



# Tłıchǫ Use and Knowledge of ?ewaànit'utì



Tłıchǫ Traditional  
Knowledge  
Reports

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and Monitoring  
Program

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Tłıchq Use and Knowledge of ɬewaànit'ııłı

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The Elders are the authors of this report. They shared their stories and knowledge of the land. Without their travels and hard work on the land, and their willingness to share, this study would not been possible.

The local researchers who conducted interviews were Rita Wetrade and Noella Kodzin. Petter Jacobsen was the principal investigator. Rosa Mantla, Camilla Zoe-Chocolate and Mary Siemens translated and transcribed the interviews.

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## K'aodèe Gha Godi Nek'òqà Dek'eèht'èe

---

Dii dek'eèht'èe sùu ɽewaànit'ii (Courageous Lake) ek'qò Seabridge Gold Inc's dè k'e sqòmbakweè xàgeta k'e eghàlagedaa sùu Whaèhdqò Nàowoò (TK) gixàetaa wegodi hq't'e. Tɽichq ɽaa ɽewaànit'ii nèk'e aget'ɽ eyits'q ekq dè k'èhogezeq sùu Whaèhdqò Nàowoò (TK) godi dek'enègeet'è gha aget'ɽ. Tɽichq Dèts'qk'àowo dii godi t'à get'ɽ ha hq't'e. Seabridge Weghàlada nɽdè dè dàɽhcho tsɽgowii ha sùu godi ghàà nàowo gehtsɽ ha. Tqdoò Zaà gots'q aati Zaà 2012 gots'q Whaèhdqò Nàowoò (TK) Tɽichq ɽqhdàà xè godi xàgetaa gots'q at'èe hq't'e.

Godi tai ts'ò eɽek'èdaà dek'eèht'èe hq't'e. Dakweɽqò, Tɽichq nàowoò gha ɽewaànit'ii wet'aaɽà k'èè yati wheɽq hq't'e. Eyi-k'è, Tɽichq ɽqhdàà eyi nèk'e dàgòht'e eyits'q ayii wek'e whelaa gik'èezq sùu gik'e goɽde. Tai t'à, sqòmbak'è hoè ha t'à ɽqdah ayii dàtɽq ghq nànidèe eyits'q eyi gha nàowo hoèe k'e gogɽde. Eyi dè hazqò gixàetaa ekò Tɽichq dani xo taat'e eyits'q ɽmbè taat'e ɽewaànit'ii k'e aget'ɽ eyits'q wek'e wek'e t'asii hazqò k'ehogezeq ghàà godi dek'eèht'èe hq't'e. Dàni xat'q taat'e eyits'q xo taat'e ɽewaànit'ii k'e agiat'ɽ sùu dek'eèht'èe. Xat'q nɽdè ekwò gha Ewaànit'ii ts'ò nigeɽà, dègonàèdii agehɽɽ, ɽii geebee eyits'q ɽi gihchi sɽ gha ekq aget'ɽ. Xok'e nɽdè Tɽichq got'ɽ ekwò gha nàgezèe eyits'q ehdzoo nègele gha ɽewaànit'ii xohogehwhi. ɽEwaànit'ii gots'q dechɽla ts'ò nageedè eyits'q Behchokò sɽ ts'ò dani nagiadèe sùu wegodi hazqò t'à goxè gogiado. ɽqhdah gɽgodii gòhɽ ghàà ɽewaànit'ii nèk'e k'ehogɽde hq't'e gedi.

Nàke t'à dek'eèht'èe sùu eyi dè k'e sqòmbak'è hoè ha sùu eyits'q wegà dè goɽhchàa gòla wek'e ayii whelaa gik'èezq. Xat'q nɽdè ekwò nadeeɽà eyits'q edɽ tɽ te nageeɽà deè k'è gòlaa sùu ekq zq aget'ɽ lani. ɽkwèè ɽEk'atɽ (Lac De Gras) gots'q ɽewaànit'ii eyits'q Nqdiikahɽi wexa ekwò nadeehɽà, Wekweèti ts'ò eyits'q Tɽichq nàgezèe k'è nadeeɽà sùu gixè dàgot'ɽ hazqò ɽqhdah gik'èezq dek'eèht'èe. Tai t'à dek'eèht'èe sùu ekwò nadeeɽà eyits'q Tɽichq nàgezèe k'è gòlaa k'e sqòmbak'è hoè ha t'à dani ɽqhdah gɽghq nànidèe wegodi dek'eèht'èe.



## Executive Summary

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This report describes the Tłıchq Traditional Knowledge (TK) study of the area encompassing Seabridge Gold Inc's (Seabridge) exploration project at Ɂewaànit'ıitì (Courageous Lake). The purpose of the TK research is to document Tłıchq use and knowledge of the Ɂewaànit'ıitì area. The Tłıchq Government will use this report in the environmental assessment process for Seabridge Project at Ɂewaànit'ıitì. The report is based on TK research undertaken with Tłıchq Elders from May to December 2012.

The report is divided into three sections. First, the cultural significance of the Ɂewaànit'ıitì area for the Tłıchq is discussed. Next, the Tłıchq Elders environmental knowledge of the area is presented. Third, a discussion of the elders concerns and recommendations for proposed development. Tłıchq use and knowledge of Ɂewaànit'ıitì is illustrated by following Tłıchq seasonal lifeways throughout the study area. The research results describe the use of Ɂewaànit'ıitì during fall and winter. In the fall Tłıchq traveled to Ɂewaànit'ıitì to hunt caribou, collect plants for traditional medicines, pick berries and to fish. Tłıchq people overwintered at Ɂewaànit'ıitì, hunting and trapping. The journey from the Ɂewaànit'ıitì area back to the treeline and towards Behchokò is described. The stories of the Elders are used to explain the use of the area.

The second section of the report describes the Elders' environmental knowledge of the proposed development area and the larger region. Their focus is on the fall caribou migration and important water crossings. This section describes the Elders' detailed knowledge of the caribou migration route from Ɂek'atì (Lac De Gras) in the north through Ɂewaànit'ıitì and Nqđikahtì (Mackay Lake) towards Snare River and the Tłıchq hunting grounds. Section Three outlines the Elders concerns regarding the proposed development on the caribou migration route and their hunting grounds.

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## Tłıchq Placenames

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ᑭewaànit'ııı	Courageous Lake
Ts'iedaa	The area covering the north and northeastern corner of ᑭewaànit'ııı. The area used to be base-camp, because of the wooded area, for Tłıchq families while hunting and trapping on the barrenlands.
Nqđiikahtı	Mackay Lake
Tikwàı	Matthews Lake
Wezhiitı	Dumbell Lake
ᑭezqı	Jolly Lake
Kwa-waatı	Mohawk Lake
Biihikènadatı	Undine Lake
Tł'ok'edaatı	Starfish Lake
Whaticho / Whatika	Seahorse Lake
ᑭek'atı	Lac De Gras  ᑭek'atı is named after the white colour on the rocks (quartzite) found frequently at numerous locations around the lake. ᑭek'atı is also the word for fat, due to the resemblance to the white rocks. The old name for the lake is Kwᑭek'atı.
ᑭek'adı	Island on ᑭek'atı
Kqk'èetı	Contwoyto lake
Dezahı	Point Lake
Be?aitı	Winter Lake

## INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this study was to document Tłıchq use and knowledge of the Ɂewaànit'ııı (Courageous Lake) area, both historical and at present. History is not referred to as the time when events were written down, but as Tłıchq history, past use of the land as documented in oral knowledge passed down verbally through time.

The study was staged in two phases. Phase One was based on individual interviews and mapping exercises with Tłıchq Elders who hold knowledge of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area. Phase Two consisted of a site assessment at the Seabridge exploration project, from August 20<sup>th</sup> to 26th 2012. This report is based on Tłıchq Knowledge documented during Phase One and Two of the Traditional Knowledge study of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area.

## Proposed Development

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There has been mining activity since the 1940s in the area south of Ɂewaànit'ııı where Seabridge Gold Inc. (Seabridge) has an advanced exploration gold project. The proposed Seabridge gold mine lies between Tikwàti (Matthews Lake) and Ɂewaànit'ııı, in the vicinity of the old Salmita mine and north of the old Tundra mine. Seabridge's activity is currently in the exploration stage. Seabridge's project at Ɂewaànit'ııı lies within Mqwhì Gogha Dè Njıłtèè, the Tłıchq territory outlined by Chief Mqwhì in 1921. Accordingly, Tłıchq Knowledge needs to inform the environmental process to guide actions taken within Tłıchq lands.

The area proposed for development is within a cultural significant area for the Tłıchq, both historically and currently. This area is an important migration corridor for barren-ground caribou and is a valued caribou hunting ground for the Tłıchq.

## Research Objectives

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The purposes of documenting Tłıchq Knowledge are twofold. The first is to allow the Tłıchq Government access to, and use of, Tłıchq Knowledge in the environmental assessment process for the Seabridge Gold Project at Ɂewaànit'ııı. The second purpose is to provide Tłıchq Knowledge to Seabridge so they have access to both Tłıchq Traditional Knowledge and Western science as they plan their development.

By documenting Tłıchq elders' knowledge, this study presents (1) the traditional and current land use in the Ɂewaànit'ııı area by the Tłıchq nation, and (2) the elders' traditional knowledge of caribou migration in relation to the proposed development area and surrounding region. This report demonstrates the Tłıchq relationship to the Ɂewaànit'ııı area, by illustrating how and where Tłıchq use the land, and by describing Tłıchq history in the area where Seabridge proposes a mine operation.

## Tłıchq Land Claim and Research Agreement

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The Tłıchq have negotiated a comprehensive land claims and self-government agreement ("Tłıchq Agreement") in which the Tłıchq have complete ownership of 39,000 square kilometers of land (surface and sub-surface), self-government powers and management of resources. The principles and objectives of the Tłıchq Agreement are to protect, promote and enhance the Tłıchq language, culture and way of life. The Tłıchq Agreement became effective on August 4, 2005.

The Tłıchq Government and Seabridge signed an agreement to conduct a Traditional Knowledge (TK) study of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area on April 24 2012. The study was conducted by the Traditional Knowledge Research and Monitoring Program based in Gamètì.



## Report Structure

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This report portrays Tłıchq use and knowledge of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area by following the traditional seasonal activities of the Tłıchq. This focus demonstrates the land use activities undertaken during each season from early fall through winter. These are referred to as the seasonal lifeways of the Tłıchq.

The report is divided into three sections: 1) Cultural Significance of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area, 2) Tłıchq Environmental Knowledge of Ɂewaànit'ııı, and 3) Tłıchq Elders and Development.

Section One describes first the travel from the Behchokò area to Ɂewaànit'ııı in late summer. Second, a discussion of the main fall activities at Ɂewaànit'ııı: caribou hunting, berry picking, making traditional medicines, and fishing. Third is a description of overwintering and trapping. Fourth is the journey back to the Behchokò area. Fifth is an overview of Tłıchq heritage in the area. Section Two, outlines Tłıchq environmental knowledge of fall caribou migration patterns and important water crossings in the Ɂewaànit'ııı area. Section Three summarizes the elders' concerns for development, especially in relevance to caribou migration and Tłıchq hunting grounds.

The elders' ecological knowledge of the Ɂewaànit'ııı area allow them to offer valuable recommendations for the implications of development on the environment, and specifically for the fall caribou migration. This study brings forth the voice of the Elders. Quotes are used to bring the reader into the elders' personal stories of being on the land.



**Photo 1: Phillip Dryneck, Jimmy Kodzin, Robert Mackenzie and Pierre Tlokka working on land use maps at the verification workshop, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.**

## RESEARCH METHODS

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The study was designed using a qualitative approach, premised on personal in-depth interviews and focus groups. The interviews were conducted based on a semi-directive interview technique, and followed a set of interview guidelines, or general questions. The combination of using research guidelines and a semi-directive interview technique allowed for flexible interviews, allowing Elders to tell stories in their own way while following the objectives of the research.

A central aspect of the research process was capacity building with the local researchers. Workshops were held to discuss methods and progression of the research. This ensured the research team was ‘on the same page’ during the research process.

### Research Activities

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The research process of Phase One and Phase Two proceeded in the following consecutive stages:

1. A three-day TK research methodology workshop was held in Gamètì with the local researchers.
2. A three-day Elders meeting was held in Behchokò on May 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, to discuss the research project and to establish the ʔewaànit’ıı̀ Land User Committee. The committee consists of Elders who know the project area.
3. Individual interviews were conducted with each elder in the Land User Committee.
4. A three-day research analysis workshop was held with the local researchers.
5. Verification interviews were held with each elder, to ensure that they agreed that their knowledge had been correctly recorded on both maps and in text.
6. A Traditional Knowledge Research camp was held at ʔewaànit’ıı̀ from August 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Four days were spend assessing the area proposed for development, and one day for visiting cultural significant sites.
7. A verification workshop was held in Behchokò on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The knowledge documented both in the report and maps were discussed, verified and elaborated.

Elders who participated in the study were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of the ʔewaànit’ıı̀ area. This decision was made during the May Elders meeting.

The interviews documenting oral knowledge were taped with digital recorders. At the same time Elders recorded their map knowledge directly onto 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 maps for the site specific study area and larger region, respectively. Interviews were conducted in Tłıchq by local researchers. Qualified local translators transcribed the recorded interviews into written English.

Map data was digitized and entered into a GIS (Geographic Information System software: ArcGIS). After interviews were transcribed and maps were prepared, verification interviews were held with each elder. During these second interviews the Elders elaborated on their stories and knowledge about ʔewaànit’ıı̀ contained within their first interview. This procedure created a more detailed picture about each elder’s experience and knowledge about the ʔewaànit’ıı̀ area. In turn, this further validated the story of the Tłıchq cultural footprint in the region.

## Traditional Knowledge Research Camp at ʔewaànit'iiṭi

---

A traditional camp was established on the shore of ʔewaànit'iiṭi from August 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The camp was attended by six elders: Margaret Tsatchia, Elisabeth Michel, Harry Apples, Pierre Tlokka, Joseph Judas and Robert Mackenzie; the camp foreman: Archie Wetrade and camp helper Harry Rabesca; the camp cook: Edith Wellin; translator: Mary-Rose Blackduck, and the researchers: Rita Wetrade and Petter Jacobsen.

The purpose of the field camp was an assessment of the proposed mine site and wind farm. Seabridge provided helicopters for transportation each day. One day was dedicated to visit significant cultural sites. A trip was made to the burial sites at Ts'iedaa on the esker at the northeast side of ʔewaànit'iiṭi. Following, a trip was made to the western side of ʔezqṭi to study the old camp sites, and the caribou trails that transect the entire area. Walking around the old camp sites at ʔezqṭi, Pierre Tlokka found the rusty tin cans and firewood left over from his previous trip there, about 20-30 years ago. This observation initiated a long tread of stories of the times the area was full of caribou and numerous hunting camps were established in the bay on the western side of ʔezqṭi.

*“Seeing some of the camps and our old trails brought back lots of good memories because as young men we use to hunt and trap around these areas. We started to reminisce and we started bringing up stories about the tricks that we used to play on each other and that brought even more laughter. But at the same time, we are serious about why we have come here and to do all this work. It’s to help our people, it’s not about us but to help all of you. We are making a path to guide you to make the right decision.”*

Harry Apples, August 26th 2012, ʔewaànit'iiṭi

Each evening a talking circle was held, where each elder shared his/her thoughts and observations from the day’s site assessment. The camp was also a place for the elders to reconnect with a part of their land that they had not visited in several years. Once all the observations and knowledge documented from the camp were compiled, a verification workshop was held in Behchokḡ on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012. During this two-day workshop, each map produced for the report was investigated by the elders. This interactive process resulted in more map data. The elders’ memories of hunting, trapping and traveling in the ʔewaànit'iiṭi area had been awakened at the field camp. During the workshop the elders collaboratively drew their memories onto each map produced for each cultural activity.



Photo 2: Traditional Knowledge Research Camp at ʔewaànit'iiṭi

## Study Area

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The study was site-specific (Map 1) and regional (Map 2). A dual approach was adopted to understand and document the movement and behaviour of people and wildlife that utilized a region larger than the area planned for the development of the proposed mine and wind farm.

For the site-specific study a detailed spatial scale was necessary (Map 1). The site-specific study allowed Tłıchq Elders to comment on plans for the proposed development and helped to determine how populations of resident wildlife and Tłıchq land use would be affected.

