

Mineral Exploration and Mining Worker Orientation Guidebook

for the
Muskwa-Kechika Management Area



MUSKWA-KECHIKA
MANAGEMENT AREA
Bc's Working Wilderness

Introductory Note:

This orientation guidebook has been developed by the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board (M-KAB) in cooperation with the Ministries of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) and Environment (MOE), and the Association for Mineral Exploration BC (AME BC).

The M-KMA Orientation Guidebook provides information about the values and intent of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (M-KMA), and conducting mineral exploration and mining activities in the area.

The M-KAB recognises that encouraging investment involves establishing certainty, and ensuring opportunities for mineral exploration and mining in the M-KMA. At the same time, this guide conveys recommended practices to assist with planning and managing access as well as restoring disturbances by minimizing or mitigating impacts to other values and uses.

The guidebook highlights the history and ecological significance of the M-KMA, as well as management and best practices that guide mineral exploration and mining in the M-KMA. As with all industrial activity, applicable legislation must be followed, including the *Mines Act*, and any applicable parts of the *Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act* and Regulation, the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code, and other relevant legislation.

Links

- ◆ *M-KMA Act*, M-KMA Regulation and Access Management Area Regulation (www.muskwa-kechika.com).
- ◆ Legislation for mineral exploration and mining, search Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) website or link to (www.em.gov.bc.ca/links/legislat.htm).
- ◆ Health, Safety and Reclamation Code, search MEMPR website or link to (www.em.gov.bc.ca/subwebs/mining/healsafe/mxready/mxcode01.htm)



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M-KMA Vision

"The Muskwa Kechika Management Area is a globally significant area of wilderness, wildlife and cultures, to be maintained in perpetuity, where world class integrated resource management decision-making is practiced ensuring that resource development and other human activities take place in harmony with wilderness quality, wildlife and the dynamic ecosystems on which they depend"



Please take note that links may change over time and become outdated. If links are not working, please refer to the BC Government Ministry responsible for the respective policy and legislation.

Thank you!

Introduction

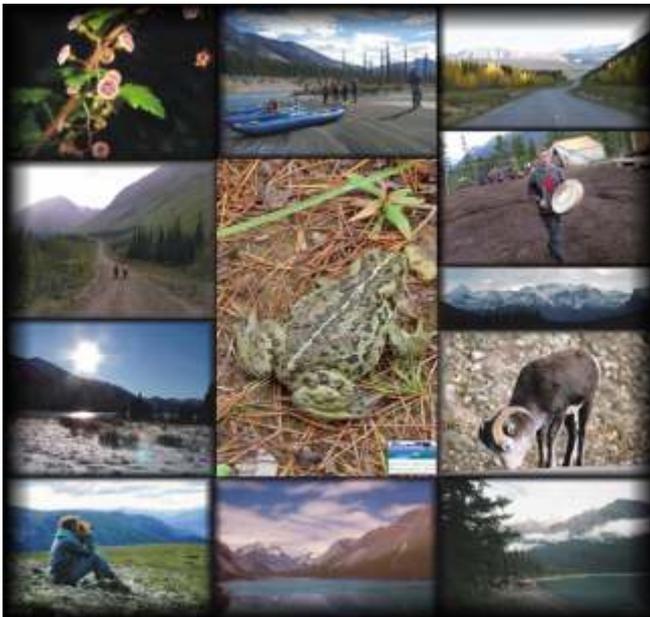
The legislation creating the M-KMA, the *M-KMA Act*, sets out the management intent for the area in the preamble as follows:

“Whereas the M-KMA is an area of unique wilderness in northeastern British Columbia that is endowed with a globally significant abundance and diversity of wildlife;

And Whereas the management intent for the M-KMA is to maintain in perpetuity the wilderness quality, and the diversity and abundance of wildlife and the ecosystems on which it depends while allowing resource development and use in parts of the M-KMA designated for those purposes including recreation, hunting, trapping, timber harvesting, mineral exploration and mining, oil and gas exploration and development;

And Whereas the long-term maintenance of wilderness characteristics, wildlife and its habitat is critical to the social and cultural well-being of first nations and other people in the area;

And Whereas the integration of management activities especially related to planning, development and management of road access within the M-KMA is central to achieving this intent and the long-term objective to return lands to their natural state as development activities are complete.”



