

**APPENDIX 30-E  
METIS INTERESTS DESKTOP STUDY**

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Seabridge Gold Inc.

# KSM PROJECT Métis Interests Desktop Study

SEABRIDGE GOLD



Rescan™ Environmental Services Ltd.  
Rescan Building, Sixth Floor - 1111 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC Canada V6E 2J3  
Tel: (604) 689-9460 Fax: (604) 687-4277

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# Glossary and Abbreviations

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Terminology used in this document is defined where it is first used. The following list will assist readers who may choose to review only portions of the document.

BC MANR	British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources
BC MF	British Columbia Métis Federation
BC MOE	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
BC MMRP	British Columbia Métis Mapping Research Project
CEA Agency	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
MNBC	Métis Nation British Columbia
MPCBC	Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia
RDKS	Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
RSA	Regional Study Area

# Métis Interests Desktop Study

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Project Proponent

Seabridge Gold Inc. (Seabridge) is the proponent for the proposed KSM Project (the Project), a gold, copper, silver, and molybdenum mine.

## 1.2 Project Location

The Project is located in the coastal mountains of northwestern British Columbia. It is approximately 950 km northwest of Vancouver and 65 km northwest of Stewart, within 30 km of the British Columbia–Alaska border (Figure 1.2-1).

## 1.3 Project Overview

The Project is located in two geographical areas: the Mine Site and Processing and Tailing Management Area (PTMA), connected by twin 23-km tunnels, the Mitchell-Treaty Twinned Tunnels (Figure 1.3-1). The Mine Site is located south of the closed Eskay Creek Mine, within the Mitchell, McTagg, and Sulphurets Creek valleys. Sulphurets Creek is a main tributary of the Unuk River, which flows to the Pacific Ocean. The PTMA is located in the upper tributaries of Teigen and Treaty creeks. Both creeks are tributaries of the Bell-Irving River, which flows to the Nass River and into the Pacific Ocean. The PTMA is located about 19 km southwest of Bell II on Highway 37.

The Mine Site will be accessed by a new road, the Coulter Creek Access Road, which will be built from km 70 on the Eskay Creek Mine Road. This road will follow Coulter and Sulphurets creeks to the Mine Site. The PTMA will also be accessed by a new road, the Treaty Creek Access Road, the first 3-km segment of which is a forest service road off of Highway 37. The Treaty Creek Access Road will parallel Treaty Creek.

Four deposits will be mined at the KSM Project – Kerr, Sulphurets, Mitchell, and Iron Cap – using a combination of open pit and underground mining methods. Waste rock will be stored in engineered rock storage facilities located in the Mitchell and McTagg valleys at the Mine Site. Ore will be crushed and transported through one of the Mitchell-Treaty Twinned Tunnels to the PTMA. This tunnel will also be used to route the electrical power transmission lines. The second tunnel will be used to transport personnel and bulk materials. The Process Plant will process up to 130,000 tpd of ore to produce a daily average of 1,200 t of concentrate. Tailing will be pumped to the Tailing Management Facility from the Process Plant. Copper concentrate will be trucked from the PTMA along highways 37 and 37A to the Port of Stewart, which is approximately 170 km away via road.

The mine operating life is estimated at 51.5 years. Approximately 1,800 people will be employed annually during the Operation Phase. Project Construction will take about five years, and the capital cost of the Project is approximately US\$5.3 billion.



