



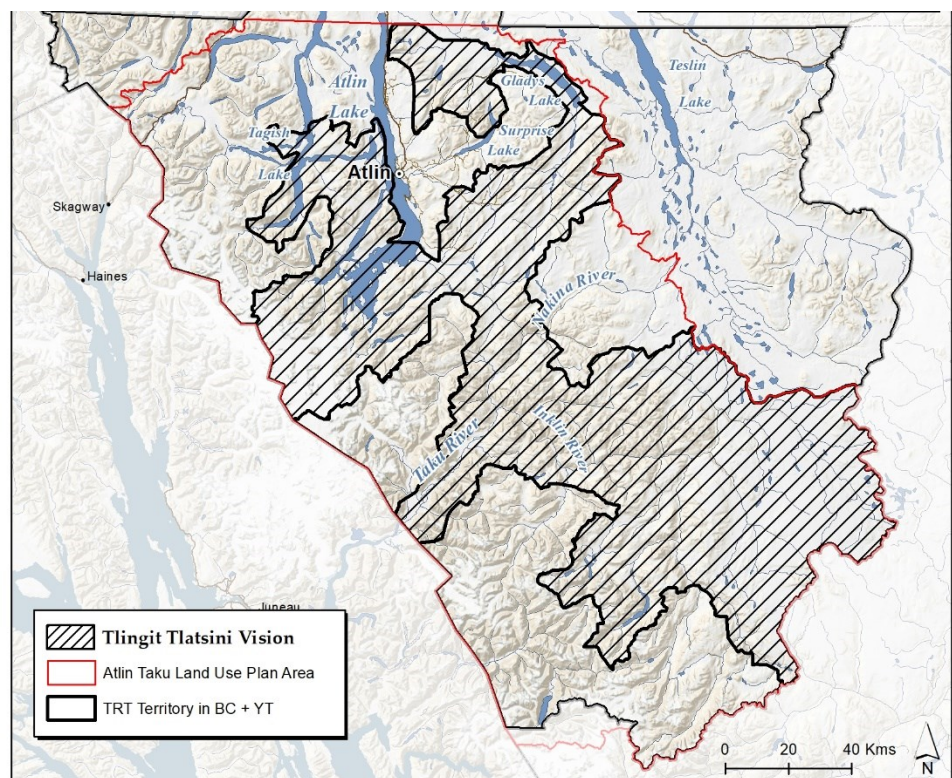
## *Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas*

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### Tlatsini Initiative Overview

In 2009, the Lands Department undertook an ambitious project to develop a territory-wide land protection plan that reflects our Tlingit kusteeyi (way of life) and supports the needs of the fish and wildlife we share our lands with. This culminated in the Tlatsini Vision for Land Protection which outlines areas of high ecological and cultural value.



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Today, the Tlatsini Initiative continues the important work that our nation and our elders began over a decade ago and this protection vision remains the foundation of the work.

***“Protection of Tlatsini lands is necessary to ensure Tlingit Khustiyxh— Way of Life, while providing for opportunities for ourselves, as well as, others who pursue the land-based life we all value in the Atlin-Taku region. ... Within the Tlatsini lands, our intent is to maintain functioning ecosystems over large connected landscapes necessary to sustain effective wildlife and fisheries populations that are so vital to our health and cultural wellbeing.”***

***- 2009 Tlatsini Vision***

Tlatsini means ‘the places that make us strong’, a phrase created by our elders to represent our protection vision. Tlatsini reminds us that our lands and our way of life are inherently interdependent. As the stewards of our traditional territory, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we look after our land so our land can look after us.

## **Project Updates**

In the spring edition of the Lands and Resources Newsletter we introduced the Tlatsini Initiative and shared the core objectives that guide our work. The understanding that environmental, individual and economic wellbeing are interconnected is a cornerstone and through our work, we aim to satisfy the following objectives:

- ♦ New or enhanced land protection and stewardship for areas important to sustain our land and water-based kusteeyi (way of life);
- ♦ Empowerment of citizens through community-based processes and capacity-building;
- ♦ Sustainable economic development founded upon our land protection vision: we can have strong land protection and a diverse and sustainable economy.

