

Archaeological Overview Assessment of DL6440, Sun Peaks Resort

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Executive Summary

At the request of Sun Peaks Resort, Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) conducted an archaeological overview assessment (AOA), including a preliminary field reconnaissance (PFR) of District Lot 6440 to support potential future development or expansion of aggregate extraction by Sun Peaks Resort (the Study Area). The Study Area is approximately 4 kilometres (km) east of Sun Peaks Village, 44 km northeast of Kamloops, and 10 km northwest of Chase. The Study Area is within the territory of Adams Lake Indian Band, Skw̓l̓x̓ te Secwepemcúlecw, and Neskonalith Indian Band (Consultative Areas Database, November 17, 2025).

The objectives of the AOA were to:

- identify previously recorded archaeological sites, if present, within the Study Area
- identify and assess the potential for unrecorded archaeological sites within the Study Area
- assess potential development-related impacts to archaeological sites
- determine the appropriate methods and scope of work for subsequent archaeological studies, if needed.

The AOA included a background review of relevant information sources on the biophysical, archaeological, ethnographic, and historical setting of the Study Area. The results of the background information review were used to evaluate archaeological potential within the Study Area, which was ground truthed during the PFR.

No previously recorded archaeological sites are within the Study Area, and no new sites were identified during the PFR; however, eight (8) areas of archaeological potential (AOPs) were recorded. Aside from these AOPs, the remainder of the Study Area was assessed to have low potential.

Stantec recommends that an archaeological impact assessment, including subsurface testing, be conducted for the eight identified AOPs, under a *Heritage Conservation Act* Heritage Inspection Permit, prior to any construction activities. No further archaeological study is recommended for the remainder of the Study Area.



Table of Contents

Limitations and Sign-off	i
Executive Summary	ii
Abbreviations	iv
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Study Objectives	1
1.2 Regulatory Context	2
2 Study Area Description	3
3 Methods	4
3.1 Background Information Review	4
3.2 Indigenous Engagement	4
3.3 Archaeological Potential Assessment.....	5
3.4 Preliminary Field Reconnaissance.....	6
4 Results	7
4.1 Biophysical Setting	7
4.1.1 Glacial and Geological History of Study Area	7
4.1.2 Biogeoclimatic Zones	8
4.2 Ethnographical Setting	9
4.3 Archaeology	10
4.3.1 Archaeological Sites Near the Study Area	10
4.3.2 Previous Archaeological Studies	10
4.4 History	14
4.5 Preliminary Field Reconnaissance.....	15
4.6 Evaluation of Archaeological Potential.....	16
4.7 Study Limitations	17
5 Recommendations	18
6 References	19

List of Tables

Table 1	Previous Archaeological Studies	11
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List of Figures

Figure 1	Overview map.....	23
Figure 2	Mid-range map.....	24
Figure 3	Detailed map	25

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Photographs
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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
ALIB	Adams Lake Indian Band
AIA	Archaeological Impact Assessment
AOA	Archaeological Overview Assessment
AOP	Area of Archaeological Potential
asl	Above sea level
BP	Before Present
DL	District Lot
ESSF	Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir
FSR	Forest Service Road
Ha	Hectares
HCA	<i>Heritage Conservation Act</i>
ICH	Interior Coastal Hemlock
km	Kilometre
LSLB	Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw
M	Metre
mw	Moist warm
PFR	Preliminary Field Reconnaissance
RAAD	Remote Access to Archaeological Data
Stantec	Stantec Consulting Ltd.



1 Introduction

At the request of Sun Peaks Resort, Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) conducted an archaeological overview assessment (AOA), including a preliminary field reconnaissance (PFR) of District Lot (DL) 6440 (the Project; Study Area). DL6440 is the location of an existing gravel pit, that has been in use since approximately 2001.

The Study Area is approximately 181 (hectares) ha and located approximately 4 kilometres (km) east of Sun Peaks Village, 44 km northeast of Kamloops, and 10 km northwest of Chase. The area is located within the traditional territories of the Adams Lake Indian Band (ALIB) (Permit #3857), Skwłāx te Secwepemcúłecw (LSLB) (Permit #SHP2025-09), and Neskonlith Indian Band (Permit # to be determined, application submitted July 8, 2025) (Consultative Areas Database, November 17, 2025).

1.1 Study Objectives

There are usually three stages to the archaeological impact assessment (AIA) process: 1) overview assessment; 2) impact assessment; and 3) impact mitigation. An overview assessment is intended to identify and assess archaeological resource potential or the likelihood that archaeological sites, deposits and/or materials are present. The objectives of an impact assessment are to identify and evaluate archaeological resources within a proposed development area, and to assess possible impacts of the development on these resources. Impact mitigation is any course of action that results in the reduction of the adverse impacts of a development. Mitigation usually involves site protection, project redesign or systematic data recovery, often involving archaeological excavation.

The present study was designed to satisfy the objectives of an overview assessment (Archaeology Branch 2009). The objectives of the AOA are to:

- identify previously recorded archaeological sites, if present, within the Study Area
- identify and assess the potential for unrecorded archaeological sites within the Study Area
- assess potential development-related impacts to archaeological sites
- determine the appropriate methods and scope of work for subsequent archaeological studies, if needed.

The AOA included a background review of the extent and results of previous archaeological studies within the vicinity of the Study Area to identify any portions of the Study Area that have not been subject to archaeological assessment. The AOA involved two main components: a review of available biophysical, ethnographic, and topographic data to understand the archaeological potential of the landscape within the Study Area, and a preliminary field reconnaissance (PFR) to verify or refine predicted archaeological potential based on in-field observations.