The Tłıchq travel extensive distances to hunt. Their travel routes, over land and water, with traditional camps, connect through the proposed development area into adjacent regions. Also, the range and migration routes of animals, such as caribou, connect through the proposed development area. As such, Tłıchq Knowledge needed to be documented at a larger spatial scale, to include the regional movement of both animals and people (Map 2). The range of the regional study area was defined by the Ɂewaànit'ııłı Land Users Committee.

## Research Guidelines

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Research guidelines were developed during the TK research methodology workshop held with the local researchers. The guidelines took the form of general research questions and were discussed with the Elders at the initial meeting in Behchokq. The purpose of the research guidelines was to record the Elders knowledge regarding both cultural and environmental importance in the Ɂewaànit'ııłı area (Table 1).



**Photo 3: Margareth Tsatchia at Traditional Knowledge Research Camp, August 21st 2012, Ɂewaànit'ııłı**

**Table 1: Research Guidelines for the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì Tł̨chq Knowledge Study**

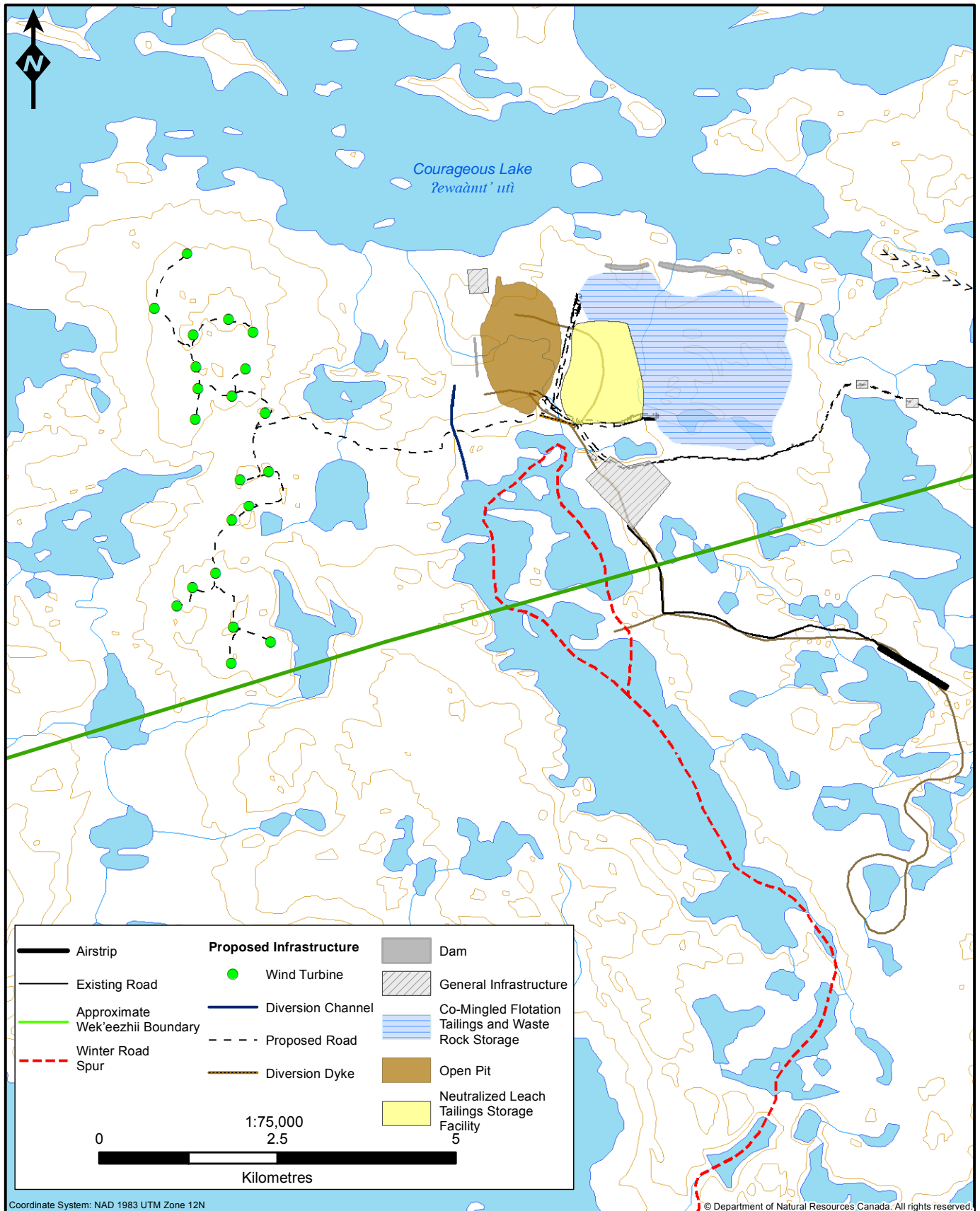
**Cultural Significance:**

1. Do you know any stories about the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - Stories related to Monfwi, Edzo, Yamoza or other important persons
2. Can you describe, and outline on the map, the routes you travelled to/ from the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - Canoe routes and dog-sled routes
3. What time of the year did you travel to the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
4. Where did you hunt in the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - What kinds of animals were hunted?
5. Where did you trap in the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - What kinds of animals were trapped?
6. Where did you fish in the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - What types of fish?
7. Are there berry-picking areas in the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - What berries would you pick?
8. Are there areas with traditional medicine?
  - Can you describe where you pick traditional medicine?
9. Do you know of any camp sites that were used?
  - Traditional and present camp sites?
10. Do you know of any burial sites in the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area?
  - What is the name of the person?
11. Are there any spiritual or sacred sites in the area?
  - Are there special places in need of respect?

**Environmental Significance:**

12. Do you know of important caribou trails?
  - Fall migration
  - Spring migration
13. Are there important water crossings that the caribou use?
  - What time of the year are these used?
14. Do you know of important denning areas for wolves and/or bears?
15. Are there important sites for birds in the area?
16. Are there important areas for fish?
  - Spawning or feeding areas

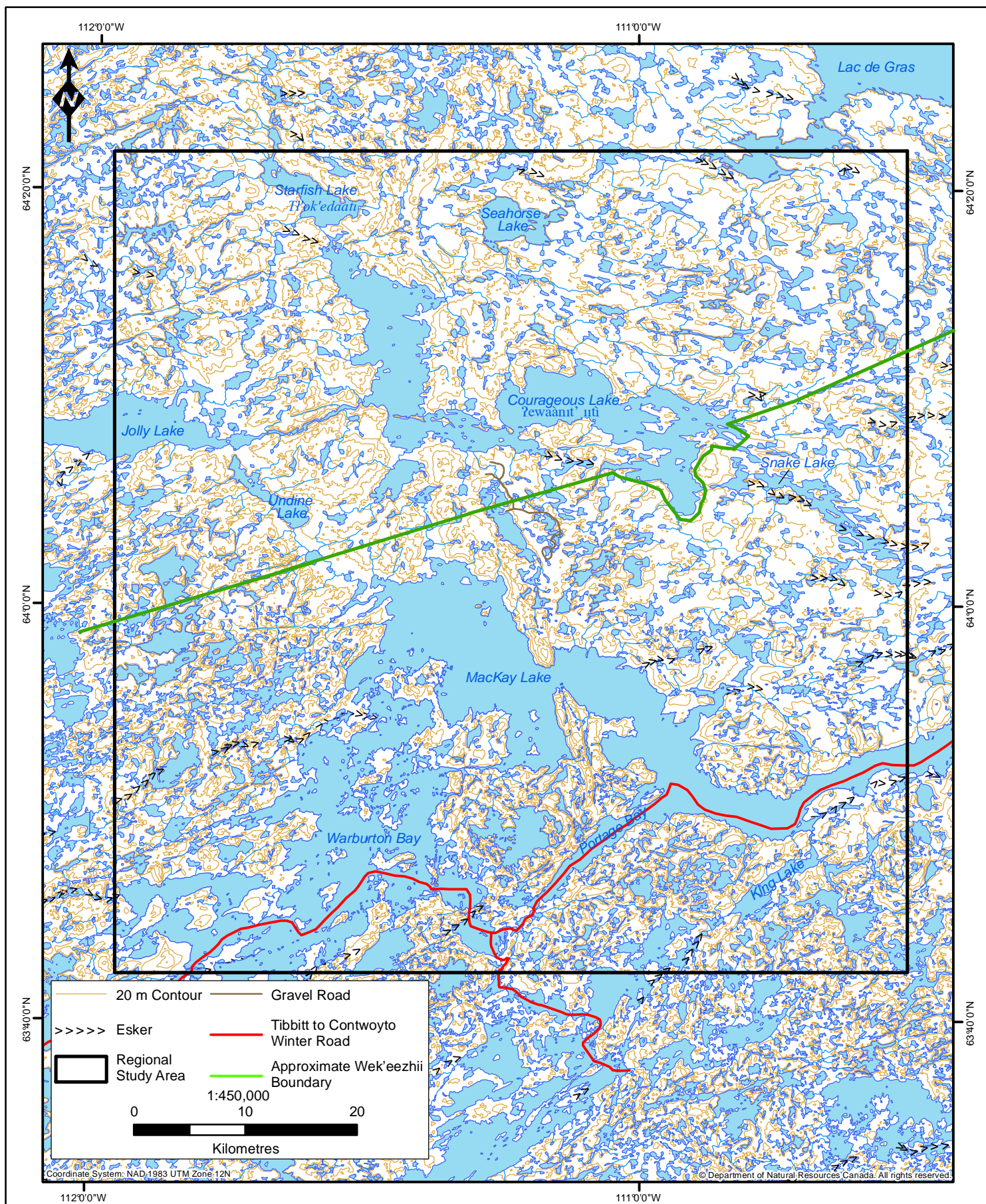




October 03 2012 (Proposed Infrastructure as of December 2011)

Map ID: CL-TL-002a

**Map 1: Site specific Study Area and  
Seabridge Proposed Development  
ʔewaànit'iiti Traditional Knowledge Study**



Map 2: Regional Study Area  
 ?ewaaniit'iiti Traditional Knowledge Study



# RESEARCH RESULTS I. THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ʔEWAÀNIT'IIȚĪ AREA

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*"We are caribou hunters, and the caribou is our source of food"*

Pierre Tlokka, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

By researching Tłıchq use and knowledge of the ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ area, this study documented the extent and locations of specific cultural activities during fall and winter, the seasons that the Tłıchq use the ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ area (Map 3). A focus on seasonal lifeways emphasized the cultural use of the resources in the ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ area, through showing the movements of the Tłıchq over the land during each specific season. The characteristics of the Tłıchq hunting and trapping culture creates a picture of the Tłıchq cultural footprint in the ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ area; a footprint which includes use and knowledge of the entire study area.

*"The impressions of trails we see today were made by our ancestors who used to roam this area. We called them 'Detsi laa got'ii' (people of the tree line). Often times I heard them tell stories about the real tundra and they used to say, "from here on ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ and due north, it's barren and there are no trees". Our ancestors and elders were poor but they worked hard and their only means of transportation were dog teams back then. It was extremely cold in those years but our ancestors were fast and moved swiftly among their traplines to catch as many white foxes as they could."*

Robert Mackenzie, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012, ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ

The research results are based on stories from Tłıchq Elders. One of the purposes of storytelling is teaching. By listening to the Elders' stories, one learns about their extensive travels by canoe or dog-team and their hard and meaningful work on the land.

Each part of Tłıchq land contains different resources that the Tłıchq rely on. During each season of the year, the Tłıchq harvest and gather these resources by following the seasonal round. The Tłıchq's traditional hunting and trapping culture has been designed to travel to particular locations at specific times of the year, where they know animals can successfully be harvested.

This section is designed to follow Tłıchq seasonal lifeways, by describing the Elders' stories of being on the land during each season. The report starts in early fall traveling along the traditional trails from Behchokò to the barrenlands and to ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ for the fall caribou hunt. Following the seasonal change, the winter activities of hunting and trapping on the barrenlands are described. Lastly, this section describes the stories of the travel south into the forest and towards Behchokò at the end of winter, and eventually into spring.

## Fall

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*"We arrived at ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ by boat, I was with my dad, Boa. We got there by boat so we stayed there during freeze up. Several families stayed there during freeze up, while we lived there, my dad went hunting. There were so much caribou, lots and lots of caribou."*

Elisabeth Michel, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Every fall barren-ground caribou migrate through the ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ area. This is well known among the Tłıchq, who have travelled to ʔewaànit'iiȚĪ to hunt caribou since time

immemorial. ‘Back in the days’, families travelled to ʔewaànit’iitì by canoe in the fall, to hunt caribou and trap white fox and wolves. The families stayed in the area through freeze-up and into winter. Currently, ʔewaànit’iitì is a desired destination for the fall caribou hunt, however, transportation has been by plane since 1970s.

## Travel to ʔewaànit’iitì

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During early fall, families gathered together to prepare for the lengthy journey from Behchokò towards the barrenlands. At this time, families departed from the summer camps around Behchokò, on the canoe trails that led towards the barrenlands and their hunting and trapping grounds around ʔewaànit’iitì.

Margareth Tsatchia describes the journey with her family to ʔewaànit’iitì:

*“I was a young girl at the time we left Behchokò by boat. We also left from Kwek’ateeli. We kept going and going for almost a week, all the way to Kw’iti tata and then we arrived there.*

*My uncle ʔahdoa, my grandpa, Gotse li. All of them lived there. My uncle, Eddie Weyallon, came to visit my uncle Zo Madzi. My in-laws said that we cannot just be staying like this, we need to go to ʔewaànit’iitì and stay there for the winter. The rest of them stayed behind. We can go trapping not far from there he said. So we left by boat.*

*Sometimes we were on small ponds, sometime on lakes, and we went on portage where we carried the boats. Some lakes were big. We continued and kept going and going, until we reach ʔewaànit’iitì. We came to the edge of the lake. Wedo, Zimmie Fish, my uncle Wetsobe, walked the dogs on land while holding on to their leashes.*

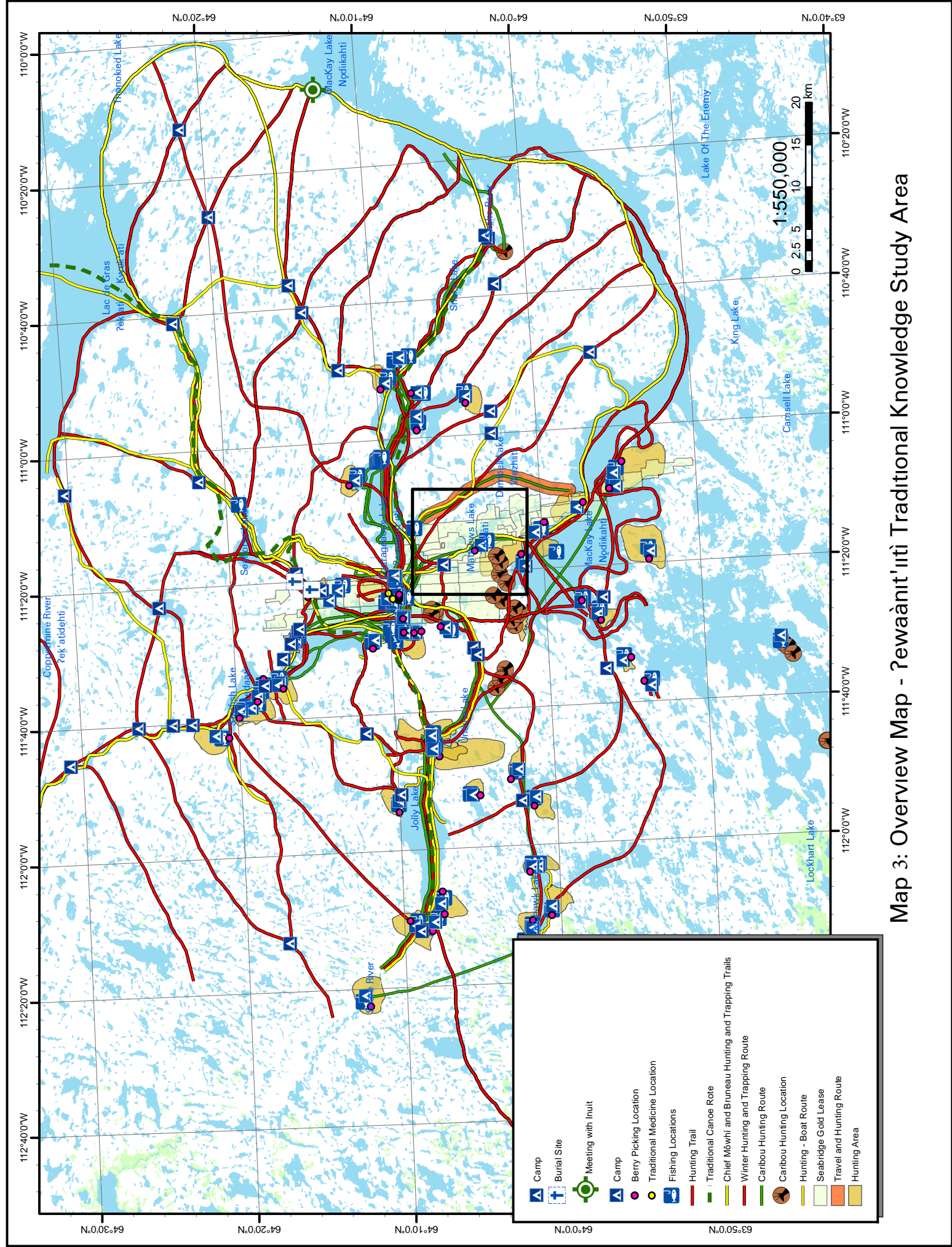
*There were so many caribou on ʔewaànit’iitì. With the small boat my uncle hauled the gear across the lake. If the crossing was too long, they used three boats to take us across and there we waited for them. They continued to haul gear until they were done. After they hauled the people across and then took the dogs last.*

