

**K'ichii  
(Whitebeach Point)  
Traditional Knowledge Study  
for the Husky Oil Chedabucto  
Mineral Exploration**



**Tłıchǫ  
Traditional Knowledge  
and Land Use Study**



**Dedats'eetsaa:**  
Tłıchǫ Research & Training Institute  
[www.research.tlicho.ca](http://www.research.tlicho.ca)

**2015**



# K'ichii (Whitebeach Point) Traditional Knowledge Study

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For the  
Husky Oil Chedabucto Mineral Exploration

Tłıchq Research and Training Institute  
Tłıchq Government

2015

K'ichii (Whitebeach Point) Traditional Knowledge Study  
For the Husky Oil Chedabucto Mineral Exploration

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## Executive Summary

Husky Oil proposes to conduct test drilling for silica sand inland from K'ichì [Whitebeach Point]. The high-quality silica sand at K'ichì is proposed to be used for hydraulic fracking and oil extraction purposes in other areas of Western Canada. The proposed exploration project has been referred to the environmental assessment process under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act.

The purposes of the traditional knowledge (TK) study are to identify and document the areas of importance for the practice of land use and cultural activities in, and adjacent to, the proposed project area; to identify any impacts on the land and animals and, consequently, on the ability of harvesting for the Tłıchq and to deliver this information to decision makers and project-developers.

The study has documented the cultural importance of land use practices such as hunting, fishing and trapping in and surrounding the proposed project area. The land use activity of hunting is especially important, particularly for moose, woodland caribou and, in earlier times, barren-ground caribou. The shoreline of K'ichì provides easily accessible campsites for harvesters and travellers to take shelter from the winds and waves on the large lake Tideè [Great Slave Lake]. Key areas of cultural importance and practices have been identified, including one burial site. The proposed project area is characterised by its unique habitat primarily identified by its large quantities of fine sand. This particular habitat serves particular purposes for certain animal species.

The elders and harvesters involved in this TK study predict impacts to local animals, habitat and harvesting based on (1) deterioration of habitat, (2) possible pollution, (3) unfamiliar noise and traffic, and (4) the establishment of a dead zone around the proposed exploration/development area, with combined effects on the harvesting economy and culture. The establishment of a dead zone has direct impacts on the availability of furbearing animals and the subsequent yearly income of trappers; the availability and hunting of ungulates, and less accessible country foods, for hunters and their families; and the likelihood of less available fish stocks adjacent to the development area and reduced harvest of fish in areas adjacent to the development as a main staple food source for nearby communities.

To prevent the possibility of impacts on harvesting activities and cultural sites, the persons interviewed for the TK study have suggested protecting the following five areas: (1) the island Kòk'èdì [Old Fort Island], (2) the area Kwehàgee, and Kwehàgeet'aa [Wrigley Point], (3) the area surrounding the lakes Łietì [Chedabucto Lake] and Ts'ootì [Bras D'Or Lake], (4) the four islands on Tideè northeast of the proposed project area, and (5) the island Dìnàgàà, including the smaller islands connecting to the mainland. The suggested protection of these areas can keep intact the cultural value of these important historical sites and maintain the possibility of future harvesting activities.

The TK study was based on six elders and harvesters from the Tłıchq community of Behchokò, and was conducted between December 2014 and March 2015.



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## Tłchq Place Names

Tideè – Great Slave Lake

K'ichì – Whitebeach Point

Dìnàgà – Island on Tideè

Nłhshì - Old Fort Rae

Enòdaa – Trout Rock

Whòsìwekqò - Blackduck Camp

Łietì - Chedabucto Lake

Ts'ootì – Bras D'Or Lake

Kòk'èhdi – Old Fort Island

Zàhdia - Louise Island

Kwehàgeet'aa - Wrigley Point

Kwehàgee – The elevated points of Kwehàgeet'aa

Tàlkè deè - Boundary Creek



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## 1.0 Introduction

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The Calgary-based company Husky Oil proposes to conduct test drilling for silica sand. Husky had planned to begin drilling in March 2015, inland from a well-known area for Tłıchq: Whitebeach Point.

Due to the broad public concern surrounding the proposed drilling and the possibility that positive test results would lead to a full-scale excavation of the silica sand in the area, the Wek'èzhì Land and Water Board referred the project to the environmental assessment process under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act. Currently, the new start date of test drilling is undetermined. The high-quality sand found at Whitebeach Point is intended to be used for hydraulic fracking and oil extraction purposes in other areas, such as Western Canada.

A traditional knowledge study was initiated in December 2014 to conduct research of the area from the perspective of Tłıchq elders and harvesters who have used the proposed development area since time immemorial. The purpose of the study was to identify, understand and document the traditional knowledge of Tłıchq elders and harvesters of the proposed development area: Traditional knowledge includes cultural and historic values based on the historic and current land use. When describing current land use, the elders include the possibility of future land use by the younger generations of Tłıchq.

For the Tłıchq, Whitebeach Point is referred to as K'ichì. Thus, the report uses the word, K'ichì, with regard to Whitebeach Point and the entire area proposed for drilling, as outlined in Map 2: Proposed Development Area. Other Tłıchq place names in the area are listed under Tłıchq Place Names on Page 6.

The knowledge disclosed in this report describes the cultural values and significance of K'ichì. However, this report provides only a handful of accounts from a limited number of people. The significance of K'ichì lies in the actual use, activities, feelings and values of being on the land by the people of the communities; the accounts in this report aim to provide a glimpse into them. When reading through the following sections of land use and traditional activities, it is useful to interpret this information from the framework of the Tłıchq cultural context, and the consequences such development has for the harvesters and elders who have provided the content and the overarching perspective of the conclusions in the report. For there to be any potential outcome of such study, the elders are clear about their wishes: it must be shared with outsiders, decision makers and development companies, who will read, analyze and make decisions—based on the words they convey in this report.

This report follows the tradition of the previous TK reports, completed by Tłıchq Government, and relies on the Tłıchq concept of ndè when referring to the land. The concept of ndè has a broader meaning than the English word, land, and can refer to a whole ecosystem or environment, “however, where ecosystem is based on the idea that living things exist in association with non-living elements, the Dogrib term ndè’ is based on the idea that everything in the environment has life and spirit” (Legat, Zoe & Chocolate, 1995). The land is, thus, a social landscape where people, animals and natural elements engage in a social relationship based on respectful behaviours towards each other, in a similar manner to two persons relating to each other.

## 1.1 Background Information of Proposed Development

Husky Oil is exploring for a source of silica sand in the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.). Silica sand is used in numerous industrial processes, such as construction, ceramic and glass manufacturing, and hydraulic fracking. Husky's goal is to use silica sand for ongoing oil and gas operations in Western Canada. Aurora Geosciences Ltd., an N.W.T. company, works for Husky Oil to evaluate the quality of silica deposits and provide the extraction procedure. From December 2001 to February 2014, Aurora Geosciences staked a total of 72,996 acres for Husky Oil in the area inland from K'ichì (see Map 2: Proposed Development Area).

The project would be managed by Aurora Geosciences and would be based in Yellowknife. Any necessary equipment for the exploration project would be transported by aircraft or seasonal road. Fuel storage would be flown to site on demand and stored at the Department of Transportation's (D.O.T.) existing quarry site. A temporary tent camp would be established for emergency and safety support and would be removed after the exploration phase of the project.

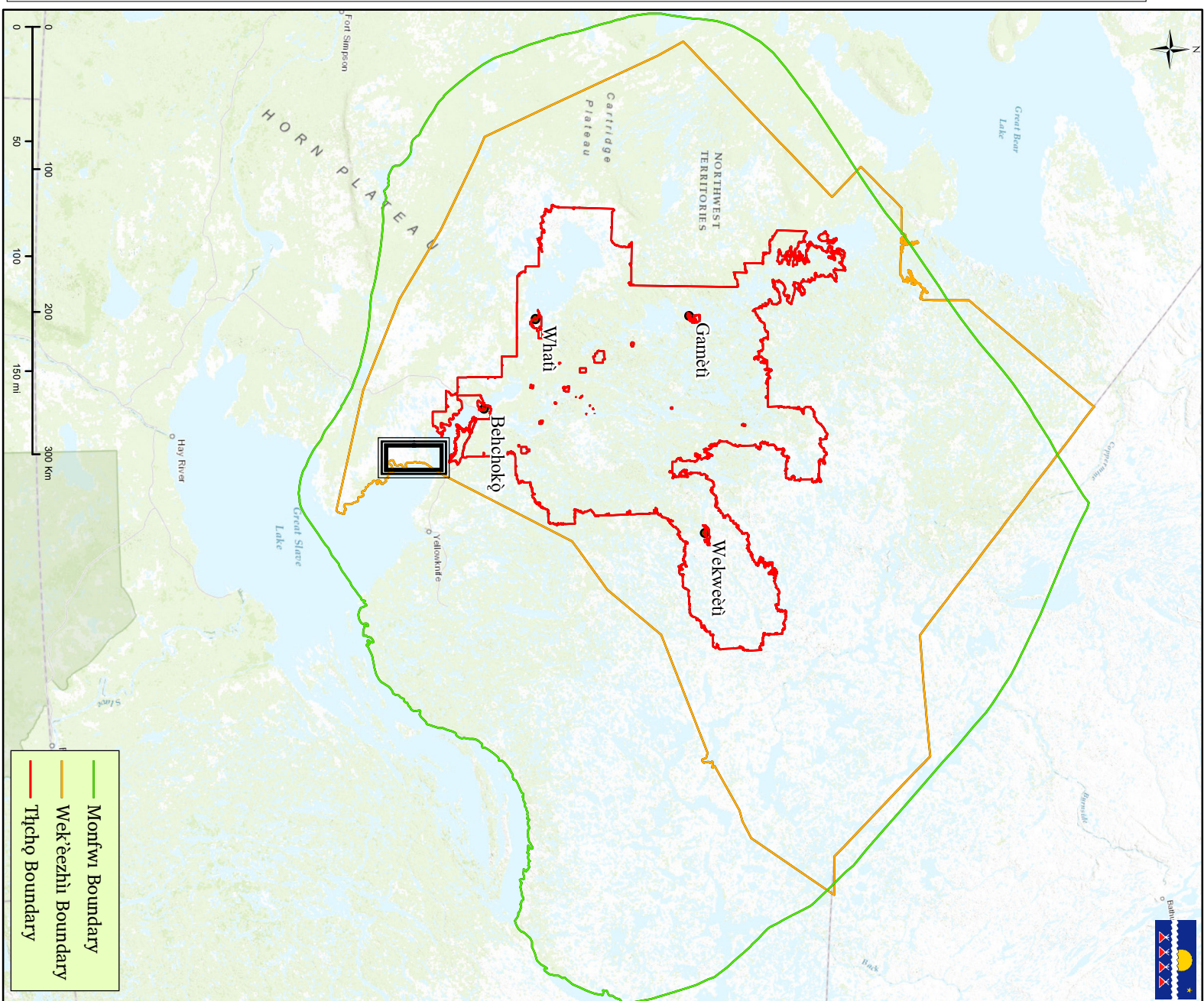
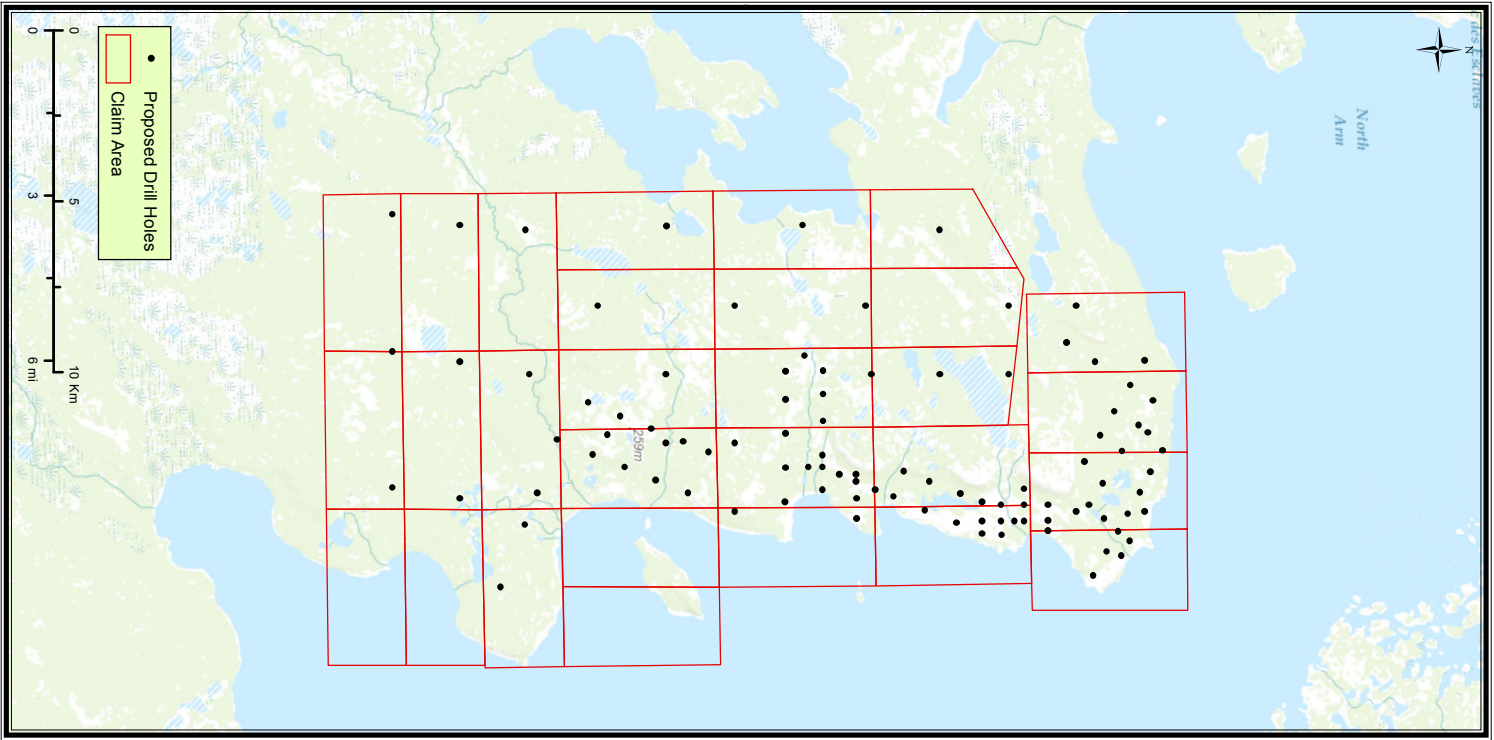
Husky has proposed to run the exploration program on a seasonal basis, from March 2015 to March 2020. A three-phase project has been planned, depending on the execution and results from each preceding phase of the project.