1.2 Regulatory Context

Heritage sites and objects on private and Provincial Crown land in British Columbia (BC) are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA), which is administered by the Archaeology Branch of the Ministry of Forests. Heritage resources specifically protected by the HCA include Provincial heritage sites, burial places, Indigenous rock paintings or carvings, sites with evidence of human habitation or use before AD-1846, and heritage wrecks. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may also make regulations to define the extent of types of sites protected by the HCA. Archaeological and historical sites are places which indicate past human occupation or use. Archaeological sites are those which can be investigated primarily by archaeological methods such as excavation whereas historical sites can be studied not only by archaeological methods but also through the analysis of written records.



2 Study Area Description

The Study Area is DL6440, which encompasses a total of 181 ha. It is located approximately 3 km North of Morrisey Lake and 10 km Southeast of Mount Tod. Portions of the Study Area have been used for gravel extraction and timber harvesting in recent years. Google Earth imagery shows an increase in timber harvesting in the Study Area between 2012 and 2018, and the appearance of new cut blocks between 2018 and 2024.

The Study Area encompasses a network of forest service roads (FSR), including the main access road, McGillivray Lake FSR, an existing gravel pit measuring approximately 2.2 ha in the southwest portion of the Study Area, and numerous unnamed drainages flowing east into Hiuihill Creek.



3 Methods

3.1 Background Information Review

Stantec undertook a review of relevant environmental, archaeological, ethnographical, and historical data to identify previously recorded archaeological sites and to evaluate the potential for the presence of unrecorded archaeological sites within the Study Area.

The following information sources were reviewed:

- Provincial Heritage Register through the Remote Access to Archaeological Data (RAAD) application maintained by the Archaeology Branch, last accessed November 24, 2025
- Areas of previous archaeological assessment (RAAD, and Stantec's internal database for Sun Peaks Resort projects)
- Previous archaeological studies within and near the Study Area accessed through the Provincial Archaeological Report Library (PARL), maintained by the Archaeology Branch, last accessed November 20, 2025
- Provincial Consultative Areas Database to identify potentially affected Indigenous groups, last accessed November 17, 2025
- Stantec's internal report library
- Relevant biophysical and ethnographic data
- Relevant historical records and documents
 - Available orthographic maps (e.g., Google Earth Pro), terrain mapping and imagery for information on the physical setting of the Project
 - Vegetation Resources Index maintained by the Government of BC were reviewed for dominant tree species and age
 - Natural Resources Canada Surficial Geology Map for Shuswap Lake, west of sixth meridian (Fulton et al. 1974)

3.2 Indigenous Engagement

This report was provided to the Adams Lake Indian Band, Skw̓lāx te Secwepemcúlec, and Neskonlith Indian Band for review and comment.

While many aspects of past land use are identifiable in the archaeological record, Indigenous knowledge maintained by descendant communities further informs on factors contributing to archaeological potential, including proximity to named places, traditional travel routes, and intangible aspects of cultural heritage within the landscape, such as spiritual practices. The results presented in this report do not address traditional knowledge or land use, nor does engagement with Indigenous groups for review and input



constitute Indigenous consultation. The study was not undertaken to address Indigenous treaty negotiations, rights or title.

3.3 Archaeological Potential Assessment

Archaeological potential is the likelihood that a location may contain physical evidence of past human activity (i.e., archaeological resources) which can be identified in the modern environment. Ascribing archaeological potential ratings can help identify where further (in-field) archaeological examination is most warranted and inform the selection of methods for interpreting results in such studies. The probability that a site is present in an area, or type of area, is presented as a relative statement, as archaeologists can not usually determine with certainty the percentage probability that an archaeological site is present at any given location due to the influence of temporal, cultural, and/or geographic factors. For instance, it is generally more likely that sites will be present in river valleys (high potential) than on steep mountain slopes (low potential). Furthermore, the term “no potential” is not used because all parts of the landscape are considered to have at least some archaeological site potential. For example, a location on a steep slope may not have potential for habitation sites, but may have high potential for other site types such as trails or rock art.

Key factors considered in the assessment of archaeological potential included:

- proximity to hydrological features
- known archaeological sites and site distribution in the area
- terrain features typically associated with archaeological sites (defined terrace edges, ridges, knolls, etc.)
- known predictive archaeological potential models (AOA models) in the same region and similar context (Golder 2016, Dahlstrom and Twohig 1998),
- the potential for Indigenous or historical trails to be present
- vegetation and tree cover, and
- presence of fish and wildlife habitat/resources

Results from previous archaeological studies in the vicinity of the Study Area were also considered in the assessment of archaeological potential. Altamira Consulting (Woywitka 2001) conducted an AOA on the DL6440 Gravel pit on behalf of Sun Peaks Resort, the results of which were considered during the assessment of potential, but not relied upon, as the AOA does not conform to current AOA standards (Archaeology Branch 2009).



Previous studies (Golder 2016, Dahlstrom and Twohig 1998) in the Interior Plateau region have used geoprocessing tools and archaeological modelling to identify the slope characteristics of recorded archaeological sites and subsurface test locations. They have identified that.

- 1.0 The most frequent occurrence of precontact archaeological sites is within lands that are moderately level to level with a slope of less than 10°.
- 2.0 Gently sloping and open-range topography are important in determining potential for habitation sites and travel routes, as it is generally accepted that the flatter an area, the greater the probability it would have been subject to human activity.
- 3.0 South-facing aspect increases exposure to sunlight, thus it will generally be warmer and drier. Most archaeological sites recorded were identified as having a south-facing aspect.