*At ʔewaànit’iitì there was a big hill. We went to the small bush area, where we set up tents and chop Kw’iaa, gooka hani. They chopped off little bushes and then we gathered firewood. They dried meat on ropes. The only wood was tent poles. After that it was early freeze up and by that time it had become Halloween.”*

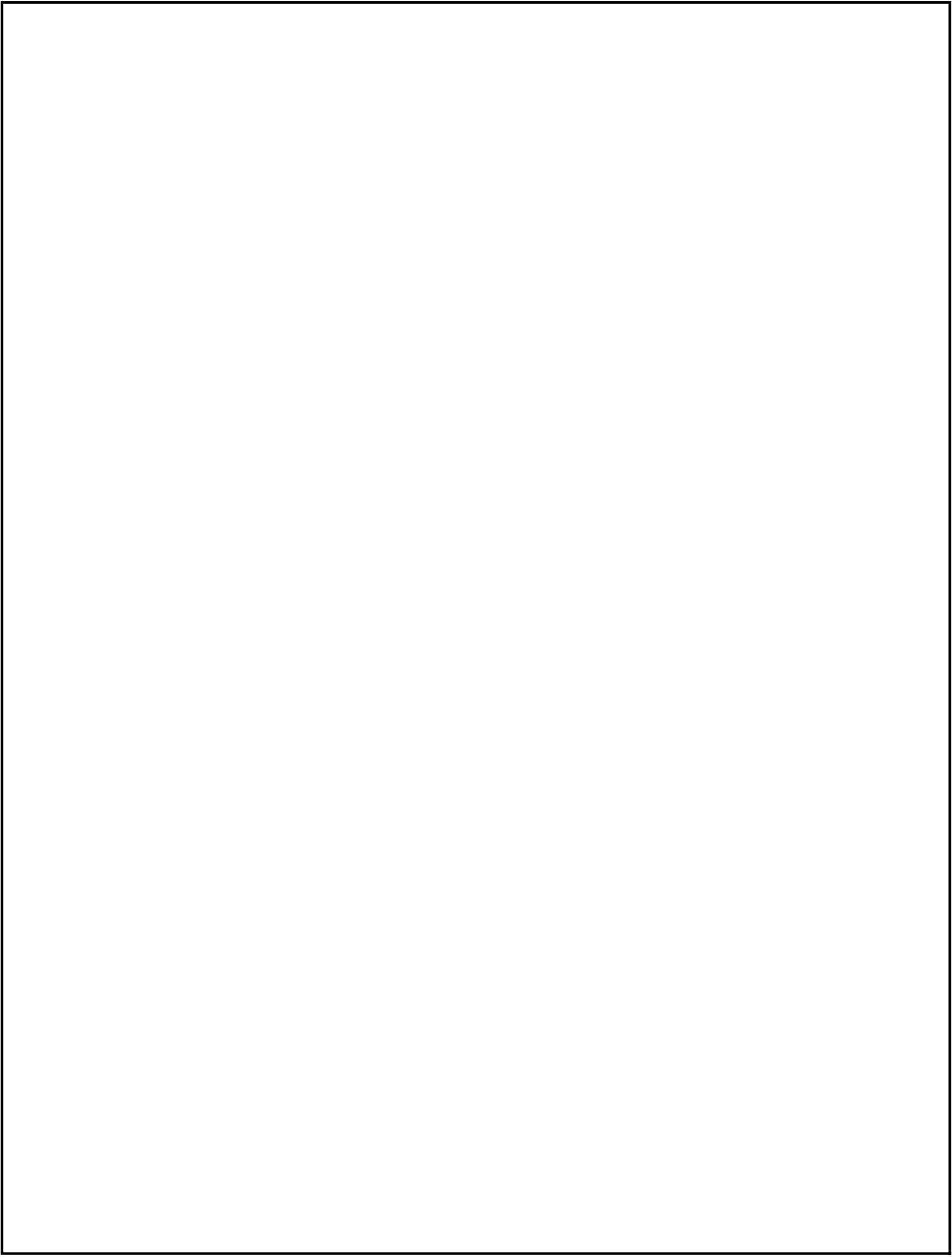
Margareth Tsatchia, May 15th 2012, Behchokò

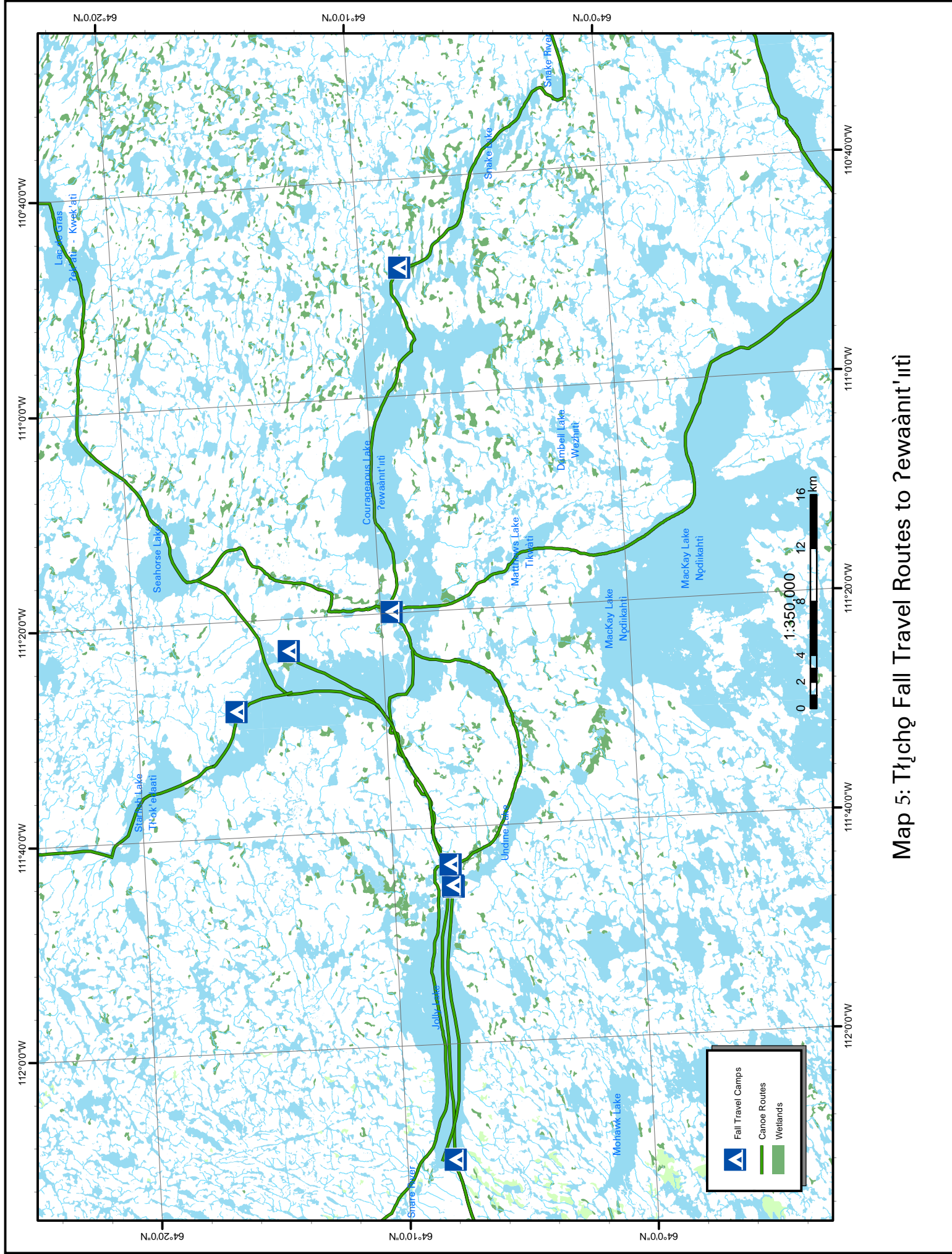
The Tłı̨chq̓ have traveled throughout their land for generations. During their seasonal movements they created trails based on the least complicated transportation method throughout the land. Their trails mainly followed the waterways, which made travel easier both in summer and winter.

There are three travel routes from Behchokò toward the barrenlands and to ʔewaànit’iitì (Map 4). One of the canoe routes, the ‘Wekweeti de’, heads northeast from Behchokò towards Wekweeti along Snare River. A second route follows the waterways along Wecho River from Dehtsootse to Wekweeti. These two routes meet on the western end of Snare Lake. The third route heads northeast from Wecho River to Reindeer Lake and towards the lake named Kw’iti. The routes meet at Kw’iti and follows Snare River towards ʔezq̓i (Jolly Lake). From this lake the routes follow the waterways east toward ʔewaànit’iitì. This route is called Kw’iti tili (trail).









Harry Apples tells his story of travelling to the barrenlands:

*“ Behchokò to there we came by boat, we carry all our gears, the sleds and dogs. It took us about two weeks. When we carry all our belongings we have to make several trips back and forth on the portage. Maybe ten trips back to haul all the stuff. Sometimes if there’s too much we let the dogs haul the gears on the sled, they pull it over the portage.*

*The portage is long. There were no big boats before; we had to let the dogs follow us along the shoreline and above the riverbank. Depending on the landforms, we had to watch for our dogs. That was how we cared for our dogs. So we had dog trails and paths.*

*When we travelled it was hard to have dogs and everything else in the boat. The dogs went ahead of us because they were familiar with the trails. They even go across the lakes, rivers and streams. The dogs sense other people too so they go in that direction.”*

Harry Apples May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, B hchokò

Entire families traveled together in large birch-bark or canvas canoes. They carried with them the necessary gear and supplies for the family to stay in the ʔewaànit’ıı̨ area during freeze-up and into winter. They intended to hunt caribou during the caribou migration to secure a sufficient amount of drymeat to last into the winter.

The families camped at one location and the men hunted and trapped in the surrounding area. If caribou became scarce, the camp was moved to a better location. Certain people had special knowledge to find their way on the land and to the areas where caribou could successfully be hunted. Harry Apples explains:

*“The people back then really had used their knowledge to know directions. Without maps they travelled long distances. Before, the people used their medicine power, our ancestors, they had visions of how to make travelling trails, paths and routes. If they had medicine power they knew.*

*These people have dreams that come true. They foresee the future. Before there were doctors, the people were their doctors. Sometimes when food becomes scarce the people asked the medicine man to foresee and predict animal movement so that they can have food. The medicine person would dream about it and next day, she/ he would tell the people where they can get the animal for food. They would go there to the place and get the animal for food”*

Harry Apples May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

After dark, the Tł̨chq use the stars to navigate their way. Knowledge of star constellations is important to determine current position and the travel direction. The North Star, the one which does not move, was the most important for the people to find their way. The stars are also used as a timekeeper. By studying the circular movement of certain constellations such as the Big Dipper, throughout the night, one would know the approximate time.

## Fall Caribou Hunt

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Since the 1970 and 1980s, transportation to the caribou hunting ground in the ʔewaànit’ıı̨ area has been by plane. Hunters search for caribou at certain locations where caribou are known to migrate through. Robert Mackenzie explains:

*“With the plane we find an area with lots of caribou and we land near them in the barrenlands”.*

Robert Mackenzie May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Camp is established for five to seven days and caribou are hunted either by walking in the surrounding area or searched for by boat along the shoreline. Robert Mackenzie continues his explanation:

*“Lots of caribou around [ʔewaànit’iitì]. If there is no wind then we travel and we paddle with the boat along the shore there. If we shoot a caribou here close to the water then we don’t have to pack it a long way. If we shoot a caribou then we can boat back.”*

Robert Mackenzie May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

After a successful hunt, the hunter skins the caribou at the site. Using a special technique, the meat is packed in the hide and tied into a ‘bundle’. The bundle is then carried to the boat or back to camp. The bundle is carried on the hunter’s back using a strap supported from the forehead. When a sufficient amount of caribou is harvested, the meat is transported back to the communities. Before 1970-80s, most of the meat was made into drymeat before transported to the communities by boat. With the use of floatplanes, the bundles are simply transported back to the communities. The elder Harry Apple describes his experience of hunting:

*“From [ʔewaànit’iitì] we hunt and kill caribou. If there are lots of caribou we just kind of watch and get what we need. If they take us to hunt, we get dropped off [by plane] where there’s a huge herd of caribou. Sometimes we just watch the caribou. They walk to it and get their caribou. That’s how we hunt.”*

Harry Apple May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

The topography around ʔewaànit’iitì provides several locations for successful caribou hunting. The Tłıchq term “tata” is an important concept in understanding both caribou movement and caribou hunting. “Tata” means a narrow stretch of land in between two large lakes. Around ʔewaànit’iitì there are several “tata” where the caribou are forced by the topography to congregate in larger herds as they funnel through such narrow stretch of land. These locations are well known to the Tłıchq. Subsequently, these tata around ʔewaànit’iitì provide excellent locations for hunters to secure caribou meat for their families for the coming winter.

The main Tłıchq hunting camps and good caribou hunting locations are located (Map 5):

- Along the esker running through the centre of ʔewaànit’iitì,
- On the east side of the esker at ʔewaànit’iitì,
- On the west side of the esker at ʔewaànit’iitì,
- The tata between Nqđikahtì and ʔewaànit’iitì,
- The tata between Nqđikahtì and Biihikènadatì (Undine Lake),
- The tata between Biihikènadatì and ʔezq̄tì (Jolly Lake), and
- The tata between ʔewaànit’iitì and T’ok’edaatì (Starfish Lake).

Numerous good hunting locations have been documented both in the regional study area and the local study area. Key watercrossings are valued hunting locations: the Nodinka narrows, the esker in the centre of ʔewaànit’iitì, and the islands at the eastern side of

ᑲewaànit'ıftı. Both sides of ʔezqı and Kwa-waati (Mohawk Lake) are also valued hunting areas.

*“ʔezq̓t̓i, we stopped there and walked around on the flat parts of the rocks for a short while on the western point of the Lake, which is very close to the esker that stretches all the way to Snare Lake, our community.*

The area around ʔeqz̥t̥i that I'm talking about was a very popular migration path for caribou at one time. The Tł̥chq̣ people used to come by large canoes in the fall and dog teams in the winter. They used to set up tents around here to be near the caribou. We can only imagine the sweat and work that must have took place here back when the animals had more freedom to roam anywhere they wanted to. Today all we see are criss-crosses of paths that over-lap one another, like a babiche from a caribou hide."

Joseph Judas August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012 ?ewaànit'iiiti

Hunting routes are used to scout for caribou while traveling from one camp area to the next, or from one large lake to another. Certain locations are known for good camp sites, but temporary camps are also established when several caribou are hunted. Important hunting routes are:

1. along the shore of ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄t;
2. from Kwa-waati to Biihikènadati and across Nqdiikahti to Nodinka narrows; and
3. following the numerous lakes across the tata between Nodiakti and ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄t, either along Tikwàti (Matthews lake) or through Wezhiiti (Dumbell Lake).