Phase 1 of the exploration project will evaluate the silica deposits conducted by reverse circulation drilling, diamond drilling and geophysical investigation. The proposed drilling program will last from 3-6 weeks during March to April of each year while the ground is frozen. Two drill rigs will work at the same time and are transported between the drill sites by helicopter. The location of the drill holes are shown on Map 2: Proposed Development. There are 200 total drill holes. Phase 2 is based on the successful identification of silica source; it involves the mini-bulk sample program of the silica. This means collecting a sample of silica from the test pits using a standard bucket loader and haul- truck for unconsolidated material, or diamond drill sampling of consolidated material. The material will be transported to a laboratory for testing. Phase 3 involves evaluation of the socio-economic, environmental and engineering feasibility to implement and develop a resource extraction strategy.

Husky states that all the drill set-ups and related disturbances will undergo reclamation activities and the exploration site will return to its natural state. The drill holes will be marked with a 2" x 2" post and backfilled, leaving a 4 inch diameter hole on the surface and a visible small and shallow depression. All equipment will be brought back to Yellowknife at the completion of each phase.



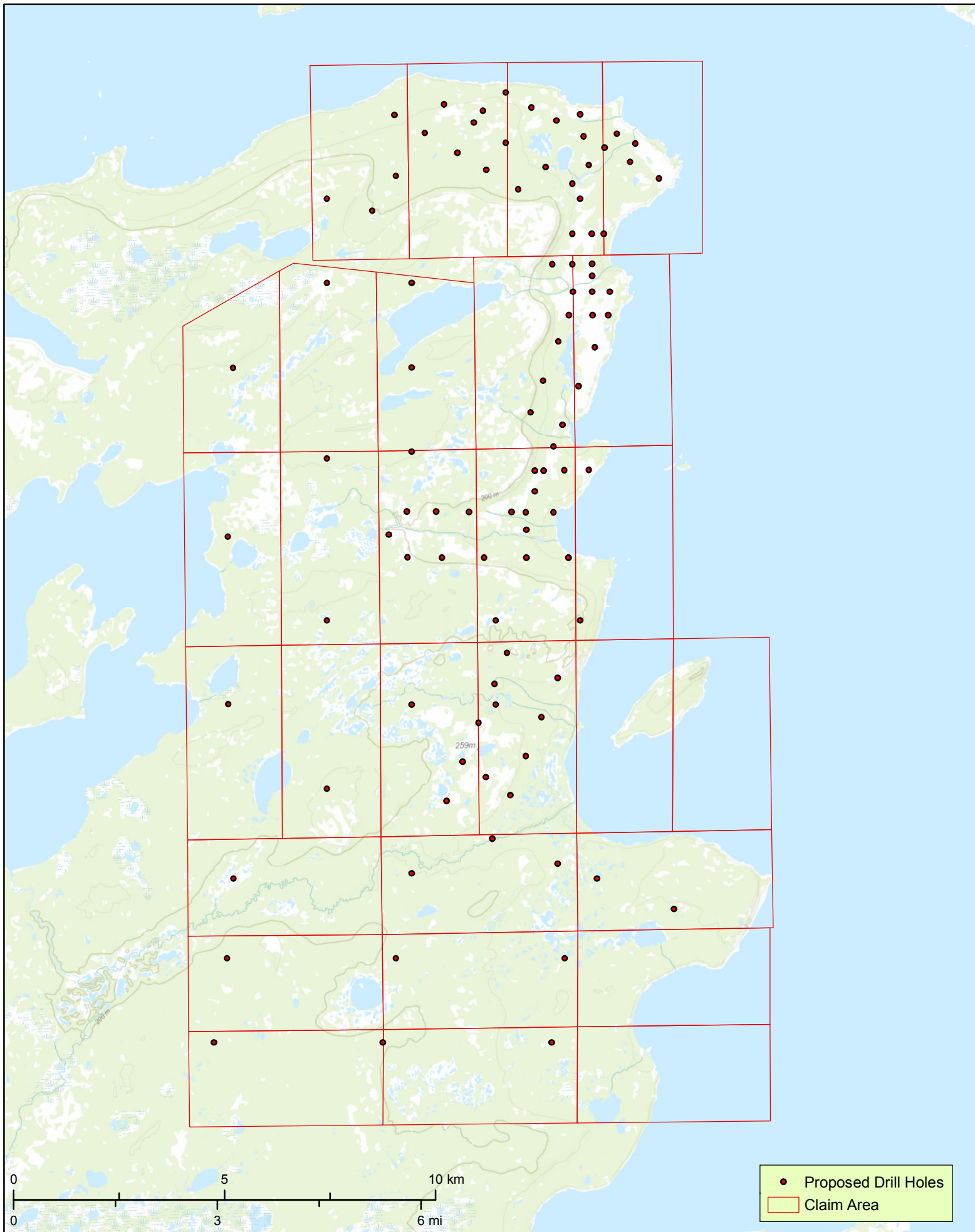
Map 1: Regional Study Area







## Map 2: Proposed Development Area



## 1.2 Outline of Report

This report describes the process of and results from the traditional knowledge study of the proposed development area. The report consists of 5 sections:

- Section 2 outlines the research methods, activities, and processes used to conduct the traditional knowledge study. This section describes how we, at the Tłıchq Research and Training Institute (TRTI), work and do collaborative research with our communities, harvesters and elders.
- Section 3 provides the results from the research. The research results are comprised of three parts. The first part describes the cultural importance of K'ichì through detailed descriptions of Tłıchq historic and current land use and the significance of place. The Tłıchq elders are familiar with the presence of extractive resources industry on their land, they want outsiders to understand why the area is important for them, and suggested areas they would like to see protected from development. The second part describes the predicted impacts to local animals, habitat and harvesting, if the project were to move forward. This section includes description of animal habitat in the area, the importance of K'ichì's particular ecosystem for certain animal species, and how the proposed development will impact Tłıchq land use and their sense of belonging to the place. To end the discussion, the third part includes the elders' emphasis on possibilities of future employment at the site, and their recommendations for the best ways for industry and aboriginal groups to work together.
- Section 4 provides a description of the suggested protected areas and burial sites.
- Section 5 describes future research and activities needed to understand and finalize the traditional knowledge research.

## 1.3 Traditional Knowledge Studies

Part of successfully maintaining a harvesting economy in the sub-arctic environment requires accurate knowledge of the minute details of animals' activities, their habitat and feeding preferences. An economy based on hunting requires intimate knowledge of the changes in the animals' seasonal movement, their appearance, breeding cycles and especially their sensory capacity for human approach. Such knowledge is based on an intimate relationship between the harvester and the animals. Harvesting is of central importance to the Dene economy, and knowledge of the seasonal movement and habitat preference for each hunted animal is vital for successfully securing meat.

To understand the complex knowledge base of indigenous societies, one must consider the amount of time the Tłıchq people have lived on their land. For millennia, the ancestors studied and understood, in great detail, the cycles of the land and animals through each season, in order to know where and how to obtain necessary resources at any given time of the year. These understandings of people's relationship with the land do not only apply to the sub-arctic but are generally true for indigenous peoples worldwide. In describing the relationship between the aboriginals in Australia and their land, Wade Davis (2009) states:

Imagine for a moment if all the genius and intellect of all the generations that have come before you had been concentrated on a single set of tasks, focused exclusively on knowing a particular piece of ground, not only the plants and animals but every ecological, climatic, geographic detail, the pulse of every sentient creature, the rhythm of every breath of wind, the patterns of every season (p. 157).

Davis illustrates how a people who have occupied one land historically bind all of their knowledge and philosophy to the land. Thus, the strength of one's connection to the land is determined by the way he or she thinks about their existence within it.

Traditional knowledge is taught orally between community members. This method of learning makes the knowledge adaptive to new situations and observations and is, thus, not static. Knowledge is shared personally and often communicated by an elder when he or she thinks the receiving person is ready to learn. Orally-transmitted knowledge is based on cultural ways of behaving and relating together with the specific information. Traditional knowledge is thus a process of learning based on personal experience that then becomes one's perspective, rather than a series of facts that are universally true. As traditional knowledge is personal, a focus on who is right or wrong or what is true becomes insignificant, while a focus on whose perspective is presented is often more useful (Castellano 2004).

A traditional knowledge study focuses on peoples' knowledge of cultural values, activities, animals and environment in a defined area. Many, but not all, traditional knowledge studies are conducted in relation to proposed development projects. The purpose of identifying traditional knowledge relative to a specific area is to inform decision-makers and development-planners about histories, or possible spirit beings dwelling in a place that only the local people know about. Once identified, various measures or project alterations can be implemented to help avoid or protect the locations that the local people value. As such, traditional knowledge studies can help promote understanding of potential impacts on an area and its inhabitants from proposed developments. These studies are conducted with elders, men and women, and/or harvesters who have knowledge and personal experience of the issue or area under study.

In recent decades, there has been much debate over the different interpretations of the term "traditional knowledge" (TK). Traditional knowledge is claimed by some to be specific knowledge of animals, the environment, and their interactions. Huntington (1998) defined TK as "the system of knowledge gained by experience, observation and analysis of natural events that is transmitted among members of a community." This definition depicts traditional knowledge as a system of knowledge parallel to that of field biology. Others define traditional knowledge as a knowledge system based on a worldview that focuses on the complex whole, and includes more than the physical, technical view of the environment (Freeman 1992). Spak (2005) provides an alternative definition: "the culturally and spiritually-based way in which Indigenous people relate to their eco-systems." This interpretation highlights the interrelationship between culture, nature, and spirituality and emphasizes the importance of respectful relationships between people and the land.

The elders interviewed for this study place high value on the method of seeing and personally experiencing a place or situation in their evaluation of what is true. They are clear that the knowledge they shared in this study is not hearsay heard or read somewhere, but is true, as they have seen it with their own eyes and experienced it personally.



## 1.4 Tłıchq Research and Training Institute

The project was conducted by the Tłıchq Research and Training Institute (TRTI). The newly established Institute intends to bring together academic, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and corporate and local Tłıchq organizations to collaborate on research in social, cultural, environmental, health, and wellness concerns for the Tłıchq. The mandate of TRTI is to advance the study of Tłıchq lands, language, culture, and way of life through the promotion of research and its use in education, training, planning, and monitoring purposes.

TRTI pursues its mandate by promoting research projects and activities involving elders and youth; developing and training Tłıchq researchers; developing and using indigenous research design and appropriate community methodologies; publishing work in a variety of media including online at [www.tlcho.ca](http://www.tlcho.ca); developing the Tłıchq Digital Database of oral history, maps, photographs, video, and other documentary resources; reviewing proposed research submitted for licensing through the Aurora Research Institute; and providing support and assistance to approved research projects while promoting collaboration with academic and corporate partners.

## 1.5 The Tłıchq

On August 4, 2005, the Tłıchq Agreement—the first land, resource, and self-government agreement in the N.W.T.—came into effect. This Agreement was signed by the Tłıchq, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the N.W.T, and established the Tłıchq Government's full powers and jurisdiction over 39,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Tłıchq lands, wildlife, and resources. The Tłıchq Agreement not only created the Tłıchq Government, but also set its mandate to preserve, protect and promote Aboriginal and Treaty rights and way of life – including culture, language, heritage, lands, economy and resources – for all Tłıchq today and for future generations to come.

The significance of the Agreement is that the Tłıchq people have ownership of 39,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land surrounding the four Tłıchq communities, including surface and subsurface rights. The Agreement guarantees participation in the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resource Board and the Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board, the co-management boards governing the resources within Tłıchq traditional lands. The Tłıchq have their own lawmaking power over all Tłıchq citizens, including aspects of education, child and family services, income support, social housing, and other services (Government of the Northwest Territories 2008 Tłıchq Government 2014).

Historically, the Tłıchq people have been referred to as the Dogrib, but after signing the Agreement, Tłıchq became their official name. The four Tłıchq communities, Behchokò, Whatì, Gamètì and Wekweètì, are located in the boreal forest, but their traditional land stretches north of the tree line into the tundra, where many of their fall hunting grounds for caribou are located. The traditional land use areas of the Tłıchq lie within the boundary known as “Mqwhì Gogha Dè Njłtłèè” of which was outlined by Chief Mqwhì during the negotiations of Treaty 11 in 1921 (Helm 1994). The traditional land consists of the area between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, from the Horn Plateau in the southwest, and as far north as the Coppermine River and Contwoyto Lake (see Map 1: Tłıchq Regional Boundaries and Study Area).

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## 2.0 Methodology

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Following the methodological standards of the TRTI, this study applied a qualitative research methodology. This approach was based on workshops and individual, in-depth interviews, and worked closely with the elders and harvesters who have personal experience and knowledge of the proposed development area.

### 2.1 Interviews

The interviews involved a combination of semi-directive and open-ended interview techniques. These two techniques allowed for fluidity and flexibility in the interviews, which is an essential part of research with indigenous elders (Struthers 2001), and created a comfortable space for elders to freely share their knowledge and tell their stories while continuing to follow the objectives of the research. The individual interviews lasted from one to two hours in duration. The interviews were recorded with digital recorders, and qualified local translators transcribed the interviews into English. The language used for the research was Tłjchq or English, depending on the preference of the participants. Sometimes a combination of both languages was used. A total of 6 interviews were conducted in Behchokq. The interview guidelines are outlined in Appendix A.

The interviews did not systematically follow the questions outlined in Appendix A: Research Guidelines. Based on professional experience working with Tłjchq harvesters and elders, the interviews followed the lead of the topics the elder wanted to speak about regarding the issue. The sections in the research guidelines were then marked off as the conversation unfolded. Any topics not addressed by the elder/harvester were specifically asked about in a later part of the interview. This interview technique applied to both the open-ended and semi-structured methods. The differences in techniques used during the interviews were often based on the personal characteristics of each elder. Each elder had different knowledge and different ways of expressing himself. Some elders elaborated more than others and expressed themselves in long monologues. During such interviews it was better to adapt to the characteristics of the elder and sit and learn rather than interrupt with a series of questions (Jacobsen 2011). This method follows the cultural characteristics of learning among the Dene and Tłjchq cultures, in which learning is mainly done by personal observation and experience and storytelling, rather than solely by direct questioning (Legat 2012; Goulet 1998). The open-ended/semi-structured interviews, in which the elder took the time to explain the areas he felt were important, were usually the most successful and insightful interviews.

A note should be made of the context and use of the questioning process during interviews with Tłjchq elders. The interview is comprised of the two actions of teaching and learning: the elder is the teacher while the researcher is learning. The Tłjchq, as with other Dene peoples, have similar ways of teaching and learning that are different from those of Euro-Canadians. In many ways, the elder wants the researcher to learn in the same ways as they learn, preferably through personal experience and observation (Goulet 1998; Guedon 1988; Ridington 1988). The use of direct questions yielded useful information and descriptive stories of the land, but as stated above, the most informative interviews were those in which the elders took the role of storyteller and described their own experiences from the land. This method of research is more in-tune with Tłjchq traditional forms of teaching and, thus, enhanced the research process.