3.4 Preliminary Field Reconnaissance

Pedestrian survey was conducted by a crew of three to five people spaced generally 10 - 20 m apart, with tighter spacing (1-2 m) utilized for surface inspections in areas of high potential. The survey was conducted within approximately 100 m of the stream running east-west through the Study Area, and along topographic high points identified from contour maps. Areas assessed as having low potential through desktop assessment were visually confirmed in the field through judgmental pedestrian survey, as needed, where terrain and vegetation were suitable for access and visual inspection. The ground surface was inspected for visible archaeological features (e.g., lithic scatters, cultural depressions, cairns), and surface exposures (e.g., tree throws, existing access trails, and sediment exposures) were examined for archaeological material. Additionally, standing and/or fallen trees within the surveyed areas were inspected for evidence of cultural modification. The survey was documented through field notes and photographs.

Areas of high archaeological potential (AOPs) were defined based on proximity to watercourses, terrain features (e.g., well-defined landforms), and soil characteristics (e.g., well-drained). Areas of low archaeological potential were defined based on sloping, uneven and/or undifferentiated terrain, and lack of defined landform features indicating suitability for past habitation.



4 Results

4.1 Biophysical Setting

The Study Area is within the Thompson Plateau of the Southern Interior Plateau of the Cordilleran Region of BC. The Study Area is located along the foot of the Monashee Mountains, known as the Shuswap Highland, situated northeast of Mount Morrissey. A tributary of Hiuihill Creek runs northeast-southwest across the south-central portion of the Study Area. The eastern portion of the Study Area sits on the deeply incised valley of the creek while the western part of the Study Area lies on flatter terrain approximately 3 km northeast of Morrissey Lake (Figure 2).

The Study Area is made up entirely of one bio geoclimatic zone, the Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir (ESSF). The Study Area is characterized by relatively level to steeply sloping terrain, with variable aspects.

4.1.1 Glacial and Geological History of Study Area

The last major glaciations began here about 19,100 years before present (BP) with decay of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet commencing between 13,000-10,000 years BP, leading to the formation of glacial lakes within the valleys dissecting the Interior Plateau (Clague 1981; Johnsen and Brennand 2004; Mathewes 1985). Deglaciation was followed by the reestablishment of flora and fauna, beginning with upland areas which were initially treeless and consisted of pioneer grasses (Hebda 1982). Between 12,000 and 10,000 years BP, upland areas gradually became forested, and valley bottoms were deglaciated and populated by grasslands (Hebda 1982). It is likely that forested areas were restricted to upper elevations during this period which gave way to cooler, moister conditions some 8,000-8,000 years BP (Hebda 1982, Mathewes 1985). These conditions persisted some 3,000 years BP, until a climatic shift gave way to warmer and slightly drier conditions which brought about an increase in Douglas fir, grasses, and sage, and a decrease in pine species (Mathewes 1985). Present day drainages in an ice-free setting were established some 8,900 years ago (Fulton 1969). Based on recent the recent glacial history of the Study Area, mid-elevation and high elevation areas provided ice free, vegetated environments by about 12,000 years BP that may have provided attractive environments for early human settlement in the area (Muir et al. 1994).

Surficial geology within the Study Area has largely been mapped by airphoto interpretation and is classified as undivided deposits consisting of glacial, fluvial, and lacustrine environment deposits with ridged or kettled topographic expressions interspersed with large rock outcrops or areas of near-surface rock (Fulton et al. 1974). There are several mapped meltwater channels, both major and minor, in the Study Area. According to the Province of BC's iMap mapping application, the soils in the Study Area are influenced by well drained parent materials classified as Eluviated Dystric Brunisols and Podzolic Gray Luvisols. The mode of deposition of the uppermost underlying parent materials are colluvial and morainal, respectively.



4.1.2 Biogeoclimatic Zones

The region supports a diversity of ecological zones that change drastically with variations in elevation. The Study Area is made up of the ESSF and ICH zones. The ESSF zone is the uppermost forested zone in the Interior Plateau, occurring between 1,200-2,100 m above sea level (asl) (Coupé and Wikeem 1991). The mean elevation of the Study Area is 1,450 m asl. The ESSF zone predominantly occupies steep, rugged mountainous terrain, and is characterized by long, cold winters with extensive snow cover. This zone is noted for its short, cool growing season with less than 60 frost-free days per year level (Coupé and Wikeem 1991).

Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir are the dominant tree species in the ESSF zone, with spruce dominating the canopy of mature stands and subalpine fir occupying the understory and forest canopy in wetter areas. Lodgepole pine is widespread within drier portions of the ESSF zone. Common herbaceous species found within the ESSF zone include subalpine daisy, white-flowered rhododendron, blackberry, grouseberry, false azalea, common red paintbrush, valerian, horsetail, and several varieties of alpine grasses.

The ICH zone occurs at lower to middle elevations between 400-1,500 m asl, occupying much of the Shuswap and Quesnel highlands. The ICH has an interior, continental climate dominated by easterly moving air masses that produce cool wet winters and warm dry summers (Ketcheson et al. 1991). The zone is one of the wettest in the interior of the province. The hydrology of the ICH is greatly influenced by significant snow melt, which minimizes soil moisture deficits by making it the most productive forest zone in the interior of the province. Given that the ICH is primarily characterized by steeply sloping terrain, wetlands are infrequent. However, extensive riparian areas and lakeshore marshes are associated with the abundant waterways, lakes, and reservoirs found throughout the zone. The Study Area falls within the moist warm (mw) subzone.

