



Ktunaxa Nation



KTUNAXA
NATION

Community Report 2015

SUMMARY OF RECENT RESEARCH ON KTUNAXA DIET, AND
QUKIN ʔAMAKʔIS (RAVEN'S LAND) KTUNAXA INTERESTS AND USE

May 29, 2015





Introduction

This community report summarizes recently completed studies by the Ktunaxa Nation Council Lands and Resources Sector. It is designed so that Ktunaxa citizens can know more about work they've been a part of.

“As Ktunaxa, we’re stewards of this land. We have a sacred covenant with the Creator. And that is, you are the stewards and you look after these resources that are on this land. And as long as you do that, it will provide for your people. It will continue and we will be able to live...”

— Ktunaxa study participant

Since 2010, the Ktunaxa Nation Council Lands and Resources Sector has been involved with several technical studies. This community report summarizes two of those studies: the **Ktunaxa Diet Study** and the **Qukin ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa Interests and Use Study**. These two studies have contributed to several technical reports and environmental assessments.

Ktunaxa citizens participated in research for these studies as trainees and co-researchers, and as knowledge holders in interviews, community meetings, and focus groups. Ktunaxa Lands and Resources Sector staff provided guidance, took part in field research, helped develop maps, and co-wrote reports with technical support from researchers at The Firelight Group.

These studies help support the rights and interests of Ktunaxa citizens and governments within the territory. They are helping strengthen Ktunaxa stewardship over lands and waters, strengthening Ktunaxa ability to negotiate with companies and governments proposing development in our traditional lands, and helping us protect our traditional knowledge and language, sacred sites and special places, traditional foods, medicines and resources, and our ability, as the Ktunaxa Nation, and as individuals, to take care of and benefit from lands and waters.

The Ktunaxa Nation will continue building on this work to help repair impacts from past development, monitor and guide existing development, and inform proposed new development, including Teck’s Baldy Ridge and Coal Mountain Operation expansion projects, as well as other projects affecting **qukin ʔamakʔis**.

Full reports are available from Ktunaxa Lands and Resources Sector. The original reports, and this community report, may be updated as new information becomes available.



Diet Study

“And that’s how I learned, my grandma who was a mentor ... She used to take us away in the sturgeon-nose canoe ... She’s the one that did the stint in Arrow Lakes, so she’s seen lots that lady. And I was very fortunate that I lived with her, brought up with her, seeing the old ways.”

— Ktunaxa study participant

The diet study shows that, despite multiple barriers to harvesting, Ktunaxa households have maintained a very active presence on the land, with most households reporting having fished, hunted, and gathered berries in the preceding year.

In December 2012, an invitation to participate in the diet study was sent to a random sample of 100 Ktunaxa households. Names were drawn from Ktunaxa mailing lists, and included Ktunaxa citizens across the Canadian portion of our territory. In all, 92 households agreed to participate.

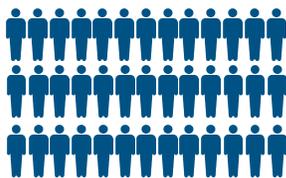
From mid-December to April 2013, community researchers travelled to Ktunaxa homes on and off reserve to interview the study participants. In each household, one person, who was at least 18 years of age and self-identified as a Ktunaxa citizen, was asked questions related to the household’s use of traditional food. A second participant was invited to answer a shorter questionnaire.

Study Participants

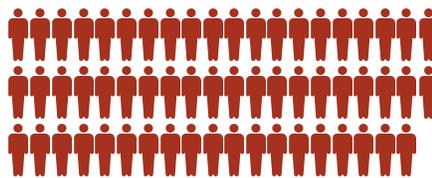
Ninety-eight Ktunaxa citizens (59 women and 39 men) in the 92 households participated. Just over half live in the Cranbrook area, with the remainder on or off reserve in the Grasmere, Creston, and Columbia Valley areas.