Guidebook Purpose

The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (M-KMA) is located in northeastern British Columbia (BC). Resource development such as logging, mineral exploration and mining, and oil and gas exploration and development are allowed though must recognize the high environmental values of the area. The purpose of the M-KMA Mineral Exploration and Mining Orientation Guidebook is to provide information on the history, ecological significance, management and best practices that guide mineral exploration and mining activities in the M-KMA. The guidebook will provide those working within the M-KMA with a better understanding and appreciation of the significance of the area and the purpose of M-KMA goals and objectives. Although the information in this guidebook is specific to mineral exploration and mining, the underlying principles of environmental protection apply to all industrial activity.

This guide is provided for all individuals actively involved in mineral exploration and mining activities within the M-KMA. Companies are encouraged to be responsible for ensuring that all employees, contractors and sub-contractors read and understand the contents of this guidebook prior to beginning work in the M-KMA.



Companies and their employees, contractors and sub-contractors are responsible for:

- ◆ Respecting the values of the M-KMA.
- ◆ Abiding by environmental protection measures to minimize impacts and protect sensitive sites that are current.
- ◆ Complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

Links

- ◆ Handbook for Mineral and Coal Exploration in British Columbia - Draft, March 2006
(www.em.gov.bc.ca/subwebs/mining/exploration/handbook.htm)

M-KMA History and Legislation

The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area was established in 1997 and links together 11 parks and protected areas (Map 2). Resource extraction, including mineral exploration and mining, is not permitted in Parks and Protected Areas.

The M-KMA covers an area of 6.4 million hectares, where careful resource development is permitted in a manner that ensures natural values are maintained.

The M-KMA Act also specified local strategic plans for some industrial sectors (but not mineral exploration and mining) to ensure maintenance of wilderness characteristics, wildlife and the habitat on which they depend.

Links

- ◆ For links to the *M-KMA Act* and the M-KMA Management Plan Regulation, please visit (www.muskwa-kechika.com).

Mineral Exploration and Mining

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) regulates mineral exploration and mining within the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area.

Development in the M-KMA must recognize and balance environmental, social and economic values. Companies operating within the M-KMA should strive to work to the highest standards as world industry leaders, and where possible create and implement new and better practices, in the spirit of the M-KMA. Activities planned and implemented with due regard to worker health and safety and protection of the environment using project and location specific recommendations will help to ensure that these activities are consistent with the vision and intent of the M-KMA.



Links

- ◆ MEMPR home page (www.gov.bc.ca/empr/).

Community, Tenure Holder and First Nations Engagement

Entering into dialogue and engaging First Nations and local communities, including other tenure holders, “early and often” is recommended in order to identify and avoid and/or mitigate potential impacts to other users of the M-KMA, (i.e., First Nations, local communities, guide-outfitters, trappers, recreational groups, government agencies, and other tenure holders).

Dialogue in the early planning phase of a project can help to overcome many of the potential barriers to exploration and mining in a proposed area and serve as a source of valuable local information. Contact information for communities, commercial and non-commercial tenure holders is readily available through local governments, Chambers of Commerce, MEMPR, MOE, Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB), and the M-KMA Information office.



Links

- ◆ Guidebook: Mineral Exploration, Mining and Aboriginal Community Engagement, Association for Mineral Exploration BC (www.amebc.ca/SiteCM/U/D/6E830BA41323EB5F.pdf).

M-KMA Access Management Area

A key to preserving wilderness integrity is to carefully manage access. While new access may be developed for industrial purposes, there is special legislation in place under the *Wildlife Act* to manage public access. Routes have been designated that allow recreational motorised use. A desired outcome is that companies operating in the M-KMA will respect these legal requirements and will manage access accordingly.

Four types of routes have been designated under the *Wildlife Act* and the M-KMA Regulation. Motor vehicles are restricted to within:

- ◆ 400 m of the route;
- ◆ 10 m of the route;
- ◆ 400 m of the route (vehicles under 500 kg);
- ◆ 10 m of the route (vehicles under 500 kg).



