included in the risk assessment.

As the number of mining development projects continues to rise in BC, it will be
increasingly important to understand the potential impacts of these projects on First
Nations who rely on the land for food, medicine and cultural identity. Land-use conflicts
occur where resource extraction results in concerns for community health, economic
development and environmental protection. The links between perceived risk and health
can play an important role in the negotiations around resource development in situations
where value systems and knowledge come into conflict. Incorporating the environmental
values and knowledge of First Nations is an important step towards empowering these
groups to participate in the destiny of their communities and for improving the health and
well being of BC’s First Nations.
WORKS CITED


Introduction

The traditional territory of Takla Lake First Nation is located in northern British Columbia and is considered to be isolated, accessible by logging roads from Fort St. James, the nearest service town. The population on-reserve is approximately 170 and registered band members are approximately 750.

Since the 1960’s, extensive industrial activity has been one of the major contributors to the shift from traditional to western diet which has been determined to have negative health outcomes on this population. Social and cultural changes have also been recorded following industrial development. These changes have put the people of Takla Landing at risk of endangering their traditional way of life. The members of Takla Landing have expressed concerns over their traditional food sources and the continued diminishment while their voices are often not heard.

Project Description

The health of the First Nations population in Canada is worse than that of the general Canadian population in almost every health measure and there is considerable evidence that many of the health problems of aboriginal people are related to diet (Willows, 2005). Food security is an important aspect of First Nations health that has been identified as a growing concern (Che & Chen, 2003; First Nations Health Commission, 1993). First Nations communities are typically isolated, have a lower socioeconomic status than the rest of Canada, and are faced with inflated costs of food (Hanley et al, 2000). Additionally, government policy has further restricted their way of life since contact. The long term effects of these impositions on this population are reaching widespread proportions.
Food security refers to the concept of ‘people having access to enough nutritional food for an active, healthy life and the ability to acquire these foods in socially acceptable ways’ (Holben & Myles, 2004). There are various determinants of healthy eating but the one that presents itself time and again in the literature is the relationship between socioeconomic status and diet (Willows, 2005; Duhaime et al, 2004; Paci et al, 2004). A common criticism of the food security literature is that the links between socioeconomic status and diet are not well understood and may operate very differently in particular geographical and cultural contexts, a consideration that is not well handled using more ‘traditional’ epidemiological research methods (e.g., Willows, 2005). For this reason, public health must look beyond a simplistic view of decision making and recognize the complexity of policy formation for these determinants of health. A major objective of my thesis, therefore, is to explore food security issues in the particular social and cultural context of a remote First Nations community in northern BC.

For First Nations, decisions about diet and healthy practices must be considered in particular cultural contexts. For instance, contemporary conditions of poverty are tied to historical-cultural legacies of colonialism. Forced relocation, impacts of residential schools and denial of cultural practices along with industrial development throughout their territory have had long term effects on socioeconomic status. This, in turn, leads to poor health outcomes such as unhealthy dietary choices. These patterns of health and behaviour must be understood in this historical context in order to inform better public health policy and practice.

Methodology

This project incorporates a mixed methods qualitative approach to the research through the use of interviews, participant observation, and respondent validation. Fieldwork for this project began during the summer months of 2006. A total of 15 elders were interviewed: 13 in the community of Takla Landing and 2 elders who were visiting in Prince George. These interviews were audio taped, hand written notes were taken during the interview and field notes complemented this data collection. The interviews were transcribed and themes were extracted.

Secondary data collection involved a literature review of academic sources which also helped validate the findings from the interviews. This review includes information on food security in general, as well as a discussion on public health practice and health promotion and aboriginal food security in context.

Preliminary Findings

Analysis of the transcribed interviews resulted in four main themes. These themes help to answer my research questions which are as follows:

- How and why has diet for the Takla Lake First Nation changed since the 1960’s?
- What are their present views on their diet?
• How can we use this knowledge to better inform socially and culturally appropriate nutrition education and public health interventions?
• How can these interventions be carried out in ways that build on the strengths of the Takla Lake First Nation?

These themes are preliminary only and include intergenerational discontinuity, colonial influences, sense of place, and the merging of traditional and western diets and lifestyles.

**Intergenerational Discontinuity**

Not surprisingly, given that I was speaking with elders in the community, issues of intergenerational discontinuities were dominant. Many of the elders told me that they teach their grandchildren their traditional way of knowing. They often said that they felt children today get too much exposure to western ideologies without knowing their own culture. It is interesting to note that the parents of the grandchildren do not teach their children traditional activities or oral histories. When I inquired about this, I was often told that residential school was the main reason for this discontinuity in traditional knowledge. Not all elders attended residential school but by the time they had children it was mandatory to attend.

Industrial development was also a factor in destroying traditional knowledge. Once companies started to come into their territory and roads and rail lines were constructed to give easier access to the outside world, drugs and alcohol abuse soon followed. However, although this community has been faced with destruction of their way of life, the elders I spoke with are very strong willed and committed to ensuring the children today are raised with skills in their own culture. Some rituals that were once common but not allowed under the residential school system are being reincorporated into the children’s lives.

**Colonial Influences**

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that colonial influences had negatively impacted the lives of the Takla Lake First Nation. There has been considerable industrial activity in this area since the 1960’s when the British Columbia Railway (BCR) first encroached in their region. Logging, sawmills, and mining are now industries that are prominent throughout the territory. Once industry came to the area, there was a considerable shift from a subsistence lifestyle to one that has been introduced to western ideologies. Band demographics shifted; this community was once made up of a younger population, but now many of the youth move to either Fort St. James or to Prince George to continue their education or for employment.

For the elders I spoke with, diet and cultural change are synonymous with the encroachment of industry since the 1960s. When I asked people specifically if their diet had changed over the past 40 years, and if so why, they answered that once industry came into their territory they were exposed to a western diet and way of life. Elders in their late 70’s, early 80’s didn’t hesitate to discuss the impact on their diet from the opening of the Hudson’s Bay Trading Post in their community. They gave me examples of trading their furs for food and being given corn flakes but not knowing what to do with them. Elder’s
in their mid 60’s and early 70’s were more likely to focus on the construction of roads which brought in people with western ideologies including alcohol and drugs and fried foods.

More recent changes to diet in the youth are traced to the influence of television and media. Elders often discussed how they were trying to teach the children their traditional ways but the younger children especially were easily influenced by advertising.

The introduction of roads, a wage economy and electronic communications therefore represent ongoing colonial influences at work that, from the point of view of the elders I spoke with, are central to changes in diet, especially amongst younger generations in the community.

Sense of Place

The community of Takla Landing was established in the 1950’s. Many of the current community members moved there at that time and have lived there ever since. However, it is interesting to note that when I asked if they are from Takla and have they ever lived anywhere else they all answered that they were not from Takla but gave the names of their keyohs surrounding the area such as Aikan Lake, Johanson, or Old Hogem. It is evident that although they have lived in this community most of their lives, their home is still their traditional territory and not government enforced space.

There are still hunters and gatherers amongst the Takla Lake First Nation but they are continually being alienated from their territory. People identify themselves based on geography but if that landscape is destroyed, so is their identity. Elders often tried to tell me about the spiritual connection they have to the land but felt that there were no English words that could describe this powerful relationship. By restricting land use we are also restricting their right to a healthy food system.

The public health implications of this deep rooted sense of place are critical. Ongoing land conflicts and threats to hunting, trapping, and fishing rights are essentially public health and food security issues when working with First Nations.

Merging of Western and Traditional Diets

None of the people I interviewed subsist on a traditional diet alone. If given the choice, most people prefer a traditional diet and often discuss stories around hunting or fishing. Many people said that sometimes they eat western food for a change or they eat western and traditional foods together.

Nutrition education should recognize that diet, as an expression of culture, is constantly evolving. It has already been determined that a traditional diet is a very healthy diet, but a western diet can also have its nutritional benefits. The merging or integration of the two can be viewed as a cultural response to changing social and environmental conditions and there is an important role here for public health and nutrition specialists. Costs associated
with maintaining a traditional diet along with work and/or family commitments may prevent people from hunting or fishing as much as they would like to. The ability to have the option of a western diet is not without merit. However, nutrition education must centre on healthy food choices that compliment rather than seek to replace traditional diets.

**Conclusion**

While the findings of this research are preliminary, it is evident that the one thread that runs through all themes is that the impacts of colonial influences which include industrial development, forced relocation, and western ways of knowing all have negative impacts on the health of this community. However, it is important to recognize that the community of Takla Landing is not an isolated case. First Nations communities throughout Canada in general and British Columbia in particular have faced drastic changes to their way of life due to industrial development and a western way of knowing forced upon them. It is time to recognize that First Nations have lived off the land since time immemorial and have thrived. They know how to ensure the health of their environment but are constantly being faced with the threat of environmental degradation from industry. Meaningful consultation and accommodation is essential to strengthen the First Nations way of knowing.
References


Project Description
Part of traditional knowledge includes the hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering practices of the First Nations people. These activities are being threatened by both the real risk of environmental contamination as well as by the fear of contamination. This research project is motivated by these fears, which have led to people limit their traditional food gathering practices.