92 households participated



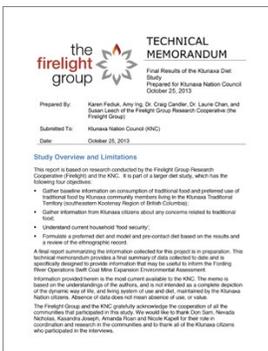
39 men



59 women



Households contained an average of three people, with a range from one to 14 household members. For income, 59% of households reported that their main income was from wages. Other sources of incomes reported were social assistance (17%), pension (12%), worker’s compensation/EI/disability (8%), spousal income (2%) and student aid (1%). About 38% of households had children under the age of 15 years.

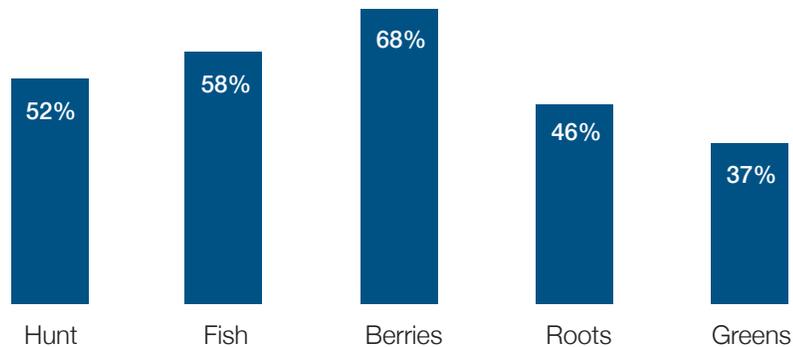


The full report contains much more detailed information, for example, in the diet study how many households of each Ktunaxa identity (ʔaǰam, ʔakinǰumtasnuǰti ʔit, ʔakisǰnuǰk and ʔaǰan Nuʔkiy) participated and were located on reserve, off reserve, or on another reserve.

Participation in Harvesting

Despite multiple barriers to harvesting, Ktunaxa households have maintained a very active presence on the land, with most reporting having fished, hunted, and gathered berries in the preceding year. Sharing between households is common. While just over half of households reported hunting, more than 90% of those surveyed reported eating game meat.

Harvesting of Traditional Food



Harvesting Areas

To understand recent harvesting patterns, households were asked to share how often, in the last 10 years, they had harvested five traditional foods (elk, deer, moose, huckleberry, and trout) in each of the six traditional districts identified on the Ktunaxa nation map — ǰukin ʔamakʔis (Land of the Raven), ǰamǰna ʔakmaʔis (Land of the Wood Tick), kyawaǰ ʔamakʔis (Land of the Spruce Grouse), ʔaknuǰtuǰamǰ ʔamakʔis (Land of the Eagle), ʔaǰǰu ʔamakʔis (Land of the Wolverine), and miǰǰaǰas ʔamakʔis (Land of the Chickadee). The most common harvesting areas were the Land of the Eagle, Wood Tick, and Wolverine.

In all, 30% of survey respondents reported that they had harvested in the Elk Valley (ǰukin ʔamakʔis or Land of the Raven) and Lake Koochanusa areas. In the last 10 years,

17% said they had harvested either occasionally, or every year, in **qukin ʔamakʔis** for huckleberries, 9% for elk, and 8% for trout. As shown in the figure on page 6, distance to the Elk Valley was reported as the most common barrier to using **qukin ʔamakʔis**.

Preferred and Daily Use of Traditional Foods

Most adults reported eating wild game (95%), berries (88%), and fish (65%) from the territory in the last 12 months. Most said they would like to eat traditional food on a daily basis. While some do, game and berries usually appear on a weekly basis, while fish is eaten about once a month.