Access management for industrial purposes is defined as: “The issuance of a special-use permit (as defined by the *Forest Practices and Range Act*), for the purpose of providing road access and other infrastructure outside of mineral claim areas to support mineral exploration and mining requires approval of the designated forest official, the designated environment official and the designated employment and investment official (now MEMPR).” (M-KMA Management Plan Regulation S 4.3)

Access management and industrial activities are further defined: “The management intent for the M-KMA is to ensure wilderness characteristics, wildlife and its habitat are maintained over time while allowing resource development and use, including recreation, hunting, timber harvesting, mineral exploration and mining, oil and gas exploration and development. The integration of management activities especially related to the planning, development and management of road accesses within the M-KMA is central to achieving this intent. The long-term objective is to return lands to their natural state, as much as possible, as development activities are completed.” (M-KMA Management Plan Regulation S 7.1)

Links

- ◆ For a link to the Access Management Area Regulation under the *Wildlife Act*, please visit (www.muskwa-kechika.com).



Produced by Geoff Hatcher
Muskwa-Kechika
Peace Region GPS Section
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- Protected Area (Proposed Provincial Archaeological Reserve)
- (Future) Resource Development
- Special Management
- Special Wildlife
- Travel is restricted to within 400m of route (Restricted to Alaska Highway right of way through Marmot Lake, St. Mary's Mountains, Northern Rocky Mountains Provincial Parks/Protected areas)
- Travel is restricted to within 10m of route
- Travel is restricted to within 400m of route (vehicles under 500kg only)
- Travel is restricted to within 10m of route (vehicles under 500kg only)
- Closed to all motor vehicle travel (non-motorized exempt)
- Roads and trails run within the Muskwa-Kechika Management area

Access Planning and Development

Access to mineral resources in the M-KMA, including industrial minerals, metals, coal and aggregates, must be thoughtfully considered and evaluated so that the least environmental impact results. The Notice of Work permitting process recognizes three types of exploration accesses; exploration trails; excavated trails; and, temporary access roads. Recommended practices for access design are to plan to create the minimum permanent road length practicable through use of existing designated routes and trails. Companies with exploration and development plans on their tenures which require road access into the M-KMA are encouraged to evaluate access options, consider future development scenarios and engage in early dialogue with First Nations and other stakeholders.



The M-KMA is characterized by mountainous terrain and access will likely take advantage of valley bottoms that have high historical, cultural, visual and biophysical values. Planning must attempt to find an access alignment that results in the least environmental impact as well as minimizes conflict with other values. Companies should co-ordinate access to the greatest extent possible and implement access control measures (i.e., reduce line of sight, locked gates).

Winter access during frozen ground conditions, within applicable timing windows, is encouraged for exploration activities to minimize long-term impacts. Planning should consider use of areas with higher suitability for low impact winter roads (i.e., minimize grading



requirements) such as willow flats and gravel floodplains. The presence of snow cover, weather conditions and the duration of activity all need to be considered for winter exploration and mining activities. Mitigation measures to minimize long-term impacts may include the utilization of matting type material (i.e., logs, branches, rubber tire mats, geotextiles, etc.).

The use of heliportable drilling and/or heavy-lift helicopters for some part of the project can be considered as a means to reduce access requirements.



Companies are strongly encouraged to commit the time and resources necessary to access planning and management.

Visual Quality



Visual quality is an important consideration in the M-KMA. If a proposed activity is near a recreational corridor, river valley, highway, or adjacent to a Protected Area, planning should identify viewpoints where the proposed activity will be visible and assess potential visual impacts.

Mitigation measures may include:

- ◆ Use of landscape design to mimic natural environments.
- ◆ Refine the size, shape and position of the work site on the landscape.
- ◆ Design above ground facilities to minimize visibility (i.e., screen activities from other users, mimic natural openings, use non-reflective surfaces and colours that blend in with natural surroundings)..
- ◆ Reduce lighting on equipment to the extent practicable..
- ◆ Remove visual evidence of operations (e.g. signs, infrastructure, waste materials, ribbons, etc.) as soon as possible after use.
- ◆ Reduce the effects of noise by ensuring that all equipment is properly maintained and practical sound suppression equipment is installed.



Mitigation measures should be developed, through dialogue with First Nations and local communities, in a manner that balances the visual quality objectives of the area with the operational requirements and capability of companies.