Traditional diet is important to the health of all First Nations people, but a fear of contaminants is one of the leading reasons that people change to a western diet. Research has shown that the switch from a traditional to a western diet can harm First Nations’ health. Historically, traditional foods have been readily available and accessible, but in recent years, the fear of contaminants has restricted hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering activities. Promoting well-informed, responsible and sustainable land and water use are essential for protecting the health of First Nations.

The overall goals of this study are:
1. To identify sources of contaminants from past and present industry,
2. To identify the type and extent of contamination
3. To understand the impact of these contaminants on human and environmental health

The importance of this project is that it serves to develop the capacity of the people in Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene to deal with environmental concerns affecting their health and diet. These concerns, which have come about because of past development, will only increase with the current and future expansion of industry into their territory. We hired and trained people from the two communities – Margo French (TLFN) and Dennis Izony (TKD) – and provided education workshops and training in sampling techniques. Community members were trained by Margo and Dennis and whenever they went in the field, someone from the community would travel with them and learn how to collect samples. We felt that this aided in building capacity within the communities.

An initial community meeting was organized in Takla, followed by band member participation in the surveys. Contact with band members through workshops and information sessions on reserve are being provided to ensure that all members are advised of the progress as the project unfolds.
This study has taken a holistic approach to identifying contaminated sites in the traditional territories of Takla Lake First Nation (TLFN) and Tsay Keh Dene (TKD). The project is based in Prince George and the research is carried out in the territories of TLFN and TKD. We interviewed people in Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene to find out where areas of concern are located. Interviews also told us about traditional diet and how dependent people are on traditional foods. Once we located sites that community members were concerned about, we took soil and water samples that were sent to UNBC for analysis.

**Project Progress to Date**

Activities from the first phase of the project have either been completed or will be completed by the end of the funding period of April 2007. A summary has been provided below which outlines the activities that have been initiated from the onset of the project up to the end of November, 2006.

Prior to organizing the logistics of this project, Pam Tobin, project coordinator, met with the former project coordinator of a neighbouring band (Nakazdli) who held funding from Health Canada for this type of project in previous years. The goal of this meeting was to determine any obstacles they faced but also to ascertain how they coordinated the staff, the sampling collection, and transportation in and out of the communities of supplies and/or samples. Due to their close proximity to Takla Landing, we continued to work with this band throughout the summer when supplies needed to be couriered to the community.

Once funding was secured, we hired staff and hosted a gathering in Takla Landing inviting the community to learn about the project. There were approximately 40 people in attendance along with the Chief, band manager, and two councilors. Dr. Lito Arocena, Principal Investigator and Associate Professor at UNBC, attended this meeting and described what we were doing and why. The Chief and council advised the community members that they fully support this project and the people present were keen to become involved.

A gathering was not held in the community of Tsay Keh due to timing conflicts and events within the community which took priority. Dr. Arocena trained the staff in both communities in sample collection and how to GPS the sample areas. The field staff was trained and ready to sample once the interviews commenced.

A total of 76 community surveys were conducted. Based on the results of these surveys, approximately 300 soil and water samples were extracted within the two territories throughout the summer months. The first group of interviews consisted of the identification of potentially contaminated sites that community members are concerned about. The data collected from these interviews determined the sites that were sampled. The second group of interviews consisted of questions regarding traditional diet, geographic locations of where food is harvested and identification of any decline in harvesting practices. These interviews were transcribed by the research assistant and
analyzed by the project coordinator. Soil and water sampling was conducted throughout the summer months of both territories and brought to UNBC for analysis.

Further to the work being done in the field, an academic literature review was completed which is an important way to learn more about the connection between the environment and human health. The literature review covered environmental contaminants and their associated risks to human health and provided a theoretical grounding for risk research. This report also reviews the current literature on environmental contaminants and focuses on the impacts of these toxins on First Nations’ health due to the culturally specific ways in which the lands and resources are used and valued by Aboriginal peoples. A general and academic literature search was also conducted to determine past and present industrial activity on the territories which include mining, forestry, and the establishment of transportation corridors. Finally, a comprehensive list of past and present industrial sites within the territories is being compiled through the examination of past records and surveys of community members. The potential types of contaminants associated with the industrial activities will also be identified. This information will be used to triangulate the qualitative data that was collected.

Although a summary of the preliminary findings are attached, we are currently waiting for the final results from the UNBC laboratory. While this is being done, we are continuing to focus on building capacity within the communities. We secured funding from the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council to send one employee to Malaspina University College who offered a certificate program in environmental monitoring. This program is focused specifically on First Nations students and was held in Saikuz (Stoney Creek, northern B.C.). Staff that collected samples throughout the summer were also invited to work on the analysis at UNBC. Over a two week period, the lab technician at the university trained one staff member in preparing samples for analysis and the process involved in getting the end results. This was beneficial in that many community members are already beginning to ask about the lab results so it was valuable for the staff to be able to report back to them while being able to describe the process.

The research assistant in Prince George has become proficient in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Endnote, and general and academic research skills. We are currently working on her report writing and seeking out opportunities for her to complete a course to improve her research skills. She recently attended a conference titled ‘Research Use Week’ in Prince George which was attended by researchers with diverse backgrounds. Topics included information on different types of methodology and discussions on reading research articles. This type of capacity building is an important element of this project. One of our goals is to ensure that this project is sustainable into the future and we are accomplishing that goal by training the current staff members.

**Preliminary Findings from Qualitative Interviews**

Analysis of the qualitative interviews that took place in Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene resulted in three key themes being identified. These three themes can be considered
preliminary findings of the research. They are environmental degradation and pollution, impacts on wildlife, fish, and plants, and impacts on human health.

1. Environmental Degradation and Pollution

Interviews with members of TLFN and TKD reveal that there are many instances of environmental contamination and pollution in the territories that have been identified by community members. In some interview transcripts, people have talked about coming across debris left behind by miners and other industry. For example, rusted barrels and old culvert pipes have been seen in Takla Lake, Bear Lake and at Bulkley House. BC Rail ties that have been treated with creosote remain beside the train tracks between the community of Takla Landing and Minaret and old vehicles, drums, machinery and garbage are reportedly buried at the end of Johanson airport.

Pollution was also identified as a concern. Interviewees have stated that many of the region’s lakes have been destroyed. For example, we were told that Second Lake by Silver Creek is now green/blue in colour, but it wasn’t like that 20-25 years ago. This is thought to be due to an old silver mine nearby that left a clear green substance at the bottom of lake. Silver Lake is also considered to be ruined by mining and dead fish have been reported floating in the lake. Other examples of pollution that have been reported in the area include the Caribou Flats fuel dump, where “sludgy gooey stuff” is in the water that looks like oil and at Baker Mine there is a white substance present in the creek; the people who work in the area claim that the water is not safe to drink.

Recent water testing by the Community Health Representative in Takla Landing indicated high E. coli in Kemess Creek and Nolan Creek, which runs into Johanson River. There is also concern that there is too much clear cut logging that is destroying old hunting and trapping trails that are hundreds of years old. Interviewees note that creeks and streams are drying out, and that glaciers are melting in the mountains. At Grassy Bluff, a culvert needs to be fixed to make it passable for the fish. Another interviewee commented on the BC Hydro lines that are in Takla Lake and expressed concerns about the potential impacts.

Overall, interviewees expressed fear that the waters (lakes, streams, and creeks) will become too contaminated resulting in a water shortage for future generations and possibly causing plants to become contaminated as well.

2. Impacts

Wildlife:

Interviews revealed that many people have noticed signs that animal health is suffering. Interviewees note that animals are already showing signs of getting sick from environmental contaminants. For example, many people have said that groundhogs are not healthy and frequently have yellow stomachs, bald spots, and are often very skinny. Many people say that the meat of this food staple looks different in colour and texture. Ducks also have yellow stomachs and have “hardly any meat on them.”
It is noted that there has been a significant decline in the moose population. Moose are often very skinny, and have signs of poor health, such as white lumps, or cysts, warts, and bald spots. Moose meat that is mushy and discoloured has also been reported.

Interviewees say that they have noticed a decline in the populations of wolves, owls, and skunks and that the porcupine has almost completely disappeared. Frog populations have also declined, and many frogs are deformed. It has also been noted that mosquitoes are getting bigger and deadlier each year and it is hypothesized that this may have something to do with the contamination of swamps. In general, people have noticed declines in population and signs of poor health among many species. It is the overall sense that the wildlife is moving away from the area to avoid the industrial activity.