Figure 1.2-1



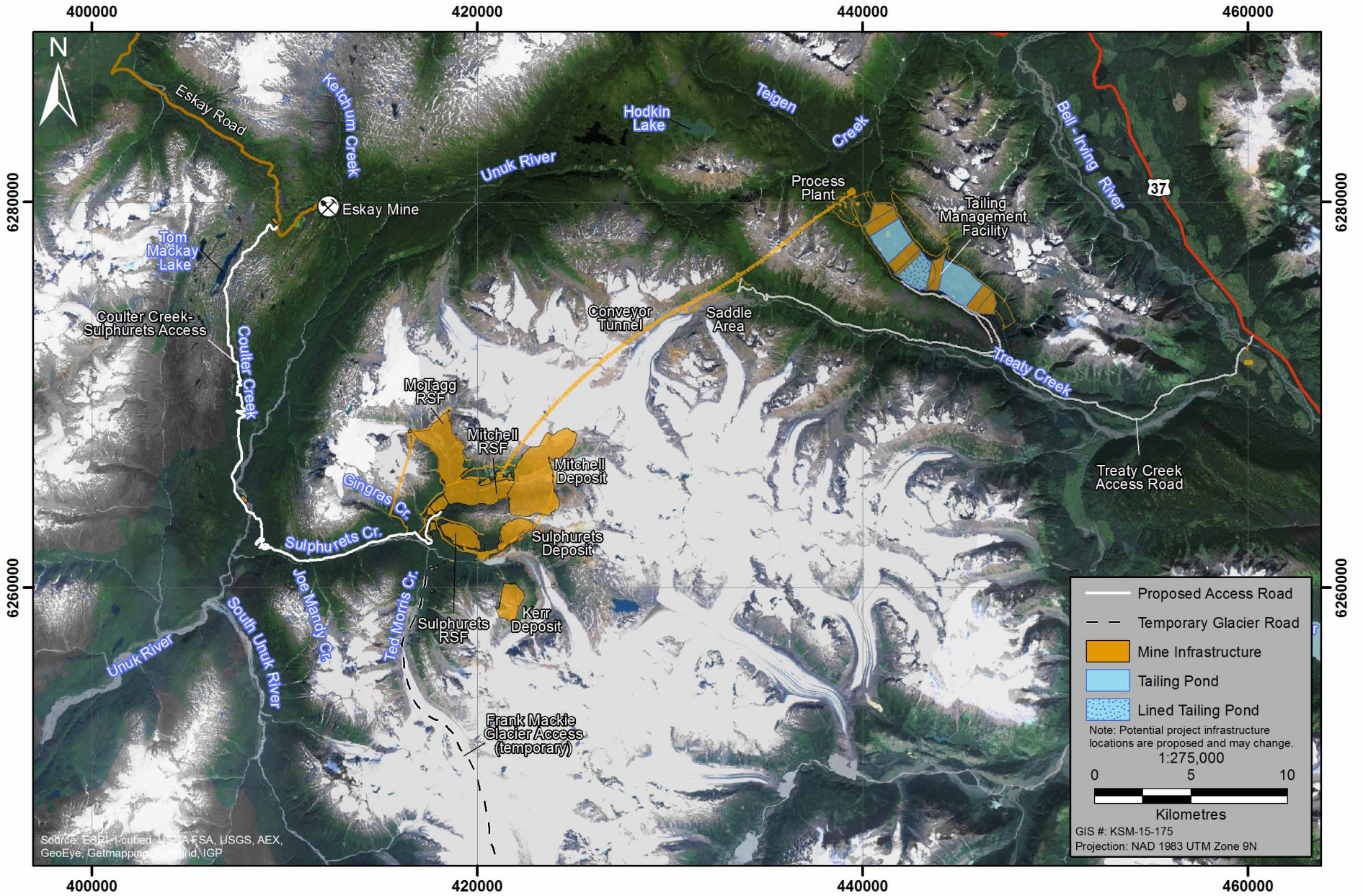


Figure 1.3-1

Figure 1.3-1



## **1.4 Study Scope and Method**

This report has been prepared to assist the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEA Agency) with the identification of Métis interests in the area of the proposed Project. This report was compiled using a desk-based research method. The information, interpretations, and conclusions in the report are based on limited investigation and research. The study drew on existing and available information, statistics, and other data from provincial, regional, and local organizations and government agencies, pertaining to the Aboriginal communities and interests in the Project area. A key source of information was the British Columbia Métis Mapping Research Project (BC MMRP) of the Métis Nation British Columbia.