Environmental Protection Measures

A high standard of environmental protection is expected in the M-KMA.

General environmental protection measures, management direction and guidelines for mineral exploration and mining companies and other industrial resource companies include the following:

Compliance

- ◆ Comply with all applicable Provincial and Federal laws and regulations.



- ◆ Strive to meet or exceed industry best practices.
- ◆ Follow management direction provided by Land and Resource Management Plans, higher level plans, legislation, best management practices and applicable permits.
- ◆ Report any incidents immediately.
- ◆ Respect all values of the M-KMA.
- ◆ Minimize off-site recreation use by industrial workers under an industrial permit (i.e., recreational use of motorized vehicles on industrial permitted roads).
- ◆ It is recommended that mineral exploration and mining workers not be accompanied by dogs or other pets while accessing the project area for industrial purposes.

Scheduling of Activities

Scheduling of activities should be developed, through engagement with First Nations and local communities, that balance the operational requirements and viability of companies operating in the area with consideration of critical wildlife periods; other land use tenure holder's operations; fish timing windows; First Nation camps; and peak recreational periods. Ongoing communication with other tenure holders and users of the land base will identify the range of resource values and uses within the project area.

Links

- ◆ Region 7 Omineca - Reduced Risk Timing Windows for Fish and Wildlife Omineca Fish & Wildlife Timing Windows (www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/omineca_tw_bmp.pdf).

Vegetation

- ◆ Strive to minimize disturbance to standing timber and ground level vegetation.
- ◆ Avoid the spread of noxious weeds and invasive non-indigenous plant materials by cleaning all equipment and vehicles used in mineral exploration and mining activities prior to entering the M-KMA.
- ◆ Confine activities to the allotted access road, work site and camp area.



Soils

- ◆ Prevent erosion and compaction of topsoil by avoiding disturbance of saturated soils. Where topsoil and natural surface debris are removed for mineral exploration and mining activities, rehabilitate disturbed areas to the extent possible and feasible to a state similar to pre-development conditions.
- ◆ Delay construction, suspend activity, use construction alternatives or implement mitigation measures to minimize long-term detrimental impacts to wet or thawed soils. Mitigation measures may include the utilization of matting type material (i.e. logs, branches, rubber tire mats, geotextiles, etc.).

Hydrological and Aquatic Ecosystems

- ◆ Avoid removal of riparian vegetation where possible.
- ◆ Implement appropriate sediment and erosion control measures.
- ◆ Use identified fisheries windows to conduct in-stream work as outlined by government agencies. Conduct work outside these windows only when it results in reduced impacts (spring spawners: July 15- August 31, fall spawners: June 15 to August 31).
- ◆ If, due to operational constraints and activities scheduling, the company is unable to conduct in-stream works during fisheries windows, consult with regulatory agencies on mitigation measures required to minimize stream disturbance and amount/type of in-stream activity that can be conducted.
- ◆ Abide by standards and best practices for stream crossings and consult with appropriate regulatory agencies.



Links

- ◆ Watershed Stewardship Division for information on stream crossings, water use, and related requirements/legislation (www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/).
- ◆ "Terms and Conditions," timing windows, notifications and other *Water Act* related items, for works in and about streams (http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/nor/wateract_per/index.html).

Wildlife

- ◆ Review the Ministry of Environment Guidelines Fact Sheet, “Guidelines for Managing Impacts from Mining Exploration on Wildlife and Habitat,” Peace Region, March 2006 (provides a listing of relevant legislation and more detailed guidelines).
- ◆ Follow timing restrictions and set-backs.
- ◆ Follow identified protocols related to aircraft over-flights and no-fly zones associated with wildlife.
- ◆ Do not harass or feed wildlife.
- ◆ Workers are encouraged to be vigilant for wildlife and use due care and attention when travelling to and from the work site.
- ◆ The above measures relating to protection of wildlife will be balanced with the operational requirements and viability of companies operating in the area.