Fish:
Fish health and population was also a concern for many of the interviewees. Williston Lake Reservoir was noted as a badly polluted water body where the fish have high mercury content. According to many of the interviewees, people do not eat fish from that area anymore. In terms of health, bull trout with white gel on their gills have been seen at Old Man Fell Down. Fish with gill sores and worms in their stomach and gills have been seen in Teeth Creek. In general, the fish are smaller and much softer, and many have been found with yellow stomachs and in some cases deformed. In Silver Lake, dead fish have been seen floating in the water. An example of declining population is Delkus Lake where there used to be a good fish population, but where now there are no fish at all.

Plants:
Gathering plants such as wild vegetables and berries and various herbs and medicinal plants is an important part of the TLFN and TKD way of life. However, there is fear that the chemicals from herbicidal spraying as well as other industrial activities such as mining make gathering plants unsafe. Furthermore, it is becoming more difficult to locate important plant species. For example, an interviewee noted that medicinal plants are gathered in old growth forests and cannot be found in the new growth forest. Berries are now scarce and don’t grow to be as big as they used to be; they are “dried up.”

3. Human health
Resource development (mining, logging, road-building etc.) results in various impacts on wildlife, fish and plants, as well as on human health. A major theme emerging from the interviews is that human health outcomes are poorer than ever, and people are noticing that there is a rise in diseases that never used to be present in their communities. For example, major increases in cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s, asthma, high blood pressure, heart problems, and strokes are noted by the interviewees. Many people tell stories of how both elders and the younger generation have already passed away from cancer and other sicknesses, and it is widely believed to be caused by contaminated food (wildlife, fish and plants). Williston Lake Reservoir has caused a great deal of health problems, mainly from the fine dust particles that blow up from the beaches of the reservoir to contaminate the air in TKD. The dust storms in TKD have affected many people and there is a high rate of respiratory problems such as asthma, allergies, chronic coughing and head sores. The people of TKD and TLFN would like to see protection from
chemicals that industries use. Overall there is fear of contamination, a noted health
decline in humans and wildlife, and a sense of powerlessness. Many people have
indicated that they are very grateful to have a project undertaken to finally address their
concerns about contamination.

Preliminary Findings from Quantitative Analysis
Water and soil were sampled and analyzed for contents of 29 elements namely: silver,
aluminum, arsenic, boron, barium, calcium, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper, iron,
mercury, potassium, lithium, magnesium, manganese, molybdenum, sodium, nickel,
phosphorus, lead, antimony, selenium, silicone, tin, strontium, titanium, vanadium, and
zinc. Many of these elements when present at elevated levels in the environment are
associated with impairment of human, plant and animal health and in extreme cases can
increase mortality. Preliminary results of the analyses were compared with the 2002
Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines for Agricultural Purposes for Soils and
Irrigation Use for Water to assess the environmental health in many areas within the
traditional food gathering areas in Takla Lake and Tsay Keh First Nation territories.

Results from both water and soil samples showed that some elements have concentrations
higher than the Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines. For water samples, elements
with concentrations higher than the Irrigation Use guidelines are aluminum, chromium
and manganese. Sampling areas showing elevated levels of at least one of the above
elements are Tsay Keh, Lovell Cove, Takla Lake, Bear Lake, Bulkley House, Cassa
Lake, Bralorne Mine, Silver Mountain, Kemess, Driftwood River, and Baker's mine
(Table 1). Other results for water samples show that arsenic, mercury, lead, antimony and
selenium contents in some samples might higher than the guidelines. Further testing is
required to confirm contamination at these sites. For soils, elements with higher
concentrations than guidelines are boron, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper,
molybdenum, nickel, vanadium and zinc. The sampling areas with at least one of the
elements is higher than guidelines are Tsay Keh region, Bulkley Landing, Leo Creek,
Bulkley House, Kemess Down, Driftwood River, Lovell Cove and Baker's Mine (Table
2).

Please see attached tables

Next Steps

This phase of the project will conclude in April 2007. We will continue to work on
completing the industry inventory and mapping the results. We will develop a map that
shows the sampling sites and areas of use. This part of the project will include training
two individuals – one from each community – to do simple mapping and geographic
information systems (GIS). Another capacity building component of the project will be to
work on a website that will provide information about this project. Two band members
will also take part in this aspect of the project. We will seek applications from band
members who are interested in becoming involved.
The Healthy Land Healthy Future project could consist of multiple year phases. We have applied for continued funding and if our application is approved for 2007/2008, we will sample animal and plant tissue and do more soil and water sampling throughout the traditional territories. It will also include other concerns raised by the TLFN and TKD on environmental issues. For example, oral histories regarding historical environmental change will be compiled from the bands current inventory and a quantitative analysis of the interview transcripts will determine the degree that people depend on traditional foods. Overall, we will seek to determine if there is a relationship between areas of contaminants, areas of hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering and health issues.

Quotes of Interest from Interviewees

The people of Tsay Keh Dene and Takla Landing are passionate about their land, their way of life, and their ability to pass this knowledge on to the next generation. The following list is an example of what people had to say about their territories. The pictures are of people we have spoken with throughout the summer who are currently hunters and trappers.

‘The mining companies should realize that they are contaminating the land and animals, As they are contaminating the animals us humans are getting that contamination from the animals and our land.’ (E-D2, TL-HLHF-21)

‘Contamination to the lake will destroy the fish which is 50% of my diet.’ (E-D4, TL-HLHF-09)

‘There is a lot of traffic in this area because of the mining, and also transportation with the low beds (trucks) in the area. I’ve noticed that the water from the creeks and streams are drying out, maybe it could be effects from using the creeks for mining?’ (E-B3, TL-HLHF-20).

‘We hunt and gather seasonally, preserving foods and gathering herbs for Indian medicine. We are concerned about the herbicide spraying and mining in our trapline because of all the toxins that are left behind on the ground and environment.’ (E-B3, TL-HLHF-20)

‘Porcupines are no longer around because of logging, [I’m] afraid that this might happen to the beaver, moose or other animals. There are hardly any frogs and many are deformed (Frogs are the barometer of this world) what are happening to them?’ (E-E1, TL-HLHF-04)

‘Our traditional territory is being destroyed, without political say.’ (E-D2, TL-HLHF-03)
‘Used to do a lot of hunting up in the Kemess area but after what I witnessed at Cheney mines some of the animals had no fur, the fat on the meat was all mushy (Caribou, groundhog etc)’ (E-D5, TL-HLHF-03)

‘All animals and plants should be protected for the future generations. Environmental studies should be done in all traditional territories and should be protected not only for us but for the future of our children.’ (E-E1, TL-HLHF-12)

‘The companies made a huge mess on our traditional land with no intentions of ever helping clean up the waste’ (E-D3, TL-HLHF-07)

‘Salmon and porcupine are decreasing. The animals are not so fat anymore.’ (H-B4, TL-HLHF-01)

‘The wildlife might give us some kind of disease from the spraying and logging. Long time ago we didn’t have to worry about harm in the traditional food.’ (H-C6, TL-HLHF-05)

‘Too much logging and mining disrupting animals and habitat.’ (H-B4, TL-HLHF-06)

‘The logging companies have taken out old growth forests that many people use for medicinal plants, medicinal plants that you can’t find in the new growth area. Major concern is clean waters for us, all life and the ecosystem.’ (E-D4, TK-HLHF-12)

‘I am concerned about the younger generation. The problems that we are facing today will only get more severe for them.’ (E-D5, TK-HLHF-06)

‘Our people are afraid of Kemess and Duncan Lake what the impacts will be.’ (E-C4, TK-HLHF-19)
Healthy Land Healthy Future: Preliminary Results

By Dr. Lito Arocena
November 2006

Water and soil were sampled and analysed for contents of 29 elements namely: silver, aluminium, arsenic, boron, barium, calcium, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper, iron, mercury, potassium, lithium, magnesium, manganese, molybdenum, sodium, nickel, phosphorus, lead, antimony, selenium, silicone, tin, strontium, titanium, vanadium, and zinc. Many of these elements when present at elevated levels in the environment are associated with impairment of human, plant and animal health and in extreme cases can increase mortality. Preliminary results of the analyses were compared with the 2002 Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines for Agricultural Purposes for Soils and Irrigation Use for Water to assess the environmental health in many areas within the traditional food gathering areas in Takla Lake and Tsay Keh First Nation territories.