## 2.2 Analysis

Content analysis of the interviews consisted of applying identifying main categories and subsequent codes to all the information, starting first with the notes and transcripts from the focus groups and interviews. Broad categories quickly emerged, such as "trapping" or "hunting". Once these broad categories were identified, sub-categories or codes were identified, such as "moose" and "woodland caribou" under the broader category of "hunting". Several broad categories and numerous codes were identified over the course of reviewing all the interview notes and transcripts. The last step in the analysis was to select parts of the elders' statements to be included under each category. This was of particular importance, as it provided each category with meaning and personal stories from the elders' lived experience on the land. Once no further categories had emerged, and the researchers were satisfied that all the cultural values and activities in the study area had been identified, the maps and report were produced.

## 2.3 Research Participants and Activities

The research involved a total of six elders and harvesters from Behchokò (a list of the participants is in Appendix B). The selection of participants was completed using a snowball technique (Bryman, Alan & Teevan 2005). Several respected, knowledgeable elders in the community were asked to identify other knowledgeable elders and harvesters who have extensive knowledge and personal experience of the study area; these persons subsequently identified other harvesters.

In Behchokò, six persons were involved in the following research activities:

- December 3, 2014 - one workshop with a total of six elders and harvesters;
- December 4, 2014 - three individual interviews; and
- December 5, 2014 – three individual interviews.

## 2.4 Geographical Scope of the Study

The geographical study area focused on the proposed development area at K'ichì. The research focused first on the local study area, specifically on the sections proposed for development; and second, on the ties between the local study area and a larger geographic area. As the Tłìchq travel long ways to harvest a variety of resources on their land, it was important to also focus on a larger geographical scale to understand the relevance of travel routes and animal migration into the study area. This dual focus allowed for an understanding of the functions of the proposed development area in Tłìchq culture and harvesting economy, both locally and in a larger geographical context.

The elders recorded their knowledge directly onto printed maps of the area surrounding K'ichì (scale 1:100,000 for the larger region and 1:55,000 for the local study area), during the workshop and individual interviews. Printed maps were used during the workshop. For three of the individual interviews, Google Earth was used to record elders' knowledge; where possible, an eye altitude (the elevation of one's viewpoint) of less than 10 km in height was maintained. For the elders who were not comfortable with using Google Earth, printed maps (1:100,000 and 1:55,000) were made available instead. The traditional knowledge documented on the maps was digitized and entered into a GIS (Geographic Information System).

The study focused on the area immediately surrounding K'ichì, and its position in a larger geographical context. Therefore, the study was not tied to a specific kilometre count around K'ichì, as such an approach would limit the understanding of the study area. By using Google Earth, the elders were able to describe their use of travel routes commencing far from the study area in order to show how they would reach certain sections of the study area. Applying a dual geographical focus gave the opportunity to concentrate on specific details of the proposed development area and understand its importance within a larger context.

## **2.5 Limitations of the Report**

This study is based on the traditional knowledge of only a small selection of harvesters and elders who have used and will use the area. A note needs to be included about the traditional knowledge of elders. Traditional knowledge should not be interpreted simply as a set of data, but knowledge that is connected to a way of life and infused with emotions, beliefs and personal experiences. A written TK report should not be seen as a collection of a community's knowledge as a whole but more as a reflection of knowledge, concerns and meanings shared in the process of a research project, under the confines of a limited time frame. Furthermore, when TK becomes disconnected and taken out of its original, oral, cultural context, and written into a report, some elements of its significance may become altered.

Only six people participated in this study; thus, the results are based on the knowledge and experiences of just a few community members and are not a comprehensive representation of the whole Tł̓chq̓ community's use of the study area. However, these results can be seen as an expression of land use indicative of how other community members have and would interact with the area.

The verification process of this study has yet to take place. This report is a demonstration of the extent and details of cultural values and traditional knowledge in its broad sense within the proposed development area. The original intent of the study was to hold a traditional knowledge research camp in June 2015, at which time the verification process was to take place. Further TK research will be completed as the proposed development project moves through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.



### 3.0 Research Results

K'ichì has several aspects which are important to consider when describing the Tłıchq connection to its immediate and surrounding area. The first requirement in understanding its significance is to listen to the words of the people who have personal experience of the place, and who know of the place from the stories of the ancestors who lived and hunted in the area. Moise Rabesca lives only a short boat ride from the proposed development area. He has hunted and fished there all his life, and travelled extensively along the shores of Tideè (Great Slave Lake).

The reason why K'ichì is important to us is because that land has mostly been left undisturbed and people have hardly been on it. We want it to continue to be that way. Many people have benefited from it. The people gathered traditional medicine like tea made from the different trees on that land. There are many smooth round rocks along the shore that can be used to pound pemmican on. They find those kinds of rocks that do not crack.

Moise Rabesca, December 13, 2014

The elder, Philip Huskey, from Behchokò, has travelled throughout the Tłıchq traditional territory and part of his upbringing included living at such locations as K'ichì.

In all this area [K'ichì] there are places to set fish nets, sites to hunt ducks, beaver habitat, whitefish in the water, and muskrat. So, in those places, when they return in their seasons, there would be very many animals. In the past the people used to sustain each other on them. It was like having a feast. In those days there were no hamburgers so big that you have to almost break your mouth to bite into it...nothing like that in those days!

Philip Huskey, December 14, 2014

Before settlement, Tłıchq moved from location to location depending on the season and year. The changing of location corresponded to the movement and behaviour of animals, particularly barren-ground caribou, throughout their migrations. People would return to approximately the same areas year after year, and for some families, a preferred location was K'ichì and its environs. The areas on the northern shore of Tideè, opposite from K'ichì, were popular locations to return to during the summer months, while the water was open, but families also stayed there during the winter months.

The [ancestors] travelled all through this area; they knew where they were going. Every person that was traditional in the past has been through [K'ichì] because we are migrators, we are not the person who puts a house up lives there for twenty-five years. We put a tent up and live in there two weeks.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

#### 3.1 Entering K'ichì: Summer and Winter Travel Routes

It is impossible to have a proper discussion of K'ichì without talking about the large lake, Tideè. This report, along with most stories of K'ichì, begins from the entry point of Tideè. The lake is a central entry point to the area associated with K'ichì, both during summer with canoe or powerboat, and during

winter with dog teams and snowmobiles. The lake was used for harvesting purposes, but the lake is also a highway for travellers towards more distant regions. The lake has connected people from Behchokò, and, previously, Nìhshìi [Old Fort Rae], towards the east, to Yellowknife, Dettah, Lutselk'e, and south towards Hay River, Fort Providence and other communities on the Mackenzie River (for travel routes, see Map 2: Cultural Values). Many harvesters travelled from distant regions to Nìhshìi to trade in furs that they had caught during the winter seasons for western goods, such as metal tools, and consumer goods, such as flour, tea, sugar and tobacco. The same campsites that are used today were used by those harvesters on their way to Nìhshìi.

Many families used to live permanently or semi-permanently at the campsite called Whòsìwekòò [Blackduck Camp]. The place name has its origin in the person called Whòsìi, who built a log house by the creek (Legat 2011). The location is on the northern shore of Tideè, directly across from K'ichii, and a few kilometres west of Enòdaa [Trout Rock]. The many families and harvesters who used to live there easily travelled across Tideè, both during winter by dog team or snowmobile and during summer with boat and canoe. Harry Apples, an elder from Behchokò, was raised partly at Whòsìwekòò.

We lived at Blackduck Camp for almost thirty years, so I am familiar with all this area. I worked with my relatives when they hunted; when the barrenlands caribou migrated inland. The experiences of our ancestors are important for us, that is why we talk about them. On all of those islands there are places where we spent time and worked with our relatives. There are many old campsites on them. In the fall time people lived on those islands to gather fish. The land is beautiful that is why we want to talk about it.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

From Whòsìwekòò, Harry Apples and many other harvesters travelled and harvested further throughout the surrounding region and across Tideè into the area proposed for development.

Everyone who has been on the large lake, Tideè, knows that frequent strong winds cover the area, and with strong winds come waves. A lake the size of Tideè experiences waves that at times become large and dangerous for travellers. Thus, it is essential for travellers to constantly know their exact location in case they need to find immediate shelter. The lake bottom is covered with underwater reefs and shallow areas that must to be avoided for safe passage into the sheltered bays and coves. It is here that K'ichii plays one of its key roles as a marker and a landmark - a well-known site that people easily recognize because of its protruding location into the lake and its particular natural features. Moise Rabesca, who often travels in the area, described the importance of the landmark.

Whitebeach [Point] is important because it was used as a traditional marker. When traveling on the Great Lake, we come to that rock outcrop point, we know what direction we are going.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

When experienced travellers teach the younger ones to travel on the lake, one of the first things the elders stress is to always aim for the island or point furthest out into the lake. The point furthest out is K'ichii. This has been true for many generations travelling and harvesting throughout the area, as it is true for travellers and harvester today. Additional to being a land marker, equivalent to serving as a lighthouse for travelers on the ocean, the bays on the northern and eastern shores of the proposed development area serve as protected coves to seek refuge if waves grow too large or winds too strong.

Consequently, people follow the shoreline while travelling, since it is easiest to find their bearings from there; to easily discern their location and direction; and to seek refuge if weather changes and they need shelter.

If they travelled by boat, they travelled mostly along the shore, because they could land if the waves were too rough. As well, when they travelled along the shore, they would hunt animals like woodland caribou and moose, and on some points they always like to set their fish nets off from the points and seek shelter if the wind is too strong to go on.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

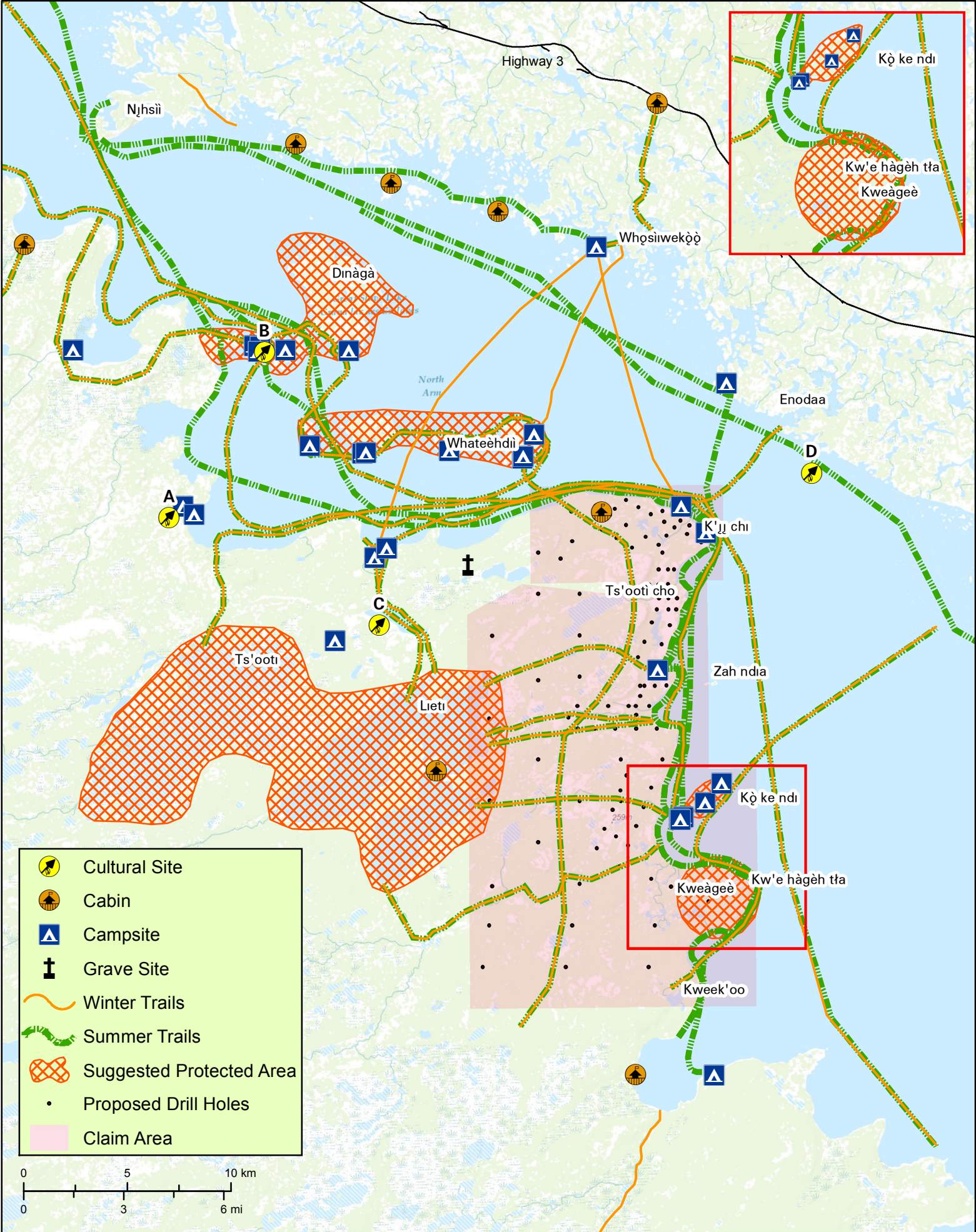
Following a familiar shoreline serves many purposes. Most Tł̓chq̓ who travel on the land are hunters, trappers and fishermen. Thus, the rifle is always close by when following the shoreline. If one has luck and an animal appears, a hunt usually ensues. Map 3: Cultural Values outlines the network of travel routes to, from and along the proposed development area. The trail network is drawn on the lake itself so exact routes are dependent on the weather conditions on the traveling day but the trails demonstrate the approximate direction of travel. Numerous campsites along the route are used during travel and harvesting times.



Picture 1: Sand dunes towards Tideè. Photo: Tessa Macintosh



Map 3: Cultural Values





### 3.2 Islands and Campsites

The campsites are mainly located in the bays and on each of the numerous islands in the region, sheltered from the wind and waves of the large lake. The location of campsites on the islands alters depending on the direction of wind and waves. During summer months, the campsites on the islands are used more frequently, as they are more accessible to the wind which helps to ward off insects, and to minimize contact with black bears. In fall and winter, the colder months, campsites are set back, amongst the shelter of trees.

Two islands, Zàhdia [Louise Island] and Kòk'èhdiì [Old Fort Island], on the eastern shore of K'ichii, are key islands for the Tideè traveller. The islands have great cultural value; historically, they served as popular campsites. Harvesters travel along the eastern shore in search of animals, or in transit to farther communities, such as Fort Providence, at the mouth of the Mackenzie, or Hay River. Zàhdia is often used as campsite, because, while it's an island, it's also sheltered from the wind and waves. The island is good rabbit habitat and is said to have a considerable rabbit population, which travellers harvest while camped there.