Upland coniferous forests dominate the ICH landscape; however, the zone has the highest diversity of tree species of any zone in the province. Western redcedar and western hemlock are the dominant tree species in mature climax forests, and grand fir common in the extreme southern reaches of the zone. White spruce, Engelmann spruce, their hybrids, and subalpine fir are commonly seen with western hemlock or redcedar in areas of cold air drainage and ponding or at higher elevations. Western larch, Douglas-fir and western white pine are common species in the central and southern portions of the zone, usually in moderately moist to drier sites, and ponderosa pine occurs on dry, warm slopes in some parts of the southern ICH. Seral species include lodgepole pine, trembling aspen, and paper birch. Common understory and groundcover species include northern oak fern, devil's club, rosy twistedstalk, falsebox, spiny wood fern and various species of mosses. Within the mw subzone Western hemlock, redcedar, Douglas fir and larch dominate the overstory, while the shrub and herbaceous layers are dominated by falsebox, feathermoss, pinegrass and haircap moss (Ketcheson et al. 1991).

Fauna important to Indigenous groups in the Study Area include moose, mountain goat, mule deer, elk, black bear, grizzly bear, hoary marmot, beaver, rabbit, ruffed grouse, and various waterfowl (Coupé and Wikeem 1991; Rousseau and Richards 1985). Additionally, conifer forests of the ESSF provide important habitat for furbearing species such as marten, mink, fisher, red squirrel, and wolverine.



A variety of freshwater fish are found in the lakes and streams of the area while anadromous fish are plentiful in the major rivers and spawning streams in the greater Study Area (Carl et al. 1959; Rousseau and Richards 1985).

4.2 Ethnographical Setting

Based on a review of the Consultative Areas Database, the Study Area is within the territory of the ALIB, LSLB, and Neskonlith Indian Band. These Nations represent members of the Interior Salish ethnographic group, speakers of the Shuswap or Secwépemc (*Secwepemctsín*) language, and the northernmost Salish-speaking peoples of the Interior Plateau region (Ignace 2008). Ethnographic information pertinent to the cultural landscape around the Study Area was compiled by Teit (1909, 1930). Other early ethnographers include Boas (1891), Curtis (1911), and Dawson (1892). More recent work includes Bouchard and Kennedy (1979, 1990), Palmar (1975a, 1975b), and Ray (1939, 1942). Although the archaeological and ethnographic record involving the Study Area is incomplete, ethnographic resources can aid in indicating the types of archaeological sites that might be found in the Study Area through traditional territories and past land use activities.

Prehistorically, the general settlement pattern of the Secwépemc is that of winter congregation in pithouse villages and spring to fall dispersal and regrouping throughout their territory to harvest seasonal resources and trade with neighbouring peoples (Teit 1909; Turner et al. 2016). The seasonal round began in the late fall when the Secwépemc entered their winter (*swucwt*) homes, where they stayed until mid to late spring. Spring was a time for digging roots and lake fishing, and early summer saw the first of the various berries ripen. July and August was a period of congregation, with the predominant activity being salmon fishing. This was a time of dispersal for hunting large game, trapping smaller furbearing mammals, and harvesting plant resources primarily at higher elevations. The seasonal movement of people was inextricably linked to the temporal and spatial availability of plant resources, occurring in a patterned and predictable seasonal round as communities and families visited harvesting sites throughout a rich diversity of landscapes within their territory for generations (Peacock et al. 2016).

Within the Study Area, some culturally significant plant resources were available, including black huckleberry (*sesép*), lodgepole pine (*qweqeli7t*), and subalpine fir (*melánllp*). Huckleberry constitutes one of many important species of berries that were harvested in abundance during the summer months (Turner et al. 2016). Lodgepole pine cadmium and subalpine fir bark were used medicinally as they provided sources of nutrients when fresh food sources were not abundant (Ignace and Ignace 2016). Lodgepole pine cadmium was harvested in the early spring and provided vitamins and minerals enabling spring cleansing, while the bark of subalpine fir was used in tonics and cleansing teas as physical and spiritual cleansers (Ignace and Ignace 2016).

Ethnographically documented travel routes provided travel corridors and were used to procure seasonal resources. Secwepemc Elders have recalled horse trails, likely following people's original foot trails, throughout Secwepemc territory connecting winter villages to important gathering sites (Turner et al. 2016). One such area was noted in proximity to the Study Area, from Neskonlith Lake to Tod Mountain (Turner et al. 2016). Ethnographic accounts describe mid-elevation forested areas as being used primarily as corridors to alpine and montane parkland environments, and to productive forest



margins, with sparse campsites located in clearings along these travel corridors (Muir et al. 1994). As such, most sites in forested areas are expected to be resource procurement sites utilized by task groups based elsewhere, with most frequented portions of forests near forest margins and along streams and trails where the variety and abundance of flora and fauna are the greatest (Muir et al. 1994).

4.3 Archaeology

The following section provides a brief discussion of previously recorded archaeological sites and site distribution near the Study Area, as well as previous archaeological studies completed in the area. For a discussion of site types and the regional prehistory of the Thompson-Shuswap region, see the AOA previously completed by Stantec for Sun Peaks (Gallagher and Perdue 2014).