The average amount of traditional food eaten on a daily basis by Ktunaxa citizens who responded to the survey is 110 grams a day (about ½ cup), while some high consumers eat over 300 grams (1½ cups) daily. Game meat (70 grams) and berries (30 grams) make up the bulk of the traditional food eaten on a daily basis. Fish made up only 4% of the daily intake of traditional food (5 grams). This pattern of consumption is different from the results of a regional study in B.C. (First Nations Food, Nutrition & Environment Study (FNFNES) study at www.fnfnes.ca), which reported a much higher intake of fish (42 grams/day) among First Nation adults. The higher intake of game and very low intake of fish by Ktunaxa citizens can likely be attributed to pollution concerns, industrial impacts on key fish species, and the historic loss of salmon from the upper Columbia.

Safety of Traditional Food

Most Ktunaxa citizens interviewed were concerned about the safety of traditional food due to development and pollution related to forestry, mining, roadways, and other causes. These safety concerns have already impacted traditional food choices: 20% of participants indicated they no longer eat wild fish, while 5% said they had stopped eating wild berries because of concerns about contaminants.

Food Insecurity

While traditional food is a critical part of the diet, providing many essential nutrients, Ktunaxa citizens need to heavily rely on store-bought food. To understand Ktunaxa citizens' "food security" — the affordability of adequate, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences — households were asked a series of questions.

The study results found that 44% of households were classified as food insecure, 33% were considered to be moderately food insecure (this means that in the last 12 months, these households relied on lower quality / less expensive foods and/or experienced a compromise in the quantity of food consumed), while 11% of families were classified as severely food insecure (these families regularly experienced food shortages, either cutting down on meal sizes or skipping meals). In households with children, 27% reported they could not always afford to feed children a balanced meal.



PHOTO: DON SAM

How much traditional food is being eaten daily?

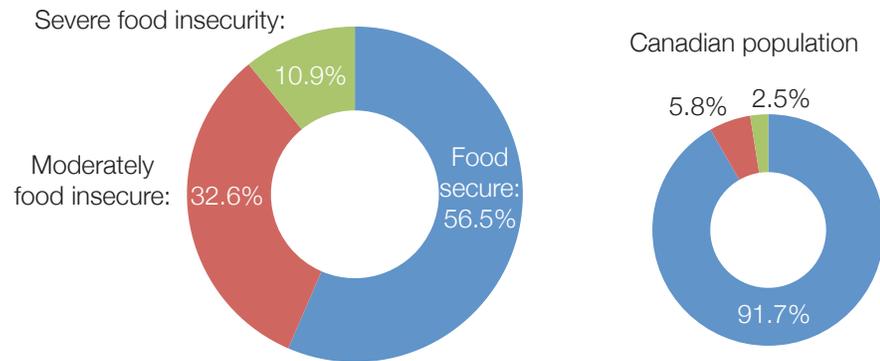


Average use for everyone: ½ cup or 110 grams/day



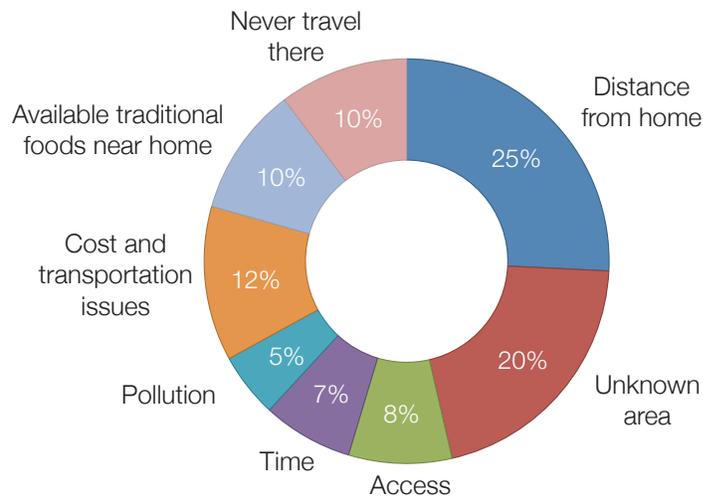
Heavy consumers: 1½ cups or 331 grams/day

Food Security



Having a wage income did not mean that households were food secure: 41% of households reporting wages as their main income were considered food insecure. This high level of food insecurity is similar to the 41% food insecurity rate reported in the FNFNES study. In comparison, among the general Canadian population, only 8.3% of households are food insecure.