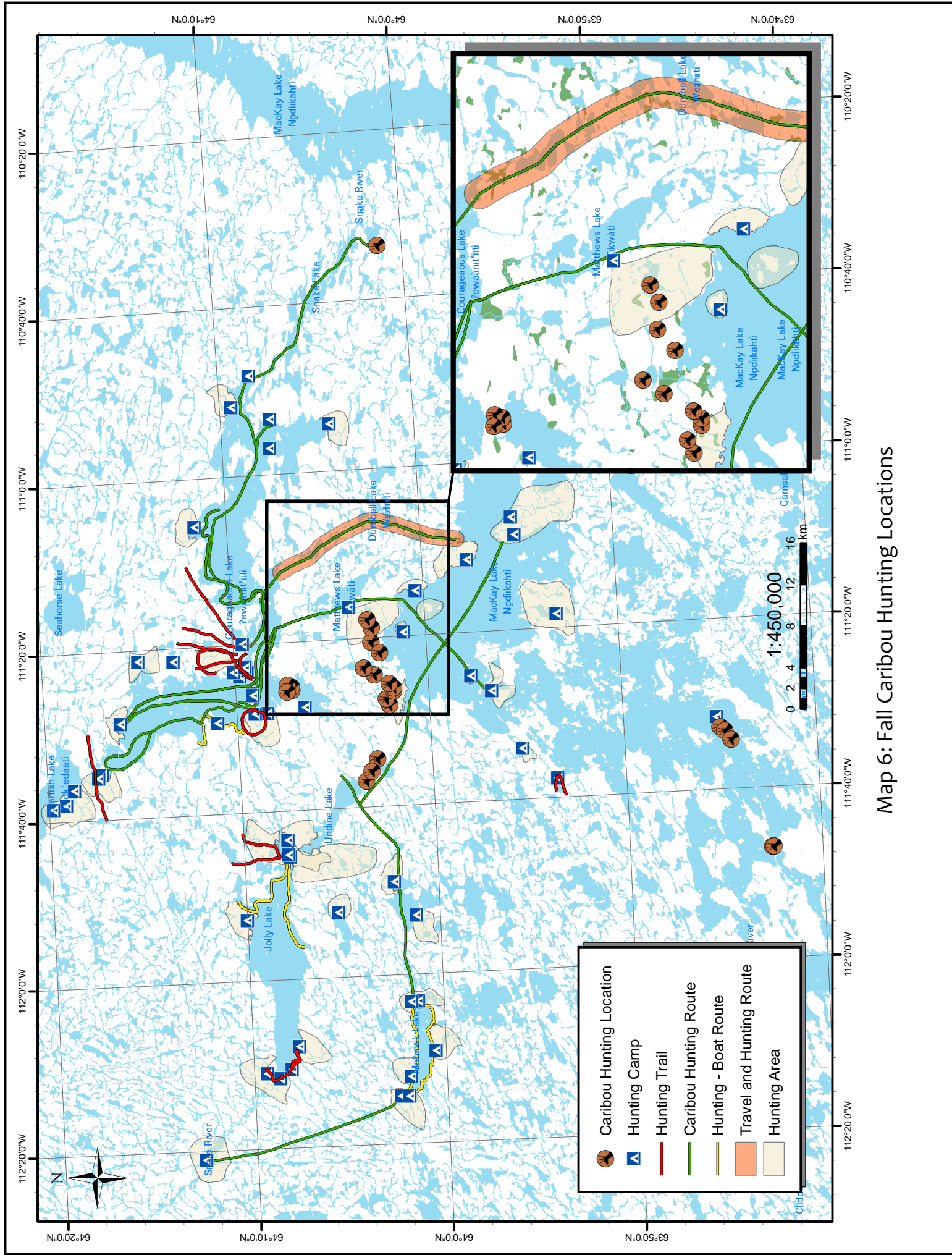
By traveling and hunting between the lakes in the region the hunters understand the extent, locations, and timing of the caribou migration.

The locations illustrated in Map 5 (Fall Caribou Hunting) emphasize the correlation between the movement of caribou along tata, and the hunting locations in these areas. Section Two of this report, describes how caribou are directed into tata between the many large lakes in the region, and how these tata lead the caribou migration towards certain areas.



**Photo 4: Elders and Seabridge representatives studying caribou tata and Seabridge proposed mine site. August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, ʔ waanit'ıı**





Map 6: Fall Caribou Hunting Locations

## Berry-picking & Traditional Medicine

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During the fall a variety of berries and plants of use to the Tłıchq grow on the barrenlands. The Tłıchq have detailed knowledge of which plants and trees can be used for various medicinal treatments, and where to find them (Map 6). Rosanne Mantla tells a story of how certain trees and plants were used to cure sores and heat rash:

*“One time [Rita Wetrade’s] uncle (Rosanne’s husband) was traveling to the barrenland by boat. He developed sores – heat rash, because they were working hard in the heat. He had sores all over his neck area, so my mother in-law said to collect birch trees. She boiled them in a big pot and for three days she applied it to his neck. It healed, and he never developed sores again until he passed away. That is a good medicine for sores. And from the same birch tree there are little bits for fluff (dahghq̃) that too can be used when a child develops mouth rash. They apply it and it goes away immediately.*

*Another berry bush called wehgwıkwıʔoò (juniper berry bush) has a bright blue color. It must be just getting ripe about this time [June]. The berries are boiled and applied to baby sores and it will stop the infection. Boil the berries and strain out the liquid, use the liquid in a bath or sometimes when a person develops eczema-like sores around the neck area.”*

Rosanne Mantla, June 5th 2012, Behchokò

The Tłıchq know where berries and traditional medicine can be found, based on certain characteristics of the soil and weather, and the specific locations they can be gathered at certain times of the year. Around ʔewaànit’ıı̄ particular locations (Map 6) are known to produce significant amounts of berries. During the fall caribou hunt women gather large amounts of berries and traditional medicines in the area around each camp, and bring this back to the communities. A large variety of berries exist around ʔewaànit’ıı̄. Rosanne Mantla explains:

*“I counted twelve varieties of berries. That many exist on the land, but we didn’t include some, there’s so many of them. There are those that are close to the ground, and then there are rosehips. There’s the ʔıhk’āı – whisky Jack berry, daht’ı̄, gq̃hıq̃ – tamarack bud, blue berries, cloudberries, raspberries, cranberries.*

*There were blueberries, cranberries, crow berries, cloud berries, raspberries. They are small and red on long roots. That sits on lower ground. Idoo too. They are red. We eat fish eggs with it. They also call it whiskey jack berries. Whiskey jack berries are like blueberries but they are big, very tasty. When children have canker sores in their mouth you use these berries and clean the sores. It clears the sores-even twice you use it. We collect them in jars and take them home.”*

Rosanne Mantla, June 5th 2012, Behchokò

The Elders say that medicine plants grow everywhere on the barrenlands at ʔewaànit’ıı̄. It is primarily the elderly women who have specialized knowledge about medicine plants. They know which plants are important, where they grow and how to use them. Rosanne Mantla is one of the elderly women who have specific knowledge about medicinal plants:

*“ʔıhk’ad̄ı are just on the ground and grow only in the barrenland. You can’t find any in this area [Behchokò], only in the barrenland. When we find the berries we collect them in containers so that we can treat infections like kids’ mouth rash. We put the berries in small jars. Not one of the standing trees do not have liquid in them. They are all medicines. All those trees have medicine in them, without exception.”*

Rosanne Mantla, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

The Tłıchq have specialized knowledge of how to prepare treatments from various plants. For example, the black lichen and the white lichen that grew on rocks are used to treat canker sores on children. Rosanne Mantla provides further insights into the use of various plants and trees:

*"There is the spruce cone and bud to make medicine drink called gots'qòhdzı̀tì from the pine tree (gqò), another one is the white spruce (ts'iwà), from which we collect the spruce buds, bark lining, and the wood itself to make medicinal drink. The gum of white spruce and the black spruce tree is called edzq, black spruce gum is called edzqdzè, the cones/bud of the tamarack tree (doowe). The wood is chopped, all the top bark removed and the tamarack inner bark (doowek'a) is collected.*

*Another plant is called Dahgqòtì and Tehgqòtì, and another plant is called Ts'aekwqò, that kind too. You see the white birch? That too, it's bud too, and the birch bark, if you cut the birch and put a tin can under the cut, it will fill with a syrup called K'itìtì, it looks just like water. When the pail gets full we just drink it."*

Rosanne Mantla, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò



**Photo 5: Robert Mackenzie making dechiti (spruceneedle tea) to prevent a cold at Traditional Knowledge camp, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, Ɂewaànit'ı̀tì.**





## Fishing

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Several places on ʔewaànit'ıı̨ and the surrounding lakes provides excellent locations for fishing (Map 7), primarily for whitefish and trout. Fish is caught mostly using nets, during fall at the caribou hunting camps. The ʔewaànit'ıı̨ area is mainly used for caribou hunting. Fishing is a supplement to the main food source, caribou, and carried out when necessary. Thus, fishing is not the primary activity at ʔewaànit'ıı̨, but does contribute significantly to their use of the area if caribou is not present. Harry Apples explains:

*“We set fishnet anywhere and we catch fish. Not in the winter it’s not easy, in summer only. Anywhere is good for fishing. When we go there we will go fishing with nets. We didn’t set the nets when we were there because there was lots of caribou and we ate good. We didn’t need to fish.”*

Harry Apples, May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Fish nets are also set under the ice during winter. Robert Mackenzie describes:

*“We always carried our nets. I had fish nets here and here. Lots of big fish there. It was like 3 feet long. Whitefish was big and trout fish too. Fishing areas, everywhere. We had one net set there. Winter camp there, when I travel by dog team, we set a fish net.”*

Robert Mackenzie, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Rosanne Mantla describes a specific fishing location on ʔewaànit'ıı̨. At the time of their trip to this location, in the 90s, several fish showed signs of blisters and bruises in the flesh.

*“Along ʔewaànit'ıı̨, the long sandy shorelines where it meets the river and further along is an island, that’s where they set the net. The fish are good there but the fish there had wetqyeè (blisters, bruises) marks on the fish at that time.”*

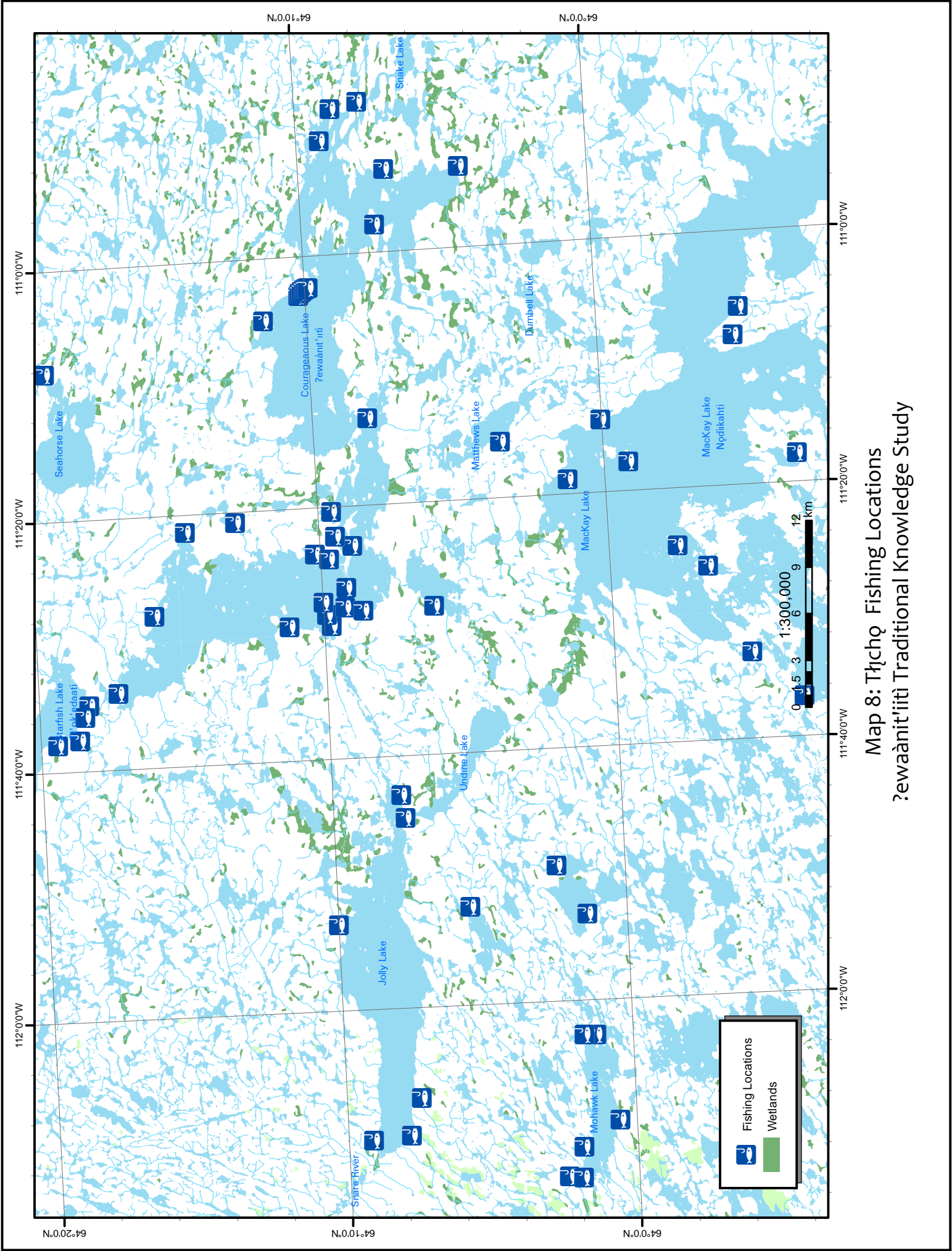
Rosanne Mantla, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

No other Elders expressed they had seen signs of decreased fish quality.



**Picture 6: Margareth Tsatchia cooking lake trout at Traditional Knowledge camp, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit'ıı̨.**





Map 8: Tłıchǫ Fishing Locations  
Tłıchǫ Traditional Knowledge Study

## Winter

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*“After freeze-up we stayed over there all winter while our parents trapped almost to Christmas and they continued trapping until Easter. When they returned from trapping only then we would travel to another lake. As the weather warmed up only then we’d leave for home, but we lived there all winter. Since we were in the barrenland our main food source was only caribou meat all winter”*

Elisabeth Michel, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The ʔewaànit’ı̀ı̀ area is attractive both because of the predictable caribou hunting locations and for the high populations of white fox and wolves, which provided good trapping opportunities. After hunting caribou, the people stayed over freeze-up and started to trap as winter approached. Some families used the area all winter, while others left for the south to celebrate Christmas. Elisabeth Michel continues to describe her stay at ʔewaànit’ı̀ı̀ during winter:

*“When we wintered at ʔewaànit’ı̀ı̀ [the women] prepared a lot of caribou hides. We made caribou fur coats, and moccasins from nìzhawò [caribou cow hide]. They told us it would be cold so we made for ourselves caribou fur mittens which we wore over another one. At that time we used clothes mostly made from caribou fur.”*

Elisabeth Michel, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

As hunting was sometimes unreliable, the families did not stay in one location all winter. Obtaining firewood during the many dark months of winter was also a difficulty. Instead a family would move their camp to locations where they could obtain food and firewood (Map 8).

*“When there were no caribou, our dad and the hunters would scout around for caribou. When they find caribou they would hunt and we would move to that area to live. If there are no caribou they would use dog-teams to scout far for caribou until they find them. They would kill twenty to thirty caribou, and move the camp to that area to live for a while. That’s how it used to be.”*

Elisabeth Michel, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

As most barren-ground caribou migrated south towards the treeline during winter, there were occasions of starvation for trappers on the barrenlands when they did not encounter caribou. Jimmy Kodzin tells a story he was told by his brother-in-law Mohzhia’s (Eddie Lafferty) trip to the barrenlands north of ʔewaànit’ı̀ı̀.