The island name Kòk'èhdiì translates literally to “empty campground island,” and has been used for that purpose as far back as elders can recall. The large island served as a refuge for lake travellers. Moise Rabesca remembers:

Once, my father told me a story about when there was no space to park birch bark canoes at Njshìi Point. It was the only place to trade in our furs so many people went there to trade. He said they paddled back north after trading their furs. Those who wanted to go south toward Fort Resolution would stay overnight on Kòk'èhdiì (Old Fort Island). My father said lots of people stayed overnight on that island, many people took refuge there from strong winds.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

As Moise described, travelers to and from other regions stayed at Kòk'èhdiì on their way to Njshìi. However, the island was not just a stopover point, it was also a place where families stayed for long periods of time. The island is of considerable size and holds enough firewood and other necessary resources. While staying on the island, hunting and trapping on the mainland towards Łietì and fishing were people's primary activities. The fish net site Kwehàgeet'aa [Wrigley Point], where fish nets made of willows were used (see discussion in sections 3.5.5 Fishing, and 6.0 Suggested Protected Areas), was likely frequented by people staying at Kòk'èhdiì. The elder, Harry Apples, told stories of his travel to the island.

This place must be what they call Kòk'èhdiì. The people travelled all through this area. In this area [eastern shoreline of K'ichii] where there are no islands, people would go through there only when it is not windy.

At one time there were many people living on this island. Before, people like Wìdà Thomas and many other people lived on that island. They were fishing there all winter long. I have visited them on this island. We travelled all over here by dog team. There is good firewood on this island. I used to get wood from this area by dogs. There are lots of good memories like that from those days.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

Following Harry's description of the island, elder Louis Flunky tell stories of the times when he and his family stayed at the island for up to a year at a time. During that time, he travelled by dog team along his trapline from their camp at Kòk'èhdii up the river to Łietì and on Birch Creek towards Birch Lake (see Map 4: Harvesting). These are prime campsites inside the proposed development area: they are sheltered by bays and islands from the frequent wind and waves on the vast lake, Tideè.

### 3.3 Story of Man with Knowledge of Fast Snowshoes

At one of the campsites along the shore of Tideè, in the proposed development area, there used to live a man with knowledge of fast snowshoes. There is a story of this man, told by Charlie Apples, and he refers to the story as a legend from before our time. The person was chased by an enemy tribe across Tideè towards the northern shore by Enòdaa. He was able to outrun his enemies but, unfortunately, he had eaten the throat of a trout which made his snowshoe laces come loose. Charlie Apples told this story:

About a man named Tł̥tsq̣keè, or Tł̥keè, I heard that old story. It was said that a group of people were living somewhere around here. It is an old story told by the people. It was said that a man was living with his mother. At that time there were lots of trout here at Tăîkè deè [Boundary Creek]. The people used to go there to eat trout. In those days, I don't know what people they were, but they are called Nàht'j̥. It was said they club people to death.

One old man was gifted as one whose dreams come true. A young man who was over-confident because he had knowledge of a fast snowshoe (ʔahdeht'q̣q̣) said to his mother, "Cut out a pair of snowshoe laces for me from that moose hide you are keeping." (The word 't̥q̣q̣ nàteè means to be gifted as a dreamer whose dreams come true).

Since the [old] man's dreams came true, the young man said to the man, "True dreamer, dream for me." He asked this because tomorrow they were going out to get fish. In the morning when the young man woke up, as he was carrying his blankets home, he said to the man, "Well, true dreamer, I asked you to dream for me, what have you dreamed for me?" So the man said to him, "What should I dream about but islands in this sandy place where your dead body was laying on a lake. A raven was circling above it. That was my dream of you." But the young man didn't want that for himself because he was confident he had knowledge of flying snowshoes (ʔahdeht'q̣q̣). This is the story of the people of long ago.

That dreamer is said to be a dreamer whose dreams come true but the young man thought he will make the dream about himself become untrue. So he went to where they were going to eat trout. As he started out, the Nàht'j̥, the enemies, were clubbing the people to death in the morning. They ran after the people and killed more of them. That young man was already running far ahead of them because he knew how to make snowshoes. He ran a great distance ahead of them.

It is said that when one eats a trout throat the laces of our snowshoes will always tear. So he thought he would make the dream of the dreamer turn out to be untrue.

So he said confidently, “Give me some of that trout throat,” even though he didn’t want it for himself. So they gave him trout throat and they ran away from him. It wasn’t far before his snowshoe laces tore and it kept tearing. He couldn’t keep them tied. He kept tying them together and ran ahead again.

Now, all the other people had run past him. Then the enemies caught up with their victims and they killed them on that lake. The young man didn’t want them to kill him on the lake. There were islands in the area so he said to them, “Let me go ashore on one of those islands, then kill me.” So they let him go on one of those islands and it is said they killed him there. It happened on any one of those islands, that is what they did to him. That is how I heard the story; it is a legend from before our time. Since we tell stories that were told by other people, whether it is true or not is not known.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

The story is said to have occurred in the proposed development area across Tideè and along the shore of the northern side of the lake. The approximate location of where he was killed is labelled as D under Cultural Sites on Map 3: Cultural Values. Their camp was somewhere in the K'ichì area. From there, they paddled to Tàikè deè to fish for trout. When the enemy attacked, the man ran across the lake with attackers behind him to the islands on the northern shore of Tideè.

### 3.4 Harvesting

Many families used to have long-term settlements along both the southern and northern shores of Tideè. The most populated areas were along the north shore of Tideè from Njshìr towards Enòdaa . Along with fishing, hunting was the main method of sustaining families and communities with food, while trapping was the main source of income. Although people no longer live permanently in the area, the cabins and small settlements are maintained and used on a seasonal and weekend basis. Consequently, these cabins serve as a base for harvesting activities conducted throughout the lake and lands on both sides of Tideè. Harvesters easily cross the lake from the north side of Tideè to enter K'ichì for harvesting and camping purposes.

We use the Whitebeach area for hunting. There are lots of moose there, caribou, and it’s good for trapping, and we set the fish nets at the tip of Whitebeach Point. In the summer when the duck migrate back a lot of ducks usually go there, like the surf ocean scoter (yàzqa), white winged scoter (wedàek’oo) and geese (xah).

At Kòk’èhdiì, there is lots of firewood along the shore, which can be used for overnight stays. Walking on the beach from K'ichì to Kòk’èhdiì, there are many abandoned cabins. And, if they are going to K'ichì in the winter, they travel along the boat trails.

Moise Rabesca, December 3, 2014

According to Moise Rabesca, an active harvester who has travelled all his life throughout the area, the land is rich in resources and used for all types of harvesting. The area is a combination of forested lands and smaller lakes, all accessible from Tideè. This combination allows for a rich resource base which the harvesters use during all months of the year. The main cultural values in the proposed development area for the harvesting culture and economy are hunting, fishing and trapping.

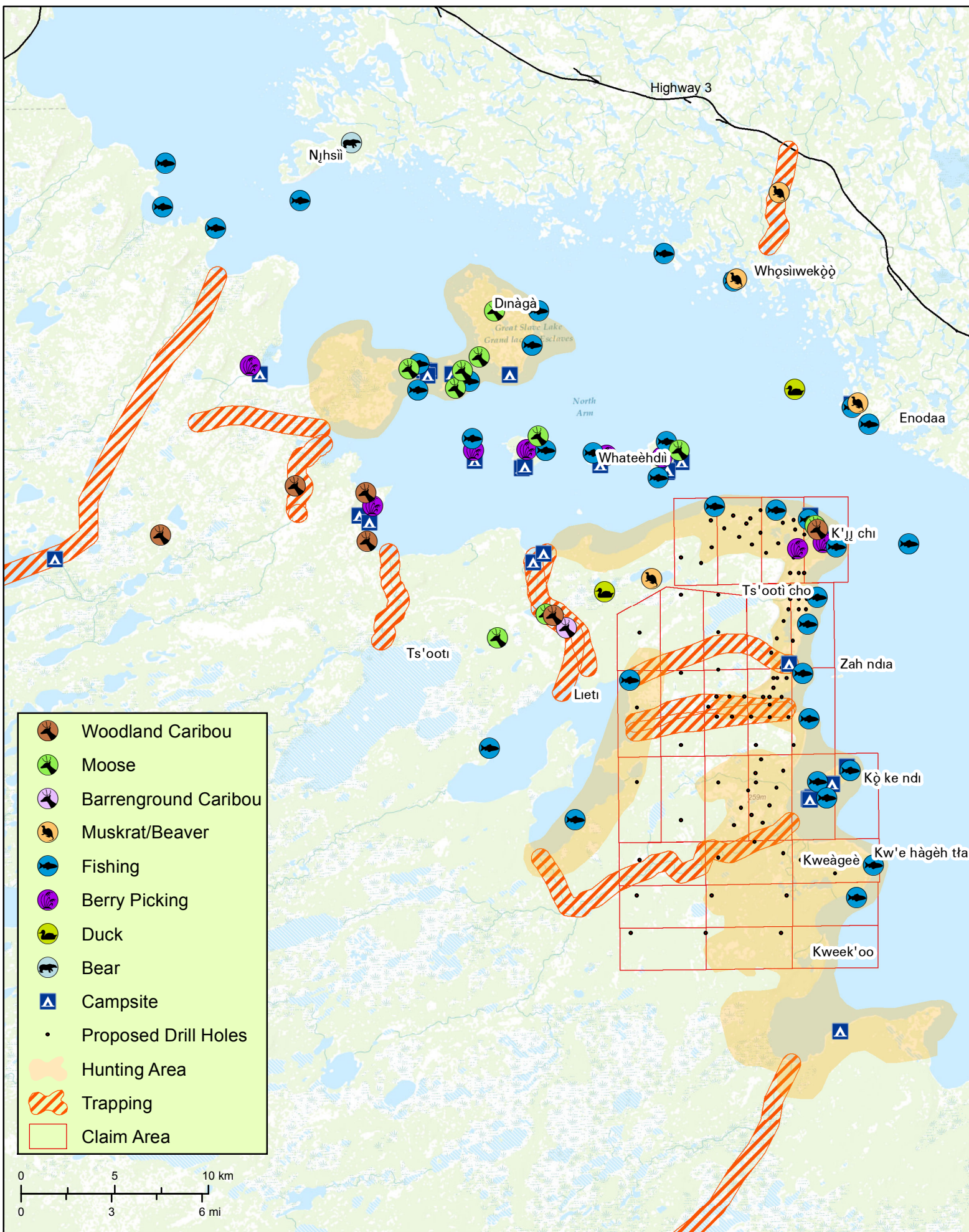
The elders often describe the land as a freezer or a store. With the right knowledge, skill and equipment, they can travel on their land acquiring meat for sustenance; fur that can be traded for income; and resources that can be fashioned into tools and shelter. With the right knowledge, passed down from their ancestors, the land is an open store that provides a comfortable living in the northern environment. That is why, as this report attempts to show, the elders and harvesters respect the land and want its healthy and prosperous state maintained. The following sections describe the process and value of each harvesting activity conducted in and around the proposed development area.



Picture 2: Berries growing in the sand. Photo: Tessa Macintosh.



# Map 4: Harvesting



### 3.4.1 Hunting

The proposed development area is a popular year-round hunting ground for Tłıchq̓. As previously stated, people do not currently live full-time in the area, but they often travel from Behchok̓, Edzo, or from their cabins alongside the highway to track and hunt animals in the proposed development area. Tłıchq̓ hunt there in all seasons, but fall is the main season for moose and winter is the time to find woodland and barren-ground caribou there. This section describes hunting for each specific ungulate species local to the proposed development area.

#### 3.4.1.1 Moose

Hunters travel across Tideè to enter the elevated area referred to as Nq̓dì [plateau], towards Łietì (Chedabucto Lake). The entire area is considered moose habitat and thus potentially good for hunting. Many hunters follow the shoreline by boat or canoe to look for moose, since travelling by water makes for easier transportation of the heavy load of meat back to camp. As Harry Apples describes, the hunters follow the shoreline to search for moose.

To Whitebeach [Point], on the lake this way, there is a small stream flowing out here. Once, when we were hunting there, I shot one moose and one woodland caribou too. We were traveling by boat. A long time ago our people used to travel in this area by boat, to hunt in the fall time. There were lots of people then. We would hunt along the shoreline because moose usually walk along the shores in the fall.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

Moose prefer areas along lakes and rivers where they can feed on willows, sedges, and plants that grow in shallow water. These natural features are key elements for sustaining a moose population. And though Tłıchq̓ mainly rely on caribou meat, in summer and fall time the main harvestable ungulate is moose. Moose provides an important source of meat in quantities large enough to support an entire family.

Hunters describe crossing Tideè, from camps either on the islands or on the northern side of the lake, to enter the forest at K'ichì. If hunters do not see moose along the shoreline, they follow the trails inland to the elevated area towards Łietì or the other smaller lakes in the area. If a hunt is successful, the animal is butchered and carried by the men back to the boats or canoes at the shore. At times, when waves are large or if darkness approaches, a temporary camp is established and hunters wait there for conditions to change, so they can transport the meat safely back to base camp. Charlie Apples, an elder from Behchok̓, used to, at times, live at Whq̓sìwekq̓ on the northern shore of Tideè. From the camp, he would cross the lake with other hunters to track and hunt moose inland from K'ichì.

We traveled across [Tideè] by dog team. We came to the shore and made a campfire. We unharnessed the dogs and they followed us as we climbed the ridge. We walked around the ridge with the dogs in hopes of finding moose tracks. There were moose tracks so the dogs chased after it and the dogs caught the moose. When we got there we shot the moose.

At that time of the year when the ice is thickly crusted the moose cannot travel fast because the ice hurts its feet. It has to walk carefully to protect its feet. On the other

hand, it is not easy to hunt woodland caribou on the Nqdi Plateau. If we hunt woodland caribou and follow its tracks, it will see us before we see it. It keeps an eye on us from way out in the bush and they can look through the trees where there are no branches. We might see it without being seen; otherwise we will not see them.

After we shot the moose and butchered it, we packed home portions of moose meat on our backs. We just cut up the meat and went back to the first camp we made where we had left the sleds and dog harnesses. We got back there and made a fire at our old campsite again. We went back again to where we shot the moose and then went back across the lake again. It was not far from our campsite.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

Charlie explained a usual hunting trip by traveling across the lake to the proposed development area to track and hunt animals. Besides from these kinds of trips, harvesters would also hunt for moose while staying at campsites in the area or while trapping. The area around the eastern shore of Łietì is recognized as good moose and woodland caribou habitat, and hunters often travel there to hunt along the shores of the lake.

### 3.4.1.2 Woodland Caribou

All of this area is woodland caribou country. From this area all the way to the shores across from Hay River there are woodland caribou and moose.

Louis Flunky, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2014

The entire proposed development area and the surrounding land is considered habitat for woodland caribou. As elder, Louis Flunky, says, the habitat extends across the entire forested area south to Hay River. The animals prefer to feed and rest in the forest and areas with many smaller lakes and ponds. The hunters describe the woodland caribou as shy and intelligent beings that are hard to track. Even if one is able to track the woodland caribou, they are known to be fast—often too fast to secure a successful hunt. Richard Rabesca, an active trapper and hunter from Behchokò, often observes woodland caribou while travelling on his trapline west of Ts'ootì [Bras D'Or Lake].