Results for both water and soil samples showed that some elements have concentrations higher than the Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines. For water samples, elements with concentrations higher than the Irrigation Use guidelines are aluminum, chromium and manganese. Sampling areas showing elevated levels of at least one of the above elements are Tsay Keh, Lovell Cove, Takla Lake, Bear Lake, Bulkley House, Cassa Lake, Bralorne Mine, Silver Mountain, Kemess, Driftwood River, and Baker's mine (Table 1). Other results for water samples show that arsenic, mercury, lead, antimony and selenium contents in some samples might higher than the guidelines. Further testing is required to confirm contamination at these sites. For soils, elements with higher concentrations than guidelines are boron, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper, molybdenum, nickel, vanadium and zinc. The sampling areas with at least one of the elements is higher than guidelines are Tsay Keh region, Bulkley Landing, Leo Creek, Bulkley House, Kemess Down, Driftwood River, Lovell Cove and Baker's Mine (Table 2).
Table 1. Contents (ppm) of selected elements in water samples collected from traditional food gathering areas in Takla Lake and Tsay Keh Dene First Nations

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30 Not all soil samples have been processed at this time; DL—Detection Limit; SD—Standard Deviation
APPENDIX E: AMAZAY AND THUTADE ARCHAEOLOGY: A REVIEW

Archaeology arguably has two different meanings. First, there is the scientific meaning. Today, archaeology is a science aimed at answering specific questions, usually about human behaviour. Research questions might address subsistence patterns, movement of people, the rise and fall of technologies, societies and peoples. In this way, archaeology is a science, and in this way, archaeological sites can be evaluated on their scientific value, that is, how much information would further investigation of a particular site contribute to the overall “archaeological record”?

To First Nations generally and to the Tse Keh Nay people specifically, archaeology is more than a scientific approach to studying human behaviour. Archaeology is a way to show children, grandchildren, and the world that Tse Keh Nay ancestors lived on and with the land. An archaeological site in Tse Keh Nay territory is not just a depression in the ground for cooking “ground-hog”, a hearth at a habitation site, a scatter of refuse lithics or a funerary site consisting of human bones. Using knowledge of Sekani laws, spirituality, traditions and beliefs, Tse Keh Nay people connect, on a deeper level, with an archaeological site. To a Tse Keh Nay person, the depression in the ground is a place where an ancestor roasted and savoured the delicacy of a “ground-hog”, having hunted and killed the animal to feed his wife, children and extended family. It is the location where ancestors chose to rest and live, at least for a while. The hearth site represents the home and family, where ancestors cooked, ate, kept warm and told stories. The scatter of lithics is the place where the hunters felt safe to rest a while, to sharpen their weapons and possibly to perform a sacred ceremony to assist them in their hunt. Finally, the burial site is a sacred place, where someone passed from this life into the next, where the family grieved and made their peace, and where they can still go and pay their respects.

As a result of the knowledge passed on from the ancestors and through their own experiences on their land, archaeological sites have great meaning to Tse Keh Nay people. They are an expression of connections to ancestors, culture, history and land. In short, the archaeological sites left by Tse Keh Nay ancestors are an expression of today’s Tse Keh Nay’s aboriginal rights and title.

Unfortunately, the archaeological process in British Columbia is often at odds with the First Nation understanding of archaeology. An archaeologist, hired by a proponent to conduct a study to assess the impact a development might have on an archaeological site, must assign a “value” or “significance evaluation” to the site. This is not an enviable task. The archaeologist must consider the scientific significance, that is, the potential that the site might contribute valuable information to the archaeological record. He is supposed to consider the historic significance, or the possibility that the site might contribute valuable information to the historic record. He needs to consider public significance, or the potential for that site to enhance public awareness, interest, understanding etc. about the historic or prehistoric past. He must consider the economic significance of a site, or whether the site might generate monetary benefits or employment through its development as a historic or prehistoric site. And finally, he must consider the ethnic significance of a site. This is the significance or the value of a site to an ethnically distinct group or community. The archaeologist must look at all these factors and make a recommendation to the Provincial Government and the proponent about the value of a site. The result of this valuation plays a large role in determining how a development will proceed. If it is low, then generally, the
development can proceed, often with little or no further archaeological work. If it is high, then it is possible that the development will need to accommodate the site. Because of the importance of this valuation, it seems unfair that Tse Keh Nay people are not asked about the significance of their sites, for the Tse Keh Nay are the only ones who can define the ethnic significance of a Tse Keh Nay site.

At no time have the Tse Keh Nay people suggested that the archaeological sites around Amazay, Thutade, and the Kemess mine sites are of low significance, and in fact, they have argued that they are important and that more archaeological work must be conducted, in cooperation with Tse Keh Nay people. Others support this assessment. For example, Harris (1984:36) suggests that “there are areas promising rich archaeological evidence which may eventually shed light on the prehistory of the Sekani. These include the Caribou Hide Trail and Thutade Lake west of Fort Ware, areas where Black located the northern Sekani.” Harris (1984:37) also notes that “until archeological research is undertaken in these and other areas, the argument over the date of the occupation of the [Rocky Mountain] Trench cannot be satisfactorily resolved.” Simonsen (in Tsay Keh Dene 2002:172) says that the “Thutade Lake area is rich in evidence of past aboriginal use and occupation – both in the form of recent and contemporary traditional use sites, as well as sites with archaeological deposits and remains.” Simonsen (2006) maintains this position today. Craig (2006:1-2) in his summary of the archaeological inventory of Amazay Lake, notes that the “Archaeological Potential Assessment” is ‘high’ and that is is “highly probable that there are more CMTs present throughout the study area” (Craig 2006:11).

Thus, many people, knowledgeable of the Amazay area, have argued that there is great archaeological potential for the Thutade region and that the information is potentially very important to learning more about Sekani prehistory. Given this, it is important to protect those few archaeological sites that have been found. Sekani ancestors did not leave a big “foot print” on the lands and it seems ridiculous to place a low scientific value on archaeological sites that are actually rare.

To assist the Panel in understanding the history of archaeological work around the Thutade area, the following is a summary of the archaeological work and known archaeological sites around Amazay and Thutade lakes. This summary is followed by a discussion of Tse Keh Nay concerns regarding the Archaeological Impact Assessments and comments from the Provincial Archaeology Branch regarding the Kemess North mine and Amazay Lake.

**Known Archaeological Sites and Previous Archaeological Studies**

Over the past 15 years, at least six separate studies have been conducted in the vicinity of the Kemess facilities. These are discussed below, by date, followed by a table identifying the known archaeological sites.

In September, 1993, Antiquus conducted an Archaeological Impact Assessment for the Kemess South Copper-Gold Project with “six experienced archaeologists” (Rousseau 1993:11). Their objective was to “identify all archaeological sites” within the Kemess development impact zones (Rousseau 1993:i). The impact zones included the 62 km “Sloane Connector Road” Right of Way along the Sustut River, and the mine operations areas in the Thutade region. No archaeological sites were identified along the 62 km Sloane Connector and three sites were identified in the other project areas (summarized in Table X). Two of these sites are “small lithic scatters’ that Antiquus rates as having medium significance. The final lithic scatter was considered a hunting camp and was given a low rating. All three sites were given considerable antiquity; 200 years BP to greater than 3500 years BP.31


In July and August, 1996, Antiquus Archaeological Consultants Ltd., conducted another Archaeological Impact Assessment for the Kemess south project. “Between July 21 and August 15, 1996, [they] conducted an archaeological impact assessment study at the request of Kemess Mines Inc… and Royal Oak Mines (Rousseau 1997:v). The study area included the development site at the current Kemess South mine, the Sloane Loadout Facility and the Right of Way Corridor for the power lines. Their goal was to identify all archaeological sites within these areas. This study area was very large, especially the transmission corridor which was 380 km long. Only two archaeological sites were identified, one at the mine’s development site, (HfSq-2) and another, large site that was recorded as a post-contact site, consisting of a trail and log bridge (HbSr-8) at the Sloane Loadout Facility, outside the current area of impact (summarized in Table X).

Site HfSq-2

This archaeological site was found within the development site at Kemess South. It consisted of lithic remains (basalt cobble and two basalt flakes). According to the report, eleven shovel tests were conducted within the perimeter of the huge development site. One shovel test resulted in the recovered lithics. The report notes that this site was threatened by the development, but assigned the site a “low” overall archaeological significance rating, even though they recognized that its proximity to another archaeological site was evidence of use in the area. The report stated that no further archaeological work was required at this location, even though only eleven shovel tests were conducted and the area was going to be greatly changed by the building of Kemess facilities.

31 BP means “before present” which relates dates to 1950. For example, 3500 BP means 3500 years before 1950.
Site HbSr-8

Throughout the report, the authors continually refer to this site as a “post-contact site”. However, late in the report, Rousseau (1997) notes that, after discussion with the Provincial Archaeology Branch, it is believed that the trail is likely an aboriginal “grease trail” that would pre-date 1846 and automatically receive protection under the Heritage Conservation Act. Based on this, their recommendation is complete avoidance of the site, or, if avoidance is impossible, they recommended a systematic data recovery program. Interestingly though, all photos and references to the site, prior to the “Management Recommendations” at the end of the report, label the site as historic. Arguably, this is misleading. Nevertheless, although associated with Kemess operations, this site is outside the current area of impact.