*“My brother-in-law Mohzhia said: “I was with Old Chief Bruneau, his son Nick who is crippled and cannot walk, my brother-in-law Louie, Ali Goa Goa and my uncle Suzie. They travelled far distance to go trapping”. My brother-in-law Mohzhia said, “as I pulled my dogs in the sled I went to the top of the hill. When I was standing on the top of ʔek’atì, huge land and remembering miles and distance towards home I thought I’ll never get back it’s too far back to Behchokò”.*

*Leaving the area, they travel on to where there was a lake that they weren’t familiar with. But the Old Chief’s advice was, even with an axe we can set fish hooks under the ice: “We can try to catch fish”. So when they got to the big lake they set fish hooks under the ice.*

*My brother-in-law Mohzhia said, “We caught fish but not enough and the dogs*

were ever pitiful, they could barely move from hunger and the cold. From there on we continue to hook some fish but it was never enough. We checked the hooks one morning and it got warmer by noon. Looking at the dogs was an agony, they looked lifeless from fatigue”.

Out of nowhere they spotted some kind of animals in the distance coming towards them. From what direction, it was five caribou coming towards them. I remember my brother-in-law Mohzhia telling us: “Who will be able to go and get caribou? Who will do it?” They looked to each other and my uncle Suzie said “I will go, I will go towards them.

Then the Old Chief said “You are not able to do it. There sitting is my nephew, Ali Goa Goa, he will do it, he will go!” So Ali went and killed the five caribou for us. With that the dogs started to look well-nourished and gained some strength, they were fed well. The old chief said “Clean and rinse out the stomach of the caribou, nothing will be wasted.” They followed his advice.

After we butchered the caribou we hurried back to the tent where Nick was waiting for us. When we got to the camp we could smell the cooking of bannock. Nick had cooked bannock, just to smell the cooked bannock, was I ever happy. The dogs had gained their strength and they looked lively with energy. We were ready to go back home.

The Chief’s son Suzie asked his father, “Father, can we go back to the barrens to trap for about a week?” His father said to him “We just came back from there without food. If we didn’t kill caribou we would have lost our dogs. It is still far to the big lake, we can’t go back again.” But Suzie kept pleading with his father until his father gave in to him. So they went back to the barrenlands to trap for white fox. After several days of trapping they killed three more caribou. They used chunks of frozen meat for trapping bait. Finally the Old Chief said “We did enough trapping, we are going home. From our trapping camp towards home was very far”. As my brother-in-law Mohzhia told his story he said: “Just to think about it, the miles and distance was ever long and far. We made it back to the big lake safely and the dogs did well too.”

Jimmy Kodzin, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, Wekweètì.

Enduring the hardship of travelling on the barrenlands, without food or firewood, was emphasized by all the Elders. Uncertainty in trapping and hunting was a part of the way of life. During these occasions it was crucial to have knowledge of certain locations where one could hunt caribou or other animals with some degree of success.

## Trapping

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Trappers from Behchokò and Wekweètì travelled to ʔewaànit’ı̄ı̄. ʔEwaànit’ı̄ı̄ was a secure camp location, as firewood was accessible at Ts’iedaa, at the north end of the lake. Trappers ran their traplines from their camp at ʔewaànit’ı̄ı̄ over land to the other larger lakes in the region: south to Nq̄dikahtì, west to ʔezq̄ı̄, north to Tł’ok’edaatì and Coppermine River, and northeast towards ʔek’atì (Map 9).

A circular route from ʔewaànit’ı̄ı̄ to Nq̄dikahtì, then north to ʔek’atì and southwest back towards ʔewaànit’ı̄ı̄ was used by many trappers including Chief Jimmy Bruneau. The trappers followed the shoreline of the larger lakes, where traps were set on each protruding point. Traplines were also set along smaller rivers and lakes throughout the region.

The main furbearing animal for trapping was white fox, but wolves and wolverines were also trapped. White fox were mainly trapped along the esker that runs through the centre of ʔewaànit'ıı̀. Before proceeding to the east side of ʔewaànit'ıı̀ and Nq̄diikahtì or further north towards ʔek'atì and Kòk'eetì (Contwoyto lake), trappers would stop by the north end of ʔewaànit'ıı̀ to collect firewood. Joseph Judas explains:

*“The main thing is our people, our Elders, our history, they always talked about that part [north end of ʔewaànit'ıı̀]. If they went trapping from ʔek'atì to Kòk'eetì (Contwoyto lake), they always stopped by there and get all these trees. They got all the wood from that part.*

*They trapped on the [eastside of ʔewaànit'ıı̀], because there is no wood on this side. So there is no wood on the east side of ʔewaànit'ıı̀. Just barrenlands. So they have to get back to [north end of ʔewaànit'ıı̀] to get wood and then they go trapping over in that area. If there is caribou they trap on this eastern side of ʔewaànit'ıı̀. From ʔewaànit'ıı̀ to Kòk'eetì, and more than Kòk'eetì. They went trapping towards that area. Our forefathers did that.”*

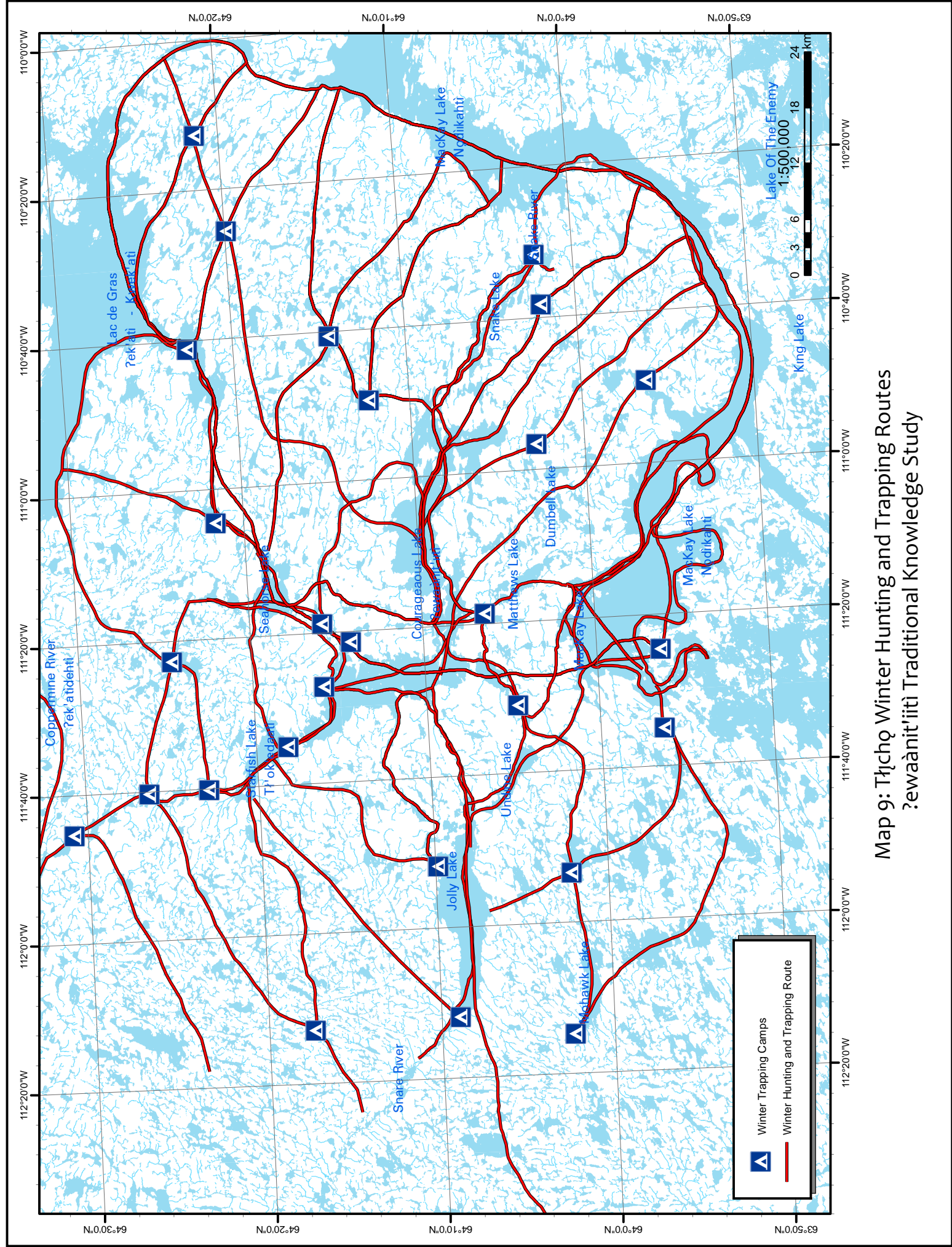
Joseph Judas, May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012, Wekweètì

The journey from Behchokò to ʔewaànit'ıı̀ took about one week by dog-team. While some families stayed in the ʔewaànit'ıı̀ area the whole winter, groups of trappers travelled to the ʔewaànit'ıı̀ area for shorter periods of time throughout the winter. Robert Mackenzie describes trapping around Nq̄diikahtì with Chief Jimmy Bruneau:

*“We travelled all around [Nq̄diikahtì]. We hunted and trapped at the same time. We were there for one week. Old chief Bruneau was there too. “We will wait for you here” we said to [Chief] Jimmy Bruneau. We waited for a long time. Finally, we decided to leave. Chief Bruno went all around there to ʔek'atì. With 4 sleds (4 people-4 dog teams) we went straight across there. Chief Bruno went all around [from Nq̄diikahtì to ʔek'atì and back to ʔewaànit'ıı̀] trapping and hunting.”*

Robert Mackenzie, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò





Map 9: Tł̥chq̣ Winter Hunting and Trapping Routes  
?ewaànit'iitì Traditional Knowledge Study



## Travel from ʔewaànit'itì

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The families who travelled to ʔewaànit'itì during fall used canoes for transportation. After the fall caribou hunt, some families returned to the Behchokò area after the lakes and rivers had frozen over. With no means of transportation on the new snow, the families had to construct their own sleds using locally available material. The few trees found on the barrenlands were cut, split and made into a sled to be pulled by their dogs. Elisabeth Michel tells the story of their preparation before departure:

*“During early freeze up on clear ice my dad said, “They had trapped before Halloween, so they might have two or three or five fur pelts. We should go to Rae, it’s very very far.” They wanted to go to Rae for All Saints Day so they went. There were no sleds, so they got logs, split and shaved the wood and made sled out of three trees. They put them together, but no sled bag, so they made sled bag out of unscrapped caribou hide.*

*“The men are going to Rae”, my mother told us, “there’s no string for the sleds, so scrape hides for the sleds”. We helped my mother by holding the hide for her while she cut narrow strips of hide for string and rope. We braided the hide string by threes and fours. We did the work as we were told. Braiding the hide strings. My dad made a sled out of spruce tree. We braided thick string for the side of the sled bag to be tied to the sled. And we braided another string for tying bundles on the sled. Four braids for the string was for attaching the sled and the bag together.*

*Because they were building a sled, we left camp sometimes after Christmas. They started to build a spruce tree sled. They used hat’aa, a de-haired caribou hide not quite dry, moist like, to make a sled bag. Soon after freeze-up they traveled to an area where we left two sleds. When hunters from Wekweetì arrived they had brought sleds to them. The two sleds were store bought sleds. Fine sled bags were made from hat’aa for the sleds, which made it attractive. The spruce sleds were thrown away, the other sleds were longer and new sled bags were made for them.*

*The people used to made spruce sleds until they got store bought sleds and discarded the spruce sleds. We used those two sleds while we were living at ʔewaànit'itì. After Christmas when father finished trapping only then did we travel back to the community. We traveled to Wekweetì and traveled back home to Behchokò with the hunters.”*

Elisabeth Michel, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The journey back to the forest and towards Behchokò was hard and long. The families were transporting their gear, and the large amount of drymeat that had been produced while hunting caribou at ʔewaànit'itì. Elisabeth Michel continues her story:

*“We lived at ʔewaànit'itì all year from freeze-up until way past Christmas. It was almost Easter when we finally left. When we are about to leave ʔewaànit'itì, our family would hunt for caribou. We would dry the meat, pack up the drymeat and backpack the drymeat ahead of the family on the trail. We would build a stage to store the packs on and return to the camp by dogteam. After two or three days of storing packs of drymeat safely on the stages we would return for them two days later. That was how we traveled packing from one lake to another.”*

Elisabeth Michel June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The Elders describe the many difficult journeys and the way of life as hard. But as Harry Apples describes, living and travelling on the land was at times enjoyable:

*“We came back (to Behchokò) by dogteam in the winter. Brought the boat back with dogteam. That is how I worked, I live my life that way and I really enjoy my way of life. It is hard work. When we work on the land it is very good. Traveling on the land makes me more determined to love what I do. Minus 50, 60 in those days, the breath of dogs is like heavy smoke, we sit on the sled and watch the cold frost from the breath of the dogs running ahead.”*

Harry Apples May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The main activities around ʔewaànit’iiti during the winter months were trapping and hunting. The families were highly self-reliant and produced most of their gear from material available locally, as Elisabeth Michel explained in her story of constructing a sled. After travelling throughout the region during fall and winter for generations, the people know where to secure certain animals for food and other animals for furs that would contribute to their hunting and trapping equipment for the next season.

## Spring & Summer

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The ʔewaànit’iiti area is not used in the spring or during the summer month of June and July.

## Tłıchq Heritage

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The stories relayed above demonstrate the extensive use of the ʔewaànit’iiti area by the Tłıchq. ʔewaànit’iiti plays a significant role in Tłıchq seasonal lifeways, during past and current seasonal harvesting activities. The traditional travel route from the communities towards Tłıchq hunting and trapping grounds goes through ʔewaànit’iiti. The traditional routes follow the waterways from ʔezqti to ʔewaànit’iiti. One part of the route follows the lake eastwards to Nqdiikahti, while the other part of the route goes north following the waterways to Whaticho / Whatika and to Ekati (Map 10).

This section describes the cultural importance of the ʔewaànit’iiti area. First, a description of Ts’iedaa; second, a description of its use by the Tłıchq Chiefs Jimmy Bruneau and Monfwi; third, is a discussion of the burial sites that are located in the area; and fourth, Tlıcho interaction with Inuit (Map 10).

## Ts’iedaa

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The area around the northeastern corner of ʔewaànit’iiti is called Ts’iedaa, meaning “living sp uce tree”. The place is referred to as the last stand of trees on the barrenlands. The area served as a base camp for Tłıchq families, during fall and winter, for fox and wolf trapping and caribou hunting. While the men hunted or travelled on their traplines, women, children and elders stayed behind at this place, because of the abundance of trees. Hunters and trappers always returned to Ts’iedaa to collect firewood that they brought with them on the trapline. Joseph Judas, who used to trap throughout the ʔewaànit’iiti area, describes:

*“The only wood they can get is from [Ts’iedaa]. There are no other trees here, so they had to bring their wood and travel through those places because there are hardly any trees in the barrenland. After that they get a stick like a broomstick about this long and wide for the traps. All the traps are hung over the toboggan sled and all the wood is put in the sledbag. That’s how they traveled. Those who*

*didn't trap a fox or whatever they were hunting for didn't burn their wood because they saved it until they killed something. They don't want to burn all their wood if they didn't kill an animal because they want to keep their wood for when they kill an animal. They will not be able to travel back without wood. That is how they used to travel on this land."*

Joseph Judas, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

People who travelled through the Ɂewaànit'iiti area would usually make camp at Ts'iedaa. Neighbouring peoples, such as the Yellowknives Dene, visited Tł̨chq families at this location as they used the same trails and shared food.

*"People from all directions used to meet up with each other, even the Yellowknife people. They used the same trails. People from different camps used to get together when there was no food."*

Pierre Tlokka, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Chief Jimmy Bruneau made his base camp at Ts'iedaa, while he was trapping on the barrenland.

*"Chief Jimmy Bruneau and his clan started the journey from Behchokò by boat around this time in August and he went as far as to ewaànit'iiti that year. So what our people did back then was pick a lake in the tundra and keep moving until they reach that particular lake and they set up their camp and get ready to spend the winter in that area. So Chief Jimmy Bruneau made his winter camp on that peninsula [Ts'iedaa] of ewaànit'iiti that was his tradition, part of his life and he made his journey annually to the tundra while he was the chief and well into his sixties."*

Elisabeth Michel August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, Ɂewaànit'iiti

Ts'iedaa represents a secure place for the families to stay safe while the men travelled long distances on the barrenlands to hunt and trap. Two burial sites are located on the esker at s'iedaa (see 'Tł̨chq Heritage' p.37). The historical and spiritual values of Ts'iedaa constitute a sensitive cultural area for the Tł̨chq.