The country I went trapping in, there's lots and lots of woodland caribou tracks. You don't see them that much. I only saw them a couple of times, they are too fast for me, but I saw lots of woodland caribou tracks out there.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

The hunters often search for woodland caribou, even though a successful hunt is difficult to achieve, due to the shy and intelligent nature of the animal. Numerous forest fires in recent years have devastated much of the forage areas for woodland caribou, but herds of caribou still roam in the areas untouched by fire.



### 3.4.1.3 Barren-Ground Caribou

Barren-ground caribou used to frequent the shores of Tideè. The herds used to migrate towards the study area from their calving grounds in the Barrenlands to their wintering habitat in the forest during November and December. The herds enter the forest during freeze-up and feed in the forest during the winter months until March and April, when they start their migration north, back to the Barrenlands. During these winter months, the barren-ground caribou are usually hunted whenever and wherever they are found. The report New Research and Documentation relating to Kwetsotlàà states that barren-ground caribou was harvested along the northern shore of Tideè until the late 1980s (Legat 2011). Harry Apples, who used to live at Whòsiwekòò, has travelled throughout the proposed development area to hunt barren-ground caribou. In a similar approach to hunting moose, Harry followed the shoreline to search for tracks and then followed the trails inland towards Łietì to hunt.

Along this way [eastern shoreline of K'ichì], if there is a trail ahead we follow it. One time I went there with loose dogs, they would follow each other along the way. I travelled all along the shoreline here. Every once in a while when I went inland I would hunt moose.

Long ago barren-ground caribou used to come to the shore in this area. We used to travel toward this big lake, called Łietì, by dog team to hunt. All the people from Enòdaa used to go there by dog team to hunt. When the barren-ground caribou migrated to these shores, there was no highway at that time and there were no power lines to the Snare Hydro Dam. It was beautiful. Since the white people have come on our land everything seems to have changed for us.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

The harvesters say barren-ground caribou hardly migrate towards K'ichì anymore, but there have been caribou sightings by trappers. The caribou herds used to travel south towards Tideè, across the lake, and on towards feeding grounds in the forest on the southern side of the lake. In the last decade, there has been a decrease in sightings and hunting of barren-ground caribou in the area. The harvesters and elders stated several factors which have led to the discontinuation of the migration: (1) the large number of forest fires in the area has devastated the good feeding grounds; thus the herds choose to travel to other areas with better forage, (2) the numerous mines located along their migration routes has made the herds migrate in different directions, and (3) the construction of Highway 3, with the continuous traffic and noise between Behchokò and Yellowknife, has disrupted the passage of the caribou herds towards Tideè. While several factors have contributed to changing migration route, harvesters such as Richard Rabesca have still observed barren-ground caribou in the forest south of Tideè.

I saw one caribou tracks went straight across, they followed my trail all the way to this lake and I thought it was one caribou, one caribou... but when I got to this lake it was nine caribou on that lake. So, I think the caribou came from the north, from the north all the way. I think it was the Bathurst caribou herd what I saw. I didn't tell nobody because I thought about the future, I didn't mention to people I saw caribou because I didn't want people to go out there.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014



As Richard's statement demonstrates, there is a possibility that caribou herds still travel to the area. If population numbers increase in the future, there is a possibility that Tł̓chq hunters might again hunt caribou in the same areas their ancestors did. The main period for barren-ground caribou hunting is from freeze-up in November, when they travel south, until March/April when the herds start the long migration back to the Barrenlands. Due to the dramatic decline in the caribou population in recent years, hunting restrictions for the Bathurst caribou herd was introduced in 2010 and, during winter 2015, tighter regulations were established, restricting Tł̓chq hunters from harvesting the Bathurst caribou.

### 3.4.2 Harvesting Along the Islands

I don't like to mention good hunting spots to people because they steal our spots and people find out our spots. I am not supposed to talk about hunting spots and traditional trails and fishing sites and stuff because that's our sites and we try to keep it secret so that other people, outsiders, don't come in and ruin it for us. The old man [Jimmy Martin] told me that. I don't like to mention it, but I am going to do it now because this is an important area.

The one I am talking about right now there is moose and caribou, moose and caribou and maybe wolverines, wolves, fox and wildlife. The old man [Jimmy Martin] told me that this is where the moose like to travel. He told me that if you ever get hungry and there is no time to get food, or anything in the fridge, Richard, you can just get yourself out here right to these islands, between these islands and camp here. He said you'll never starve, ever, if you go to that area.

He told me that and to this day I keep it. It is like food for me. When there is no food for me, the caribou is cut off and we are not allowed to [hunt Bathurst caribou] anymore--the rules they impose on us--he said there are places where I can go hunting. He told me ...hunting woodland caribou, there's lots and lots of woodland caribou in this area. He said that those people they talk about, half of this place is woodland caribou; most of this spot is moose.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Without ruining the success of Richard's future hunt by revealing the exact location of his hunting spots, this report will state that Richard is referring, in general, to the peninsula and chain of small islands leading to the large island, Dìnàgàà, northwest of the proposed development area (labelled as B under Cultural Sites on Map 3: Cultural Values). Dìnàgàà and the islands that connect to the mainland are recognised as a valuable habitat for ungulates and other animal populations. The moose population follow the shoreline and swim out to the islands for fresh feeding and the cool breeze that keeps the bugs away.

Those islands, [Jimmy Martin] said people used to live there on that point too, on all that area. [Jimmy Martin] told me that people used to live there a long time ago. They used to go for fish, for the moose and for the trapping. Back then, the [Tł̓chq] used to be scattered —when he talks to me about those stories— back then when there was no houses, no government houses or stuff like that. All the people were scattered back then, they were scattered all over the country.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Many people had semi-permanent campsites and cabins on the islands and along the southern shoreline, and the cleared spaces from the numerous campsites are visible to travellers. The area is also recognized for the numerous good spots to set fish nets and secure large amounts of whitefish. The availability of both large quantities of fish and a healthy ungulate population made the area a valuable and secure place to set camp for certain periods of the year. The elder, Harry Apples, describes use of the island by himself and his ancestors.

This island is call Diagàht'à. This is Dinàgaà, right. I have also been on this island for a cook-out there. At that time, I was hunting for moose by boat. In this area, people were fishing when they got frozen in, so they spent the winter there.

Louis Mackenzie and I went this way by boat looking for a fishing spot to set our nets. We paddled this way looking for moose on this lake way out to this area. All these islands have been used by our people in the past. At this island, people could get fish so they put their nets in the water there. All of these islands are sandy islands. Before my time, my uncles and their families used to go trapping there, so in the past many people have been on these islands. We used to live on this particular island in the summer, and through fall time, hunting moose. In the summer, moose go to the islands to avoid the bugs.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2015

As Harry explains, the area among the island is used for harvesting activities, both along the shore by boat and on land. The elders emphasize that their ancestors thrived in that specific location since time immemorial and that the area, including the islands and the neighbouring mainland, are strongly valued due to their wide historical and current use among the Tłıchq. They also explain that the area contains sensitive habitat for many local animal species. Louis Flunky, an elder from Behchokq who has harvested animals and camped for many years in this area, describes the important value of the islands:

There are many campsites in this area...campsites can be seen when we go there by boat in the summer. There were many abandoned cabins there, also here on the point and also on this island [Dinàgaà]. At the last meeting, we had they said that this will be an important place to monitor. They are right because moose swim to the island. Because of that, our ancestors benefited and valued that island.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

### 3.4.3 Fishing

There is fish in Tideè from K'ichì to a couple of islands over there. Not too far into the lake, there is a wide, round, dark area in the water, good fish habitat where the fish raise their young. When the weather turns cold around February, the older generations of fish would go there with the young ones to where the water is deep, until spring. Then, in the springtime, there would be lots of fish again.

Philip Huskey, December 4, 2014

Every point of land into Tideè is regarded as a good location to set fish nets or use a fishing rod. The waters around northern shore of the proposed development area and around the tip of K'ichì are considered good fishing spots, as some areas are deep and hold large quantities of fish. As Philip Huskey described, during the cold months of winter, and especially in February, the older generations of fish follow younger and smaller fish to the deeper spots where they reside till spring and the increased intensity of the sun, which penetrates the ice cover, lights up the underwater environment.

Fishing is a highly-valued activity, as it is a relatively easy and secure way to supply oneself and one's family with food. Fish nets are most often part of the harvester's "toolbox" when travelling on the land. A fish net can be set with ease at most locations in the ice-free months of the year, and, with the specialized knowledge, can be set in winter. Fishing is usually a secondary activity conducted while being out on the land for such other purposes as hunting or trapping. However, at certain times of the year, such as in May and June, fishing is the main activity for the production of large amounts of dry fish, which can be stored away for the coming season. The harvesters know the exact locations where large quantities of whitefish can be caught with fish nets, and while they harvest in smaller quantities from these locations during most parts of the year, semi-permanent camps are set up in these spots during prime times for producing dry fish. These camps are set for a number of people that stay there for weeks until a large supply has been produced. These camps are usually set on islands, in order to avoid confrontations with black bears who have awoken from their winter hibernation, and are hungry for a quick meal of leftovers from the fish camps.

Inland from the shores of Tideè, there is one particular lake for fishing. The ancestors named the lake Łietì, which literally translates to "fish lake." The lake is described as shallow and without much current. The fish species in the lake are mainly jackfish, whitefish, suckers, with some trout. Fishing at this lake is usually done in conjunction with hunting moose or barren-ground and woodland caribou, or while trapping in the surrounding area. The lake Ts'ootì, directly west of Łietì, is supposed to contain fish, but none of the harvesters interviewed mentioned fishing in the lake. The elders believe there is an underwater channel that connects the two lakes, and thus regard the two lakes as one lake system.

Fishing has been conducted from the shores at K'ichì since time immemorial, and at the same locations used by Tłjchq ancestors are used by fishermen today. Rocks from the shoreline were used as anchors for fish nets back in the days, as Moise Rabesca explained:

Our elders collect rocks for their fish net's anchors. Some of the rocks were piled together around a tree trunk, I was wondering what they were. My late father said people did that for their fish net anchors.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

In earlier times, fish nets were made of willow. These fish nets were relatively light-weight and needed anchors at the bottom to secure the lower edge of the net to the lake bottom, keeping the net open for fish to swim into. At this time, several semi-permanent campsites were established on Kòk'èhdì and at Kwehàgee and Kwehàgeet'aa (Wrigley Point). People camped at these locations due to the particular fishing sites. At Kwehàgeet'aa, the rock slopes gradually into the water, which facilitates easier placement of the willow fish nets. The rock anchor would be thrown from the shore into the water. The heavy rock anchor would then draw the light willow fish net deep into the lake. Louis Flunky, an elder who used to trap and live at these sites, describes the location:

The area called Kwehàgee...when Jimmy Bearlake used to tell us stories, in the times when willow [fish] nets were used he said, from that rock point [Kwehàgeet'aa] sloping into the water they would throw rock anchors into the water that would pull the fish nets into the water.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

The fish nets were made from the bark of willows. Large quantities of willow bark were gathered in early summer. Making the fish net was time-consuming and the bark was kept in water during its construction in order to keep it moist. The moist bark was twisted together to form a long rope. Once numerous ropes had been made, they were knitted together to create the fish net. The net was then set in the lake, with rock anchors tied to the foundation, as Louis explained. As described in section 6: Suggest Protected Areas, Louis Flunky suggested the protection of this particular area due to the value of the significant cultural activities at this site and due to the natural features that facilitated the cultural use of the area.

In this area there are the places where our ancestors had their campsites, like out on this point [Kwehàgeet'aa]. It was before our time so we don't know whose camps those were out on that point.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

Louis Flunky talks about the historic use of the proposed development area for fishing. It is important to note that even though fishing methods have changed and that people do not live at the same location for such long periods anymore, the fish still frequent the same habitat around the rock points and other natural features. The elders have shared their knowledge of fish habitats to the local fishermen, who currently use the same rock outcrops to set fish nets to bring fresh food from the land to their families and communities, as their ancestors have done for millennia.

I used to have nets there for about two weeks. I used to go check it every day. I used to drive down and check my nets. I used to catch about seventy to eighty fish on one net every two days. In two weeks it was too much, I had to take my nets out because there was too much fish; I had to cut back.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

### **3.4.4 Trapping for Furbearing Animals**

Trapping is mainly conducted in the proposed development area during the winter months. The harvesters trap furbearing animals, such as martens, mink, otters, lynx, wolverines, foxes and wolves, although marten is the most sought after animal. Most trappers enter the K'ichì area from Tideè but one can also enter the trapping area via trails from Highway 3, south of Edzo. From Tideè, trails extend from the northern and eastern shores into the inland of K'ichì. Trappers follow these trails and set traps at various distances from the trail (see Map 4: Harvesting). The trails lead to the lakes, where harvesters set traps at certain locations along the shoreline.

The main season for trapping furbearing animals is from around the beginning of freeze-up in late October to the end of December, although some trappers continue throughout the remaining winter



months. The start of the trapping season depends on the depth of snow in the area. If there is a low snow base, trappers will wait for more snow to cover the trails so their snowmobiles can maneuver through them. Also, large tracts in the area have been ravaged by forest fires in recent years, and therefore, need an increased amount of snow to cover the amount of stumps and trees scattered on the ground. Richard Rabesca, a young harvester who was taught by the elder, Jimmy Marten, frequently travels in the area to hunt and trap.

I went hunting on that land for seven or eight years, roughly. I went out there with Jimmy Martin and he showed me the road and the area. He was the one who knew most of the area. He has been there before. He knew where he was going; he was my guide out there. I made a trail out there. I go trapping there - really good fur. There's lots of abundance of furs out there and the furs are really healthy. They are really healthy furs.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Louis Flunky, an elder from Behchokò, recalls the time when he and Jimmy Martin trapped with dog team.

At that time, there were hardly any marten, though there were tracks for marten, mink, and fox. Jimmy Martin was trapping around here; I was trapping with him. He would break trail for the dogs and I would drive the dogs after him. At that time, there were hardly any marten and there were no beaver.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

Trapping for muskrat and beaver is insignificant in the area, at least according to the harvesters consulted for this study. (Other harvesters we have not interviewed may say otherwise.) The reason why the muskrat and beaver populations are so low is because the terrain is muddy and marshy, and beavers and muskrat have not populated the region for long.

The trapping business has only been used in the winter time. I don't know anything about beavers or muskrat there. There's only marten, fishers, kingfishers, mink, lynx and fox. Sometimes there's white fox hanging around down there too and wolves, wolverines, lots, lots of mink and marten, fishers, and what was is it called tehji [otter].

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

Louis Flunky described how beaver and muskrat were introduced into the habitat:

There are no muskrat in this area. There are hardly any muskrat because it was mostly a muddy marshy area here. On that side of the lake there are hardly any muskrat but on this side of the lake to Yellowknife and Behchokò there are lots of muskrat. A long time ago there were no beaver in Behchokò. I think it was around 1953 when beavers were shipped in from Fort Smith. They placed some beavers at the mouth of West Channel on this side of the lake, along the edge of a rock outcrop there in an enclosed fence. They placed a number of beavers there.