## **2. Study Areas**

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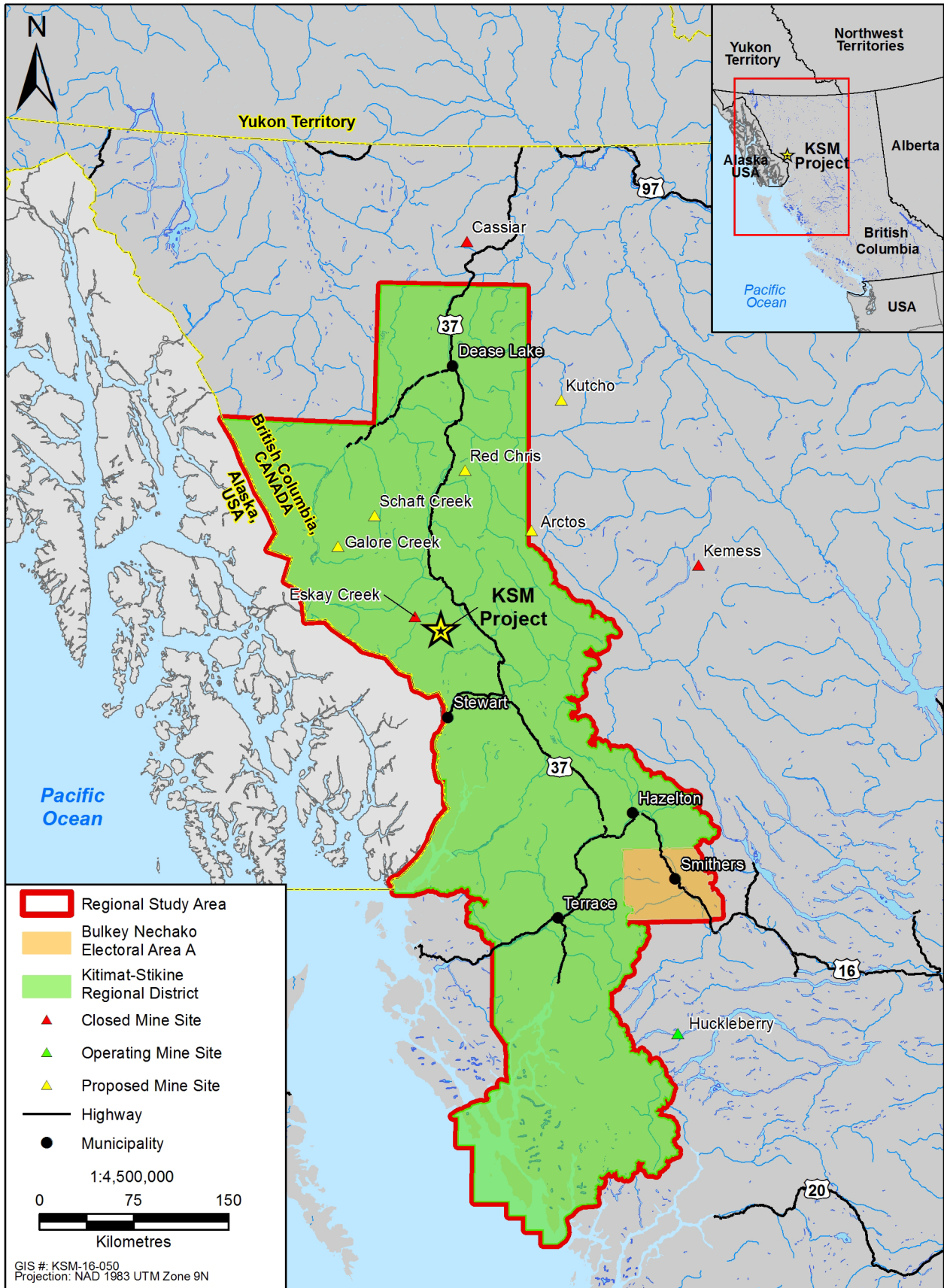
Two distinct Regional Study Areas (RSAs) are defined for this study – a Social and Economic RSA, and a Land Use RSA. The Social and Economic RSA is used to identify and describe Métis communities and organizations. The Land Use RSA is used to identify and describe Métis land use interests in relation to the Project.