Barriers to Harvesting in the Elk Valley



The diet study is being used to inform other studies and reports, including the assessment of the risk of chemical exposure to Ktunaxa citizens as a result of the proposed expansion of mining activities in the Elk Valley.

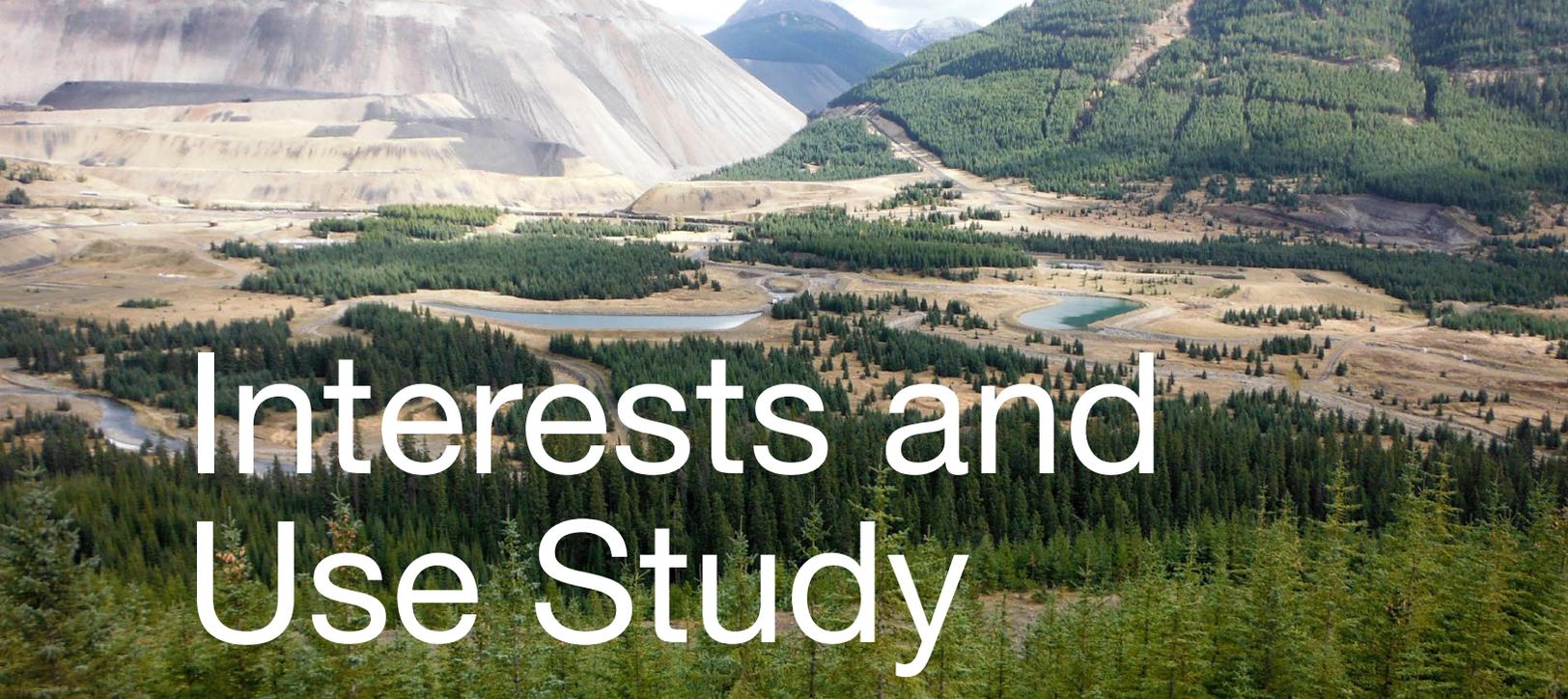


How the diet study is helping

To date, the diet study is helping to:

- Inform the Ktunaxa Nation of the current and preferred use of traditional food by Ktunaxa citizens, understand current barriers to use of traditional foods, and set priorities for improving Ktunaxa access and use in particular areas; and
- Inform the Human Health Risk Assessments being undertaken to estimate the risk of chemical exposure to KNC citizens as a result of current development, and proposed expansion, of mining in the Elk Valley.