They said that Benny Lafferty knew the area so they put two beaver in the plane with him. Ever since there have been beaver in Behchokò; before that, there were none. In all of this area, on this side, the beaver started to populate the area. In 1965 few people shot beaver so the beavers populated the area and there were lots of beaver.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

Beavers are famous for altering the natural landscape, and the introduction of beavers into the region had similar effects on the land as in other areas of Canada. Beavers cut down soft wood to construct lodges and dams, consequently flooding areas so they had increased access to tree stands. The alteration of the landscape had consequences for the water habitat for fish species as well. The elders state that larger fish used to swim upstream from Tideè but, since the rivers and streams became blocked by beaver dams, no large fish were observed upstream from Tideè. This was true for large jackfish up the stream by Whòsìwekòò and for trout in Tâikè deè.

Trapping is mainly completed during the winter months, and trapping for furbearing animals, such as beaver and muskrat, is conducted mostly on the north side of Tideè. In combination with trapping, other land-use activities, such as hunting for small or large game, take place. The harvesters always have their rifles ready to hunt for food. Fishing provides another stable source of food while the harvesters are on their traplines. During the winter, fish nets are set under the ice. Usually, the harvesters make holes in the ice relatively soon after freeze-up, while the ice is still relatively thin. In earlier times when trappers were out on the traplines for months at a time, fishing was also the main food source for maintaining one's dog team, which consequently aided in ensuring a successful trapping season. Alternatively, trappers can now travel from the community of Behchokò, or from the cabins along the highway, to the proposed development area with snowmobiles, within a single day, although most trappers bring tents so camp can be set for any number of days. It should be noted that the furbearing animal population has decreased in some areas in recent years, as the area has experienced numerous large and small forest fires; the fires have also made transportation through the forest difficult, particularly during periods of low snow cover. Richard Rabesca, an active trapper and hunter from Behchokò, has been extending his trapline towards the proposed development area over the past few years. Unfortunately, forest fires have made brush cutting and trail clearing almost impossible and his current strategy is to wait for some areas to grow back and natural elements to decay the numerous deadfalls, which will make transportation easier. Meanwhile he has been trapping in other regions, but will return in two or three years once the burned areas have started to regrow.

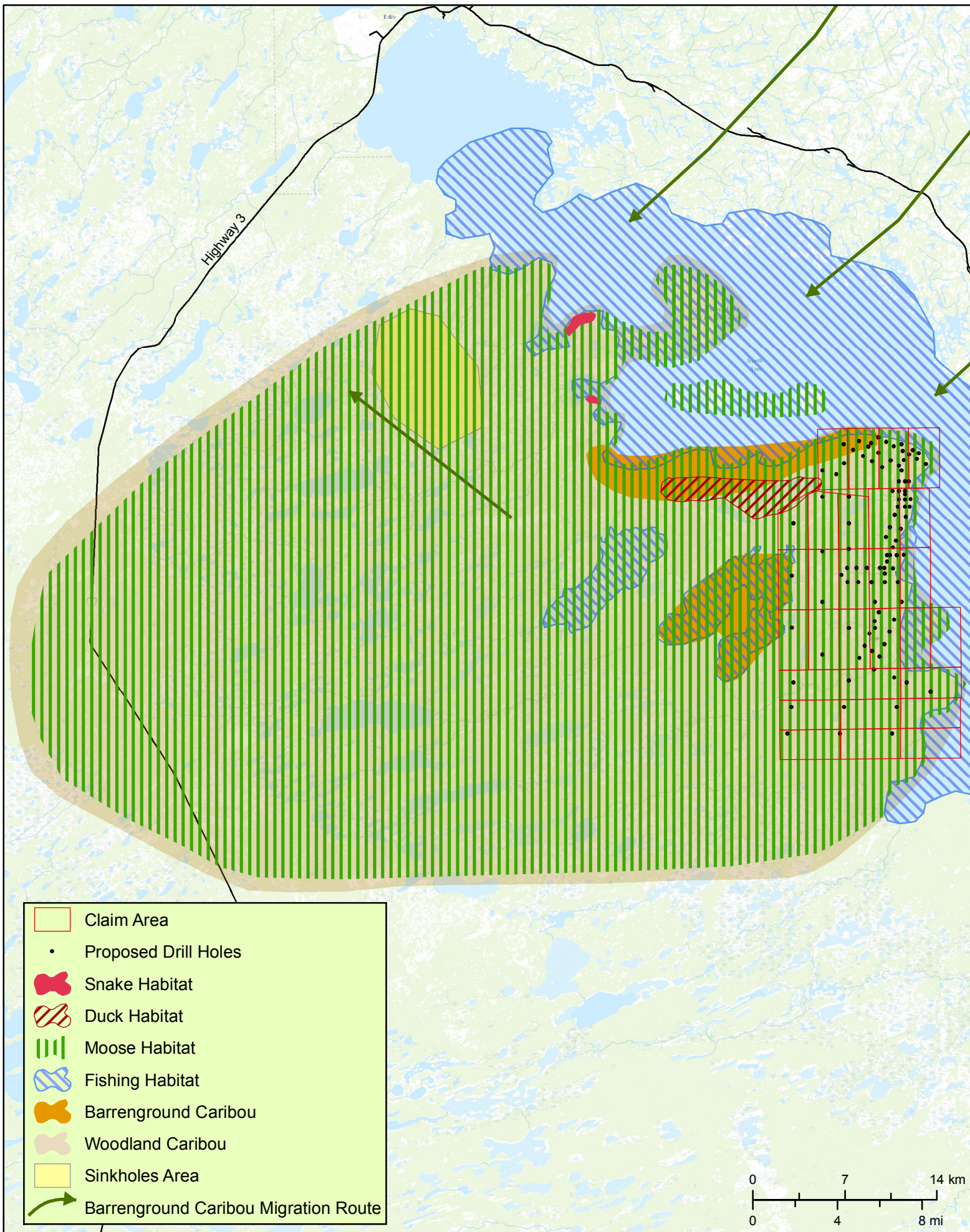
I want to go back to that area again in the future when it's grown over, because I have already started my trail this far already. So, I am thinking by the next two or three years, when everything gets softer and softer [the fallen logs gets rotten], I can go a little bit further. Another year, another year, I want to get back up to here again. I like that area: it is a nice, beautiful country; beautiful country in there with lakes.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014





# Map 5: Animal Habitat



## 3.5 Predicted Impacts on Local Animals, Habitat and Harvesting

Whenever they start to work on any kind of development, where the development takes place, it causes the land to die.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

These are the words Harry Apples chose to use when talking about the proposed development plans at K'ichì. Harry Apples, an elder from Behchokò, has harvested and travelled throughout the Tłıchq traditional territory from the northern Barrenlands to the southern parts of Tłıchq territory around K'ichì. He has seen the consequences of development, from the old Rayrock uranium mine to Ek'atì (Lac de Gras), where caribou migration routes have been altered in relation to the mining operations. Like most elders, Harry wants the land to be clean and healthy, with a prosperous animal population that he and his family can harvest from. This section describes the predicted impacts to local animals, habitat and harvesting, through an assessment of (1) habitat, (2) pollution, (3) noise and traffic, and (4) the establishment of a dead zone around the proposed development, and lastly, the combined effects of these factors on the harvesting economy and culture.

### 3.5.1 Habitat

Similar to any other place in the ndè, the proposed development area has a well-functioning ecosystem; numerous animal species live in balance with each other throughout each season of the year. The combination of large sandy areas, lakes, rivers, marshes and forest landscape creates a unique habitat for these animal species in a northern environment.

There are lots of flowers, lots of purple flowers, cloudberry, blueberry. There's lots of animals there I'm pretty sure, because I even trap in there. I saw rabbits all the time, I see wolves, I seen a couple of wolves. I didn't do anything because like I said, I only hunt martens. I see wolverines, [barren-ground] caribou, moose, woodland caribou tracks, fox, and lots of fox. I see lots of fox trails on lakes, along shores, wolverines too on lakes, along shores. Mink, I see lots of mink trails on rivers. I see otters too. I see all the animals that I usually go out and see when I am out there. It's abundance when you are out there, lots.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

As Richard described, the ndè is inhabited by animal species specific to a northern environment. However, K'ichì and the proposed development area are especially valuable to the local animal species for a specific reason: the area's fine sand deposits give it a unique ecology. Ironically, Husky Oil likes the region for the same reason the animal species do: for the soil conditions. The particular ecology of the proposed development area is characterised by its soil conditions. With some of the same reasons Husky Oil wants to develop the area, some animals are habituating the area due to the fine sand deposits. Louis Flunky, an elder who has much experience with the proposed development area, explained:

The whole area around there is sandy so it is good for [animals] to make their dens there. There are all kinds of animals living there but I don't know of any lynx den. Even wolves have dens to raise their young.



Of course, bears, squirrels, they all live in and around the sand... there are even bear dens in the ground. There are fox; they have dens to raise their young.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

Due to the particular ecosystem that exists because of the special ground conditions, the sand itself is a prime habitat for animals such as bears, wolves, foxes, wolverines, and rodents. Animals favour the soft soil for digging holes and creating dens in. The soil itself provides viable habitat for certain animals, and in K'ichii, which has a considerable amount of fine sand, animals build dens either to raise their families in, or to hibernate in during the long winter. As the sand creates specific habitats, there are also certain areas characterized as habitat for snakes. These are located northwest of the claim blocks and are not adjacent to any of the proposed drill locations (see Map 5: Animal Habitat for specific locations). The elders and harvesters did not provide any detailed knowledge of the snakes or their habitat as they typically try to avoid these animals.

Thus, for many species of local animals, the sand itself is vitally important for breeding populations and their ability to raise their families, ultimately leading to the continuation of healthy populations. The test drilling, and possible excavation of sand, could alter these particular animal habitats, and consequently, the ability for animal species such as bears, wolves, foxes, wolverines, and rodents to establish dens and securely raise their families.

The ndè, with its lakes, ponds and land, is a home for many animals. They feed on the vegetation—grasses, sedges, lichen, leaves and branches. For that reason, when Tłjchq elders hear about proposed project plans for K'ichii, they question the future of local animals, from small rodents such as mice and squirrels to larger ungulates, especially if the vegetation that they depend on disappears. The elders emphasize the link between nutritious soil and healthy vegetation, which serves as a feeding ground for the animals. Elder, Louis Flunky, raises his concern for the future of animals in the proposed development area:

As I said, all animals live on the vegetation only, so if they destroyed the land what would the animals feed on? Even animals like mice and squirrels live on the land and even mice depend on grass so if the grasses are destroyed what will wildlife survive on?

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

Louis is especially concerned about the animals that feed on the vegetation. He specifically mentions the vulnerability of mice populations for an important reason: the marten population depends on the availability of mice and other small rodents that they feed on. Marten is the main animal the harvesters trap for. Therefore, the potential decrease in availability of food for marten will have an adverse effect on its population numbers. The vulnerability of the marten population is of great concern to the harvesters as marten is the main trapping animal, and low marten population will impact the overall rate of trapping success.

The elders encourage us to think holistically about the ecosystem; how each part of the ndè is connected. If one component of the ndè is altered, how will the other parts be affected? And what are the potential impacts for the cultural values and practices that take place there? The proposed development could lead to destruction of the soil, which holds the vegetation – the forage for the animals. The concern of the elders and harvesters is the possible destruction of the habitat which

currently maintains the health of the local animal populations. Charlie Apples explained his concern for the habitat throughout the development process.

They will damage all the land; a large area of land will be destroyed. The surface of the land is a nice open spaced area but underneath there is only sand. When they drill, the rock the dust will not stay still, the wind will be blowing it somewhere else. When it freezes it will pollute the area and all the trees will get dry.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

### 3.5.2 Pollution

The potential for oil or other chemical spills during drilling operations is a concern to the elders and harvesters. Spills pollute the surrounding environment and can have both short- and long-term effects on the habitat and animals. The effects of spills on local animals, both on the land and in the water, can have dire effects on animals as oil saturation leaves their fur incapable of providing insulation for them. Thereby, the animals become vulnerable to the fluctuating temperature in the north. This denotes particular concern for waterfowl and furbearing animals, such as beavers, muskrat, otters and mink.

This land will have to be monitored in case there is an oil spill or chemical contamination, because if gets it into the ground it will damage the land. Then the animals will be contaminated and it will also pollute the water. Animal habitat nearby along with their young will be devastated.

Philip Huskey, December 4, 2014

As Philip Huskey mentions, the elders want environmental monitors on site to prevent, report and clean up any potential spills. Elder, Louis Flunky, added to Philip's concerns:

Probably if they misuse oil products it would [affect the animals]. There are many kinds of animals that eat grass to survive, even mice. Animals like moose and rabbit live only on plants and if even the rabbit population gets destroyed by oily materials, what are we going to eat?

It may not be so bad with gasoline but the one called 'diesel' the kind that tractors use, has strong fumes.

It would be best if the developers did not excavate close to this lake because the animals and fish live right here. There must have been lots of fish in this lake, that is why our ancestors called it Łietì before our time.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

### 3.5.3 Noise and Traffic

The animals are sensitive to noise and foreign activity on their land. The harvesters say the animals are "living free right now" (Richard Rabesca, December 4, 2015) and they are healthy as there are no disturbances and no noise that cause stress to the animals. The land is a healthy environment where the

balance of the ndè can continue. The elders are concerned that noise and activities from operational machinery and human camps will scare the animal populations away from the proposed development area.

The population of the animals...like I said, if a caribou hears anything he runs away from it until he doesn't hear it, until he doesn't smell it, and that's how far. I say it's like twenty-five or thirty kilometers. In the center of the construction or whatever that's going on, it's a dead zone, twenty-five kilometers around, it's a dead zone, no animals, no caribou, no nothing....these caribou are going to move on. They'll move somewhere else where there's no smell, where they can't hear it, can't see it.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

The noise will come from several sources including the helicopters, used daily to haul drilling equipment, fuel, camp gear and personnel; the drilling operations; and from human camps. The unfamiliar noise is easily carried throughout the forest environment, especially during colder temperatures. As Richard Rabesca explained, the noise will force animals, such as woodland caribou, to stay approximately 25 to 30 km away from such noise disturbances.

Although this study was intended only to address the exploration phase conducted by Husky Oil, the elders predict how future events will unfold if the test drilling results are positive and the company decides to proceed with further development and excavation of the silica deposits. The development would require a road to be constructed, either a temporary ice road or a permanent road, connecting to Highway 3, south of the community of Edzo.