Over the last several years, we have been busy building the foundation for the work ahead and this year was no exception. Moving into 2023, we expect to see the completion of the Lands and Resources Vision and Management Direction update as well as significant progress in our land protection goals as set out in the 2009 Tlatsini Vision.



## **Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas**

In 2019, TRTFN received federal funding to identify potential Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) within our traditional territory. Designed to provide an indigenous led approach to conservation, IPCAs have gained momentum across the country and are a new tool for First Nations to ensure that land protection meets their needs.

Our nation is committed to our protection vision for our lands and waters and the Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas is the evolution of countless years of ecological and cultural work, community meetings, government negotiations and more. Our team met monthly with our elders to get their guidance and with our leadership for direction. The work over the last couple years has focused on our Taku watershed, and the guidance and direction we have received has been clear – we need to protect our Tlatsini lands and waters in the Taku watershed, particularly those that our salmon depend upon but all lands and waters need to be carefully stewarded.



We have also had a couple community dinners, presentations, and discussions. We are excited by the interest, support and enthusiasm you all have shown for the work. Your input and guidance are critical, as we are doing this work for all Tlingit today and forever. In one meeting, you have helped us understand what ‘protection’ means to you. It is clear that there are high expectations for ensuring our Tlatsini lands and waters remain healthy and able to support the plants, wildlife, fish and all that provide for our kusteeyi.

In addition, we have been meeting with members of both the provincial and federal government to help them understand the importance of the Taku. Indeed, the Taku is not only important to us, but our watershed is globally significant. It is the largest unroaded watershed on the Pacific Coast of North America! Its size, intactness and diversity provide our salmon and wildlife their best chance at being able to move and adapt to climate change. What is essential for our salmon, for our wildlife is also essential for our kusteeyi, for us. And, for everyone as all the world depends upon places like the Taku that provide safe landscapes for nature to thrive.



We have heard that we need economic certainty, our people want good jobs here at home that provide for healthy families. We are working within our government and with others to identify how there can be opportunities to mine in some areas of the Taku in ways that do not impact the health and resilience of our Tlatsini lands and waters. We are also looking at ways to diversify our economic opportunities by sharing the beauty and awesome complexity of the Taku with others interested in learning from the Taku – researchers, tourists, and other visitors.

The Tlatsini IPCA Initiative is a culmination of over a decade of work, and we are excited to share our progress and would love to hear your input. We will be hosting a community dinner in the New Year to celebrate the work that has been done and provide more formal updates with our community. Stay tuned for that announcement in the coming weeks!

## **Vision & Management Direction**

In addition to building on the original Tlatsini Vision from 2009, we are also updating the Vision and Management Direction for Lands and Resources (Our Land is Our Future - Há Tlátgi Há Khustíyhx Síti). Known to many as the ‘yellow book’ this document was first published in

2003 and has been an important guiding document for our nation. TRTFN is conducting community-wide surveys to inform this update. Our current team for interviews is; Caitlin O'Shea – Tlatsini Initiative Coordinator; Nicole Gordon - Tlatsini Initiative Community Interview Technician; and Shauna Yeomans – Land Guardian/Community Engagement. We began conducting interviews in late September and have been hearing from various citizens about their Visions and Priorities for *Lingit Aani – Lingit Land*. This is a very important piece to updating the Our Land is Our Future - Há Tlátgi Há Khustíykh Síti (Vision and Management Direction Document) for Lands and Resources to reflect the new challenges, opportunities, and priorities of its citizens moving forward.



We have had a chance to interview an estimated 35 TRTFN Citizens of various ages, from youth to Elder. It is the most important piece to the work we are conducting within this project, and we are hoping to reach many, many more citizens within the next two to three months.

What type of information are we asking about? Surveys ask participants to:

- ♦ Describe the importance of various on the land activities
- ♦ Rank their levels of support for different types of activities in the Territory
- ♦ Describe their priorities, concerns and visions for land, water, fish and wildlife in the Territory
- ♦ Describe their personal use of the Territory
- ♦ Describe their visions for future generations of TRTFN Citizens

We ask several closed questions like multiple choice so that the information can be compared easily. But there are also many open-ended questions so that Participants can more fully describe their values discussed within the survey. There is \$150 Visa/Mastercard gift cards for each participant.