4.3.1 Archaeological Sites Near the Study Area

No previously recorded archaeological sites are located within the Study Area. The nearest recorded archaeological site, EfQw-28, is approximately 8 km southeast of the Study Area on the southeast tip of Aylmer Lake and consists of subsurface and surface lithics. Other nearby sites, EeQw-19, EeQw-20, EeQw-26, EeQw-27, and EeQw-28 are approximately 11 km southwest of the Study Area on the northwestern end of Niskonlith Lake (Figure 1). These sites consist of a complex of housepit depressions, cache pits, and surface lithics.

Site distribution within 50 km of the Study Area is concentrated around the region's major river systems and a complex of large lakes, including the North and South Thompson Rivers, Shuswap Lake, Adams Lake, Aylmer Lake, Little Shuswap Lake, and Niskonlith Lake. Though a dense distribution of sites surrounds these water bodies, reflecting the archaeologically rich setting of the region, few sites have been recorded near the Study Area within mid to high elevation terrain. Archaeological investigation is often tied to a specific development component; therefore, site distribution and survey results are skewed toward areas where development has occurred. Accordingly, the absence of recorded archaeological resources should not be interpreted as an absence of archaeological potential or past Indigenous landscape use in these areas, but rather as a lack of investigation tied to development. It is important to keep in mind that archaeological sites tend to be where archaeologists look for them. Most archaeological assessments are development-driven, and it is less common that large-scale archaeological surveys and assessments target subalpine and high alpine environments.

4.3.2 Previous Archaeological Studies

Archaeological studies have been completed near or within the Study Area (Table 1). These include twelve AOA, eight PFR assessments, and one AIA. The results of these studies were reviewed and considered in our assessment of archaeological potential within the Study Area.

Arcas Consulting Ltd. conducted an AOA for the Kamloops Forest District, Land, and Resource Management Planning region, which included the Mount Tod area (Muir et al. 1994). The purpose of the study was to compile and synthesize information regarding the distribution of archaeological sites in the project area. It also identified (on 1:250 000 scale maps) areas of high and low archaeological potential.



Archaeological Overview Assessment of DL6440, Sun Peaks Resort

Abbreviations

January 30, 2026

An AOA was completed for the proposed Sun Peaks Resort expansion area on Mount Morrissey (Lackowicz and Handly 2000). Three AOPs were identified within the proposed expansion area. Further archaeological work was recommended if land altering activities were proposed within the AOPs.

Table 1 Previous Archaeological Studies

Year	Title	Assessment Type	Reference
1994	Archaeological Overview of the Kamloops Forest District, Land and Resource Management Planning Region	AOA	Muir et al. 1994
2000	Archaeological Overview Letter Report, Proposed Mt. Morrissey Expansion	AOA	Lackowicz and Handly 2000
2001	Archaeological Overview Assessment Proposed Gravel Development Area	AOA	Woywitka 2001
2003	Archaeological Assessment Orient Ridge	AOA	Ball 2003
2011	Archaeological Preliminary Field Reconnaissance Report, Forest Health and Fuel Management Mount Morrissey West	PFR	LeBourdais 2011a
2011	Archaeological Preliminary Field Reconnaissance Report, Forest Health Treatment Units 1-4 and 6-9 and Fuel Treatment Units 5, 7, 12A, 12B and 15	PFR	LeBourdais 2011b
2014	Archaeological Impact Assessment of the Gills Development Area, Sun Peaks	AIA	Perdue 2014b
2014	Archaeological Overview Assessment of the Morrissey Bridge Crossing, Sun Peaks	AOA	Perdue 2014a
2014	Archaeological Overview Assessment of Amended License of Occupation #337752 Controlled Recreation Area	AOA	Gallacher and Perdue 2014
2014	Archaeological Impact Assessment of the Gills Development Area, Sun Peaks	AIA	Perdue 2014b
2018	Archaeological Overview Assessment for Land Parcels 34, 35, 36A, 70 and Associated Roads, Sun Peaks Resort	AOA	Young 2018
2018	Preliminary Field Reconnaissance of Lot 36A Road Sun Peaks Resort	PFR	Davison 2018
2018	Archaeological Overview Assessment of Proposed Snow Making Reservoir, Chairlifts, Power Trench-Lines and Ski Runs at Sun Peaks Resort	AOA	Grieve 2018
2019	Preliminary Field Reconnaissance of Two Proposed Reservoir Options and a Chair Lift Development Area at Sun Peaks Resort	PFR	McKnight and Davison 2019
2021	Preliminary Field Reconnaissance for Sun Peaks Resort's Sundance Bike Park and Mount Morrissey Trail Networks	AOA	Dirmeitis and McKnight 2021
2021	Archaeological Over Assessment – Proposed Chairlift Installation in the West Bowl Area, Sun Peaks Resort	AOA	Scott 2021



Archaeological Overview Assessment of DL6440, Sun Peaks Resort

Abbreviations

January 30, 2026

Year	Title	Assessment Type	Reference
2022	Archaeological Overview Assessment – Parcels 27, 56, 57, and 68, Sun Peaks Resort.	AOA	Scott 2022
2022	Preliminary Field Reconnaissance for Sun Peaks Resort's Proposed Parcel 12, 27, 55, 56, 57, and 68 Developments	PFR	Grieve 2022
2023	McGillivray Highlands Nordic Trails Preliminary Field Reconnaissance Report	PFR	Burdeyney 2023
2025	Archaeological Overview Assessment – Untenured Areas, Sun Peaks Resort	AOA	Burns 2025
2025	Orient Skiway and Mac Lake Adaptive Trail Project Preliminary Field Reconnaissance Report	PFR	Gartner 2025

Altamira Consulting Ltd. completed an AOA for the DL6440 gravel pit (Woywitka 2001), the same location as this current Study Area, and did not identify any AOPs through an assessment of the area's environmental characteristics. No further archaeological work was recommended; however, this study does not conform to the current AOA standards, including updated datasets and thresholds of effectiveness for AOA models.