The final diet study report will be released in 2015.



Interests and Use Study

“... we used to always go to [hunt] buffalo two or three times a year and so there’s, there’s mountain passes getting through to go to buffalo. And I think those are really important, those are important to me because that’s, that’s part of my aboriginal territory. Those are part of the lands that we were never, we were never consulted on ... The trails are important because that’s our network ... You look at the archeological record, you see sites here, sites there, sites here, but there’s nothing really connecting them. They’re all connected and it’s those trails that connect them.”

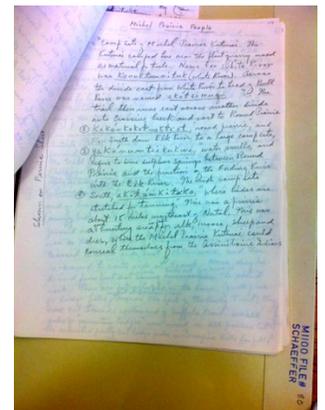
— Ktunaxa study participant

The **Qukin ʔamakʔis** Ktunaxa Interests and Use Study is an umbrella study for a number of reports, including an ethnohistory report and two environmental assessments. The goal of the study is to create the best baseline information possible to inform development and planning in the Elk Valley including portions of **qukin ʔamakʔis** (Raven’s Land or Raven’s Home) and **čamína ʔamakʔis** (Land or Home of Wood Tick).

Prior to starting the **qukin ʔamakʔis** study, the Ktunaxa Nation had very little information regarding how Ktunaxa citizens use and value the Elk Valley. To date, 36 Ktunaxa knowledge holders have taken part in mapping or oral history interviews to document Ktunaxa values and knowledge in the Elk Valley and around Lake Kococanusa. More interviews are taking place in Spring 2015. Ktunaxa researchers also reviewed historical documents from past studies and research to gather information on Ktunaxa occupancy and use.

The two main types of information collected are:

- **Site-specific values:** current, past and future uses and values tied to specific locations, such as trails, cultural places, or harvesting areas; and
- **Non-site-specific values:** things that are important to Ktunaxa citizens but not tied to a specific location, such as transmission of language and knowledge across generations, or access to clean and reliable water sources.



This study focused on interviews with Ktunaxa citizens and staff, but also used historical documents to gather data – for example, this sample of Schaeffer’s handwritten notes from the Glenbow Archives.

Ktunaxa Land Use in Qukin ʔamakʔis



qukin ʔamakʔis: Ktunaxa land district in the area of Elk Valley, also called Raven’s Land

ʕaʔna ʔamakʔis: land or home of Wood Tick

yaqaʔ hankatititki na ʔamak: the Ktunaxa phrase that captures the interconnectedness and the stewardship concepts applicable to land management

ʔaknumuʕtitit: Ktunaxa Nation laws on how to live with the land

ʔakukʔpukam: speaks to anything that gets life from the earth through roots

ʔakukʔpukamnam: builds on ʔakukʔpukam and adds the human dimension, whereby the earth’s life is translated into human life

kaqawakanmitukniik: Ktunaxa people of Michel Prairie

qaʔintak: Whiteswan Lake

qukin nuʔkiyʔis: Raven’s rock, or coal

Information gathered through the study clearly shows that we continue to use and occupy the entire Elk Valley, and that Ktunaxa stewardship in the Elk Valley was in place long before early coal mines, or assertions of sovereignty by Canada, Britain, or the United States.