Photo 7: 'Feeding the fire' ceremony near the burial sites at Ts'iedaa, August 24th 2012.

## The Chiefs

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Both Chief Monfwi and Chief Jimmy Bruneau used the ʔewaànit'ı̀ı̀ area. During fall the chiefs travelled by canoe to the barrenlands to hunt caribou. During winter they hunted and trapped with their people around ʔewaànit'ı̀ı̀. The main travel route for Chief Monfwi went along Kw'iti tili from Snare River through ʔezq̄ı̀ and ʔewaànit'ı̀ı̀ and north towards ʔek'atı̀ (Map 10). Chief Jimmy Bruneau hunted and trapped extensively in the area from ʔewaànit'ı̀ı̀, Nq̄ı̀ı̀kahtı̀ and ʔek'atı̀ (Map 10). Robert Mackenzie explains his travels with Chief Jimmy Bruneau:

*"ʔewaànit'ı̀ı̀ is the old chief's [Jimmy Bruneau] area. The Yellowknife people go there too. The old chief would leave from [Behchok̄] in the fall and travel by boat for many days until he landed at that place Ts'iedaa. He was strong-minded. He used to camp there during freeze-up, trapped until Christmas, then traveled back to Behchok̄ for Christmas by dogsled. He was strong-minded. At the time people were poor, we didn't carry store-bought food, none at all, only bullets, tobacco and tea. He didn't care for store-bought food; we lived on caribou when the caribou migrate there."*

Robert MacKenzie, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchok̄.

The people followed the Chiefs who showed strong leadership and were good rolemodels. The chiefs worked hard for their people and were highly respected.

*"The two great Elders who were our leaders worked hard for their own people. They really did set up good leadership model and culture examples. They developed their traditional skills for us, we cannot say what they did was small and simple. They both were great Chiefs for their people. They taught their people survival skills and their people too had good relationship skills with their Chiefs. They communicated well, worked well, were reliable and very dependable on the land. They had strong spiritual ties to the land, they were able to travel many distances on the land to trap and hunt on their own."*

Jimmy Kodzin, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, Wekweètı̀

Elisabeth Michel describes living with the Chiefs and sub-chiefs:

*"I remember Chief Bruneau never went to Behchok̄ without his wife on special occasions like Christmas. His wife didn't waste time when she did things, she did her work quickly and efficiently and the both of them always travelled with people who spend the early part of winter at their camps. The two of them always celebrated Christmas and New Years in Behchok̄ among the Tł̄chq̄ people. That was another tradition the two of them had, but once the holidays were over, everyone who came by dogteams would split up and each person would head back to their camps."*

*Chief Jimmy Bruneau was a very strong willed and a determined individual. I cannot remember if he ever spent his winter months around Great Slave Lake. The Chief's common remarks to his people always went like this: "We have been given our treaty money so we should all prepare to leave for the barrenlands soon and not one of you is staying behind. People of Behchok̄ and the Metis who live here year round will stay, but we are going back by boats to the barrenlands". Those were the orders that the Chief usually gave his people and they never ever turned him*



down. Chief Jimmy Bruneau was the kind of a person who was very strong minded and so was Monfwi.

Jimmy Bruneau became chief after Monfwi passed away while he was still a leader. Chief Jimmy Bruneau was known for his determination to work. He also had two sub-chiefs: one of them was my uncle Antoine. Chief Bruneau used to delegate responsibilities to those two to help him keep order in the camps. One of them used to come out of his tent early in the morning to publicly announce what was expected to be done that day. Chief Jimmy Bruneau was known for being organized and a good planner. He used to work with Chief Monfwi but when Jimmy Bruneau became the leader for the Tł̓chq̓ people, he appointed my uncle Antoine to be his sub-chief. In that way the roles and responsibilities to run the camps efficiently filtered down to each person in the camps.

When we say our ancestors labored hard, we mean they struggled because as a little girl I remember how we paddled our canoes close to the shore on this lake [ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ]. We set up our tents at Wekweètì and lived there for the winter, or sometimes at the peninsula of [ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ]. The men usually left camp right after freeze up to trap white fox and a few of us stayed behind. Most times we had just enough food to live on, but the orders given by the headmen were never disobeyed. Everyone in camp worked together in harmony. Gambling wasn't popular in those days. Chores that needed to be done at camps were delegated by the sub-leaders. Their orders were never ignored or turned down by the members wintering together. There was an abundance of wildlife everywhere around us and there was lots of caribou, and I mean lots."

Elisabeth Michel August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ

## Burial Sites

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There are two burial sites located on the esker at Ts'iedaa, along the northeastern part of ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ (Map 10). The two graves are of a woman and a child. Robert Mackenzie (May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò) explained that the woman was the older sister of Joe Martin. Her name was Margareth, with the nickname Mqgoò, and she was the wife of Alexia, from Yellowknife. The child's name was Baadè or Madea. Around Christmas, a group of people were travelling to ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ with Chief Jimmy Bruneau when the woman and the child died. The two were buried together at the point.

"That man's name was Bì who was the father of K'àowo, Zoozèhtsèa's (Joe Nedlin). He was married twice. His wife from his first marriage was Mqgoò (Margaret). She was the older sister of Joe Martin from Dettah. Her grave is there."

Philip Dryneck, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

A family was trapping in the area, when an unforeseen occurrence happened. Margareth Tsatchia tells the story:

"I told that story at ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ. It is not my story. It is the story of the mother who raised me, she told me that story. When we reached the age of puberty they taught us many lessons. They taught us about all the possible sicknesses or hardships we may experience in the future.

She said: "A man called K'q̓q̓dzabì had killed a wolf. K'q̓q̓dzabì's family had only one

*blanket. He didn't want the wolf to freeze so he wrapped the wolf in the blanket, brought it home and took the fur off. He covered his sleeping family with the only blanket they had. In the morning his wife Mqgoò died in her sleep. Even though she was checked by a shaman it was too late. She died because she was affected by the wolf. Then as soon as her son got sick, he too died and was buried beside his mother".*

Margareth Tsathia, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Behchokò.

The burial traditions at that time were different than today. As access to wood was difficult, people covered the body of the deceased person with rocks. As the families trapping on the barrenlands only returned south a few times during the year, a deceased person would be buried at the place where they had died. Pierre Tlokka explains:

*"They didn't use wood for burial, they used only rocks and stones. When you see [rocks] in a pile, it's a burial ground. They didn't use wood, what wood? That's how they buried them when someone dies. Not with wood, but if you see a pile of rocks you know it's a burial area. We used to look for burial grounds. It's a long distance to travel by canoe. Digging a hole in the ground is very difficult and it was very cold, so they would bury the body along the way on top of the ground and pile rocks on top of it. Only rocks were used, rocks piled on top of the body. We think they buried the dead in the ground, they didn't. It was not like that."*

Pierre Tlokka, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

Harry Apples explains further:

*"We only know it by a rock pile in a form of a grave. It was hard and harsh in the old days when someone was buried, they didn't dig the ground. They covered the body with sticks and piled lots of rocks on the body until there was no sign of the body underneath the pile of rocks and sticks. The cross, there was no cross because there was no wood. They just buried the people like I said. Nowadays when someone dies they bring the body back from Edmonton or Yellowknife. Before it was not like that. When people died they buried them there where they died."*

Harry Apples, May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

## **Elders Visit to the Burial Sites at ʔewaànit'ııı**

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On Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup> 2012, a trip was made from the Traditional Knowledge research camp to the burial sites at Ts'iedaa, at the northeastern end of ʔewaànit'ııı. The substantial amount of trees in the area, made the location a strategic basecamp for Tłchq families hunting and trapping around ʔewaànit'ııı and further north on the barrenlands. Having not been there in many years, the elders were emotional about visiting the burial sites and seeing their old camp sites. Margareth Tsatchia explains:

*"[I am speaking of] the trip that we just took to the peninsula of this lake, we said our prayers at that burial site and then Robert Mackenzie did the honors of feeding the fire. Just before we left, he put a rosary on the cross of Mqgoò's grave and my brother [Pierre Tlokka] put a cross on a grave of a child that is buried close to her. The thought of how thankful I was to be here was running*

*through my mind as I sat a short distant away and watched all this take place.*

*I then went to this large tree that was near the site and I said, “You have been a part of this tundra for many years but we are here for a short time because we have a job to do”. I said, “Our ancestors like Monfwi, grandpa Gaudet and Jimmy Bruneau were here at one time”. Then I thought they had probably chop at some trees at this spot many years ago because I could still see impressions of their blades in the trunks of the trees. I was thinking that as I stood underneath the big spruce tree. Then I remembered the story my aunt, Monique used to tell me about the one winter that they lived on this very peninsula where that lady is buried now. That lady and her family were spending the winter there too. I truly believe there is a creator because I had the occasion to once again visit the historical site of our ancestor which renewed my mental strength. So I’m grateful to our creator today for allowing me to visit this place one more time.”*

Margaret Tsatchia August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit’iitì

Burial sites are an important link for the Tł̨chq̨ to their land. The Tł̨chq̨ revisits the burial sites to pray to the person who is buried there. The spirits of the buried person still dwell in the area, and the Tł̨chq̨ communicate with their family members, through prayers, at these places on the land. Through this communication, the land becomes an emotional sphere where ones family members and friends still live. Many features on the land are a living entity where certain spirits live and watch over the land. Communication with these spirits is highly important for Tł̨chq̨ as they travel through their land. These spirits watch over the people and are asked for help in various situations. Through communicating and conducting certain 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 yet another level of connection between the Tł̨chq̨ and their land.

*“Our ancestors travelled by dog teams a long time ago around here. We looked for traces of them in places where we thought our ancestors could have possibly set traps for fur-bearing animals. Then we went back to the burial sites on a sandy esker where we made a campfire and had a meal. We had a ‘feeding the fire’ ceremony. A fire was made and an elder was chosen to make an offering to the fire. It is usually done by a leader or an advisor of the camp. It’s a tradition that has been passed down from our ancestors who have long since passed away. We mentioned their names and each was remembered at our offering today, but that wasn’t all we did. We also prayed for all our ancestors who are buried around Wekweètì, Gamètì, Whatì and Behchokò.”*

Joseph Judas August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit’iitì

The two burial sites at Ts’iedaa are the only burial sites documented in this study. As the Tł̨chq̨ have used the area around ʔewaànit’iitì since time immemorial, other burial sites may exist, but their locations have been lost as elders passed away. The fact that burial sites exist on their land makes the entire place an emotional area for the Tł̨chq̨, as Pierre Tlokka explains:

*“This area means a lot to us. It is in our hearts. A lot of our ancestors died in this area.”*

Pierre Tlokka August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, ʔewaànit’iitì



Photo 8: Tłıchq elders at burial sites at ʔewaànit'ııłı, August 24<sup>th</sup> 2012.

## Tłıchq and Inuit

On their journeys into the barrenlands, the Tłıchq occasionally met Inuit. Tłıchq and Inuit fulfilled the same needs at the barrenlands; hunting caribou and trapping white fox and wolves. The elders remember several meetings with the Inuit, including relationships between young Tłıchq and Inuit. At times, the Inuit travelled to and stayed with the Tłıchq. Even though the Inuit and Tłıchq speak different languages, efforts were made to learn from each other. Elisabeth Michel still remembers words that Inuit had taught her.

*“When the Inuit first came to us there were four of them. The father was called Edward, the son’s name was Bobby and I don’t know the mother’s name. They came to us at our camp. My husband used to travel regularly to the Inuit country so he can understand them. That is why they set up their caribou fur tent close to us. They used a white flour bag for their window on their tent. That is how they lived in their tent. Shortly after he went north a group of twelve Inuit came to our camp. The chiefs were there but they said since Yabì understands the Inuit language let them live close to them. So they set up their tents beside us. We had a new tent ourselves and the Inuit kept coming to our tent.*

*One Inuit named Jimmy was the leader. They came after Christmas. Then Jimmy got sick so they brought him back by their sled. They couldn’t carry him so they abandoned him north of Gahtsodì because he was starting to get stiff while he was still breathing. They put his gun, knife and cup beside him and left him there. Next year when they returned there they found that Jimmy had died. That was the time when we lived here.*

*When the Inuit go outside they would say, “alabah,” which means “It is cold.” They would say, “nagoòyah,” which mean “it is good.” I just remember those two words, the rest I don’t remember. “*

Elisabeth Michel, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Tłıchq hunters and trappers also travelled far north into Inuit territory. Elisabeth Michel describes her husband’s travels:



“I know for a fact that some of our ancestors have trapped close to the Arctic Circle on the Inuit traditional lands near the Arctic Ocean, my late husband travelled with my brother-in-law Louie, Jimmy Dryneck and the late sub-chief Amos and several others who are all gone now. They set traps for white fox and they almost made it to the Arctic Ocean. My late husband said they met some Inuit at their winter camps along the way.

When they came home, he said that when they got up in the mornings, their clothes were covered in frost. We asked what caused that and their response were “We were close to the ocean and it never freezes so that is where the moisture is coming from”. They also told us the feeding grounds for the caribou never freeze either. That was their explanation, they described how the igloos were covered with frost and ice. That’s how far they travelled to trap. My late husband never missed one season to trap near the Arctic Ocean.”

Elisabeth Michel August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit’iitì

Chief Jimmy Bruneau met an Inuit family while trapping at Nqdiikahti. Robert Mackenzie told the story of when he was trapping with Chief Jimmy Bruneau. The Chief decided to trap along the shore of Nqdiikahti towards ʔek’atì and returned to ʔewaànit’iitì with his dog-team. Robert Mackenzie and the other trappers stayed at Nodiakti and ʔewaànit’iitì. The two groups of trappers decided to meet in four days, but the chief’s group was delayed for several days. Robert and the other trappers decided to depart before him. When the chief was trapping on the north eastern part of Nqdiikahti, he encountered Inuit (Map 10). Robert Mackenzie explains:

*“We camped four nights [on island on Nqdiikahti]. They said there were no fox tracks but there were lots of caribou. That’s why we went this way to Ts’iedaa [point on ʔewaànit’iitì]. Old Chief’s [Jimmy Bruneau] group went that way to Ek’atì and they would return to us, so we waited for them there. An Inuit man was living there with his son and wife. They saw the Inuit person, that’s why they were delayed. So we left before them from there.”*

Robert MacKenzie, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

Another story was documented of Chief Bruneau visit with the Inuit:

*“One year he decided to visit an Inuit camp for Christmas so Chief Jimmy Bruneau left his camp shortly after freeze-up. He didn’t have money but he had set his trap along the way. One day he went by his dog team to check his trapline and that’s how Chief Jimmy Bruneau met an Inuit family who were also spending their winter at this one camp.*

*As a leader, he travelled lots with the Tł̥chq̓ people who were with him for the winter. Most times, Chief Bruneau usually left his camp to go trapping shortly after freeze up when the ice was still thin. Normally, he would return about a week before Christmas. His wife stayed behind to take care of their home by chopping down trees for firewood and bring in spruce bough to spread on the ground for the floor in the tent. She always managed to survive in the cold climate. They worked hard and I mean really hard. Chief Bruneau did this for his people and today we carry on with his tradition by going to the barrenlands.”*

Elisabeth Michel August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit’iitì

The stories told by the elders indicate frequent encounters between the Tł̥chq̓ and Inuit in the ʔewaànit’iitì area, and other places on the barrenland. Meetings occurred mostly during winter, when people used dog-teams for transportation on their traplines.