### **2.1 Social and Economic Regional Study Area**

The Social and Economic RSA boundaries incorporate two administrative regions: the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS), and Electoral Area A of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District (Figure 2.1-1). This RSA covers approximately 104,000 km<sup>2</sup> of northwest BC and is the same area used for the social and economic baseline studies for the environmental assessment (EA).

### **2.2 Land Use Study Area**

The land use RSA is 338,008 ha in size and is the same area used for the Wildlife Characterization and Terrestrial Ecosystems Baseline studies for the EA (Figure 2.2-1). The RSA takes into account the area that provides habitat for wildlife species that may come into contact with proposed Project infrastructure as well as other ecological factors, such as distinctive ecosystems, wildlife species with the largest habitat range, and natural landform barriers (such as mountain ranges) beyond which effects diminish considerably. Both human and wildlife activities are influenced by terrain. Consequently, naturally occurring barriers (e.g., major mountain ranges and watersheds) define subsets of different human land use and movement. Further, a number of land uses in the Project area are related to the occurrence of wildlife (e.g., hunting and trapping), and as such, adopting the same study area ensures consistency and the ability to compare relevant data sets. For the purpose of this report the Land Use RSA will be used to discuss Métis interests around harvesting.



KSM Social and Economic Regional Study Area

Figure 2.1-1



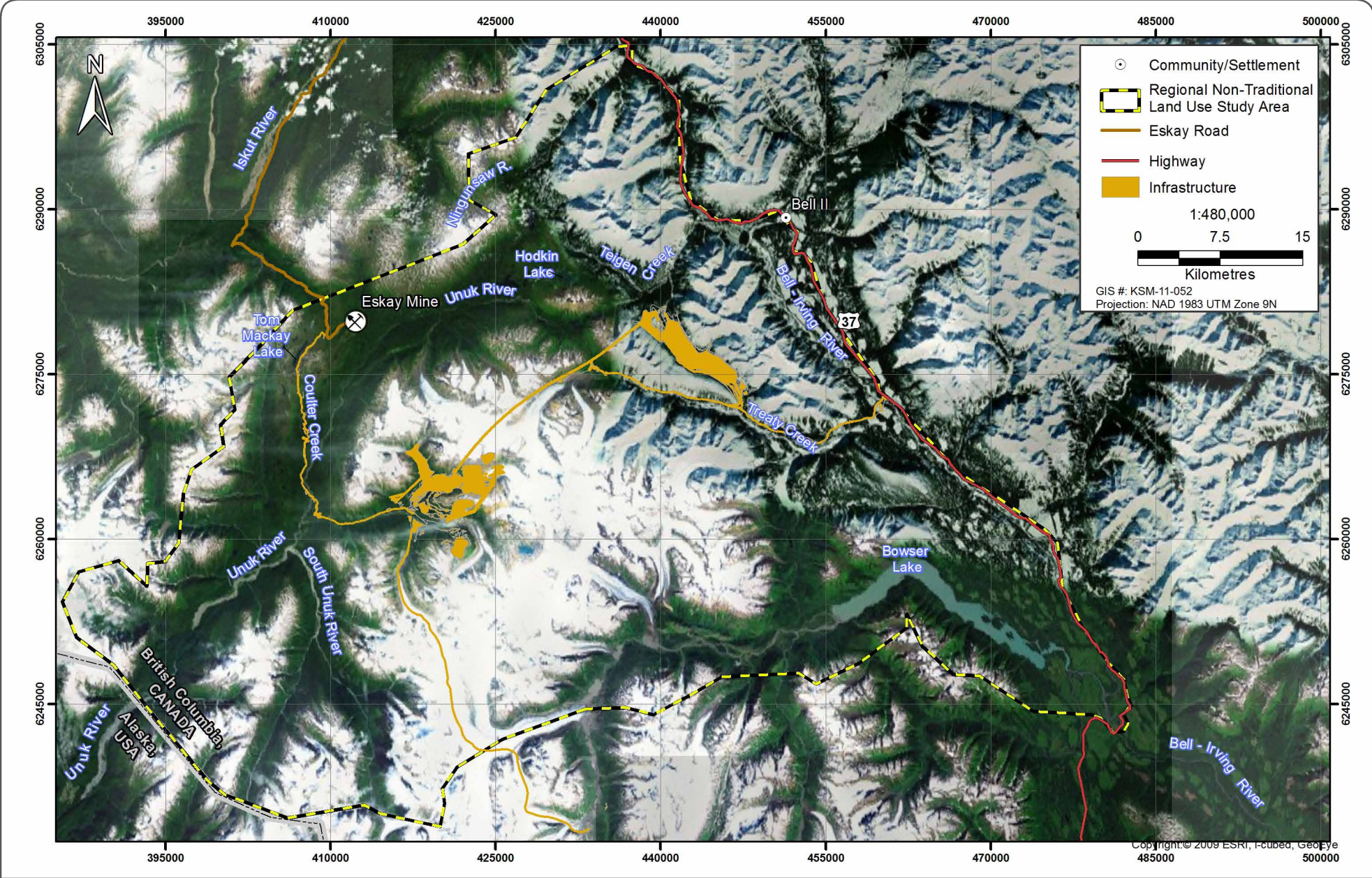


Figure 2.2-1

### KSM Land Use Regional Study Area

Figure 2.2-1

## 3. Background Information

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### 3.1 Overview of Contemporary Métis

The Métis in Canada have been recognized and affirmed as one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

The Métis National Council consequently adopted the following definition of Métis in 2002:

“Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation (Métis National Council n.d.).

In the 2003 judgement of *R. v. Powley*, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that Métis are a rights-bearing Aboriginal people under section 35 of the *Constitution Act* (1982). The components of a Métis definition for the purposes of claiming Aboriginal rights include the self-identification as a member of a Métis community; the ancestral connection to the historic Métis community whose practices ground the right in question; and the acceptance by the modern community with continuity to the historic Métis community (*R. v. Powley* 2003).

