A First Nations Perspective on Mining

Presented by
Rhoda Quock
and
Eileen Doody

November 30, 2006
13th Annual MEND ML/ARD Workshop
Mining claims in and around the Stikine watershed.

Yellow: claims before the online staking system. Red: claims made in January 2005 when online system initiated.
Proposed resource development in the Stikine, including mines, power lines and coal bed methane. Iskut is in the middle somewhere.
Nass Headwaters
Stikine Headwaters
Spatsizi Headwaters
Skeena Headwaters
Klappan Mountain
Todagin Mountain
Todagin Mountain
Black Lake, Todagin Mountain
Proposed resource development in Tahltan traditional territory and the Sacred Headwaters:

1. Galore Creek Mine– Nova Gold Inc
2. Red Chris Mine– bcMetals and Red Chris Development Corp
3. Kutcho Creek – Western Keltic Mines Ltd
5. Klappan Coal Bed Methane – Shell Canada
6. Groundhog Coal – Westhawk Development Corp
7. Rok Coyote Eddon – Firesteel Resources
8. Schafft Creek – Copper Fox Metals Inc
9. Forrest Kerr Hydroelectric project – Nova Gold Inc
10. Foremore – Roca Mines Inc
11. GJ (Kinaskan) – Canadian Gold Hunter Corp
12. Extension of power grid up Highway 37 North
13. Extension of the rail grade north to Alaska
14. Bradfield road connection to Alaska

This is not a complete list of all exploration and proposed projects.
The relationship between an aboriginal community and the lands over which it has aboriginal title has an important non-economic component. The land has an inherent and unique value in itself, which is enjoyed by the community with aboriginal title to it

– Delgamuukw decision, 1997
Salmon is a major part of Tahltan culture.
Tahltan community members at one of their many camps
Culturally modified tree (CMT). This tree was modified as a traditional trail marker, commonly known as a ‘blazed tree’.
Our elders are dying. They know the Klappan. They need to teach us our ways. We need the Klappan to have these teachings.

-Community member
Moose marrow is a delicious cuisine in Tahltan and other aboriginal cultures.
Using the land is an integral part of Tahltan culture.
Tahltan traditional territory is rich with healthy populations of mountain goats (above), Stone’s sheep, grizzly and black bears, moose, caribou, and wolves.
Many Tahltan members have traditional camps throughout the Stikine watershed. Spending time with elders on the land is critical for passing traditional knowledge to the next generation.
Culture camp in the Klappan area
Children at play in the winter with traditional dogsled team
Where will our people go if the Klappan is gone? It will never be the same if we let the mining and oil companies work up there.

-Iskut elder
Example of road impacts from mineral exploration
Exploration in Klappan area
Coal bed methane discharge reservoirs in the Powder River Basin
Drill sites in Grand Prairie area
Acid mine drainage from Equity Silver mine site.
Sludge pit, Equity Silver Mine.
Johnny Mountain Mine site.
Bell Mine pit.
Fortune Minerals Camp

Klappan
Fortune Minerals Drill Site

Klappan
Coal Bed Methane Test Site

Klappan
Galore Creek Camp
We did not inherit this land from our grandparents, we are borrowing it from our grandchildren.
In September 2005, 9 elders and 6 other community members and supporters were arrested for blockading resource development access to the Klappan and Sacred Headwaters area.
Traditional Greeting with Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs
Wet’suwet’en

Standing in support of the Klabona Keepers
We have a responsibility to our Ancestors to protect Klappan – *Iskut Elder*
James Dennis
Bertha Louie

Dempsey Quock
I’ll get arrested again to save the Klappan.

-Iskut Elder
John Nole
Simon Brown
(Wet’suwet’en supporter)
In August 2006, brought together by the threat of cultural genocide that would follow excessive resource development in Sacred places, these Nations gathered at the Sacred Headwaters:

Tahltan, Iskut, Wet’sewut’en, Gitxsan
Taku River Tlingit, Haisla, Haida, and Tsay Keh Dene

These Nations of northwest BC represent the land stewards whose territories flow from the headwaters of the Skeena, Stikine, Nass, Findlay, and Taku down to and beyond the Pacific Ocean.

In solidarity, they declared…
At this Sacred Headwaters where so many rivers are born, we the people of the Stikine, Iskut, Skeena, Nass, Finlay, Taku, Bulkley and Morice commit ourselves to protect our lands from unwanted resource development.

In the memories and spirit of our ancestors, and for all our children to come, we commit ourselves to defend our headwaters wild, beautiful and sacred forever.

August 5, 2006

Klabooa Keepers
Jerry Oucock
Mabel Oucock
Dennis Oucock
Karen Oucock
James Dennis

Taku River First Nation
Iskut Band Council
Marie Oucock
Ramona Oucock

Wetsuweten
Adams
Verbee Nazel
Lucy Nanis
Jeff Brown

Tsay Keh Dene
Bill Doote

Gitksan
Merv Baby
Secwepemc
Loys Pregoodin
Wlips Winnissiik
Tl’etxwa
Ellen John

Alphonse Stimson

Alphonse Stimson
Elders welcome guests to the Klappan, to the Sacred Headwaters Gathering while the younger generations listen and learn.
Many people from beyond the Sacred Headwaters area support the struggle.

Dr. Wade Davis

Dr. David Suzuki
In September 2006, one elder, Lillian Moyer, was arrested for blockading resource development access to Todagin Mountain.
DON'T TAKE OUR FUTURE AWAY FROM US AND OUR CHILDREN + GRANDCHILDREN TO COME....
“To those who would despoil our homeland, we say this: we will never dishonor those who have gone before us, and whose bones are now part of the earth beneath our feet. Long ago our people established laws to protect the land and waters and the animals and plants that live among us…”
“...We are not opposed to economic development on our homeland and deeply desire economic justice and opportunity for all people, and especially our children. There are places within our territories we are willing to share with those who come to us in respect, those who recognize our place on this land, and those who understand we have traditions and laws we are obliged to honor.”

-Klappan Declaration, 2005
This place can remain a wonder and inspiration for all, for all time, if only we respect its beauty and richness.