If you would like to participate in this very exciting, important and crucial work for the Lands and Resources Departments by providing your vision for Lands and Resources for future generations, please contact:

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## *Current Status of Ha Khustìyxh Agreements*

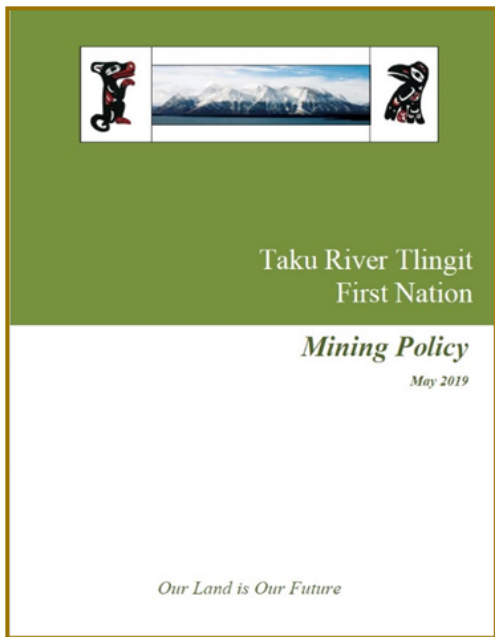
### **TRTFN Mining Policy**

The Mining Policy describes to mining companies how TRTFN wants them to conduct business on the TRT Territory. This Policy was ratified at the Joint Clan Meeting in May 2019, with the concept that it would be implemented, and results would be reported back to the citizens. To implement the policy, the TRTFN Lands Department needed more than one person within the Mining Division to allow for enough person time to complete other obligations before spending time on the Mining Policy implementation. The concepts of the policy had been discussed with many mine companies/people since 2019, but it wasn't until December 2022 that TRTFN signed its first Ha Khustìyxh/Our Way Agreement!

*A Ha Khustìyxh Agreement is the ultimate implementation of the TRTFN Mining Policy. It solidifies the relationship between TRTFN, and the mining company and it set out conditions under which the company will be able to continue to conduct work on the Territory while having TRTFN's support for that work. Support for the work, is simply the fact that TRTFN will not object to the work being done, if that work complies with the regulations that BC sets up in their permits and legislation AND with the terms and conditions set out in the Ha Khustìyxh Agreement.*



*TRTFN office and area, fall 2019.*



## What does this mean?

These agreements are meant to be a technical and communication style agreement between TRTFN and a mining company. It represents the idea that TRTFN is not opposed to the work that is outlined within the agreement. It does not, however, give approval or permission for any other work. The work described within the agreement will be assessed as per the Government-to-Government agreement with BC. That means that TRTFN has/will already agree with BC on the activities that the mine will be permitted to carry out. Plus, the agreement is TRTFN's way of confirming with the company that there are more conditions than just the ones in the BC permit!

## Conditions within an Agreement

Conditions may include;

### Communication

Send TRTFN Mining Division updates as they are working.

- ♦ This way the office always understands the work that they are conducting, and we can answer question from the citizens.
- ♦ Present your information to the TRT Citizens, every year, in person.

### Reclamation

The company has obligations through BC regulations.

- ♦ However, TRTFN wants the company to do more, there will be details in the agreement based on the conditions of the site.



*Inspection of a placer mining reclamation site, note that although the vegetation is sparse, it has started.*

## Environmental Impacts

TRTFN insists that environmental impacts are minimized and there will be staff sent to inspect the mining work.

- ♦ The company will pay for staff to get to site and for any samples that may be taken.
- ♦ Each year the company will arrange and pay for a flight of TRT Citizens to visit the site, for them to see for themselves what condition the site is in.
- ♦ If there are conditions that TRTFN does not approve of, the company will work to fix those concerns.

## Employment

TRTFN wants to see employment for TRT Citizens.

- ♦ The company will prioritize TRT resumes and will offer training whenever possible.



*Mark Connor and Adair Jack, catching invasive goldfish at the warms springs.*

## Royalties

TRTFN wants to see a monetary benefits from any mining activity, when that company is only conducting exploration work, they do not have any revenue to share.

- ◆ However, they can still provide TRTFN with some financial benefit that offsets the cost of staff.
- ◆ Once TRTFN has several companies set up with agreements, the purpose for the royalties can be changed to benefit all TRT Citizens.