Altamira Consulting Ltd. completed an AOA for the Orient Ridge on the north side of McGillivray Creek and the east side of Mount Tod (Ball 2003). No areas of archaeological potential were identified during the 2003 AOA due to extreme slope conditions, and no further archaeological work was recommended for the Orient Ridge.

Two PFR surveys were conducted within the Mount Morrissey area (LeBourdais 2011a and 2011b). Field surveys assessed the Mount Morrissey blocks as having low archaeological potential as well as most areas located in the Forest Health Treatment Units and Fuel Treatment Units located to the west of Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality. No archaeological sites were identified during the studies; however, an AIA was recommended for two proposed fuel treatment units.

Stantec completed an AOA for the proposed Morrissey Bridge Crossing in 2014 (Perdue 2014a). The area surrounding McGillivray Creek and the proposed bridge was assessed as low lying and poorly drained. No significant topographic features were identified within the proposed bridge crossing development area as the area appears to have been heavily disturbed by previous developments including timber harvesting, land clearing and leveling.

Stantec completed an AOA for a proposed ski lift and run development in the Sun Peaks Resort Municipality (Gallacher and Perdue 2014). The original AOA study Area was proposed in 2013 and included an area adjacent to Mount Tod. The study Area was subsequently expanded in 2014 to include an area referred to as Gills development area. Gallacher and Perdue (2014) details the results of an AOA for these two areas. One AOP was identified during the AOA. An in-field assessment was completed for this area under Ministerial Order M-252-2013 (Perdue 2014b). Fieldwork identified two discrete AOPs (STL 1 and STL 2). Subsurface testing was completed at these two areas and no archaeological



materials were identified. No further archaeological work was recommended for the Gills development area (Perdue 2014b)

Stantec completed an AOA of land parcels and associated roads located along Valley Drive (immediately south of the Orient Chair area), and along Sun Peaks Road (2 km south of the Crystal Chair Lift) within the Sun Peaks Resort Municipality (Young 2018). One AOP was identified during the AOA. Subsequently, a PFR was completed to refine the assessment of archaeological potential within parcel 36A (Davison 2018). No archaeological resources were identified during the PFR and the area was assessed to have low archaeological potential. No further work was recommended for the project.

Stantec completed an AOA of proposed snow making reservoir, chairlifts, power trench-lines and ski runs at Sun Peaks Resort which included the Orient Chair and associated power lines (Grieve 2018). The AOA identified several areas of archaeological potential based on the presence of relatively level terrain and terrain characteristics and features commonly associated with archaeological sites. A PFR was completed to refine the assessment of potential for the two proposed reservoir locations and Crystal Chair Lift (McKnight and Davison 2019). Two AOPs identified by the AOA were confirmed during the PFR. Avoidance was recommended and adhered to for the two AOPs confirmed during the study, while no further work was recommended for the remainder of the assessed development areas which were deemed to have low archaeological potential.

In 2021 Stantec conducted a PFR of the proposed Sundance Bike Park, which consist of approximately 17 km of downhill machine-built free ride flow trail, and the proposed Mount Morrissey trail which will consist of a 1.8 km of two-way multi-user trail. No archaeological sites were identified during the PFR. One AOP I was recorded within the Sundance Bike Park and avoidance of the potential area was recommended and adhered to during trail construction (Dirmeitis and McKnight 2021)

Stantec completed an AOA for a proposed chairlift in the West Bowl Area of Sun Peaks (Scott 2021). The AOA identified several areas of archaeological potential associated with relatively level terrain, and terrain characteristics and features commonly associated with archaeological sites such as proximity to freshwater hydrological sources. An AIA was recommended for areas evaluated as having high archaeological potential and that a sample of areas deemed as having low archaeological potential are assessed during fieldwork to confirm the assessment of potential.

Stantec completed an AOA for a proposed residential development of four parcels of land, parcels 27, 56, 57, and 68, located to the south of Valley Drive in the Sun Peaks East Village area (Scott 2022). Potential for archaeological resources to be present within the project areawas identified in the AOA. A PFR was recommended to refine the desktop evaluation of archaeological potential (Grieve 2022). One AOP was identified during the PFR, and avoidance of the potential area was recommended.

In 2023 Stantec conducted a PFR of the proposed McGillivray Highlands Nordic Trails Expansion project area. Three AOPs were identified during the PFR, and avoidance of the potential area was recommended. For the areas assessed as low potential, no further work was recommended (Burdeyney 2023).



In 2025 Stantec completed an AOA of the untenured areas proposed for development in Sun Peaks Municipality, with the purpose of compiling archaeological data for the area and assessing the potential for unrecorded archaeological sites to be present. The AOA found that there is potential for sites to be present within the project area study area, and recommended a PFR to further refine the evaluation of potential (Burns 2025).

Stantec also conducted a PFR in 2025 of the proposed Orient Skiway and Mac Lake Adaptive Trail Project, during which four AOPs were identified, and avoidance of the high potential areas was recommended. For the areas assessed as low potential, no further work was recommended (Gartner 2025).