Transmission Right of Way

Antiquus conducted a survey along this 380 km corridor using low level aerial reconnaissance and aerial photographs to identify areas with medium to high archaeological potential. The on-the-ground survey included surface inspection and shovel tests. However, where Antiquus records the number of shovel tests, they seem to be limited. For example, in a study area consisting of approximately 1 km of right of way, only 8 shovel tests were done. Another of similar length included 10 shovel tests and finally, another study area around Thorne Lake, where there is a long history of Aboriginal Use, included only 3 shovel tests. Even with these limited number of shovel tests over such a vast area, Antiquus states (1997:49) that the “survey strategy covered a representative sample of terrain with greater than low archaeological site potential to give… a high level of confidence in the results.” The report states that “based on the negative results of the shovel testing program and the degree of prior disturbances it is recommended that no further archaeological work should be required” (1997:49).

3. Tsay Keh Dene Traditional Use Study, 2002

From 1999 to 2002, the Tsay Keh Dene worked with D.M. Cultural Services Ltd. of Victoria to conduct a Traditional Use Study. As part of this study, in August 2000, Archaeologist, Bjorn Simonsen, accompanied by Elders Jean Isaac and Vera Poole, traveled by helicopter to Thutade Lake. Their goal was to ground-truth the sites recorded in this study. While flying over the area of Thutade (and therefore the area around Amazay Lake), “physical evidence of past use could be readily seen” (Tsay Keh Dene 2002:164). A “number of these locations were… considered to have a high potential for the presence of archaeological remains” (Tsay Keh Dene 2002:164). However, due to time constraints, the field team did not have time to visit all of these high potential sites.

The Tsay Keh Dene Traditional Use Study author also notes that at least seven of the sites around Thutade Lake have potential for sub-surface material remains. During its short time in the field, the team visited 11 sites and flew over four sites. Of the fifteen sites, eleven were documented in the TUS as habitation sites of various antiquity and burial sites of up to 8 individuals.
Although the study area for the TUS ground-truthing did not include Amazay Lake, based on the assessment of the archaeologist Bjorn Simonsen, the report states that the “Thutade Lake area is rich in evidence of past aboriginal use and occupation – both in the form of recent and contemporary traditional use sites, as well as sites with archaeological deposits and remains” (Tsay Keh Dene 2002:172). Additionally, under Recommendations and Future Research, the report authors state that the Traditional Use Study “recognized the need for a series of detailed traditional use and archaeological studies to take place through the Traditional Territory” (Tsay Keh Dene 2002:144).

4. Antiquus Archaeological Impact Assessment 2004

In June, 2004, four archaeologists from Antiquus Archaeological Consultants Ltd. conducted an Archaeological Impact Assessment in the proposed development areas for Kemess North. This summary will focus on the results of that work in the vicinity of Amazay Lake. To conduct the fieldwork, the four archaeologists spent six days with four First Nation representatives. During this time, their goal was to survey all medium to high archaeological potential areas and record all archaeological sites.

The results of the study were the identification of six sites (summarized in Table: Summary of Archaeological Sites): three pre-historic sites at the north end of Amazay Lake; one contemporary site at the south end of Amazay Lake; one contemporary site on the eastern shore of Amazay Lake; and one pre-historic site at the north end of the proposed “North Dump” site, northeast of Amazay Lake.

It is the opinion of the Tse Keh Nay that the Antiquus report lacks information and that it makes generalizations that are problematic. The report states that the AIA was “designed and implemented to ensure that all archaeological concerns existing within the selected development areas were identified, recorded, assessed, and properly managed prior to initiation of any land-altering development activities.” (Will et al 2004:9). As noted below, later studies recorded other archaeological sites that were missed by Antiquus. The Antiquus report also lacks maps showing survey locations and traverses. There is a map showing the study area, but there is no information about what sections of the study area were examined. For the sites that Antiquus records, on numerous occasions, the number of shovel tests is approximated. For a development that intends to completely destroy an area, approximations are not acceptable. It is also interesting that the shovel tests conducted by Antiquus revealed no archaeological expression, while a later survey by Traces was successful in identifying a number of archaeological sites using this same method.

The Antiquus report does not record any Culturally Modified Trees (CMT). Although the Tse Keh Nay does not agree with the application of 1846 as a date to determine protection, it does recognize the Archaeology Branch’s position. Nevertheless, it is common practice to record all CMTs in a report, with a comment on their antiquity. Antiquus did not record the CMTs that were later documented at the north end of Amazay Lake, and in fact stated that “[n]o Culturally Modified Trees were identified during this study” (Will et al 2004:11). It is also interesting to note that two “contemporary sites” were recorded, even though they are not protected under the Heritage Conservation Act. According to Antiquus, these contemporary sites “are not archaeological sites” but were recorded “because they are of local interest and… if this area is going to be used, it's nice
to have knowledge of the fact that they were once there” (EA Panel Hearing, Oct.30, 2006: 125). The Tse Keh Nay question why the CMT’s were not afforded the same consideration.

Another concern is that on Oct. 20, 2006 (EA Panel Hearing: 123-126), Mr. Mike Rousseau discussed the survey work at the south end of Amazay Lake. He states that there were “a number of terraces that extended up the side of the hill here” (123) that were initially noted as “extinct shoreline levels” (124). He then stated that his initial assessment of these terraces was incorrect and that these terraces were “artificial” and the result of placer mining in the 1960s and 1970s. Contrary to this assessment, Remi Farvacque, an archaeologist with a degree in Earth Sciences and experience in assessing Holocene geologic formations, notes in the Archaeological Report later prepared by Traces that:

The Holocene drainage history of Amazay Lake is complex. Initially draining simultaneously to the south-east and south-west through two separate valleys, the waters of glacial Amazay Lake eventually breached a relict end moraine… constraining the lake at its north end. Down-cutting of this breach to the existing elevation of Amazay Lake’s outlet was not continuous, as lake levels stabilized on several occasions. These stand-stills of unknown age and duration, resulted in the creation of at least three terrace complexes, as observed in the course of our assessment. The highest of these terraces likely relates to the period when Amazay Lake drained to the south. The exception is at the south end of the lake, where these terrace complexes have cut into the glacio-fluvial outwash deposits such as river channels and levees are also well preserved. (Craig: 2006, per Remi Farvacque).

As a result of these conflicting opinions, the issue deserves greater investigation, as it is possible that Mr. Rousseau’s conclusion was incorrect and there is likely to be archaeological information available at the south end of Amazay.

In their report, Antiquus also makes generalizations about site significance that concern the Tse Keh Nay. In the report, Antiquus notes that it cannot speak on behalf of the First Nation and therefore cannot rate the ethnic significance of the archaeological sites. The Tse Keh Nay agree with this point. However, at least twice in their report, it is suggested that the overall “cultural significance” of a site is low, thus, indicating that Antiquus did consider ethnic significance in rating these archaeological sites.

Overall, it is the opinion of the Tse Keh Nay that the Archaeological Impact Assessment conducted by Antiquus Archaeological Consulting did not, as it set out to do, “ensure that all archaeological concerns existing within the selected development areas were identified, recorded, assessed, and properly managed prior to initiation of any land-altering development activities” (Will et al 2004:9). The Tse Keh Nay believe that Antiquus missed important sites and information and that, based on the work of Traces, there is, at least, justification for further archaeological work in the area.
5. Dana Evaschuk Reconnaissance

For one day in November, 2005, Dana Evaschuk traveled with Chief John Allen French and Allan Teschuk of the Takla First Nation to Amazay Lake. In their short time at the north end of Amazay Lake, Evaschuk noted several CMTs. This was a simple reconnaissance, and not an assessment under archaeological permit, so no sub-surface testing was conducted. Nevertheless, the findings convinced the Tse Keh Nay Chiefs that further archaeological work was needed. To conduct this work, they hired Traces Archaeological Research and Consulting Ltd. (results noted below). The Evaschuk report also emphasizes that consultation was inadequate and should have been “conducted in order to determine the ethnic significance of the sites” (Evaschuk 2005:2).

6. Traces Archaeological Inventory Study In the Vicinity of Amazay Lake

In August, 2006, in cooperation with the Tse Keh Nay, archaeologists from Traces conducted an archaeological inventory around Amazay Lake, under permit 2006-294. In the preliminary report, Traces notes that three archaeological sites had been previously recorded around Amazay Lake. During the four field days, Traces documented eight new archaeological sites and five cambium stripped lodgepole pine trees. The sites recorded by Traces include a hearth site, a cultural depression (roasting pit), lithic scatters, and a possible burial site. It also notes the existing camp area and the presence of a moose hide stretcher.

During the investigation, the archaeologists reviewed the sites to determine their current state. Seven of the eight sites were recorded as being 100% intact. The only site that was not 100% intact was one that has been 60% destroyed by exploration road impacts. Finally, for five of the eight sites, Traces reports that “there are adjacent areas of high [archaeological] potential that may contain additional sub-surface cultural materials.”