Any type of road would increase activity and noise in the area. The elders have personally observed how the ndè changed after Highway 3 from Fort Providence to Yellowknife was built. Prior to construction of Highway 3, the habitat contained an abundant animal population. After construction, certain animal species disappeared and discontinued their migration to the area. Harry Apples, who has lived part of the year inland from the shores of Tideè at Whòsìwekòò, shares his observation of animal availability:

The development will chase away all wildlife if a mine was made there. Like the Yellowknife mine [Giant mine], for example. Before there was a road to Yellowknife, the [barren-ground] caribou used to migrate there, but since the road was built the caribou don't go there. It will be the same with this [proposed development] area.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

### 3.5.4 Establishment of a Dead Zone

The concern is the cumulative effects of habitat destruction, oil and/or chemical spills, and unfamiliar noise and traffic in the natural habitat, will lead to the establishment of a dead zone around the development. The woodland caribou and barren-ground caribou are sensitive animals that easily sense movement and noise within their surroundings; their heightened sensitivity serves as a natural defence mechanism against predators. Consequently, unfamiliar noises, movements and activities will be regarded as a danger and therefore avoided. As Richard Rabesca explained above, animals such as

caribou will move away until they cannot hear, smell or see the intrusion. During the research process, Richard repeated his message:

The population of the animals...like I said, if a caribou hears anything he runs away from it until he doesn't hear it, until he doesn't smell it, and that's how far. I say it's like twenty-five or thirty kilometers. In the center of the construction or whatever that's going on, it's a dead zone twenty-five kilometers around, it's a dead zone, no animals, no caribou, no nothing. So what do you say...these caribou are going to move on. They'll move somewhere else where there's no smell where they can't hear it, can't see it.

As a hunter I am always trained not to make noise, keep my mouth shut, watch where I am stepping, to be ready to hunt to kill whatever I am hunting for, like I said no noise. You always travel up wind to keep the smell away, that's how we hunt so we don't scare the animals away.

If you make noises and you smell, the twenty-five kilometer dead zone is created. I am probably not the only one against it. There are people out there who are going green, they don't want stuff like this to go up.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

The caribou is not the only animal species that will avoid the proposed development area. Since each part of the ndè is connected, if some elements disappear or change behaviour, other parts will inevitably be affected too. While caribou and other large and smaller animals rely on vegetation for forage, these animals are an essential food item for predators such as wolves, wolverines, lynx, foxes and martens. Each of the predator species has their own hunting grounds to track, hunt and obtain its food, for itself and its offspring.

The dead zone will impact my trap line, my animals. I can't say it won't, but I can say what animals doesn't stay in one spot, they travel twenty-five ...like I said he travels twenty-five kilometres... [the predator] got his own zone, his hunting zone. If you take his hunting zone away [the predator] is going to move someplace else. That's the dead zone I am talking about.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

As Richard Rabesca emphasized, each animal has its own hunting zone, and the consequences of fewer available animals, such as ungulates, means less accessible food for predators who rely on these animals. The geographical diasporas of species in relation to anthropogenic changes to the landscape is not new to the Tłıchq harvesters, as they have observed the introduction of bison into their territory and seen dramatic changes to the migration routes of the barren-ground caribou (TRTI 2013). The movement away from development will create a dead zone where few animals can live. The elder, Charlie Apples, follows Richard's predictions and states that,

If they are going to remove the sand, everything is going to be destroyed for sure. The trees and the land are going to be damaged so the people will no longer be able to live off of it. No one will live on it; it will become a dead land. Everything they use to drill the rocks with and the rock dust that goes into the water will ruin the fish and water.



Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

The elder, Charlie Apples, predicts that the same effect will occur in the water that the dead zone will not only occur on land, but similar effects appear in the water bodies surrounding the development. If the sandy lake bottom is disturbed, swirls of sand and mud will move through the lake's current system. Such effects will have similar impacts to fish species and aquatic animals, forcing them to move to other areas, essentially creating an underwater dead zone.

Like I said about the twenty-five kilometer dead zone, it will probably be the same. Fish can't swim through dust clouds in the water, so I figure the dead zone is in the water too. The dead zone will probably be in the air too.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Charlie Apples used to live off fishing at Whòsìwekòò, across from the proposed development area. He added to Richard's prediction of potential impacts to water and fish.

If those toxic rocks from the drilling are blown into the water it will impact the fish and may cause changes in the fish. When we used to live at Blackduck Camp, we used to live on fish all winter. We had our fish nets in the water all winter and in the fall, towards November, we would gather fish for two weeks for the winter. There were lots and lots of fish. We had six fish nets in the water and we would catch over two hundred fish in one fish net, only whitefish.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

Although Whòsìwekòò is not located directly in the proposed development area, it is adjacent to the development site, not only in distance, but also in sight and experience across the lake, Tideè. The harvesters and elders are thus concerned about the direct effects on both water and land contained by the proposed development area, and the indirect impact to the surrounding region due to the movement of wind and water currents.

### 3.5.5 Impacts for Harvesting

A healthy ecosystem is important to the successful harvester. As mentioned above, the health and growth of vegetation is important for rodents, such as mice, which are important for the marten population in an area. The marten population directly affects the success of a trapper during the short harvesting season. The establishment of a dead zone around the proposed development area will directly impact the success rate for both trappers and hunters.

I'm a hunter and a trapper, I speak from what I know of these animals that I know that I trap, and I eat. Half of my diet is on the land and the other half is in the store, so whatever is out there, that's the other half of my store.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Richard emphasizes the importance of the availability of animals, as it comprises approximately half of his food consumption. If the hunter is unsuccessful, he needs to support himself and his family through other means and obtain food from the community store. A dead zone will thus mean less income from

trapping and less available country food for himself and his family. Most likely, he will need to establish traplines in a new area—areas that no other trappers have claimed. Similar situations are predicted for hunters. Charlie Apples explains how the predicted deterioration of habitat will impact the harvesters.

If the sand is mined, how our people could work in the sand, they will not work with sand. All kinds of people living and working there will come among us to work the sand and the land will become of no use to the people, it will be like a dead land.

The moose may have been on it before but they will not go on it anymore. Neither will the woodland caribou go on the land. Grouse like sandy areas so they may still be there, but when the tractors scoop up the sand even the grouse will not land beside them.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

The establishment of a dead zone has direct impacts for: (1) the availability of furbearing animals and the subsequent yearly income of trappers; (2) the availability and hunting of ungulates, and less accessible country foods, for hunters and their families, and (3) the available fish stocks adjacent to the development area and reduced harvest of fish as main staple food for nearby communities.

### 3.5.6 Summary of Potential Impacts

This section has described how the elders and harvesters predict impacts to local animals, habitat and harvesting. The elders provided an assessment of impacts by considering (1) habitat, (2) pollution, (3) noise and traffic, and (4) consequently the establishment of a dead zone around the proposed development area.

As stated above, the elders want others to think holistically about the ndè, which means considering all factors, elements and uncertainties, where balance and long-term sustainability for future generations is the goal. Proposed development on the ndè is a risk factor; it could disturb the balance of the ecosystem, and therefore the sustainability of local hunting, trapping and fishing for future generations of Tł̓chq̓. Philip Huskey, an elder from Behchok̓, reminds us to think long-term when considering important issues related to development.

I believe that all of those impacts are coming up here from the south. Those effects will cause problems for us in the future; the pollution of the land and water will cause us problems. They also cause us to disagree with each other and not work together as a team. I don't want that to happen.

If these changes continue to happen, things well not return to the conditions they used to be in. This won't happen right away but in less than ten to twenty-five years, when the sand is extracted, it will have important results. When the project begins, it will become a big undertaking to manage the project and control its damage. Elders should be involved in those kinds of things.

Philip Huskey, December 4, 2014

Philip connects the destruction of the environment with deteriorating social and cultural coherence. He stated that “pollution of the land will ... cause us to disagree with each other and not work together as a

team". Again, this is an example of the elders thinking holistically. For the elders, environment and people are intrinsically connected, as the concept of ndè illustrates, and the economy of harvesting demonstrates every day, as hunters, fishermen and trappers harvest animals to sustain their livelihood from the land. Thus, environment and people are connected as behaviour of one affects the other. Philip speaks from experience. He has lived through the era of the Rayrock uranium mine with its catastrophic environmental damage, leading to illness among the Tł̓chq̓ and abandonment of a large section of their land due to contamination - a land abandoned to this day, from fear of contamination (Dogrib Renewable Resource Committee 1997; TRTI 2015). Possible pollution of the land will almost inevitably lead to abandonment of the land, which, in turn, will lead to changes in social behaviour.

In the past, when there was no mine development and when the land was very beautiful, the people were healthy living off the land. Our generation was raised on fish, caribou meat and all kinds of wildlife food. We were healthy and strong living on all those kinds of foods. Today we are not like that. What we didn't eat then, we are eating more of it now. In the past we were not like that.

Charlie Apples, December 3, 2014

The elder, Charlie, follows Philip Husky's thoughts, and notes the connection between the health of the land and the health of the people. The connection is obvious and an important factor when considering long term effects for future generations.

### 3.6 Tł̓chq̓ Harvesters and Development

The northern landscape is always changing and exploration and development have, in recent decades, become a normal part of the ndè for Tł̓chq̓ harvesters. Often, when travelling on the land, harvesters find equipment or old oil drums left behind by exploration companies to rust in the elements. Moise Rabesca, who once ran a hunting lodge in the Barrenlands, has experienced the outcome of newcomers' activities, both on the Barrenlands' environment and closer to his home, on the shores of Tideè.

Today, all those [white people] around us are searching for diamonds, oil. After they searched through everything, just when we thought it is over, then they start again by attacking the sand.

Where else can we look where there is no development? It is beginning to be hard for us. When we see a little clear space, they would find something there. It is like going in circles!

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

Moise is concerned about his traditional territory, and for the future users of the land. He continues:

We are speaking out because land and water are precious to us. When we travel by boat toward Whitebeach Point, the water is very clear. It is good for drinking. That is why we say the water is important for us.

The land is like an animal, so it would be good to monitor it. It would be good if project planners received the land based on our culture. We need to protect our land

well so that it will take care of us in the future. What we are talking about today benefits us, but for the next generations what will there be for their future?

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

As Moise Rabesca illustrates, he questions the sustainability of their way of life, if or when the development project starts. His statement calls attention to the uncertainties of their ability to continue their cultural practices on their land in the future. Richard Rabesca picks up on Moise's point, and emphasizes the love the harvesters have of the land that provides for them:

Us guys we look after our country. We cut trails, we know what is out there, we look for what we know as a hunter and a trapper. We love our country, we love doing what we do. Beautiful out there. I always want it to be like that, not just for me but for my kids and for my grandkids. I want them to see what I saw, the way it was, not the way it's going to be.

In the future for exploration like that and stuff the land isn't going to go back to normal if we try, if everybody tries. We can try to put the animals back and everything back still they wouldn't be the same animals that was there. They wouldn't look the same as the animals that were there. It's like kicking somebody out of their house and putting somebody else there that doesn't know anything about the house.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

Harvesters such as Richard have been raised by their elders to harvest and care for the land. Expressions of unease are prevalent, due to development they have experienced in other areas of their traditional territory. There are numerous examples of areas that have been claimed by resource extraction companies, transformed and left alone by Tł̓chq̓ from fear of contamination. Richard continues to express his unhappiness with the proposed development plans:

It's probably not just me but probably almost every Dogrib that lives here. They probably want to go there before they see it go away. Every Dogrib probably wants to look at it for the last time. It's not just one guy, one guy's eyes; it's everybody's eyes. If they are going to go ahead with that exploration and everything, I want to go there and kiss the land good-bye, the twenty-five kilometer dead zone. Yeah, kiss it and they can kill it after that.

One guy's ceremony is not good enough. Like I say, it's just one guy talking for myself; I don't want to talk for others. The others, they talk. They probably feel the same way. They probably all want to see it for themselves before it disappears. They all have something to say about it before it disappears, not just me, not just us—*all of us*.

Richard Rabesca, December 3, 2014

The proposed plans for Richard's trapping territory and Moise's fishing areas can alter their land use, cultural practices and feeling of being on a healthy and prosperous land, similar to the stories of their ancestors. Aside from expressing their uneasiness about the uncertainties, the harvesters state the need



for proper communication between the developers and the Tłıchq, in order to maintain a good working relationship. They describe how that might look in the following section.

### 3.6.1 Working Together: Employment

A very elderly couple raised me. When the Indian Agent from the government first came, Chief Mq̄hwhì made all the necessary agreements with him. Before that, were the days of Ekècho and Edzo. Ekècho was killing our people and Edzo wanted it to stop. Though Ekècho was planning to kill our people, Edzo forced him to stop. From then on, Edzo said, people would not kill each other, we would love each other. We will work well together; we will raise our children well. That is what Edzo said in his speech. So, if we truly do love each other and work well together, [working together] would be the right thing to do.

Philip Huskey, December 4, 2014

Philip Huskey reminds us that there have been tension, conflicts and negotiations between different groups on their traditional territory for many years, and the only way to proceed peaceably is by working together. The current discussions with the resource extraction industry are similar to the many previous confrontations and negotiations that the Tłıchq nation has had to maneuver in generations past. Philip refers to the incident that took place in the 1800s, when Edzo had to confront Ekècho at Gotsokati [Mesa Lake] in order to establish a peace agreement and forge a working relationship between two groups, the Tets'oti and the Tłıchq. In the same statement, he refers to an important negotiation that took place in 1921 between Chief Mq̄hwhì and the Government of Canada; that negotiation established the Tłıchq rights to continue to use the land for hunting, fishing and trapping, “as long as the sun will rise, as long as the rivers will flow, if the land is not moved, we cannot be limited from our way of life”. By referring to these important points of history, the elder, Philip Huskey, reminds us that the current constant negotiations between the local indigenous peoples and the numerous companies of the resource extraction industry are part of the continuous negotiation to develop a balanced working relationship to produce the best results for all parties involved.

The harvester Moise Rabesca agrees with Philip’s philosophy of working together; he also provided an outline for a good working relationship between developers and the local people:

We have to communicate with each other—good communication with each other with honesty and no under the table dealings. We need to look each other straight in the eye; that is the only way we will go forward the right way. We have to talk to each other. That way, if we start a job and don’t know the details, they will tell us and we too will tell them.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

Phillip adds to Moise’s explanation:

The project concept must be based on a good working relationship between the employees and Husky Oil management. It is by no means a small project. It will provide work for our children’s future, for the next generation and for the other people who will work on the project. Since they will be working together based on

the tradition of how our elders used to work well together, they will consider that we worked well together in the past and it will prepare them for the future.

Philip Huskey, December 4, 2014

The employment opportunities for the younger generations are an important aspect of reflection for the elders. Employment opportunities are limited in the Tłıchq communities and new development projects in the region are an opportunity for unemployed people to secure jobs and earn money for their families. The possibility of employment in close proximity to the communities of Behchokò and Edzo is a welcome opportunity for the many unemployed locals, especially young to middle-aged men and women. Moise Rabesca mentioned that the proposed development area is used by other indigenous peoples and the available employment should be considered for all indigenous communities around Tideè that historically and currently use the areas proposed for development.

The employment opportunity is not only for the Tłıchq, it is also for those other peoples who live around the Great Slave Lake. The reason why I said, 'those who live around the Great Slave Lake' is because these people also harvest from its shores. They include people from Behchokò, Ndelò, Dettah, Łútselk'é, Fort Resolution, Hay River... all these communities gather and hunt along the shores of Great Slave Lake also. If we are going to work with each other we have to learn from one another.