4.4 History

The early historic era of sustained European contact in the Thompson region began in 1812 when the Hudson's Bay Company established a fur trading post at present day Kamloops (Muir et al. 1994). The presence of the post led to an increased dependence on trapping and the adoption of Euro-Canadian technology (Ignace and Ignace 2016). However, it wasn't until the gold rush of 1858 that significant settlement in the greater Study Area occurred as mining operations were followed by an influx of settlers seeking farm and graze land. Settlement significantly altered the ecological communities of the area and dispossessed the Secwepemc people of their lands, who were moved to reserves in the 1860s and 70s (Ignace 2016; Ignace and Ignace 2016; Muir et al. 1994). By the early 1900's, transportation infrastructure and railways further opened the Interior of BC for settlement and continued growth and expansion persist to this day.

Additional sources of disturbance within the Study Area associated with historic and more recent development include industrial scale logging and the development of resource roads and trails. Logging in the area began in the late-1800s as population increased following the gold rush and was later stimulated by the increased demand for lumber associated with the completion of the railway (Cooperman nd). PFR studies conducted nearby have noted clear-cut logging and forested areas consisting of second-generation growth (Davison 2018; McKnight and Davison 2019). Based on the Province of BC's iMap mapping application, the projected age of forest stands within the Study Area are between 98 and 148 years.

As the historical developments that have occurred within the Study Area, such as logging and the construction of resource roads and trails, have resulted in relatively limited subsurface impacts, there is the potential for intact unrecorded archaeological resources to be present within the Study Area. According to a review of the Vegetation Resources Index, maintained by the Government of BC, and based on the projected age of the forest stand and previous clearing activities, the potential for the presence of culturally modified trees within the Study Area is low.



4.5 Preliminary Field Reconnaissance

The topography of the DL6440 Study Area ranges from gently to steeply (0-40°) sloped terrain with variable aspects, to relatively level areas. DL6440 encompasses several logging roads, and some areas have been extensively and recently impacted by logging and gravel extraction. Vegetation within the Study Area was at varying stages of growth, with an overstory of subalpine fir, spruce, trembling aspen, alder, pine, and an understory of gooseberry, raspberry, ferns, rhododendron, false Solomon's seal, hellebore, twisted stalk, strawberry, blueberry, huckleberry, rattlesnake plantain, moss, false box, queens cup, mountain ash, labrador tea, willow, five-leaf bramble and soopoallie. Some areas have been recently logged and thus cleared of most vegetation (Photo 1).

Eight AOPs were identified during the PFR (Figure 3). AOP 1 was identified near a flowing unnamed drainage. It is a long, thin, relatively level knoll measuring 5 m x 100 m (N/S x E/W). The terrain of the AOP is level to gently sloping (2-4°), with a top middle portion that is relatively level and slopes (20-25°) down to relatively level areas at each end (Photo 2). The AOP has an excellent viewshed of all surrounding terrain, overlooking the drainage 40 m to the west/northwest and lower lying terrain to the north, east, and south.

AOP 2 is a large, relatively level to gently sloping (2-5°) knoll measuring 20 m x 40 m (N/S x E/W), which overlooks the drainage approximately 40 m to the west/northwest (Photo 3). Like AOP 1, this AOP provides an excellent viewshed over the surrounding lower terrain in all directions. AOP 3 is a small, relatively level section, measuring 4 m x 18 m (NE/SW x NW/SE), of a long thin knoll delineated by moderate (25-30°) slopes to the NW, SW, and SE. The landform continues, but is moderately sloped, up to the northeast, overlooking a small adjacent drainage flowing 40 m to the southwest, as well as a dry drainage approximately 10 m at the base of the slope to the northwest (Photo 4).

AOP 4 is a large ridge, measuring 157 m x 54 m (E/W x N/S) with a relatively level to gentle southwardly sloping (0-3°) terrain overlooking a small drainage to the south as well as lower lying terrain to the north (Photo 5 **Error! Reference source not found.**). The AOP is delineated by moderate slopes (20-30°) down to the north, south, and east and moderate slopes up to the west (20-25°).

AOP 5 is a 130 m x 15 m (NW/SE x SW/NE) edge of a drainage located on the same landform as AOP 6, separated by moderately sloping terrain to the east (10-15° south). The AOP is relatively level to gently sloping (2-4°) and is delineated by moderately sloping terrain (20-30°) to the west and south toward the drainage and associated wetland (Photo 6).

AOP 6 is an extension of the same landform as AOP 5 to the west, separated by moderately sloping terrain (15-20°) trending south. It is a 75 m x 15 m (NE/SW x SE/NW) edge of a drainage with a terrain that is relatively level to gently sloping (0-4°) with a southern aspect. The AOP is delineated by uneven and undifferentiated terrain to the north, a moderate (20-25°) slope to the east, and a moderate (25-30°) slope toward the south where it sits 3-4 m above the drainage, providing excellent viewshed of the drainage system (Photo 7).



AOP 7 is a relatively level knoll with well drained soils, measuring 35 m x 3 m (N/S x E/W). The AOP is elevated 10-15 m above surrounding terrain, with moderate to steep slopes (30-40°) descending to wetlands to the north, east, and south, as well as a drainage to the west (Photo 8).

AOP 8 is a section of a drainage edge, measuring 108 m x 36 m (NE/SW x N/S) that overlooks a small creek 10 m to the south (Photo 9). The terrain is relatively level to gently sloping (2-4°) with a southern aspect, delineated by moderate slopes (20-25°) to the south and east, and becomes increasingly sloping (5-8°) and uneven where the AOP is delineated in the west and north.

The portions of the Study Area outside of the identified AOPs were assessed as low potential based on uneven and/or undifferentiated, sloping terrain, and lack of defined landform features indicative of settings suitable for past habitation (Photo 10).