Interviews and oral histories with current elders and knowledge holders echo accounts from the late 19th and early 20th century and clearly identify the area of the Elk Valley, including the upper Fording River and areas around Line Creek, Grave Creek, Round Prairie, Fording Pass, Tornado Pass, and Crow’s Nest Pass area, as being continuously occupied by our people. Oral and written histories indicate that the area around **kaqawakanmituk** (Michel Prairie), where the town of Sparwood is now, was a central village area of the easternmost branch of the Ktunaxa, referred to in some places as the Plains Ktunaxa, and in others as the **kaqawakanmitukniik**.

Based on oral histories, the **kaqawakanmitukniik** were closely related to Ktunaxa families to the south at Tobacco Plains and west in the area of **Qaʔintak** (Whiteswan Lake). Along with other branches of the Ktunaxa Nation, including the **katamukinik**, the **kaqawakanmitukniik** were decimated by smallpox while hunting bison east of the Rockies, likely just prior to, or shortly after, the arrival of horses in our territory in the late 1700s. At least some of the survivors of the **kaqawakanmitukniik** returned west of the Rockies and were later joined by Ktunaxa from further south. We continued to use and occupy the Elk Valley and the community later became known as the Michel (or Michelle) Band, also referred to as the Fernie Band. Our oral histories indicate that reserve lands were promised in the Elk Valley, but never set aside.

Our annual round included regular winter and summer bison hunts east of the Rockies, as well as residence, agriculture, and harvesting in the Elk Valley and nearby areas. Regularly eaten species included elk, deer, sheep, goats, cutthroat trout, burbot, and other freshwater fish. These species are still sought and eaten today. Tobacco was cultivated at **kaqawakanmituk** in the summer. Travel through passes in the Rocky mountains was critical for accessing buffalo to the east.

Our seasonal use and occupancy in the Elk Valley has been maintained and — despite impacts due to coal developments, forestry, Indian Act policies, and other barriers — Ktunaxa citizens continue to reside throughout the lower Elk Valley, including Fernie, Elko, Sparwood, and elsewhere. We continue to live, hunt, gather, fish, graze horses, use trails and travel routes, collect minerals, trade, and maintain cultural connections in **qukin ʔamakʔis**.

