

Appendix I

Mi'Kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study

Donkin Exploration Project

Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study



Membertou Geomatics Consultants.
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Executive Summary

This Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study, also commonly referred to as a MEKS or a TEKS, was developed by Membertou Geomatics Consultants for Canadian British Consultant Limited (CBCL) for the Donkin Coal Mine Exploration Project. The purpose of the MEKS is to identify Mi'kmaq land and resource use activities that have or continue to be pursued by Mi'kmaq in the geographical areas being considered for development activities with regards to the Donkin project. The Donkin area is currently being considered for the possibility of the future mining of the presently non-operating coal mine that is located here. Xstrata Coal and its partners have currently undertaken a two year feasibility study to evaluate the future operation and productivity of the coal resource that is located at Donkin. This feasibility study involves the de-watering of the flooded mines so as to evaluate the coal resources. As well, there will be a small road developed that will allow access to the Donkin Mine site. This MEK study encompasses the areas of land where the mine entrance is located, the area where the access infrastructure will be located, and also the off shore areas surrounding the Donkin area and as well as a 10 kilometre buffer zone surrounding the study area.

The Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study consisted of three major components:

- **A Historical Review** regarding past Mi'kmaq occupation and use of the area in question,
- **Mi'kmaq Traditional Land and Resource Use Activities**, both past and present,
- **A Mi'kmaq Significance Species Analysis**, considering the resources which are important to Mi'kmaq use.

The Historical Review undertook archival research regarding the Donkin, Glace Bay and Port Morien areas to identify past Mi'kmaq use and occupation of the area. From the information that was located it was found that Mi'kmaq use with regards to occupation in this area has been minimal, and may have primarily consisted of a gathering place for meeting colonial representatives for the disbursements of gifts from the French. This would have occurred in the 18th century.

The Mi'kmaq Traditional Land and Resource Use component utilized current interviews as the key source of information regarding Mi'kmaq use in the study area. Numerous interviews were undertaken by the MEK Team with Mi'kmaq hunters, fishers and plant gatherers, who shared with us the details of their traditional use activities. The interviews were undertaken during the month of September, whereby Mi'kmaq were shown maps of the Donkin area and asked to identify the places where they undertook their traditional use activities, and the type of activity that occurred there. All interviews were recorded, if permitted by the interviewee, and their information was incorporated into our GIS data. These interviews allowed us to develop data base that reflects the most recent Mi'kmaq traditional use in this area.

In addition to these interviews, interviews regarding Mi'kmaq traditional use activities had also been previously undertaken by the Aboriginal Title Project. The data that they generated as result of their interviews was also utilized by the Membertou Geomatics Team. These interviews also allowed identification of the key Mi'kmaq people that currently pursue traditional use activities in the communities at that time, and to ensure that were re-interviewed them for the most current data.

The data collected identified various hunting areas for small game, deer, and areas where these animals have been harvested previously. Medicinal plant gathering sites and areas were identified through the interviews and Mi'kmaq food plant gathering sites as well. The most significant data however appeared to be fishing activities that are pursued on the coastal areas surrounding Donkin and Big Glace Bay. Such fishing activities included the harvesting of lobster, urchin, cod and crab.

The Mi'kmaq Significance analysis allowed consideration of 10 fishing species, 11 medicinal plants, 4 food plants, 2 spiritual plants, 2 small game, and deer. These resources were considered for their availability or abundance in the study area, use and importance with regards to the Mi'kmaq and their availability in areas adjacent or outside of the study area.

The study found that Mi'kmaq continue to undertake traditional activities throughout the study area, although the activities are minimal on land. Based on the data gathered regarding the various resources, it was found that although these resources play an important role to Mi'kmaq, the majority of them are found in other areas either within the study area, or in other areas of Nova Scotia.