

Mine Closure Planning with First Nations Communities

The Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) and The New Afton Mine

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Acknowledgements

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Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc and Skeetchestn Indian Bands for sharing with me their knowledge, traditions, culture, and for being welcome hosts during my time in their territory.

SDIMI 2015 Presentation

This presentation discusses the methodology, organization, and overall experience conducting research in the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation.

The results and analysis of this study are withheld at this time.

Results needs approval by the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation before releasing it to the public.

Introduction: Mine Closure Planning

Closure planning should result in remediation of the land for safe, future generational use, as agreed upon through consultation and collaboration with the mine site's stakeholders and rights holders

(Warhurst & Noronha, 2000).

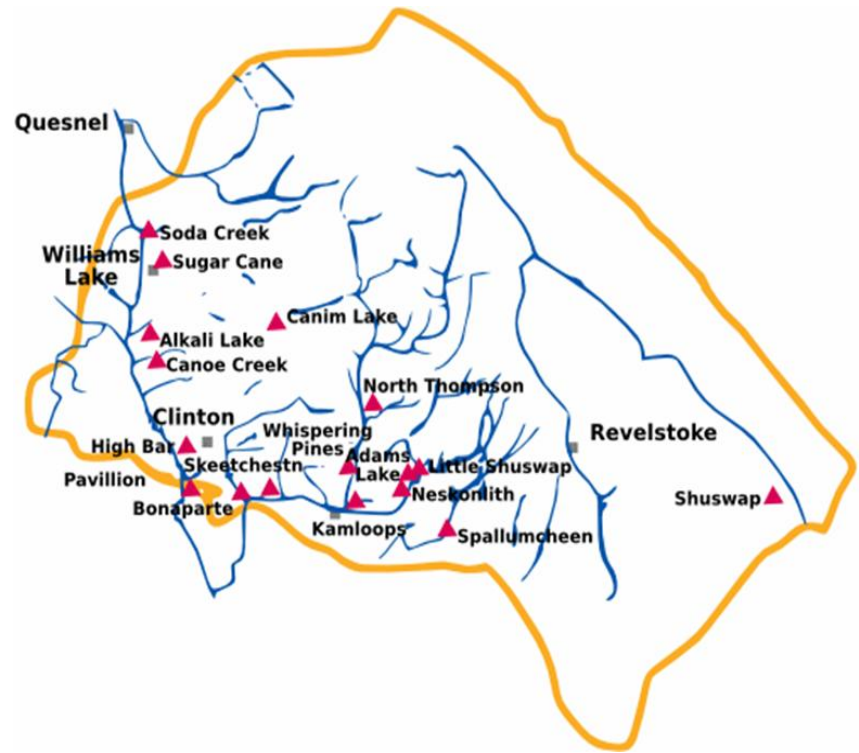
Introduction (Cont.): [Rights holders not Stakeholders](#)

A common misconception is considering First Nations communities as stakeholders (Joseph, 2014).

- First Nations communities are considered to be sovereign nations with rights to the land.
- **Their views and values of closure need to be an important consideration for mine closure planning (Brooks, 2013; Peck et al., 2005).**

Case Study Overview: [Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation \(SSN\)](#)

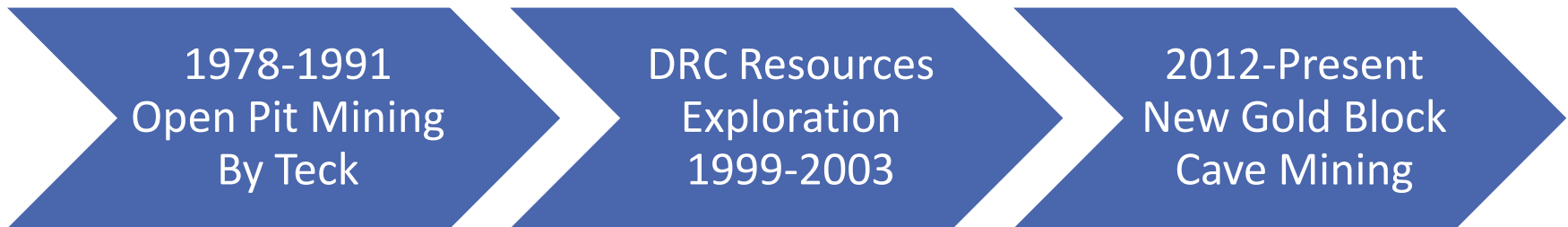
- SSN is the joint partnership between the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc and the Skeetchestn Indian Bands.
- The two bands hold historically close ties through shared lands and cultural heritage.
- Bands are part of the Secwepemc Nation (17 nations in total)



Secwepemc Nation Map

(Source: Secwepemc Cross Cultural Awareness Presentation)

Case Study Overview: New Afton Mine



- Located 10 km outside of Kamloops, B.C.
- BC Government considered property as a brownfield site.
 - The Afton pit, Pothook pit, Teck smelter, Teck bunker, and other historical mining development were on site at time of purchase from New Gold.
 - **Previous reclamation supported grazing and wildlife use**



Source: Google Maps screen capture (May 2015)



Source: Google Maps screen capture (May 2015)

Research Question

How can First Nations' traditional knowledge, and information gleaned from consultation, be utilized to improve closure, reclamation, and land use planning?