Thus, given that all except one of the sites are 100% intact, and given the comments about the area around these sites, it seems highly probable that the Amazay Lake area is a rich resource for further archaeological information, both from a cultural and scientific point of view.
### Summary of Archaeological Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site # (some may be temporary site #s)</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Condition/Archaeologist's Valuation</th>
<th>Comments from Reports</th>
<th>HCA status</th>
<th>Archaeologist and Year of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HfSq-1</td>
<td>lithics</td>
<td>Medium significance due to limited prehistory for the region</td>
<td>&quot;hunting field camp&quot; at the mine's &quot;Plant Site&quot;. Medium significance because &quot;virtually nothing is known about the prehistory of this region&quot;. Estimated to be between 200 and 3500 BP. Obsidian came from Mount Edziza, 250 km nw of the site</td>
<td>Protected and recommendation was to avoid altering it</td>
<td>Antiquus 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-1</td>
<td>lithics</td>
<td>Medium significance due to limited prehistory for the region</td>
<td>Prehistoric camp site of medium significance. Small prehistoric lithic scatter, predating 3500BP.</td>
<td>Protected and recommendation was to avoid altering it</td>
<td>Antiquus 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-2</td>
<td>lithics</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Prehistoric hunting camp with low significance. Predates 3500 years</td>
<td>Protected and recommendation was to avoid altering it</td>
<td>Antiquus 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HbSr-8</td>
<td>&quot;post contact site&quot; and grease trail</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Post contact site that late in the report is recognized as being on a prehistoric grease.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antiquus 1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32 BP means before present and is the year 1950. To get the actual date, add 56 years for the time between 1950 and 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HfSq-2</td>
<td>lithics</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Precontact lithic scatter</td>
<td>Antiquus 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-3</td>
<td>precontact hearth and lithic scatter</td>
<td>Impacted by road so removed the artifacts. State that now the work can proceed as there is nothing left to impact</td>
<td>In middle of drilling rig access road-excavated the site in a 2x2 m unit and screened matrix-95% of artifacts collected. Assemblage included: &quot;a number of fragmented bifaces (projectile points and knives), formed unifacial scrapers, unmodified utilized flakes and retouched flake tools...&quot; p. 24. States that the sites suggests a short term hunting camp and that the tool production seemed deliberately focused around the fire. One point is dated between 2500 and 1200 years BP. Carbon 14 dating puts this site at 1350 +/- 70 years BP. Notes very few sites from this era recorded. Notes that all artifacts were collected so no further impact to the site could occur.</td>
<td>Pre-1846 so protected (but all artifacts removed so report states that there would be no further impacts) Given medium overall potential and medium-high scientific value (then on page 44 say it has a very low overall value-this may be because they removed everything associated with the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-4</td>
<td>isolated lithic find</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Isolated, no arch site associated. Left the flake in situ and suggest that the site can be developed with no further archaeological work.</td>
<td>pre-1846</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-5</td>
<td>lithics</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Lithic scatter. Recorded in situ. Recognition that using Amazay as a tailings site will destroy the site but that it &quot;is of little archaeological or cultural significance, and…no additional information would be gained by any additional… investigations&quot; (31).</td>
<td>pre-1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-6</td>
<td>Lithics</td>
<td>Low; 0% intact</td>
<td>Located at the proposed north dump site. Was an isolated find of on flake tool. If it was a site, Antiquus states that it was completely eroded and nothing is left. However, the flake has heavy patination suggesting it may be several thousand years old.</td>
<td>pre-1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-11</td>
<td>Lithics</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance-associated with Protected</td>
<td>protected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-8</td>
<td>Lithics</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance-associated with Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

128
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Intactness</th>
<th>Use Purpose</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-12</td>
<td>Lithics</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-9</td>
<td>Lithics</td>
<td>c. 40% intact (exploration road went through)</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-13</td>
<td>Lithics, hearth, cultural depression (roasting pit)</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance, food procurement and preparation. Depression is interpreted as a roasting pit based on its size, shape, location, and presence of charcoal and calcine bone. Two Radiocarbon dates were obtained from this site. The first date is 910 +/- 40 years BP The second date is 760 +/- 40 years BP.</td>
<td>protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-14</td>
<td>Lithics (1 small obsidian flake)</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HgSq-7</td>
<td>Lithic (1 medium obsidian flake)</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Short-term use for tool maintenance</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>HgSq-10</td>
<td>Burial/Human</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>One depression believed to represent a grave site-“a definite</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remains</td>
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<td>depression with rocks that look to be deliberately placed…. An</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>adjacent mound of dirt would account for the excavated materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to make the burial.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMTs</td>
<td>5 cambium stripped lodgepole pines</td>
<td>100% intact</td>
<td>Along north side of Amazay; Notes that it is highly probable that</td>
<td>Not protected (post 1846)</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more CMTs are there. Oldest core sample dated to 1850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrecorded as an arch site (don’t know why- too recent?)</td>
<td>Camp area</td>
<td></td>
<td>An old moose hide stretcher was identified at a prominent point</td>
<td>Likely post 1850</td>
<td>Traces 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>about 1/3 down Amazay on the eastern shoreline. Located at a</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>site where there is evidence of numerous old tent camp ruins</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and helicopter pads</td>
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</table>
Concerns about the Northgate Minerals Archaeological Impact Assessment

The recent AIA conducted by Antiquus and the letter and comments from Mr. Jim Pike of the Archaeology Branch conclude that the “project locality has received relatively low intensity and transitory (short term) human use over time” (Pike 2006:2). The Tse Keh Nay disagree and believe that while the Archaeology Branch can express opinions about the presence of physical expression of use and occupation, it does not have enough information to make sweeping statements about use. Not all use of the land leaves “physical evidence of past human use” but Mr. Pike explains that the Archaeology Branch only concerns itself with physical archaeological sites. Thus, the Branch is not authorized to make comments about other forms of use. These comments about the low level of use, in large part, are based on the low number of archaeological sites found in the region, yet it is readily recognized that there has been little formal archaeology conducted. In fact, in their 1993 report, Antiquus notes that the “immediate mine area is devoid of any previously recorded archaeological or heritage resources” (Yellowhorn 7). It also states that “[f]urther work must be done to understand more fully the prehistory and history of the area (Yellowhorn 1993:7). Pair this with the methodological concerns about Antiquus’ work, which, until recently, has been the only archaeological firm working in the area, and the conclusion that there was low human use in the region seems even less valid.

In fact, in four days, Traces identified eight more archaeological sites in the Amazay area. This more than doubles the number of pre-historic sites that Antiquus has identified in three separate studies, over more than 40 days, since 1992, over a much larger study area. Additionally, Traces identified a number of areas with high potential for archaeological sites around Amazay Lake, and Bjorn Simonsen states, via the Tse Keh TUS, that the “Thutade Lake area is rich in evidence of past aboriginal use and occupation – both in the form of recent and contemporary traditional use sites, as well as sites with archaeological deposits and remains” (Tsay Keh Dene 2002:172). Finally, Harris notes in her thesis the high potential for archaeological resources in the area. If one considers these together, along with the information provided elsewhere in this report of the strong oral history of use and traditions around Amazay Lake, it seems obvious that it is a mistake to conclude that the area has received low intensity and transitory use. According to Tse Keh Nay oral history, experience and knowledge, the opposite is true. Amazay is at the heart of Tse Keh Nay territory.

The dates for the archaeological sites for the area are also important. One stone flake from HgSq-6 is estimated to be several thousand years old, due to its patination. Both sites HgSq-1 and HgSq-2 predate 3500 years BP. HfSq-1 is estimated to be between 200 and 3500 years BP. HgSq-3, a hearth site on northern shore of Amazay Lake, is 1350 +/- 70 years BP. HgSq-13, recorded by Craig at the south end of Amazay Lake provided two dates, 910 +/- 40 and 760 +/- 40 years BP. Tree core samples from culturally modified trees at the north end of Amazay Lake provide dates from the mid 19th century. These few sites offer dates that suggest a long history of use of Amazay Lake from before 1550.
BC to 1850 AD. Other sites that are post 1846, and thus not deemed to be archaeological, as well as traditional use research reveal use to the present day.

Another concern with the 2004 AIA is its assignment of site value. In addition to concerns about assigning “cultural significance”, there also seems to be discrepancy in the assignment of overall significance. In 1993, Antiquus rated small lithic scatter sites as having medium significance, noting that the lack of prehistory in the region makes these sites important (Yellowhorn 1993:26). According to the report, these sites are of significant antiquity (up to 3500 years for one and greater than 3500 years for the other) (Yellowhorn 1993:19, 23). Later, in 2004, for similar sites, and one can only assume, with similar antiquity, the sites are given a low significance rating. Between 1993 and 2004, only eight sites were recorded in the area, so there was not a lot of information added to our knowledge of prehistory. Why then the change in significance rating?