Links

- ◆ Guidelines Fact Sheet: Guidelines for Managing Impacts from Mining Exploration on Wildlife & Habitat, Ministry of Environment, March 2006 (ftp://ftpsj.env.gov.bc.ca/pub/outgoing/Peace_Region_Wildlife_Values/)
- ◆ Wildlife Species Inventory database, to access numerous projects, data and also where companies can input any data collected (srmwww.gov.bc.ca/wildlife/wsi/index.htm)

Heritage and Cultural Resources

- ◆ During early phases of engagement, if potential archaeological resources are identified, an impact assessment may be necessary. The assessment should lead to recommendations for managing activities and the archaeological resources. Options may include: alteration of proposed development site to avoid impact, or mitigation studies directed at retrieving resource values prior to impact.



Links

- ◆ <http://www.bcapca.bc.ca/>
- ◆ <http://www.bcapca.bc.ca/archaeology.htm>
- ◆ <http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/archaeology/>

Fires

- ◆ Companies will adhere to the Ministry of Forests and Range *Wildfire Act* and Regulations related to fire-fighting equipment, fire hazard and fire suppression requirements.



Waste and Hazardous Materials Handling

- ◆ All waste and hazardous materials handling will meet the MOE Environmental Standards and Guidelines for Fuel Handling, and the *Provincial Fire Services Act* and regulations relating to spill reporting, response plans, kits, secondary containment disposal of waste/hazardous materials.
- ◆ Immediately report all spills. Companies should have a Spill Response Plan, required spill kits appropriate for the equipment utilized, and fuel storage handling facilities.
- ◆ Dispose of all waste and hazardous materials at an approved facility outside of the M-KMA.
- ◆ Secondary containment should be provided at all fuels and hazardous materials storage areas.
- ◆ Spill prevention measures should be in place when servicing equipment with the potential for accidental spills.
- ◆ Use innovative or best management practices to contain hazardous materials, install leak detection systems, and monitor surface and groundwater quality.



Restoration



- ◆ The goal of restoration is to return the lands to their natural state. Companies strive to have conditions on a reclaimed site that are as similar to pre-disturbance status as is reasonable and feasible.
- ◆ Restore watercourse crossings and re-contour slopes once exploration and mining activities for the area are completed.
- ◆ Monitor and manage for weeds. Reseed with a native seed mix and short-lived cover crop that will quickly re-vegetate the site and provide erosion control, while allowing native plants to reestablish.



Worker Safety

- ◆ Companies must comply with the Health and Safety Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia.

Links

- ◆ Health, Safety and Reclamation Code, search MEMPR website or link to (www.em.gov.bc.ca/Subwebs/mining/Healsafe/mxready/mxcode01.htm).

Garbage

- ◆ Establish specifications for garbage, food handling and disposal to prevent wildlife attraction.
- ◆ All construction garbage and waste shall be continuously collected and disposed of at an approved facility outside of the M-KMA.
- ◆ If a camp is located within the M-KMA, bear-proof waste containers should be used and/or garbage should be incinerated.



Bear Encounters

Be cautious of the possibility of encountering bears. Although bears are most likely to run at the sight of a human, bears are unpredictable and may become aggressive if they feel threatened. Watch for bear signs such as tracks, droppings, digging and food sources like carcasses and berry patches. Follow the precautions below:

- ◆ Avoid working solo in bear country. When a team may be physically separated, carry portable communication equipment. If a camp is located within the M-KMA, bear-proof waste containers should be used and/or garbage should be incinerated.
- ◆ Avoid traversing closely or stopping for lunch at watercourses, unless it is essential to the activity. These areas are often prime feeding / loafing areas for bears and have background noise that masks sound.
- ◆ Make noises while walking or working in forested areas. This will alert bears to your approach and prevent them from being surprised.

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- ◆ If you are travelling through the bush and detect a strong rotting odour, backtrack and avoid the areas.
 - ◆ If you see bear cubs, it is likely that you will encounter a protective female. Leave the area immediately.
 - ◆ Never harass or chase a bear. If your vehicle is nearby, get in as soon as possible.
 - ◆ If approached by a bear, do not run away. Instead slowly back away and speak in a calm voice, or use a flare or noise device. If that does not work, dropping your pack may distract the bear and provide enough time to leave the area and/or prepare an alternate response.
 - ◆ Move to a tree or rock to shield yourself. Climbing a tree is not a sure escape, but it may cause the bear to feel less threatened.
 - ◆ If there is no escape and an attack is possible, play dead. Curl up on the ground, protect your vital parts, especially your head, and offer no resistance. The bear may leave once it realizes you are not a threat.
 - ◆ If the bear is a black bear, people have successfully defended themselves by fighting back.