#### 3.1.1 Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)

The Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) is the governing body in British Columbia recognized by the Métis National Council. MNBC was created in 1996 and formally incorporated as the Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia (MPCBC). In 2003, the MNBC Constitution was ratified, thereby establishing a new Métis Nation governance structure (BC Métis Federation n.d.).

The MNBC is governed by the Métis Nation Governing Assembly. It represents thirty-seven (37) Métis Chartered Communities in British Columbia and is “mandated to develop and enhance opportunities for Métis communities by implementing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services” (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.).

To qualify as a Métis Chartered Community, the community must have at least 25 Métis citizens who are over 18 years of age. There are two Métis Chartered Communities within the Social and Economic RSA: the Northwest Métis Association located in Terrace, and the Tri River Métis Association located in Smithers. The Northwest Métis Association has approximately 164 Members and the Tri River Métis Association has approximately 150 members. (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.).

Based on 2006 Census data, there are approximately 1,130 self-identified Métis in the Social and Economic RSA, 935 Métis residing in the RDKS (Government of British Columbia 2011) and 195 in the Buckley-Nechako Regional District, Electoral Area A (Statistics Canada 2007). The large variation in population numbers between the MNBC statistics and the 2006 Census can be attributed to various reasons: a lack of chartered communities in the area; voluntary members to existing chartered communities; differences for self-identification of Métis; and different definitions of Métis.



### **3.1.2 British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources**

The British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources (BC MANR) is a ministry of the MNBC, through the MNBC Minister of Natural Resources. The organizational structure of the BC MANR is consistent with that of the traditional “Buffalo Assembly” used by the Métis in the 1700-1800s while hunting bison throughout the homeland (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.). The BC MANR follows a Captain structure with representation from all regions. The Captains hold resource portfolios such as forestry; fisheries/water; lands/air; enforcement; wildlife; youth; education; and finance (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.).

### **3.1.3 BC Métis Federation**

The BC Métis Federation (BCMF) is a non-profit association that works with Métis communities to ensure the well-being of grassroots BCMF members. BCMF is formerly known as the coalition for concerned Métis Citizens (BC Métis Federation n.d.). It is important to note that although the BCMF represents some “citizens” as members, it is not recognized as a governing institution by the national council, the Government of Canada, or the Government of British Columbia.