Finally, it is important to consider the burial sites around Amazay Lake. In the summer of 2006, Traces recorded “one depression feature believed to represent a burial” (Craig 2006:10). Traces suggest that this could “be the final resting place of Duncan Pierre who is reported to have been buried at the… end of Amazay Lake” (Craig 2006:10). There are also numerous references in the traditional use interviews to burials around Amazay Lake. These burials are important to Tse Keh Nay people and must be protected.

After review of all the available archaeological data, reports and information, it seems that there is more to protect around Amazay Lake than suggested by Antiquus and the Provincial Archaeology Branch. These places are an expression of Tse Keh Nay connection to ancestors, culture, history and lands.
References

Craig, Frank

Environmental Assessment Panel Hearing Transcript
2006 Transcript from the EA Panel Hearing, Oct. 30, 2006 in Prince George, B.C.

Evaschuk, Dana

Harris, Yvonne Dorothy

Pike, James

Rousseau, Mike K., Ian Franck and Jeff Bailey

Simonsen, Bjorn
2006 Personal Communication.

Tsay Keh Dene (TKD)

Will, Mike, Lisa Seip and Mike K. Rousseau

Yellowhorn, Eldon and Mike K. Rousseau
APPENDIX F:  PLACE NAME MAP

The place name map included with this submission identifies the names of prominent land features in the Thutade watershed. Although much more work is required to fully record place names, the names that are recorded attest to the long history the Tse Keh Nay have with this region.

The place names recorded here were gathered from various sources including previous studies conducted by the Tse Keh Nay and the current study for this submission. The map provided with this submission is a draft and further research is required. This map is confidential and is for the EA Panel use and information only. It is not to be become part of the Public Registry for Kemess North Gold-Copper Mine.
As noted in this report, the Sekani were primarily foot travelers. This mode of transportation was made possible by an extensive series of trails that connected the Tsay Keh Nay to each other and to their neighbours. This network of trails was noted by many early visitors to the region. For example, Samuel Black noted that the trails were easily traveled by foot, even though they were not easily traveled by his party with their large canoe and packs. He also suggests that both Tsay Keh Nay and animals use the same trails and that these were not always marked by blazes (Rich 1955:98). Of particular interest to Black was the area around Thutade Lake as he spent many days here. He noted in his journal that there was an extensive trail system and that the Tse Keh Nay were very knowledgeable of the area.

Through this trail network, the Sekani kept in close contact with one another and were able to establish trade relations with their neighbours. For example, they acquired iron and dentalium shell from the Babines, Gitksan and Carriers, and salmon from the Nahanees. Jenness described some of these trade routes:

Westward there was a route from McLeod lake via Carp lake to Fort St. James on Stuart lake...; one up Nation river to Nation and Takla lakes; one up Manson river to Manson creek, thence south to Stuart lake or west to Takla lake; one from Fort Graham up the Mesilinka to Bear Lake; one via Ingenika river and another by the Finlay itself to Thutade and Tatlatui lakes, whence there were trails across the divide to the headwaters of Stikine and Skeena rivers. (1937:2-3)

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This appendix provides some brief information about trails in Tsay Keh Nay territory. For further information, refer to the main body of this submission.

During research for this study, Tse Keh Nay advisors explained that it is not possible to use the presence of blazes to distinguish an animal trail from a human trail because not all Tse Keh Nay trails were blazed. There was no need. This transportation network was well known by the people who had traveled them since infancy. It was also noted that it was usual for animals and humans to use the same trail. This is common sense as the trails, created either by human or animal use, would be attractive for any foot traveler. Thus, the trails became used, and consequently kept open, by both humans and animals.
Knowledge of these trails is alive and well among the Tsay Keh Nay today. Many people have intimate knowledge of them, where they go, how they connect and the resources available along them. Many trails were recorded during research for this submission. At times, the advisor was given the pencil and soon, trail after trail appeared and became connected to other trails on the map. It became obvious that there were main routes that connected the discrete geographic ranges of the Sasuchan, Tseloni, Yutuwichan and Tsekani, the four groups that made up the Tsay Keh Nay in the 18th century. It became obvious that these trails led through the Thutade region.

In part, Tse Keh Nay current land use is demonstrated by the mapping of their many hunting and trapping trails throughout their territory. Today, these trails are often traveled by Tse Keh Nay hunters on snowmobiles or quads. This extensive trail network, including the network in the Thutade/Amazay area, reveals the nature of land use by the Tsay Keh Nay and their ancestors. All of the territory was known, used and connected, and, according to oral information, the territory was easily traveled within a period of days. Trails were the Tsay Keh Nay’s “highways.”

The map of trails accompanying this submission shows the extensive trail network around Thutade and Amazay. It has been suggested elsewhere that this area was almost void of people and use until roads opened the area in the mid to late 20th century. Oral evidence of travel and the mapping information shown on the attached map do not support this argument. In fact, oral evidence and the map suggest the exact opposite: Thutade was central to Tsay Keh Nay territory and many trails led in and out of the region.

The map provided with this submission is a draft and further research is required. This map is confidential and is for the EA Panel use and information only. It is not to be become part of the Public Registry for Kemess North Gold-Copper Mine.
References

Jenness, Diamond

Rich, E.E.
1947 Part of Dispatch from George Simpson Esq’r, Governor of Rupert’s Land, to the Governor & Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company London, Toronto: The Champlain Society.
APPENDIX H: REPORT AUTHORS’ CURRICULA VITAE
EDUCATION:
Ph.D. Anthropology 1995 University of British Columbia
M.A. Anthropology 1987 Carleton University, Ottawa
B.A. Honours 1981 Carleton University, Ottawa

THESIS TOPICS:
Ph.D. thesis: Gender, Class and Community: The Employment History of Sne-nay-muxw Women
M.A. thesis: The Role of Women in the Northwest Coast Fur Trade
B.A. thesis: Metis and Non-Status Indian Land Claims

SCHOLARSHIPS & DISTINCTIONS:
Melville Jacobs Research Grant 1991
M.A. Thesis Pass with Distinction, 1987
Carleton University Fellowship, 1982
John B. McDonald Bursary, 1976
Langara College, Vancouver Community College Honour Roll, 1976

PUBLICATIONS:
2003 Beryl Cryer and the stories she collected, Shale: Journal of the Gabriola Historical and Museum Society, no 6, April.
ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS:
Canadian Anthropology Society/Societe Canadienne d'Anthropologie
Society for Applied Anthropology
American Society of Ethnohistory

CONFERENCES:

Presentations

Women’s Voices in “Indian Legends of Vancouver Island”, American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Branch, University of British Columbia, August 2001


Employment History of Women in a Coast Salish Community. Northwest Anthropological Conference, Simon Fraser University, April 1992

Images of Northwest Coast Native Women in the Historical Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. B.C. Studies Conference, University of British Columbia, November 1990


Chaired
Gender, Space and History in the 19th and 20th Century Indigenous Northwest, Fifth Women’s West Conference, Washington State University, Puyallup. 2000

Organized on behalf of Snuneymuxw First Nation
British Columbia Archaeology Conference, Nanaimo, 2002, Co-chaired with Malaspina University College.

Hulqumínun Language Conference, Nanaimo, Spring 2001, funded by First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation

Hulqumínun Language Conference, Nanaimo, Fall 2000, funded by First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation

VISITING LECTURES:

First Nations People and their Contact History on Vancouver Island, History Lecture, Malaspina University College, November 2003

An Introduction to the History of First Nations Women Lecture for Capilano College Women’s Studies Department, part of the Hon. Thomas A. Dohm, Q.C. lecture series, March 2003
First Nations History on Vancouver Island, History Lecture, Malaspina University College, 2002

BC Treaty Process, History Lecture, Malaspina University College, 2001

Women’s Role in the Fur Trade on the Northwest Coast, First Nations Studies, Malaspina University College 1997

Women Traders in the Fur Trade, Stolo Cultural Centre, 1996

**RESEARCH AND STUDIES ON BEHALF OF SNUNEYMUXW FIRST NATION**

1995-2006 Numerous Research Studies and Surveys related to Treaty Negotiations

1997-1999 Snuneymuxw First Nation Traditional Use Study

2000 False Narrows: Report for the Historic Sites and Monument Board

2000-2006 Specific Claims Historical Research and Reports for Snuneymuxw Douglas Treaty Claims, (10 Claims)

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**

1995 to present Research Coordinator  
*Snuneymuxw First Nation Treaty Office*

1994 Sessional Instructor  
Native Peoples of Canada, SA 387  
*Simon Fraser University, Burnaby*

1993-94 Sessional Instructor  
Native Peoples of North America, Anth 401  
*University of British Columbia, B.C.*

1993 Anthropology Instructor  
Native Peoples of British Columbia, Anth 120  
*Kwantlen College, Surrey Campus*

1992 Women's Studies Instructor (part time)  
Women in Anthropology, WS 122  
*Capilano College, North Vancouver, B.C.*

1991 Anthropology Instructor (temp full time)  
Introd to Anthropology, Anth 111  
Native Indians of Canada, Anth 121  
*Malaspina College, Nanaimo, B.C.*

1991-1990 Anthropology Instructor( temp part time)  
Native Indians of Canada, Anth 121  
Native Indians of B.C., Anth 221  
*Malaspina College, Nanaimo, B.C.*
QUALIFICATIONS

I have worked on behalf of aboriginal people in British Columbia since 1983 providing services in ethno-historical and legal research and treaty management. I have a comprehensive knowledge of the aboriginal history of British Columbia, the establishment of the reserve system, aboriginal resource rights and use as well as a good working knowledge of provincial and federal legislation that directly affects aboriginal lives in British Columbia.