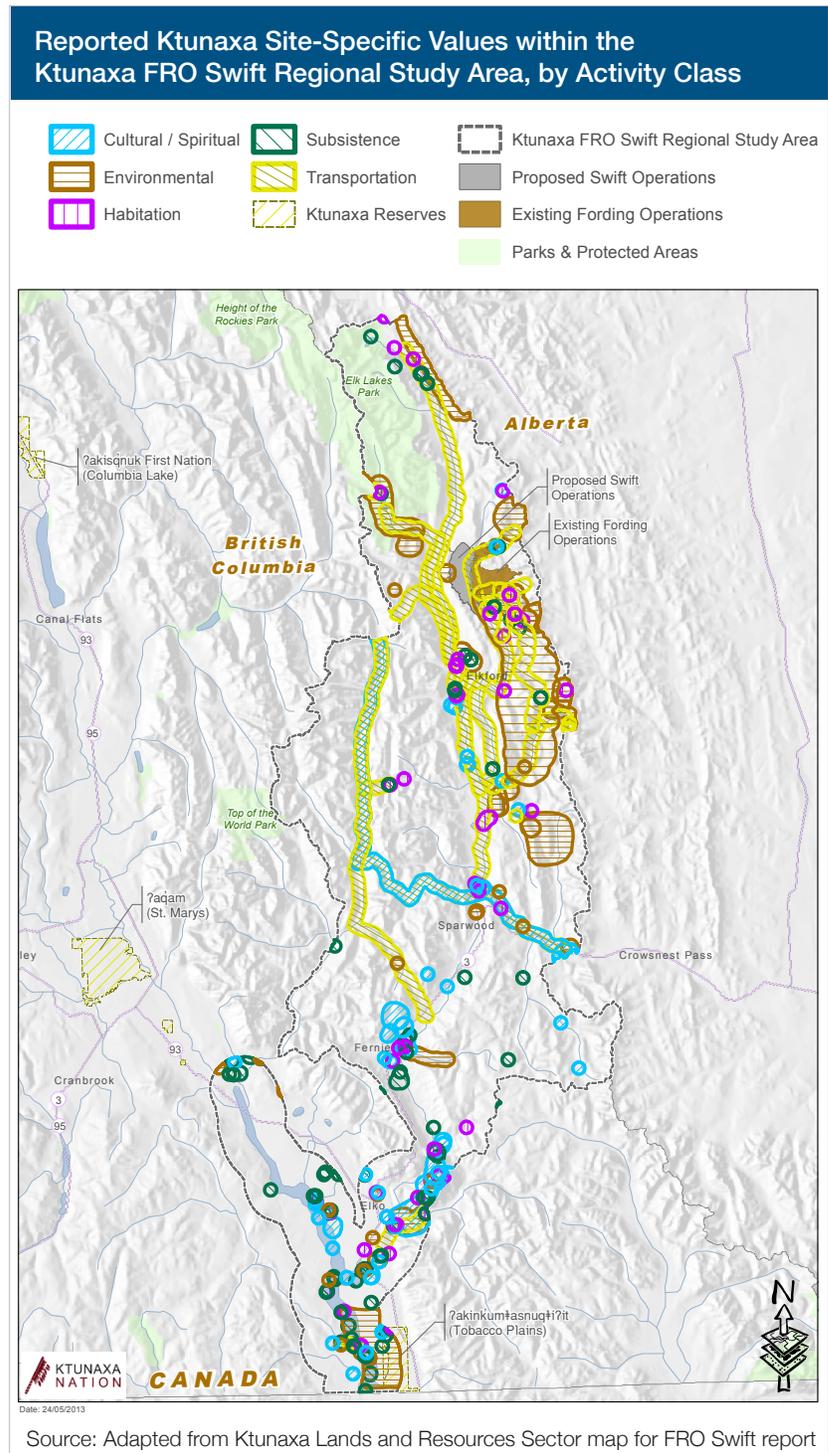
Maintaining a continued relationship with the lands, waters and animals of **qukin ʔamakʔis** through stewardship, governance, and use remains critical for us as Ktunaxa citizens.

Land Use Mapping

The Elk valley includes many places associated with Ktunaxa habitation, cultural places, trails, harvesting areas, and environmental features. A series of maps were created that show the extent of Ktunaxa use and the current relationship of the Ktunaxa with the Elk Valley. To protect the site and maintain confidentiality, exact locations and detailed information is not shown (mapped sites are randomized and buffered by 1 km).

So far, 244 site-specific values have been mapped by Ktunaxa knowledge holders within the study area:

- 43 environmental features:** Especially important ecological areas, for example highly valued fish spawning areas, and habitat for black and grizzly bear, moose, elk, mule deer, and white tailed deer.
- 16 transportation routes:** Trails and passes, including north–south routes along the valley, and a series of east–west passes extending from **Qa’intak** (Whiteswan Lake) in the west and across the Rockies to the east.
- 46 habitation sites:** Temporary and permanent habitation areas and ancestral villages or gathering areas, including areas near present day Sparwood, Round Prairie, Elko, and Mt. Broadwood.
- 79 subsistence sites:** Food harvesting sites, including hunting, berry picking, and food plant collecting.
- 60 cultural/spiritual sites:** Gathering places, ceremony places, spirit places, teaching places, medicine collection sites, burial sites, rock art sites, archaeological sites, and many others.



Land Stewardship and Development

“We’ll survive as a people if we look after what we have in our territory... And as Ktunaxa, as stewards, we should probably say, ‘Enough is enough. No more. You’ve already got your billions. Leave it alone where it is.’... That’s our way. We only take what we need.” — Ktunaxa study participant

Mountains of coal have been removed and water quality for fish, people, and other living beings has suffered.



Through Ktunaxa involvement, an Elk Valley water quality plan has been established that should, over time, reduce the amount of selenium and other heavy metals in the Elk River, Fording River, and their tributaries.