## RESEARCH RESULTS II. TŁCHQ ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF ʔEWAÀNIT'ITÌ

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*“The animals travelled a quite a distance for many years to make themselves visible to the Tłchq, so our people can survive.”*

Joseph Judas August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit'itì

Caribou is the animal of central significance for the Tłchq. This section describes the elders' detailed knowledge about the fall caribou migration, including the major caribou routes and water crossings in the ʔewaànit'itì region. The ʔewaànit'itì area is a highly valued location for caribou hunting, and the Tłchq return most years for the caribou hunt at their numerous camps throughout the area. Pierre Tlokka describes the movement of the large caribou herds:

*“When a large herd of caribou crosses over the water, it's just like watching a huge river flowing, so strong. You can see the hind legs of the caribou moving and everything is moving. You can see their flat ends as they cross the lake. Because they are powerful animals they travel long distances so our people can hunt them. We are caribou hunters, and the caribou is our source of food.*

*When you see a large herd you know about ekwò deet'èè, and do you think the crossing is (too) big? It doesn't bother the caribou they just stampede into the water and swim across. You can hear all that noise. As meat-eaters we know when it's a large herd. We call it - ekwò et'èè. It doesn't pay attention to people, it just goes in the water, it's powerful. Even though the crossing is a long distance it swims across, and you can hear its legs moving underwater.”*

Pierre Tlokka, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

### Fall Caribou Migration and “Tata”

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The ʔewaànit'itì area is located in the centre of the fall migration for barren-ground caribou. The Elders have detailed knowledge of the behavior and movement of caribou and their water crossings over the entire region from ʔek'atì through ʔewaànit'itì and Nqdiikahtì towards Snare River and Wekweètì. To understand the migration of the barren-ground caribou through the region, the Elders interpret the particular land formations and the large lakes in the area around ʔewaànit'itì. The Tłchq term “tata” is significant in understanding both caribou migration and caribou hunting.

Joseph Judas explains:

*“Tata is like a channel, that animals can go on, on the mainland all the way. Because of a big lake, right there and on both sides. That's what they call tata.”*

May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Yellowknife

Tata is a channel of land between two lakes forming a land bridge that caribou are forced to migrate through. The interpretation of the land formations throughout the area reveals how caribou move over the landscape. The large lakes in the region, such as ʔek'atì, Nqdiikahtì and ʔewaànit'itì, create boundaries which compel the caribou to migrate through specific tata between the large lakes. As a result, caribou have few options on their westward migration

through the ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ area.

An analysis of the land formations and tata in the ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ region reveals four main areas that the caribou travel through (Map 10):

- In the north; the tata between Starfish Lake and ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄.
- The esker in the centre of ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄.
- The tata between the south side of ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ and the north side of Nqđikahtı̄; and
- Along the islands on Nqđikahtı̄.

Additionally, some caribou migrate across the water crossings at the Nodinka narrows and other crossings on Nqđikahtı̄ (Map 10). These are the main areas for the westward migration of caribou towards the Tł̄chq̄ region. However, the majority of the migration moves through the tata between ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ and Nqđikahtı̄. This tata is significant for the westward migration, as it directs the caribou towards Tł̄chq̄ lands and especially towards Wekweèti's winter hunting grounds. Joseph Judas explains the caribou migration:

*“There are lots of caribou trails through there [around Matthews Lake], because it's the only narrow part the caribou has. They always go through the (Old Tundra and Salmita] mine. And, they always go through that area, the whole [area between ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ and Nqđikahtı̄]. This is where the caribou travel a lot, at that narrow part.”*

Joseph Judas, May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012, Wekweèti.

The Elders explain that in mid-July the caribou start to move south past ʔek'atı̄, both from the eastern and western side of the lake. In August and September, the caribou migrate further south between the eastern side of ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ and Nqđikahtı̄ (Map 10). The channel of land between these two lakes forms the tata which directs the caribou migration between the south side of ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ and north side of Nqđikahtı̄. The caribou herds continue to travel further west towards Biihikènadatı̄ (Undine Lake) and towards the north and south side of ʔezq̄ı̄ (Jolly Lake) (Map 10).

*“We spoke to [Seabridge] about what we call tata in Tł̄chq̄. They staked an area that will be used for the duration of the mine's life and part of that is on the tata. We explained that the tata stretched all the way to Wekweèti, it's a corridor. Some time we call it the migration path. Caribou are drawn to it because lichen grows on it and lichen is their main source of food. They also use it for passage when they begin to migrate below the treeline, the corridor isn't that wide.”*

Joseph Judas August 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄

During fall, certain factors stress the caribou. The large amount of black flies and the hunters on the barrenlands cause the caribou to move around continuously. In August and September the main herds move through the ʔewaànit'ı̄ı̄ area westwards from the barrenlands towards the Wekweèti area. However, the caribou herds turn around and move back and forth between these areas three to four times to avoid these stressors.

Joseph Judas elaborates:

*“The people used to stay at a lot of places. That's why the caribou doesn't settle down, it just moves around a lot. People are shooting from here, then [caribou] move this*



*way, then they shoot here and then [caribou] move that way. Then they start shooting in that area, and [caribou] move in that way, or this way, it goes like that.*

*After the fall hunt, you get at least ten bundles [caribou], or five bundles, each. That's why it's really hard. Not only them, but the outfitters have camps too on the barrenlands. They too, they are bothering the caribou at that time. Everybody all at the same time. Same time in the fall time. Everybody goes there to shoot caribou for one month. So the caribou just go crazy moving back and forth."*

May 27th, 2012, Yellowknife

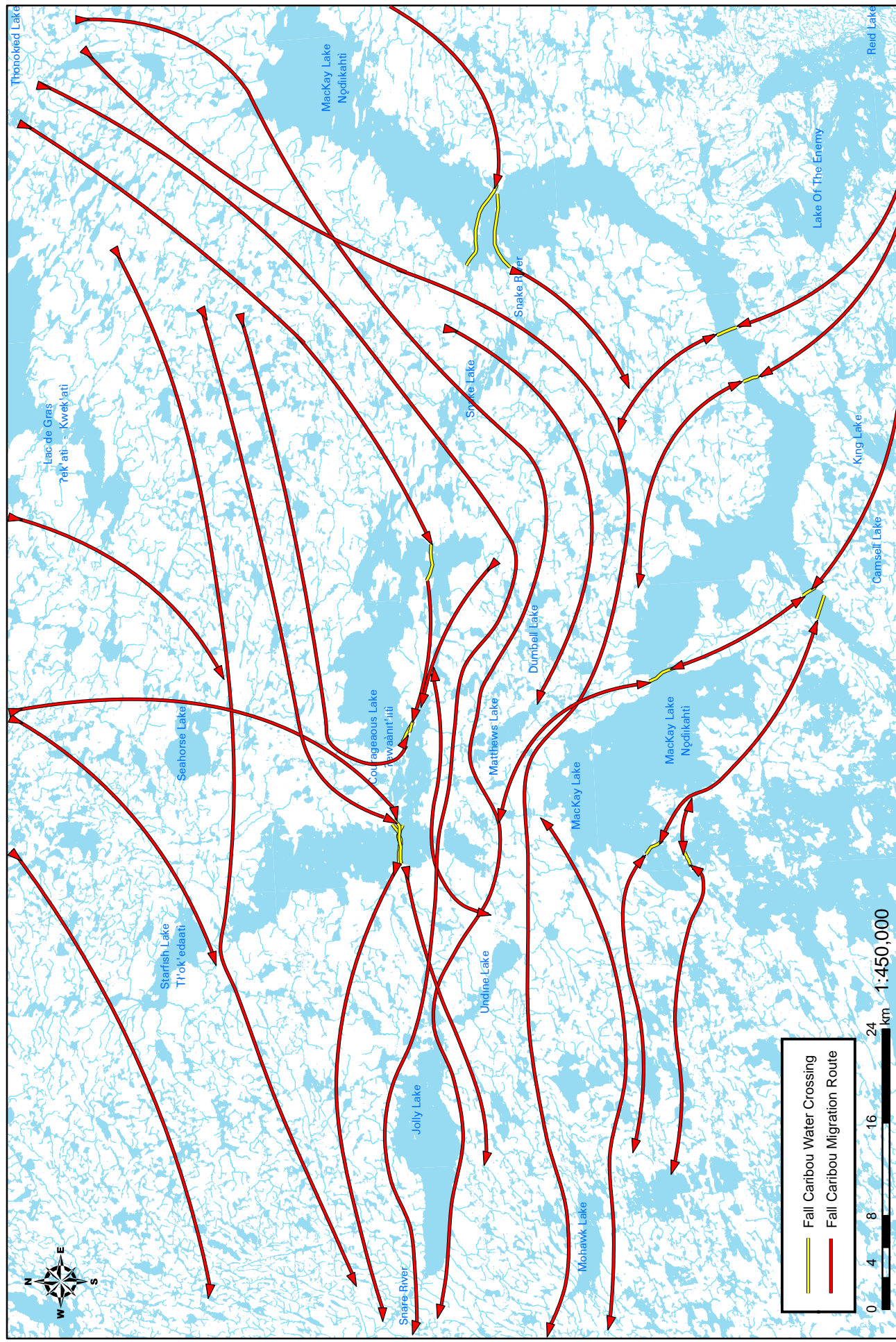
During September and October the majority of the caribou start their migration into the trees, where they stay during the main winter months. The Elders do not hunt in the Ɂewaànit'ıı̃ area during spring, thus, detailed knowledge of caribou's spring migration is limited.

## **Traditional Knowledge and Western Science**

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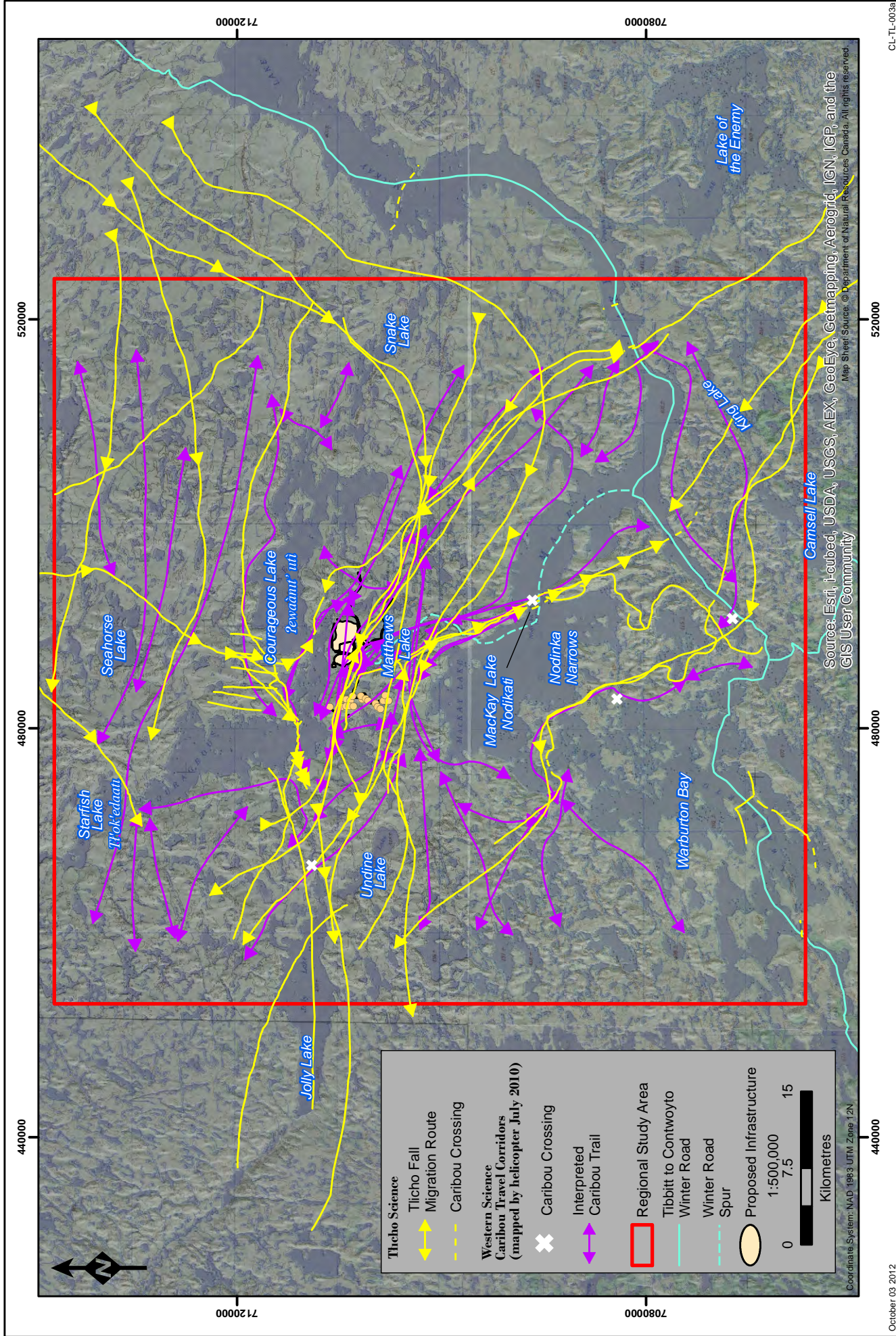
Vivian Banci, a wildlife biologist working for Seabridge Gold, mapped the major caribou trails on the land by helicopter in 2010. This work was conducted for the environmental studies of the area surrounding Seabridge's Courageous Lake project. These results were shared with the Elders for the TK study.

The caribou trails and water crossings mapped with the Elders were compared with those mapped by the biologist (Map 11). The two maps are almost identical. The Traditional Knowledge map is based on the elders' memory of caribou trails from Ekati through Ɂewaànit'ıı̃ and towards Wekweètì. Map 12 is an overlay of the elders and the biologist mapping.



Map 11: Fall Caribou Migration & Water Crossings  
?ewaànit'iitì Traditional Knowledge Study Area





Map 12: Caribou Migration Routes  
Tłıchq Traditional Knowledge and Western Science



## RESEARCH RESULTS III: TŁCHQ ELDERS AND DEVELOPMENT

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This study was conducted with the elders from Behchokò and Wekweètì. The objective of the study was to reflect the elders' voice and knowledge. Building on the Traditional Knowledge presented in section One and Two, this section describes how the elders perceive development and changes to the land, in light of the importance of ʔewaànit'itì both for caribou migration and Tłchq land use.

### Significance of ʔewaànit'itì for the Tłchq

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The stories of Tłchq lifeways within the ʔewaànit'itì area, documented in this Traditional Knowledge study demonstrate the value of this culturally important region for the Tłchq. The area provides several of the resources that the Tłchq rely on. The area is valued for the various locations offering successful hunting during the fall caribou migration, for its trapping areas during winter and for the rich cultural history in the area.

The stories of travels to ʔewaànit'itì and hunting and trapping throughout the region illustrate the significance of the area in the seasonal movements of Tłchq, in the past and at present. There are culturally significant sites for the Tłchq within the ʔewaànit'itì area that must be recognized and protected for current and future generations.

The elders' emphasize how their ancestors worked to protect and maintain Tłchq culture and way of life from former enemies and from colonial institutions. By continuing the work of their ancestors, the elders' state that, now, it is their time to protect and sustain the Tłchq culture and way of life.

*"[Our ancestors] struggled and worked extremely hard. But our ancestors were determined to survive. There is a legend about Edzo and how his sons made peace with the Chipewyan at Mesa Lake that we have been told. Since then our people have been able to sleep without too much disturbance.*

*Then there is another piece of our history. This story is about why Monfwi accepted the first treaty payment and about the boundary he drew for his people on the map. He said "All the treaty people will have the right to hunt, trap and fish within the boundary and that include ownership of all things and no restrictions will be imposed on my people inside of this boundary". Only then did Monfwi accept the treaty payment. The story of this historical event still exists to this day. There is another legend, about a lady who played an important part in achieving peace and harmony for us. That story too is still around. Therefore we don't see too much violence and we sleep well at night. Now we inherited their cause and beliefs, so we carry on with their work.*

*One thing I know for certain is that we will never let our culture and traditions die. We will carry on what [our elders] have demonstrated in front of us and we will hold on to it until we die."*

Robert Mackenzie, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, ʔewaànit'itì



The continuation of traditional cultural activities on the land and being part of the land is of critical importance for the elders. In regards to proposed mining development on their traditional hunting grounds, the elders are concerned of how the animals and the land will be impacted and consequently if their grandchildren, as future generations of harvesters, can continue to use the land in similar ways as they have.

*“We have to make it clear to all the potential companies. If they want to do some exploration work it has to be understood that our goal is to keep the land as we see it presently as much as possible. We have to admit that once our land is disturbed, the landscape will never look the same again. When a person states “I am going to work on this piece of your land” we perceive this as saying “I am killing your land”.*

*To avoid destruction and try to keep damages to a minimum, we want our presence here known because it seems like that’s the only way our concerns will be heard. So we do this every time we hear of a company that is interested in opening a mine. Our presence is necessary to keep our land from being completely destroyed. Once that happens there will be no way to return it to what it used to look like. So our purpose for flying to different sites with the mining company representatives is to meet them, get to know them and talk with them about how they will handle problems. Once the mine goes into operation, what will the company do to fix problems? And, how can they assist us to manage and maintain the lands outside of the boundary of the proposed mine site?”*

Joseph Judas August 26th 2012, ʔewaànit’iiti

## Development and Caribou Migration

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The Elders are concerned over development in the ʔewaànit’iiti area. If the caribou cannot migrate across the tata between the south side of ʔewaànit’iiti and north side of Nqdiikahti, due to development of the proposed mine site and the construction of a wind farm, fewer caribou will travel towards Tłchq lands. As the barren-ground caribou population has declined rapidly during the last years, the Elders are concerned over the consequences from further development on their land.