EDUCATION:

B.A., Anthropology, University of British Columbia 1977

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Research Consultant June 1997 – present

Services Provided

- The preparation of studies and reports to support First Nations claims within the British Columbia Treaty Process, for Specific Claims and litigation and for educational purposes, including: specific claims research, analysis of aboriginal, legal and reserve rights, ethno-historical reports, and traditional land use studies.
- Assessment of research needs, coordination and direction of projects, development of proposals and training

Manager, Technical Support October 2000 – December 2005

Hamatla Treaty Society
Cape Mudge, Campbell River, Comox and Kwiakah First Nations

- Management and coordination of resource team and committees (Lands, Forestry, Fisheries, Culture, Governance, and Environment) including: support in the development of interest statements, negotiation mandates and consultation processes
- Governance Support including: research and development of self-government proposals, participation in tripartite government negotiations and administration of Governance Treaty Related Measure
- Main Table Support including: preparation of materials, briefing notes for Council of Chiefs, participation in planning and analysis and tripartite liaison
- Research Support and Management

**Manager, Treaty Negotiation Office**  
*Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN)*  
November 1994 – November 1996

- Responsible for the direction and coordination of treaty negotiations for the SFN
- implemented treaty office organization, directed staff and consultants
- coordinated traditional land use study and all research related to land and resource use and rights and interests in reserve lands and over traditional territory;
- developed and implemented policy in the areas of archaeology and Crown Land referrals
- coordinated land and resource consultants provided advice and assistance to Chief and Council and to negotiating team;
- developed and implemented work plans and budgets pertaining to negotiations, training programs, studies and reported to BCTC, provincial and federal agencies, etc;
- managed consultation process with membership and the general public

**Researcher**  
*Snuneymuxw First Nation*  

- completed all ethnohistorical, archaeological and legal research
- interviewed Elders and compiled traditional land and resource use information
- developed library of historical, ethnographic, archaeological and legal materials
- provided liaison between the First Nation and Government agencies, universities, museums and specialists

**Researcher**  
*Donna L. Kydd, Barrister and Solicitor*  
*First Nation Law and Aboriginal Rights*  
1983-1990

- completed all historical and anthropological research tasks for specific claims, reserve land transactions, water rights claims, court actions and negotiations
- managed documents for litigation
PUBLICATIONS:

Legal Information Pamphlets for the Public Legal Education Program of the Legal Services Society of British Columbia, 1989 on:

1. Indian Land Holdings on Reserve
2. Land Use on Reserves, Surrenders and Designated Lands
3. Funds for Housing on Reserve
4. Labour Law on Reserve
5. Debtor Creditor Law on Reserve
6. Indian Estates

UNPUBLISHED REPORTS AND STUDIES:

Since 1997 I have conducted research and prepared studies and reports on behalf of the following First Nations: the Esketemc (formerly the Alkali Lake Band), the Heiltsuk, the Esquimalt, the Homalco, the Quatsino, the Gwa’Sal’a Nakwaxda’xw, the Da’naxda’xw Awaetlala, the Tlatlasikwala and Takla Lake.

These studies and reports include specific claims submissions, ethno-historical reports, studies on the history and establishment of the reserve system in British Columbia, land, water and natural resource rights, and aboriginal and legal rights.
QUALIFICATIONS

I have a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology, followed by eleven years of post-graduate, field experience, working directly with Northwest Coast First Nations in ethnographic research.

EDUCATION

University of Victoria, Graduated with honours, M.A. in Anthropology, July 1995. My research areas were Northwest Coast cultures, past and present land/resource issues, and kinship studies.


University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts, graduated with distinction in May 1993, with a major in Anthropology.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Malaspina University College
Sessional Instructor
Nanaimo, B.C.

Sept. 2004 to Present

Currently instructing in a sessional position, Anthropology 112, Introductory Anthropology (cultural) and Anthropology 141, Cultural Sensitivity in BC’s Resource Management.

Independent Contractor
Hamatla Treaty Society (HTS)
Campbell River, B.C.

1997 to Present

• My primary focus is archaeological liaison and research. As Archaeological Liaison, I work with our First Nations to identify archaeological sites within the
territory and liaise with developers and their archaeologists, and the government
to ensure that work is completed within the requirements of the Heritage
Conservation Act. I also direct the current fish trap and clam garden
archaeological research spearheaded by the HTS. As a Researcher, I focus on
cultural heritage issues but I also conduct research into land concerns, access,
review of development proposals, repatriation and heritage site protection.
Current work includes an Aboriginal use project, genealogy research,
ethnobotanical research, place name research, archaeological inventory studies of
the traditional territory, and Agreement in Principle chapter drafting. All research
work with the HTS requires interviews and extensive consultation with Elders and
knowledgeable community members.

Independent Contractor    Spring 1997 to Fall 2001
Traditions Consulting Inc.
Victoria, B.C.

- Sub-contract to assist with the Huu-ay-aht First Nation (HFN) Traditional Use
  Study (TUS). This project involved weekly travel to Bamfield to work with the
  TUS team to: review work done by the team to assure project quality; ensure the
  project remained on schedule; assist with the final report; research difficult
  sources for traditional use information; assist with TUS team training in
  interviewing procedures; and train the TUS team in various research methods
  including computer training. After completion of the TUS, I assisted with the
  development and implementation of the “Proposed Development Review
  Process” to ensure any proposed developments within HFN territory are fully
  reviewed.

Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN)
Tsawwassen, B.C.

- Conducted the interview phase of the TFN’s Traditional Use Study. This
  included training the TFN Researcher on interviewing, conducting interviews
  with many Elders and community members, completing a final analysis of the
  interview data and working in an advisory capacity regarding the overall TUS
  project.

U’mista Cultural Centre    Aug. 1, 1995 to May 31, 1996
Genealogical Researcher
Alert Bay, B.C.

- Research for the Kwakw̱a’wakw people to establish genealogical relationships.
  This required developing and managing the project, extensive interviews with
  Elders and Kwakw̱a’wakw families, compiling the information into a database,
researching archival data, church records, written materials, and government
documents, circulating the information to families and working with them for
verification. The long term goal of this research is to have a family history for all
Kwakwaka’wakw people. In February 2004, I worked with the U’mista Cultural
Centre to update the database in order to make it available to the
Kwakwaka’wakw people once again.

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Jan. 1995 to April 1995
Independent Contractor
Victoria, B.C.

- Research of the Nisga’a-Gitanyow border dispute for the Northwest Treaty
Negotiating team. This involved archival research, a trip to Gitanyow to meet
with Gitanyow people and Elders and a final report discussing the findings.

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs May 1995 to July 1995
Independent Contractor
Victoria, B.C.

- Community Profile research for the Provincial North and Interior Negotiating
Team. This involved developing the Community Profile process and researching
various line ministries for information about the communities of interest. Results
were submitted to the British Columbia Treaty Commission as part of the
approval process for the Provincial government to move into Stage 3 negotiations.

PUBLICATIONS, WRITINGS & PRESENTATIONS

Sanders, Deidre 1995 What Was Really Said?: A Consideration of the Nuu-chah-
nulth and Kwakwaka’wakw Testimonies Before the Royal
Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British

Sanders, Deidre et al. 1999, What the People Said: Kwakwaka’wakw, Nuu-chah-
nulth, and Tsimshian Testimonies Before the Royal Commission
on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia (1913-

Sanders, Deidre March, 1995 Gitanyow-Nisga’a Border Dispute (Overlap).
Unpublished paper submitted to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Neary, Kevin, James C. Haggarty, and Dee Sanders. 1998 Traditional Use Study of


Smith, Tess et al. 2001 Ka:'yu:'K’t’h’/Che:K’tles7et’h’ First Nation Cultural Heritage Site Review Project Final Report. Kyuquot, B.C.: Ka:'yu:'k’t’h’/Che:k’tles7et’h’ First Nation, Unpublished Report


PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

CASCA (Canadian Anthropological Society), member in good standing.