Research Objectives

1. Determine the goals for mine closure, reclamation and long-term land use planning of the New Afton Mine, for the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation.
2. Find the important flora, fauna and traditional use patterns of the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation on and near the New Afton Mine site.
3. Explore the general thoughts about mining and mine closure planning for the Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation.
4. Understand the proper engagement procedures with First Nations communities for mine closure discussions.

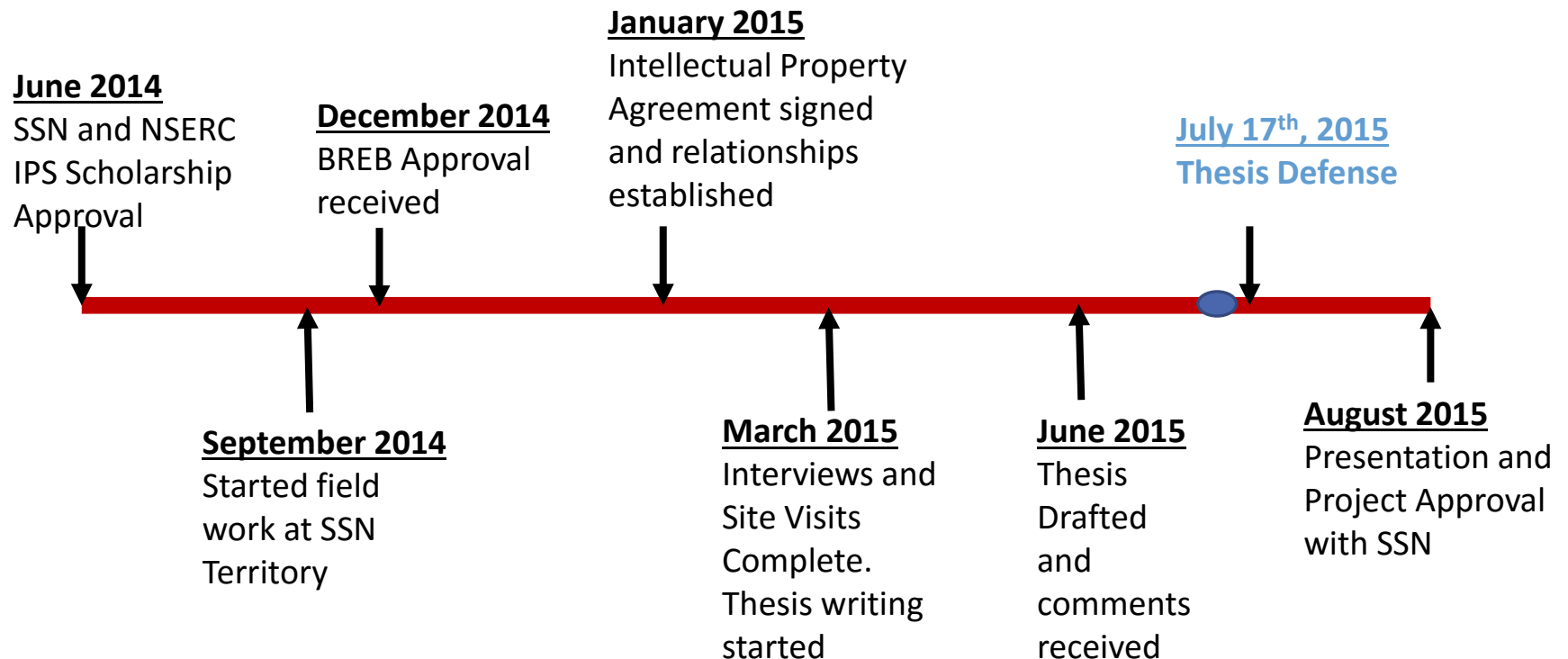
Research Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews with traditional knowledge keepers of the region
 - **Questions were designed to understand plant life, wildlife, water sources and overall uses of the region and the New Afton Mine.**
- Site visits to the land with knowledge keepers and Natural Resource Departments
 - Natural Grasslands
 - Mine site
 - Reclamation Sites
- Analyze cultural heritage studies and other documents of the region

Research Methodology: Ethics

- Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) approval received December 2014.
 - Ensured protection of participants from potential risks.
 - Minimal risk was determined.
 - Discussed protocols for interviewing and data storage.
- Intellectual Property Agreement approval received from SSN in January 2015
 - Final thesis needs to be approved by the SSN to ensure accurate portrayal of traditional knowledge
 - Acknowledging specific knowledge keepers.
 - Data is owned by the SSN and will be stored on-site at the SSN office.

Project Timeline



Results: Organization (Cont.)

- Use of word count features and analysis of important quotes.





(Photo taken December 2014)



(Photo taken December 2014)



(Photo taken December 2014)



Sagebrush (Photos taken December 2014)



Cacti (Photo taken December 2014)



Native Grass (Photo taken December 2014)

Conclusion

- Realizing the significance of the land and the environment, and understanding that First Nations culture is tied to the land and the environment.
- Engagement and collaborative planning helps greatly to align closure planning to adhere to the community's views for environmental protection (wildlife, plant life, water sources), as well as their social and economic needs.
- For the company, it helps to attain community acceptance, improve company reputation, and to support the industry's commitment towards making contributions to sustainable development.

Questions and Discussion

THANK YOU