These conditions are typical for an agreement with a mineral exploration site, they would be different for a placer mine site. TRTFN has not yet signed an agreement with a placer site, but those conversation have been held with those companies and we are hopeful to see those happening in 2023!

## Technical Working Groups Needed

In addition to the Ha Khustiyyh Agreement with Canagold, TRTFN is in the process of negotiating agreements with Teck Resources for the continued participation of the remediation of the Tulsequah Chief Mine. Additionally, a second agreement with Canagold is needed for participation in their Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment application process.

Each of those agreements will need a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of a:

- ◆ TRTFN Staff member,
- ◆ 1 representative from each clan and
- ◆ 1 technical consultant



*Kitchen and bunk house at New Polaris, with Trevor Williams.*

The task of these groups will be to work with the Company and their consultants to understand the work they are doing, ask questions, raise concerns, and bring that information back to the TRT citizens. Periodically there will be larger community wide meetings to fully bring all the information to the people, such that when a decision is needed, people will be prepared to enter a JCM to reach that decision.

Early in January, the Lands Department will be reaching out to gather names of people that would be interested, have the time, have the ability to work in one of these TWG's. If you think you may be interested, or have questions, please reach out. It will not matter where you live as we have the technology to make all meetings online ones.



*New Polaris Exploration site.*

## Canagold Resources

You may have seen some posters lately featuring meetings or chat sessions with this company. Their exploration site is called New Polaris, long ago it was Polaris Taku or Townsite and is located on the Tulsequah River.

### Current Exploration and Ha Khustìyxh Agreement

The first TRTFN signed Ha Khustìyxh agreement was signed with Canagold in Nov/Dec of this year. It is based on the current work that the company is conducting which includes the drilling, camp facilities, and related work on the site. You may know people that have been working there, as several TRT members have been there this year and last!

This agreement is specific to that work and does not impact or include the work that they have proposed and is discussed below.

### Feasibility Study

They have started what is called a Feasibility Study, because they already have the information showing that there is enough gold to have a mine. Now the feasibility study will put together all the other details, such as the engineering design of the mine, location of camp, offices, kitchen, airstrip, mill and processing plants, etc. Once all those other features are added into the equation – is it still economically feasible to start a mine?

### Environmental Assessment

At the same time as they are completing the feasibility study, they have reached out to the BC Environmental Assessment Office. This is the BC organization that looks at the Feasibility Study information and adds on things around socio-economic conditions – so what impacts will there be to Atlin, to TRTFN community, to the jobs, and the social aspects, to businesses in the area. They look at any potential environmental, economic, social, cultural and health effects that may occur during the lifetime of a major project and thoroughly assess them.

## Agreement and Technical Working Group (TWG)

This is where a new, bigger agreement comes into action between Canagold and TRTFN and where there is a need for a technical working group. Please see the section on that within this newsletter!

## Ongoing Engagement

Canagold has shown that they are committed to providing ongoing engagement with the TRTFN office and have already started to reach out the TRT citizens. This effort will continue. They have also started to reach out to the larger Atlin community. We can expect a lot more in-person and will start online meetings as well. This will, in part, be a task of the TWG.

## Tulsequah Chief Mine

We have all heard about this mine, the one that has orange water flowing into the Tulsequah River. In the last 4 years TRTFN has been working with BC to monitor and plan for the remediation of this mine site. The current 'owner' is a company that is bankrupt, has no actual people working for it and will be still tied up in red tape! But a past owner of the mine, Teck Resources, will be stepping up and taking on the remediation of this site.

TRTFN is working with Teck to develop an agreement that will provide capacity for TRTFN to work closely with them in the planning and implementation of a reclamation plan.



*Tulsequah Chief Mine and the effluent that is flowing into the river. Reclamation would take place to mitigate this situation.*



*TRTFN staff sampling near Tulsequah Chief. Jerry Jack, Matt O'Brien, others.*

## Technical Working Group

As mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter, there will be a need to develop a working group to help oversee, plan and implement this work with Teck.

## Ongoing Engagement

As with the Canagold project, this Tulsequah Chief Reclamation will also have ongoing engagement with the TRT people on many levels for the next several years!