BCMF is not directly linked with Métis Chartered Communities such as MNBC. The organization has director representatives from various regions in British Columbia. The BCMD director based in Terrace represents BCMF members within the Social and Economic RSA.

## **3.2 Overview of Historical Métis Presence**

### **3.2.1 The Historic Métis Homeland**

The Métis emerged as a distinct people or nation in the historic Northwest during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. These communities emerged along some parts of the freighting waterways and Great Lakes of Ontario, throughout the Northwest, and as far north as the Mackenzie River. This area of the Northwest is known as the “Historic Métis Nation Homeland.” The homeland includes the three Prairie provinces, and extends into Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories (Métis National Council n.d.). The Métis people of this region, although deeply rooted in their home communities, were connected through a highly mobile fur trade network, seasonal rounds, extensive kinship connections and a collective identity (i.e., common culture, language, way of life, etc.) (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.). This historic Métis Nation had recognized Aboriginal title, which the Government of Canada attempted to extinguish through the issuance of “scrip” and land grants in the late 19th and 20th centuries (Métis National Council n.d.).

### **3.2.2 The Métis in British Columbia**

Similar to Métis in North America, the presence of Métis in British Columbia can be linked to the fur trade. In the 1790s, Métis were present in the Peace River drainage and eastern slopes of the Rockies (Métis Nation British Columbia n.d.). In addition, numerous Métis fur trade employees and their families could be found throughout the Columbia (present day southern British Columbia and Washington State) and Athabasca (present day northern British Columbia, Alberta, and Southern NWT) Fur Trading Departments or Districts (BC Métis Federation n.d.).



## ***Background Information***

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The BC MMRP, sponsored by the MNBC, is a catalogued database for information on historical Métis communities. In some cases these documents are available for download. A search of the area found numerous documents such as journal articles relating to fur trade, history, outposts and employees; death and marriage certificates; and HBC post histories (BC Métis Mapping Research Project n.d.).

The BCMRP also includes a *Map of Places Significant to the Métis in British Columbia*. A search of this map did not return any results for the Social and Economic RSA or Land Use RSA associated with the KSM Project.

## 4. Métis Interests

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Information related to current uses in the Land Use RSA based on the available secondary information is provided in the following section. The term “interests” is used to include activities as they relate to hunting, trapping, fishing and plant harvesting.

### 4.1 British Columbia Métis Mapping Research Project

The BC MMRP contains a number of databases that aim to document Métis presence and activities on the land. The database includes the “Harvester Survey and Mapping Tool”, the purpose of which is to inventory past and current Métis harvesting frequency in the province. The information is organized by watershed, age of the harvester (born before 1945, between 1945 and 1966, or after 1966), and harvest product. The database does not provide the origin of this information, such as dates of harvest, names of harvesters, or specific site references. The database provides a running total of the number of times Métis have recorded harvesting activities in a given watershed over time. No attempt was made to verify the information in the database or rectify apparent anomalies or inconsistencies in the data (e.g., the potential for double counting across watersheds).

For the purpose of this study, all ages by each harvest products were queried within the watersheds that overlap the Land Use RSA. The activities and frequencies, as of November 7, 2012, of these watersheds are noted in Table 4.1-1.

**Table 4.1-1. MNBC Database Results for Watersheds that Overlap with the KSM Project’s Land Use RSA**

Watershed	Harvest Product						
	Bear	Deer	Moose	Small Game	Birds	Fish	Non-timber
Lower Bell-Irving River Watershed	455	455	455	320	320	320	320
Upper Bell-Irving River Watershed	455	455	455	320	320	320	320
Unuk River Watershed	135	135	135	No data	No data	No data	No data

Source: (BC Métis Mapping Research Project n.d.)

## 5. Summary

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The desktop study did identify Métis hunting, fishing, and plant (non-timber) harvesting in the Land Use RSA. Harvests included birds, bear, deer, moose, small game, fish, and non-timber plant species.

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