Moise Rabesca, December 4, 2014

The elders remark how working together is vitally important if the exploration and development project proceeds. Proper negotiations need to be in place to ensure employment of local people and necessary benefits for all users of the area affected by the proposed development.

## 4.0 Cultural Sites

This section addresses the burial site and the suggested protected areas, and the locations labelled cultural sites on Map 3: Cultural Values. These specific locations and the adjacent areas carry cultural sensitivity and should be treated with respect and unnecessary disturbance avoided.

### 4.1 Nàhgà: Cultural Site A

The location labelled A on Map 3: Cultural Values was marked by Harry Apples, who described the area as a place where Nàhgà [bushmen] were/are living. As he explains the place is important to the people. Here is his description:

Once I wanted to hunt in this area by dog team and I crossed this area and wandered through that area on snowshoes by myself. I was looking around to set my traps when I came upon a clearing. I think it was in this area, there were lots of dens in the clearing. I went into one of them, it was like a big house as big as this room. Long ago it was said that there were people who were bushman. It looked like that kind lived in those dens all winter. Because I was afraid after a quick look I went away from it. I went farther on when I came across another one. It looked like the one back there.

Since when I saw those dens they say that an animal lived there past Dinàagà. They say no one can go to it. It is on this [southern] side. My stepfather, Francis, said it is like a snake in the sand. Since we were going hunting, he told us not to go in that area to hunt because it is dangerous. There also at the tip of this area, they discovered dens in a rock outcrop, in the rocks. The rocks are flat, and the inside is like a house or den of something. I checked that out too because I wanted to know what it was. There are many things like that. Those kinds of places are important to us.

Harry says it is a place where no one can go due to the potential danger. Among the Tł̓chq̓, the Nàhgà are said to take people away, especially when traveling alone on the land. People are, thus, cautious of those areas, and avoid disturbing the location or having any potential contact with the beings living in the area. The place where Nàhgà dwell and their behavior are mostly unknown. Thus, the beings are regarded with fear and the place of their presence is most often avoided.

## **4.2 Significant Harvesting Area: Cultural Site B**

The location and the description of cultural use are described under section 3.4.2: Harvesting Along the Islands, page 29.

## **4.3 A Place to Avoid: Cultural Site C**

Similar to the location of Nàhgà, as described above, this location, labelled B on Map 3: Cultural Values, is an area described as strange by the elders. When people travel on the lake, they prefer to follow the northern shoreline of the small lake and avoid going close to the southern shoreline. The place has negative associations and should be avoided to not upset any beings living in the area and to avoid confrontation and potential danger. Such places are most often respected by Tł̓chq̓ harvesters who are aware of the unpredictable behavior of such places and associated beings. There are numerous similar places as this within the Tł̓chq̓ traditional territory. Many tragic stories originate in such places, and to avoid further creating such stories, the people avoid the location.

## **4.4 Place Where the Man with Knowledge of Fast Snowshoes was Attacked: Cultural Site D**

The location of cultural site D is the approximate place where the person, in the story of the man with knowledge of fast snowshoes, was attacked and killed by his enemies. The story and its locations are described by Charlie Apples in section 3.3, page 22.

## **4.5 Burial Sites**

One burial site is located adjacent to the proposed development area. The site is located west of the claim blocks, in the northwestern section, and is labelled on Map 3: Cultural Values. The person buried

there is the son of John Nòghàà (Crapeau). His actual name is not known. John Nòghàà (Crapeau) is Philip Huskey's grandfather and it was Philip Husky who provided the information.

No burial sites have been located in claim blocks or on or close by the proposed drill sites. That being said, the cultural use of the area extends far beyond current memory. As people have used the area since time immemorial, there are great probabilities that old burial sites are located within the proposed development area. However, based on the information from the elders and harvesters in this study, we have not documented any.

In the event of burial sites being discovered during the proposed development, the burial sites would be either Christian sites, which are marked by a wooden cross, or pre-Christian burials which are marked by a small group of rocks where the body is buried. The pre-Christian burial sites can be difficult to discover as vegetation has regrown and rocks can be covered with moss.

Burial sites are an important link to the land. People revisits grave sites to pray to the person buried there. The spirits of the buried person live in the area, and the prayer communicates with the deceased persons at these places on the land. Through this communication, the land becomes a social landscape where one's family members still dwell. Many features on the land are living entities where spirit beings live and watch over the land. Communication with these spirits is important as people travel through and harvest on the land. These spirits watch over the people and are asked for help in various situations. By communication and conducting specific ceremonies, the land becomes alive on a social level; part of the peoples past and future of being a part of the land. The significance of burial sites for the people demonstrates the social connection between the Tłıchq and their land.

## 4.6 Suggested Protected Areas

The cultural and economic value of the trapping, hunting and fishing areas has been outlined in Section 3. Of the specific locations, there are areas of considerable cultural historic value that the persons interviewed suggest should be protected from any development. Please note that this is the opinion of the persons interviewed and does not by any means reflect the opinion of other elders, harvesters, Tłıchq community members and the Tłıchq Government. The suggested protected areas are: (1) the island Kòk'èhdii (Old Fort Island), (2) the area Kwehàgee and Kwehàgeet'aa (Wrigley Point), (3) the area surrounding the lakes Łıetì (Chedabucto Lake) and Ts'ootì (Bras D'or Lake), (4) the four islands on Tideè, northeast of the proposed development area, and (5) the island Dìnàgàà, including the smaller islands connecting to the mainland. These five areas are outlined on Map 3: Cultural Values.

The island Kòk'èhdii has served as campsite and as shelter from cold winds and waves on Tideè for travellers from time immemorial. The word Kòk'èhdii literally means "empty campground island." As the island has been in use historically, currently and for future traveller and harvesters along the shores of Tideè, the elders request the land to be saved from any development. Louis Flunky who has lived at the island and harvested throughout the surrounding area, was very vocal in expressing the need for the protection of the cultural heritage at the island, due to the historic values.

The areas Kwehàgee and Kwehàgeet'aa are also suggested to be protected, due to the important historical and current value as fishing locations. The geographical location of the suggested protected areas is outlined on Map 3: Cultural Values. The value lies in the historical use of the area as semi-permanent site for camp due to the natural features that facilitated the use of willow net for fishing.



From that rock point [Kwehàgeet'aa], they would haul in fish, so at this point there used to be many traditional artifacts. It would be good if they didn't disturb those kinds of places.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

At the time, there were a limited number of areas that facilitated the use of willow fish nets, and so this area became known for its fishing, as well as its camping. Large groups of people gathered at certain times of the year at Kwehàgeet'aa to set the willow fish nets. While fishing, the families would prepare large quantities of dry fish for the coming seasons. This dry fish was used while travelling to other locations for harvesting or trading. The historical use of both the specific natural features and specialized harvesting equipment there holds the cultural value of Kwehàgeet'aa.

The elders want to ensure that the historical value and current cultural practice of harvesting remains for them at the lake Łietì and Ts'ootì. These lakes are used for numerous harvesting activities, such as hunting for woodland caribou, barren-ground caribou and moose, as well as trapping along the shoreline for furbearing animals and fishing.

There was a trail here that they used to hunt on. The trail goes along this lake [Łietì]. They travelled on [Łietì] by dog team. That is how we used to travel, by dog team. We used to hunt there. There used to be a lot of caribou on that lake Łietì so there must be many abandoned cabins on there too because the people hunted on it. There must be abandoned cabins one after another.

Harry Apples, December 3, 2014

Campsites exist along the lakeshore from the many camps that have been established while harvesting in the area. Due to the many harvesting opportunities at the lake, the elders want the area protected for future generations of harvesters.

It would be best if the developers did not excavate close to this lake [Łietì] because the animals and fish live right here. There must have been lots of fish in this lake, that is why our ancestors called it Łietì before our time. I don't think the fish that live in this lake go anywhere else. They stay in this lake, don't they. Because the waters here are not too big or deep and the current is not strong, the fish don't go to the river.

Louis Flunky, December 4, 2014

The cultural importance of the island Dinàgaà and the islands on Tideè has been detailed in section 3.4.2 Harvesting Along the Islands. The elders interviewed want these islands and the surrounding areas protected to maintain the possibility to continue harvesting activities and the historical values these areas have for the people.

Based on the cultural values expressed by Tłıchq elders and harvesters, the five areas (1) Kòk'èdì (Old Fort Island), (2) Kwehàgee and Kwehàgeet'aa (Wrigley Point), (3) the area surrounding the lakes Łietì (Chedabucto Lake) and Ts'ootì, (4) the four islands on Tideè northeast of the proposed project area, and (5) the island Dinàgaà including the smaller islands connecting to the mainland, are suggested to be protected from exploration or development.

## 5.0 Further Research

There are five points of further research needed:

- The elders indicated that historical and current use of the land in the proposed development area was shared with other indigenous nations. Research results should be shared and linkages drawn from the research results between Tłıchq and the Yellowknives Dene, who were specifically mentioned by the elders. Predicted similarities include use and knowledge of the suggested protected sites, (1) the island Kòk'èdìi (Old Fort Island), (2) the area Kwehàgeet'aa (Wrigley Point), (3) the lake Łetì (Chedabucto Lake) and Ts'ootì, (4) the four islands on Tideè northeast of the proposed development area, and (5) the island Dinàgàà including the smaller islands connecting to the mainland. By sharing information, a broader picture can be portrayed of land use in these areas.
- More information is needed about the island Kòk'èdìi and the area Kwehàgeet'aa. Further traditional knowledge research must be done to understand the full extent of the historic use and the natural features of the areas. Linkages could be drawn between an archaeological assessment of the area and the traditional knowledge study, which would benefit and supplement the results for both studies.
- For a broader analysis of land use and place meaning for Tłıchq harvesters and the communities in general, more harvesters and elders could be involved to elaborate the results in this traditional knowledge study.
- If the proposed development plans proceed and exploration leads to the excavation of silica, there will be value in preparing a socio-economic study to understand the issue from other perspectives within the Tłıchq communities. The results in this study have highlighted the importance of the area for the harvesters, elders and the local harvesting economy. A better understanding of the extent of harvesting economy for the families and communities would help identify and understand the importance of these land use activities from an economic perspective.
- The results in this report are based on a workshop and series of individual interviews with six harvesters and elders. The verification process needs to be completed, for the involved participants to comment and further elaborate on the knowledge documented in the report. The verification is a process where the involved elders and harvesters verify the documented knowledge and add further knowledge to the research process. Specifically, further knowledge needs to be documented regarding the cultural sites, as Kòk'èdìi, Kwehàgeet'aa and Kwehàgeet'aa.

## 6.0 Conclusions

This report has described the cultural land use of the area Husky Oil proposes to explore. The cultural activities on the land indicate a use of the land that follows the traditions of the Tłıchq ancestors: hunting, fishing and trapping. These activities hold an important value for the Tłıchq harvesters and their families, in terms of providing a local economy of harvesting and bringing bush resources into the communities. Harvesting also holds the cultural value of being on the land; learning about the elements and natural features; adding knowledge and stories to the traditional knowledge the harvesters have

learned from their ancestors; and developing and maintaining one relationship with the animals and spirits within the ndè.

Harvesting, travelling and being on a healthy land is a central arena for Tłıchq cultural reproduction. Among other things, this cultural reproduction involves language revitalization, spiritual connection to the land, and increased knowledge of the ndè - the ecosystem, land, spirit beings and animals. The land is thus a strong facilitator for the reproduction of culture, and on a personal level, a strong culture is manifested by strong personal groundedness, self-confidence and identity to one's cultural heritage.

This report has expressed the harvesters' and elders' traditional knowledge of the proposed development area, based on historic and current land use. The area of the proposed development is characterized by harvesting activities, such as fishing, trapping and hunting. The shoreline of K'ichì has several campsites where harvesters and travellers take shelter from the winds and waves on the large lake, Tideè. The proposed development is predicted to impact the ndè, through habitat deterioration, possible spills, and unfamiliar noise and traffic from operations, which may consequently lead to the establishment of a 25 to 30 km dead zone around the proposed development area. Such a dead zone would directly impact the success of harvesting activities, by (1) reducing the availability of furbearing animals and the yearly income for trappers who are mainly men, (2) reducing the availability of ungulates, leading to reduced hunting success and less accessibility to country foods for hunters and their families, and (3) likely reducing available fish stocks adjacent to the development area, in turn reducing the available harvest of fish. In addition to reduced availability of animals to maintain the local harvesting culture and economy, is the combination of these effects - the decreased practice of culture on the land.

The elders strongly urge locals and developers to establish good working relationships, and safeguard possible employment opportunities for the Tłıchq and surrounding aboriginal groups. To prevent possible impacts on harvesting activities and cultural sites from the development, the persons interviewed for this study have suggested the protection of the following areas: (1) the island Kòk'èdì (Old Fort Island), (2) the area Kwehàgee and Kwehàgeet'aa (Wrigley Point), (3) the area surrounding the lakes Łietì (Chedabucto Lake) and Ts'ootì (4) the four islands on Tideè northeast of the proposed development area, and (5) the island Dìnàgàà including the smaller islands connecting to the mainland. The protection of these five areas can keep intact the cultural value of these important historical sites and maintain the possibility of future harvesting activities.

People are attracted to K'ichì due to its unique and beautiful landscape. As this report has conveyed, the meaning of walking, harvesting and being on a beautiful land in close proximity to the main Tłıchq communities has strong cultural value; thus, people often say there is no place like it.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Guidelines**

### **Interview Guidelines Whitebeach Point TK Study**

1. Can you describe which areas are important for you? Why?
2. What do you do on the land at Whitebeach Point?
  - Hunt
  - Fish
  - Trap
  - Berry picking
  - Wood cutting
3. Do you know of campsites or cabins?
4. Can you describe the travel routes to Whitebeach point?
  - On the lake
  - On the land
5. How was the area used in the past?
6. How is the area used nowadays?
7. Do you know of any cultural sites?
  - burial sites
  - sacred sites
8. Are there any legends or stories related to the area?
  - Yamooza
  - Edzo
  - Mq̄hwhì
  - Other
9. Place Names of the area?
10. Which animals use the area?
  - Moose/ Woodland caribou/ Barren-ground caribou
  - Furbearing animals
11. Will Husky Oil operations impact your use of the land?
12. Will Husky Oil operations impact cultural sites?
13. Will Husky Oil operations impact your cultural practice in the area?
14. Will Husky Oil operations impact animal habitat or animal populations?

## **Appendix B: Research Participants**

The traditional knowledge study worked with the following elders and harvesters in Behchokò:

Harry Apples  
Charlie Apples  
Richard Rabesca  
Louis Flunky  
Moise Rabesca  
Philip Huskey

## **Appendix C: Research Activities**

In Behchokò, the research participants were involved in the following research activities:

- December 3, 2014 - one workshop with a total of six elders and harvesters;
- December 4, 2014 - three individual interviews; and
- December 5, 2014 – three individual interviews.





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