A central migration route for the caribou is the tata between ʔewaànit’iiti and Nqdiikahti. Development in this area worries the Elders, because of their extensive cultural history in the area, and because of the potential disruption to the caribou migration. Elders are particularly concerned regarding the area as the tata leads the caribou towards Tłchq lands and their winter hunting grounds around Wekweèti. As the elder Robert Mackenzie states:

*“The caribou are going to be divided there. That’s why there’s hardly any caribou going to Wekweèti. If a mine is built there that’s going to make it worse.”*

Robert Mackenzie, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The Elders are especially apprehensive over development on the caribou’s habitat that can further damage the caribou migration, for the sake of the health of the caribou and for the migration towards Tłchq communities and their hunting grounds. Joseph Judas explains:

*“That’s really on the trail of the caribou. This whole area [between ʔewaànit’iiti*

*and Nq̄diikahtì] is called tata. The land looks like a channel. There is a lake right here [ʔewaànit'ı̄tì] and there is a lake right here (Nq̄diikahtì) so the land is right here. So this is the only place where the caribou start moving. So this whole crossing area is caribou trails. So it's like [the proposed wind farm] is blocking [the migration].*

*So when I say I don't feel comfortable with that, means that they have already blocked one area over there (ʔek'atì), so if they block this one, where else will the caribou might go? They might go the other way [southeast] or go this way [northwest to Sahtu]. But only a few will hit Wekweètì. Not right now, or in five years will it be like that. But in thirty to twenty years, or forty to fifty years from now, there will be nothing left coming through that way."*

Joseph Judas, May 25<sup>th</sup>, Yellowknife.

An obstruction on the tata between ʔewaànit'ı̄tì and Nq̄diikahtì will force the caribou herds to travel in other directions, instead of travelling towards Tł̄chq lands. As demonstrated in Research Results 2, the caribou migrates between the large lakes in the area. Development on the main tata in the region, between ʔewaànit'ı̄tì and Nq̄diikahtì, will cause the caribou to travel either on the eastern side of Nq̄diikahtì and towards the forest further east of Tł̄chq lands, or the opposite will occur. The majority of the caribou will travel further northwest towards the Sahtu region. Robert Mackenzie expresses his concerns:

*"There is a big lake here [Nq̄diikahtì] and the caribou will either go this way [northwest] or that way [east], the caribou will either go toward Sahtì or the other way [east] and get divided. Then there will be no more caribou."*

Robert Mackenzie, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The westward migration of caribou, across the tata, from the ʔewaànit'ı̄tì area to the Tł̄chq lands is of critical importance for the Tł̄chq.

*"It is a huge land. A great vast tata will be destroyed for sure. It is between these lakes, ʔewaànit'ı̄tì and Nq̄diikahtì. It is in the area of long stretched great tata. There has not been caribou in Wekweètì area for some time now, the next couple of years. Sixteen years [proposed mine life] is long time and no caribou will ever pass through if they start the project. Even though we continue to raise our concerns and repeatedly talk about our land, it seems that we will not be heard and listened to. They only say what they feel is pleasing and good for themselves."*

Robert Mackenzie, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, ʔewaànit'ı̄tì

## Cumulative Impacts on Caribou Migration

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*"Today we talk about how we love our land, we love our land that's why we keep talking about it and people still talk about it. We hope our land is not damaged or will be damaged that's what we say. There were no mines in the days of our ancestors, so they had wonderful healthy lifestyles and good energy to work well.*

*The animals and fish were healthy in rich environments and their habitats because there were no mining activities. Now some of the animals and fish are affected due to unhealthy environment and the mines. That has become the way it is now."*

Jimmy Kodzin, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, Wekweètì

The annual fall community hunt on the barrenlands is essential for the Tłıchq communities to secure caribou meat after the summer months. Accurate knowledge of caribou migration routes is critical for hunters to determine the hunting locations in order to provide food for their families and communities, until the caribou migrate closer to the communities during the winter months.

Even though caribou migration alters annually, the Tłıchq have a general idea based on Traditional Knowledge of where to expect caribou. In recent years, the caribou migration routes have been irregular and the elders state that the mines impose the greatest impacts to caribou migration. Throughout this Traditional Knowledge research project, the elders emphasized not to analyze Seabridge's proposed mine at Ɂewaànit'ıı̀ in isolation. The elders say that the existing and proposed mines on the barrenland are located at several locations on caribou's migration route from the calving ground to the winter range in the forest. Thus, they want the consideration to include the cumulative impacts of these mines and developments on the migration routes of the caribou herds.

*"I told them at the meeting that they have ruined Ɂek'atì. That is the only place where the caribou start their migration toward us. In the fall sometimes it would take three or four days for the first group of barrenland caribou to migrate. They were so many, but now since the mine being located at Ek'atì there are less caribou. And now again at Ɂewaànit'ıı̀ where the caribou used to gather, the same thing will happen because they will open a mine there again."*

Philip Dryneck, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

Joseph Judas shares the same experience and concern:

*"Within the last seven years, the BHP and Diavik [mines] are blocking the migration route... If they are going to be doing this stuff again, it's going to be worse. We are not going to be seeing any caribou on this side [Wekweètì], this area any more. It's going to move all to Lutsel K'e and to Sahtu areas. So caribou are going to be moved to some other area. That is why I am thinking that, that stuff they are talking about, it won't be a good idea. I don't think so."*

Joseph Judas, May 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, Yellowknife.

In proximity to the other mines positioned on the caribou migration route, the mine Seabridge proposes is located further southwest along the caribou migration route, from their calving grounds to the winter range in the forest. The elder emphasize the existing impacts of the Diavik and Ekati mines on caribou, and state that an additional mine on the migration route will increase consequences for the caribou migration. The elders subsequently consider the cumulative impacts witnessed at the other mines located on their land. The elder Robert Mackenzie describes his experience of mining operations on his hunting grounds.

*"[Seabridge] says the project will be in operation for 16 years. When they start hauling all the blasted dirt and rocks, it will be a big lump of piled rocks. It will be very high that the caribou won't go there. The tata will be gone. There will be no*

more tata. It will disappear. The caribou will not pass through that pile.

*I have seen it at Diavik and Ekati. All the blasted rocks that they piled up, it's so big and high that the caribou don't go to the area anymore. They made a road there, they dig out rocks there to fill in the pit, they said to us. We went there not long ago. How do they expect the animals to get through that? No animals will go among there, not even a wolf will go there. This area [ʔewaànit'itì] will be like that too, even though they talk nice. They will talk good, but as soon as they take out rich minerals they won't followed up with their words."*

Robert Mackenzie, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, ʔewaànit'itì

The elders ask to understand the proposed mine in relations to the other developments affecting the environment. Ultimately, these factors have introduced changes to Tłıchq's way of using and harvesting from the land. The elders are concerned of how the future generations of hunters will continue the Tłıchq way of life.

*"Us Tłıchq, we depend on the land. These days we know [Seabridge] is going to take something out of the ground. What's going to happen? Once you build the mine what's going to happen to the animals? I haven't seen any caribou at my community [Wekweèti]; it's been a long time. They built Ekati mine where the main caribou herds migrate. Joseph spoke already about it. [The elders] were talking about it in the past and now it did happen; now how are we suppose to live off the land? We talked about it to our kids about how the outcome of all this. You guys sitting here right now, what's going to happen later on in the future when you are not here? Aboriginal people, that's us, we only live off the land, it's always been like that. We can't just go to Yellowknife and get money, it doesn't work for us."*

Jimmy Kodzin, November 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

## Loss of Hunting Locations

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The Tłıchq hunters closely follow the caribou migration. The development on the caribou migration route consequently brings changes to Tłıchq land use. Joseph Judas explains the impact of mining on Tłıchq hunting practices:

*"It's not like before when we traveled over here, it's not the same. Before caribou had their way of travel but when the mines were built they went a different way. It's not like they go straight through but now they go around. Before when we travel for the caribou hunting season we usually go to a certain place, now we go to a different place cause of the mines. From ʔek'atì to Snare Lake the caribou migrates, but now we don't see any caribou in Wekweèti.*

*Now when we go hunting we have to go to a different place because the mine is built. If they keep building mines on the caribou trail we won't be able to know where the caribou migrate. Because of the white people building mines the caribou migrate to a different location. Because they built mines on the caribou trail, caribou migrate to different locations. When they open the mines, it might last for fifty years. It's going to be hard for us to go hunting because now the caribou migrates differently. "*



Joseph Judas, November 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò.

The elders state that the proposed development at ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨ will disrupt the caribou migration across the tata between ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨ and Nq̨diikahtì. T̨ı̨chq̨ land use in the ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨ area is dependent of the migration across this tata. Several hunting locations, camps and hunting routes, within the local and regional study areas, can experience decreased hunting success if the caribou migration is altered.

- In the local study area: (1) the hunting routes across the tata along Tikwàtì (Matthews Lake), (2) the hunting route across the tata east of Tikwàtì, (3) the hunting camp on the western shore of Tikwàtì, and (4) the hunting area southwest of Tikwàtì.
- In the regional study area: (1) hunting locations between Tikwàtì and Biihikènadatì, (2) the hunting route from Biihikènadatì to Nq̨diikahtì, (3) the hunting camps located southwest of ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨, (4) hunting areas southwest of ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨, (5) the hunting areas around Biihikènadatì, (6) the hunting areas on the east and west side of ʔezq̨tì, (7) hunting route from Kwa-waati to Biihikènadatì, and (8) the hunting areas on east and west side of Kwa-waati.

## Elders' Concerns Regarding Potential Contamination

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*“The landscape is beautiful and it's being destroyed. They are killing our land and it makes me want to cry”*

Margaret Tsatchia, August 26th 2012, ʔewaànit'ıı̨ı̨

The elders express concerns of potential contamination of the land and animals. They emphasize their concern of jeopardizing their current freedom to utilize all the resources and places on their land. Their experiences with other mines on their land have created an impression of the potential negative impacts on the environment. The elders remember how such negative effects eliminated their freedom to use the land without fear of contamination in the vicinity of other mine sites. The elders thus state that it is crucial for the future generations to be able to continue harvesting and consuming traditional foods such as fish, caribou, berries, traditional medicines and water on the land and in the vicinity of the mine site without fear of contamination.

*“About the tata....if something like that comes up we get fearful. If there is a mine they work with rocks and poisons so the people don't want to make tea even from the snow water. They don't want us to make tea from the water because in a mine they may be working with poisons. If the native people know there is a mine they can't do anything near the mine. They work on the land only if they are some distance from the mine. Before the mining companies started, our forefathers have been in these areas. We are stressing that our forefathers have been in these areas. Today we see it for the first time, so we are fearful about it. We can't do anything on the land near it, and we can't camp close by it. We are saying we remember all the places [our forefathers] have traveled to hunt caribou and the places they lived. “*

Joseph Judas, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, Behchokò

The elders fear that the T̨ı̨chq̨ will not be able to use their traditional hunting grounds surrounding the proposed development in the future, due to contamination. There is

apprehension regarding the harvesting and consuming of traditional foods, due to potential contamination. This prospective of not being able to use the area or harvest traditional foods due to potential contamination could construct an area where future generations of Tł̓chq̓ caribou hunters cannot continue to use as their forefathers did. Results of the potential disruption in Tł̓chq̓ use of the land, is a lack of identity with and knowledge of a core area in the Tł̓chq̓ way of life on the barrenlands.

## Elders' Concerns Regarding the Proposed Infrastructure

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*“[The wind turbines] will be high up but we do not know if the animals will pass underneath or go near the tower. They will be disturbing the traditional trails of the animals. Yesterday, I spoke about [Diavik mine] structures on the island on ʔek’atì. I brought up that structures were put on the trails of the animals which is very disturbing for us and the animals. The structures are blocking the animals to go on the trails which makes the animals don’t come towards us anymore, this is how it is with us now. It is very upsetting and frustrating for us for a long time. We talk about it because we are extremely concerned and worried about the whole project.*

*If similar things happen again how will we cooperate and feel about the situation and cope on our land? The people that are yet to be born, they are supposed to use the animals and the land. But if damage is done again, the future generation would not have the opportunity to enjoy the land and animals. If there will be any future mine sites, we do not want anything on our land to be destroyed and damaged.”*

Joseph Judas August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, ʔewaànit’uì

The elders believe that the structures Seabridge proposes to develop on the tata between ʔewaànit’uì and Nq̓diikahtì will have significant effects on the caribou migration. The elders anticipate that the proposed development will alter the direction of the caribou migration routes, and consequently decrease the number of caribou entering their hunting grounds.

Currently, the proposed wind farm, consisting of 22 wind turbines with connecting roads and powerlines, creates a “wall” of obstacles due to its design forming a continuous line from north to south. This design disrupts the east to west movement of the caribou migration, across the tata (Map 10). If any development should be constructed this needs to be parallel to the direction of the tata, from east to west. This is to avoid creating a ‘wall’ of obstacles dissimilar to the nature of the tata and the movement of the fall caribou migration, which direction flows from east to west.

The proposed design of the mine site has potentially similar issues as the wind-farm. The current proposed location of the overburden storage, open-pit and the tailings- waste rock storage including the dams creates continuous construction from the north end of Tikwàtì (Matthews Lake) to the south shore of ʔewaànit’uì. This design creates a continuous barrier across the land between the two lakes and limits the possibility for caribou migrating through the area.

## Further Research

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This study has documented the significance of the ʔewaànit'ıı̨ area both in terms of Tłıchq way of life and for caribou migration. The research results, cultural and environmental, in relation to the proposed development raise further questions and concerns. Based on the importance of the area, continuing research involving the Tłıchq elders is necessary. Further research is needed on the proposed wind farm and its effects on the surrounding environment. The elders' state that a visit to other wind farms is necessary to understand the extent of several wind turbines in operation together, and on the design of the proposed mine site and wind farm to minimize the impacts on caribou.

During the verification workshop in Behchoko on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, the elders discussed alternatives to the development plans of the proposed mine site and wind farm. The discussions focused on alternatives to the design and locations of the mine site: the overburden storage, open-pit and the tailings- waste rock storage, and the location of the wind farm. Further Traditional Knowledge research and on-ground assessments of the proposed development area are necessary for the elders to provide additional recommendations.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The Traditional Knowledge of the historic and current land use and the elders' environmental knowledge of ʔewaànit'ıı̨, documented in the study, demonstrate the significance of the ʔewaànit'ıı̨ region for the Tłıchq in the past, present and the future.

There are many cultural and environmental sensitive areas in the ʔewaànit'ıı̨ region. The Tłıchq lifeways in this area are tightly interlinked with the movements of caribou. Caribou hunting locations correspond exactly with detailed knowledge of specific caribou migration routes and water crossings. The continuing practice of traditional harvest activities in the ʔewaànit'ıı̨ area are important for developing and maintaining the identity of Tłıchq citizens as caribou hunters in the barrenlands. This practice is especially important for the future generations of harvesters; a critical message that the Tłıchq elders always emphasize.

The Elders often tell how their forefathers worked hard on the land and for their people. Their emphasis is that the land needs to be protected for future generations. Their way of life hunting, trapping and living on the land, has shaped their culture. As mentioned above, the relationship between Tłıchq lifeways and caribou movements is irrevocably interlinked, as the condition of one affects the condition of the other. The continuance of using the land is of central importance for the Tłıchq Elders.

The elders emphasize the importance of the tata between ʔewaànit'ıı̨ and Nq̨iikahtı and the function of the narrow channel of land, for the caribou migration towards their winter range and the Tłıchq hunting grounds. Development on the tata and the disruptions to the migration will have significant consequences for the caribou and for the Tłıchq. Further Traditional Knowledge research with the elders is necessary of the proposed development in relations to caribou and tata, if and when the mine is developed. Based on their history and connection to the land, the Elders state that their words and recommendations should not only to be included, but need to be central if any development should take place on their land.





# **Tłıchǫ Government**

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