



# XENI GWET'IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT VISION

And the Implications of the  
New Prosperity Mine

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# Assertion of Stewardship

We, the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation Government, part of six communities of Tsilhqot'in Nation, re-affirm, through our August 23, 1989 Nendugh Jid Gwezit'in Declaration, that we are the stewards of this Tsilhqot'in Area called the Xeni Gwet'in Caretaker Area

We govern the Area using our Tsilhqot'in customary laws, which come down to us from our ancestors and our existing membership.



# Introduction

- ▣ The Xeni Gwet'in have a vision for how they want their land to be used. It is one based on historical use and on moving forward in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- ▣ The proposed New Prosperity Mine project does not honour this vision. Indeed it threatens this vision for many years to come and therefore the very self-determination of the Xeni Gwet'in.

# Xeni Gwet'in Sustainable Development Vision

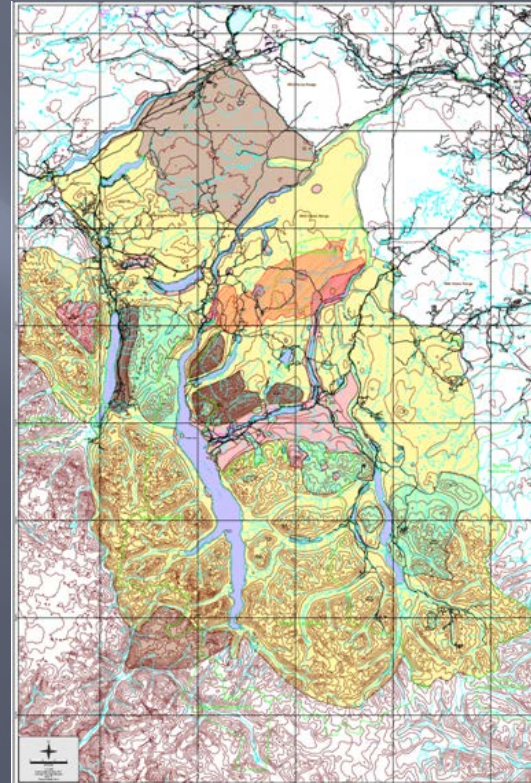
Consistent with our past, we have a vision for the sustainable development of our Caretaker Area, which includes:

1. Maintenance of the Area's **ecological integrity**;
2. Maintenance of our **traditional use** opportunities and culture;
3. Creation of **meaningful employment and income** for our people;
4. Enhancement of our people's **self-reliance**;
5. Enhancement of our community's **resilience**; and,
6. Development of our community **capacity for self-governance**.



# ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

We envision a healthy land, which includes a diversity of intact habitats with an abundance of plants, fish and wildlife natural to the area as well as clean water, air and other valuable ecosystem services that are integral to a healthy land.

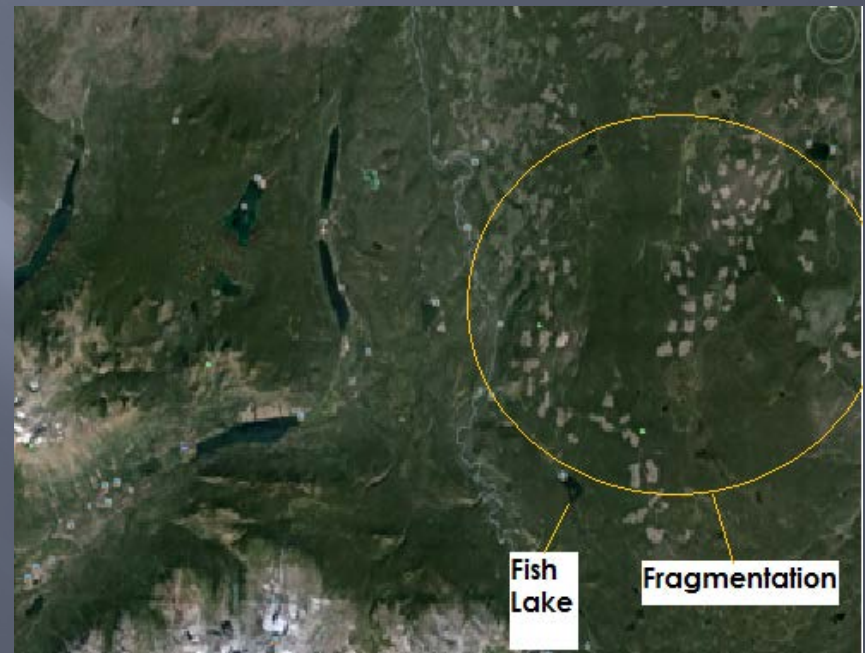


Ecosystem-based management zones

# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Ecological Integrity

The proposed Mine will:

- ❑ Severely degrade Fish Lake and destroy the Little Fish Lake ecosystem and their ecosystem services
- ❑ Fragment connectivity to adjoining ecosystems (adding to a badly fragmented eastern region) →
- ❑ Stress adjacent ecosystem services through pollution and force them to compensate for the degraded or destroyed ecosystems



# TRADITIONAL USE

- ▣ We envision a future where we have sufficient opportunity to practice our traditional uses of the land, including:
  - hunting and fishing, and collecting forest products
  - managing our wild and domestic horses and domestic cattle.
  - teaching our traditional language and ways of the land
  - hosting gatherings and ceremonies
  
- ▣ The opportunity to practice these traditional uses is closely tied to the health of the land.



# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Traditional Use

The proposed Mine will:

- ❑ Eliminate deer and moose hunting, fishing and berry and medicinal plant collecting from the Fish Lake area.
- ❑ Result in greater wildlife fatalities from traffic collisions and greater recreational hunting and fishing, which will limit the availability of wild foods for the Xeni Gwet'in.
- ❑ Reduce traditional activities in adjacent waters and lands due to concerns over contamination.
- ❑ Shift traditional use into a smaller area, which will make it harder for the animals to survive and the Xeni Gwet'in to sustain their traditional activities.
- ❑ Negatively impact traditional fishing and water sources downstream, if there is any significant contamination.





# Sustainable Jobs and Income

We envision employment and income creation that is based on renewable resource use and value-added manufacturing – consistent with our ecosystem-based plan.



# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Sustainable Jobs/Income

- Opportunity for some jobs and royalties

BUT

- Based on non-renewable resource development
- Little interest in mining jobs among the Xeni Gwet'in at present.
- Most semi-skilled and skilled jobs will go to outside workers.
- Labour drawn to the mine will take away labour from local projects.
- Much of the money earned will be spent outside the community.
- Uncertain what royalties will trickle down to Xeni Gwet'in.



# Self-reliance

We aspire to depend as much as possible upon our own resources and capabilities to fulfill our needs.



# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Self-Reliance

- ▣ Some income to the community via employment and royalties.

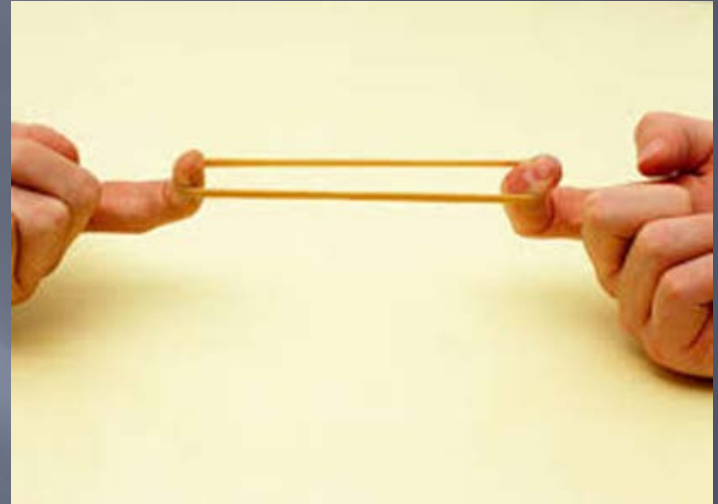
BUT

- ▣ The proposed mine will negatively impact the community's plans for greater self-reliance by:
  - restricting traditional food gathering
  - drawing labour away from the production of local goods and services.
  - Tying the community even closer to the cash economy



# Resilience

We aspire to be a resilient people supported by a diversity of skills, food and energy systems as well as diversity of businesses and public services, all grounded in a healthy ecosystem and culture.



# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Resilience

- ▣ Increased economic activity from mining

BUT

- ▣ At the cost of community resilience
  - It will harm the existing wilderness tourism sector
  - It will draw off labour from local projects
  - Reduce ecological diversity
  - Weaken local food security



# Capacity Building

We aspire to strengthen our administrative, technical, business, and resource management skills in order to enhance our self-governance capacity.



# New Prosperity Mine Implications – Capacity Building

- ▣ It may provide some opportunity for work experience & technical training.

BUT

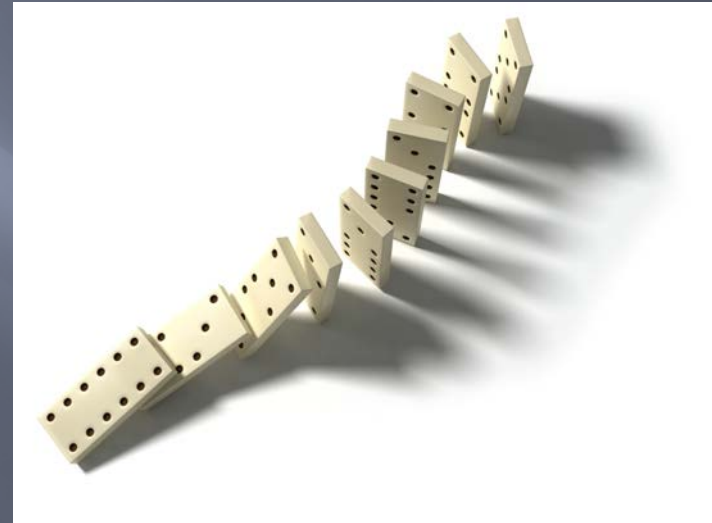
- ▣ Uptake may be small at this point.
- ▣ Management and high skill capacities are not likely to be fostered among the Xeni Gwet'in (because positions will be filled from the outside).





# Cascading Effect

- ▣ If the proposed mine goes ahead, it opens the door to more mine development in the area, which will compound the effects discussed above.



# Summary

- ❑ The Xeni Gwet'in have a vision for how they want their land to be used. It is one based on historical use and on moving forward in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- ❑ The proposed New Prosperity Mine project does not honour this vision. Indeed it threatens this vision for many years to come and therefore the very self-determination of the Xeni Gwet'in.
- ❑ If there is any integrity to the Government's commitment to First Nation rights and the duty to consult, the Government must honour the Xeni Gwet'in vision and disallow the New Prosperity Mine project.

**Thank You**