Appendix 1: Contact Information

◆all addresses are in British Columbia, Canada

| Muskwa-Kechika Management Area | BC Ministry Offices | Mineral Exploration and Mining | First Nations |
|---|---|---|--|
| Muskwa-Kechika Information Office Suite 200, 9523-100th St. Fort St. John, BC V1J 4N4 Ph: (250) 262-0065 Fax: (250) 262-0077 | Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources #350 1011-4th Ave. Prince George, BC V2L 3H9 Ph: (250) 565-4240 Fax: (250) 565-4328 | Association for Mineral Exploration BC 800-889 West Pender St. Vancouver, BC V6C 3B2 | Kaska Dena Council Box 9 Lower Post, BC V0C 1W0 Ph: (250) 779-3181 Fax: (250) 779-3020 |
| | Environment #400, 10003-110th Ave. Fort St. John, BC V1J 6M7 Ph: (250) 787-3411 Fax: (250) 787-3490 | | Treaty 8 Tribal Association 10233 100th Ave. Fort St. John, BC V1J 1Y8 Ph: (250) 785-0612 Fax: (250) 785-2021 |
| | Integrated Land Management Bureau #300, 10003-110th Ave. Fort St. John, BC V1J 6M7 (M-K Program Mgr) Ph: (250) 787-3534 Fax: (250) 787-3219 | | Tsay Keh Dene #11, 1839 First Ave. Tsay Keh Dene Community, BC V2L 2Y8 |
| | Front Counter BC main ph: 1-877-855-3222 Fort St. John Office #100, 10003-110th Ave. Fort St. John, BC V1J 6M7 Ph: (250) 787-3415 Fax: (250) 261-2084 | | |



Appendix 2: References

Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Resources

- ◆ M-KMA Website (www.muskwa-kechika.com)
- ◆ Joint Solutions Workshop for Mining in the M-KMA Report (www.muskwa-kechika.com/...)
- ◆ Geophysical Guidelines for the M-KMA (www.muskwa-kechika.com/resource...)
- ◆ Pre-Tenure Plans for Oil and Gas Development in the M-KMA (www.muskwa-kechika.com/resource...)
- ◆ Guidelines- Management Objectives (www.em.gov.bc.ca/Subwebs/oilandgas/ptp/ptp.htm)

Integrated Land Management Bureau M-KMA web page
(<http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/lup/lrmp/northern/mk/index.html>)

Mineral Exploration/Mining Legislation and Best Practices Resources

- ◆ Legislation: search the MEMPR website, or link to (www.em.gov.bc.ca/Links/legislat.htm)
- ◆ Handbook for Mineral and Coal Exploration in BC, Draft March 2006 (www.em.gov.bc.ca/Subwebs/mining/Exploration/handbook.htm).
- ◆ Guidebook: Mineral Exploration, Mining & Aboriginal Community Engagement, AME BC (www.amebc.ca/SiteCM/U/D/6E830BA41323EB5F.pdf).
- ◆ Guidelines Fact Sheet: Guidelines for Managing Impacts from Mining Exploration on Wildlife and Habitat - MOE, March 2006, i) click on BMPs, ii) click on mine exploration bmp pdf (ftp://ftpsj.env.gov.bc.ca/pup/outgoing/Peace_Region_Wildlife_Values/)
- ◆ Water Act "terms & conditions," timing windows, notifications, for works in and about streams (http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/nor/wateract_per/index.html)
- ◆ Health, Safety and Reclamation Code, search MEMPR or link to (www.em.gov.bc.ca/Subwebs/mining/Healsafe/mxread/mxcod01.htm)
- ◆ Watershed Stewardship Division; stream crossings, water use, and related legislation (www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/)
- ◆ Wildlife Species Inventory database, to access projects, data and where companies may input any data collected (<http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/wildlife/wsi/index.htm>)
- ◆ BC Wildlife Act (www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/W/96488_01.htm)
- ◆ A Practical Guide to Effective Coordination of Resource Tenures - Northeastern BC (<http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/rmd/crt/index.htm>)



MUSKWA-KECHIKA
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