Work completed through the **Qukin ʔamakʔis** Ktunaxa Interests and Use Study highlights the unique relationship that we maintain with the Elk Valley.

My understanding of water and land is that water is the blood of the land. The hills, the mountains, the valley bottoms, it’s all living, even stone and water and air. So when it comes to strip mining, it’s like taking a knife and cutting my arm. And it bleeds... That mountain range that people call Rocky Mountains is a being ... his head is down at the south and his feet are up north, and it’s a being. When people are digging into it, think of yourself lying there and people picking into your body. The water to me is a living being unto itself, whether it’s vapour, surface, falling from the sky, or underground.

The work also highlights the importance to Ktunaxa citizens of careful stewardship of resources and development for future generations, including receiving benefits from development consistent with Ktunaxa practice and rights.

We have to remember the history, and that we were miners as well ... on the road to Moyie – somewhere out there, are mine shafts that...predate European contact. We were miners. As an aboriginal right, we have a right to mine minerals from the land and to trade it. We traded it. Our stone traveled across the land and to different tribes and different nations and we traded it for value... So that coal is from our territory. And because of our history as mining people, and because we were excluded from participation in owning minerals, I think it’s only right that we get a fair share now.

Coal mining and other developments in the Elk Valley have clearly already had a negative impact on Ktunaxa use, and on the health of the land and water in **qukin ʔamakʔis**. Mountains of coal have been removed and water quality for fish, people, and other living beings has suffered as the splitting of rocks releases selenium and other heavy metals in higher concentrations than normal.

Through Ktunaxa involvement in environmental assessments for expansions of the Fording River and Line Creek mines, an Elk Valley water quality plan has been established. Over time, this plan should reduce the amount of selenium and other heavy metals in the Elk River, Fording River, and their tributaries, and sets strict requirements for any future projects.

The Ktunaxa Nation will monitor further developments in **qukin ʔamakʔis** closely and continue to work across all of its sectors to support a strong, Ktunaxa rights-based economy, maintain biodiversity, protect Ktunaxa confidence in healthy environments, and support future Ktunaxa relationships with **qukin ʔamakʔis**.



Conclusion

What the Studies Have Achieved

- Enabled the Ktunaxa Nation to strongly assert rights and title in **qukin ʔamakʔis** and helped make us a leading figure at the tables determining the place of coal mining and other industries in our territory.
- Supported an Impact Management and Benefit Agreement (IMBA) now in the final phases of negotiation with Teck. This agreement would ensure a powerful role for KNC stewardship and financial benefits in support of building strong Ktunaxa communities.
- Gathered together precious Ktunaxa knowledge, place names, and oral histories of special places in **qukin ʔamakʔis** and portions of **qam̓na ʔamakʔis**.
- Improved Ktunaxa knowledge of our diet, and documented the continuing importance of traditional foods in our diet and for our health.
- Provided strength behind a Strategic Engagement Agreement with B.C. and provides us with a mechanism for sharing in mineral revenues from coal.

“The key to all of this is to exercise our jurisdictional authority over the area to the greatest extent possible. We have the right to protect our rights. We are going to look after the lands ourselves.” — Ktunaxa Lands and Resources Sector Director Ray Warden, Cranbrook community verification session, February 2015

Next Steps if an IMBA is Signed

Implementation of the Impact and Management Benefit Agreement would include:

- Creating a direct link between Ktunaxa knowledge holders and decision processes on the land.
- Increasing access for Ktunaxa citizens to the Elk Valley to maintain the continuity of presence and knowledge in the valley and to build future economic opportunities.
- Providing for annual updates to the diet study to monitor Ktunaxa relationships with the valley and an inventory of important Ktunaxa places to help guide future decisions.
- Supporting Ktunaxa involvement in repairing the damage that has been done to the land.



Prepared by Ktunaxa Nation Council with
The Firelight Group Research Cooperative

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Photos: KNC, Nicole Kapell, and The Firelight Group

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To discuss this report, please contact Nicole Kapell at 250.489.2464 or NJKapell@ktunaxa.org

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