4.6 Evaluation of Archaeological Potential

No archaeological sites are documented within the Study Area, although portions are assessed as having archaeological potential. The lack of recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the Study Area may reflect a low frequency of archaeological field studies within mid-to-high elevation settings rather than an absence of sites in this setting. Subalpine environments are the bridge between valley bottoms and high elevation, mountainous environmental settings, such as Mount Tod. Archaeological sites tend to be where archaeologists look for them, and most archaeological assessments are development-driven. It is less common that large-scale archaeological surveys and assessments target subalpine and high alpine environments due to lower density in development activities. The absence of recorded archaeological resources should; therefore, not be interpreted as an absence of archaeological potential or past Indigenous landscape use in these areas but rather lack of investigation tied to development.

Elevated potential for unrecorded archaeological sites is present within portions of the Study Area (Figure 3). This assessment of potential is based on the following:

- The presence of topographic attributes associated with archaeological sites, consisting of level to gently sloping terrain (less than 10° slope), and proximity to waterways, were identified within the Study Area during the PFR.
- The Study Area is composed of the ESSF biogeoclimatic zone. Tributaries of Hiuihill Creek and other unnamed drainages are within the Study Area. Ethnographic data illustrates that forest margins and areas adjacent to fresh water sources represent the portions of mid-elevation forested environments most frequented by Indigenous peoples as they are associated with and increased abundance of flora and fauna.
- Ethnographic data illustrates the significance of mid and high elevation and mountainous environments within Secwépemc territory for hunting and gathering.
- Ethnographic accounts of traditional Secwépemc settlement patterns demonstrate that the seasonal movement of people was inextricably linked to the availability of plant resources; several culturally salient plant species including black huckleberry, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir are native to the Study area.



- Based on ethnographic sources (Section 4.2), the Study Area has characteristics consistent with ethnographically documented travel corridors.
- The most likely type of sites to be identified during in-field archaeological assessment on relatively levelled-ground and proximity to watercourses are camp sites as they are areas of much activity, increasing likeness of evidence left, where people may have camped, fabricated, and fixed their tools, have fire and cooked, and processed meat, hides, roots, and berries.
 - According to the Province of BC's iMap mapping application (Vegetation Resources Index) there is low to moderate potential in small portions of the Study Area for the presence of culturally modified trees based on the dominant tree species and age.

4.7 Study Limitations

Limitations identified during this study include:

- Archaeological visibility: archaeological sites associated with traveling, hunting, processing, gathering, and plant harvesting activities tend to leave minimal traces of use (i.e., low density) and as a result may be harder to identify. In addition, these types of sites may not always be located on level to gently sloping ground and near bodies of water. In addition to level to gently sloping terrain and waterways, which may be indicative of archaeological potential for camp sites, archaeological assessment should also consider potential for travel corridors and lookouts, which may be indicative of potential for trails and rock cairns (i.e., trail markers), rock shelters (i.e., temporary habitation features used along the way), hunting blind features, salt licks, rocky promontory and/or water access associated with hunting activities.
- Seasonality: the subalpine forest region features cooler climate, a shorter growing season, and longer winters. Which may suggest short-term summer occupation of the subalpine zone, and specific seasonal round activities associated with subsistence.
- Temporality: the subalpine and high-elevation alpine zones tend to be primarily used for two purposes, hunting, and plant food gathering/processing activities. The nature of these activities required movement through the landscape suggesting short-term use of the environment and temporary settlement patterns which tends to leave minimal traces in the archaeological record.
- Previous archaeological in-field studies: limited field assessment and subsurface testing has occurred within the Study Area. In addition, several previous studies have focused on steeper ground due to the nature of the proposed developments (i.e. ski runs, chairlifts, bike park), where less areas with high archaeological potential terrain characteristics are present. The majority of AOPs identified within the vicinity of the Study Area have been avoided during development rather than investigated under an HCA-permit and, therefore, ground-truthing results are minimal.



5 Recommendations

This study was designed to satisfy the objectives of an AOA, which included a PFR. Based on the results of the AOA and PFR, Stantec makes the following recommendations:

- Avoidance is recommended for the eight (8) AOPs identified in this study (AOPs 1, to 8).
- If the AOPs cannot be avoided during planned development, it is recommended that the areas be subject to an AIA under an HCA Section 12.2 Heritage Inspection Permit issued under the HCA, as well as Heritage Inspection Permits issued by involved Indigenous groups maintaining permitting systems, prior to any construction activities.
- No further work is recommended for areas that have been assessed to have low archaeological potential. If the proposed development footprint expands to include unassessed areas, a qualified archaeologist should review the change to determine if an additional assessment is warranted.
- All archaeological sites, whether they are as-yet unidentified or recorded, are protected under the HCA administered for this project by the Archaeology Branch. If suspected archaeological materials or features are encountered during development, any work potentially impacting those resources must stop and the Archaeology Branch must be contacted.

The present study was designed to satisfy the objectives of an AOA. These recommendations apply solely to physical evidence of past human activity protected under the HCA. It is not the intent of this report to evaluate traditional Indigenous use, nor is the intent to address potential impact to post-1846 cultural heritage resources within the Study Area. Affected Indigenous groups should be engaged with to identify culturally-sensitive landscape locations and features that may interact with planned development activities.

Based on the evaluation of archaeological potential discussed above, there is potential for archaeological resources to be present within portions of the Study Area.



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Archaeological Overview Assessment of DL6440, Sun Peaks Resort

Abbreviations

January 30, 2026

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Figure 2 Mid-range map.

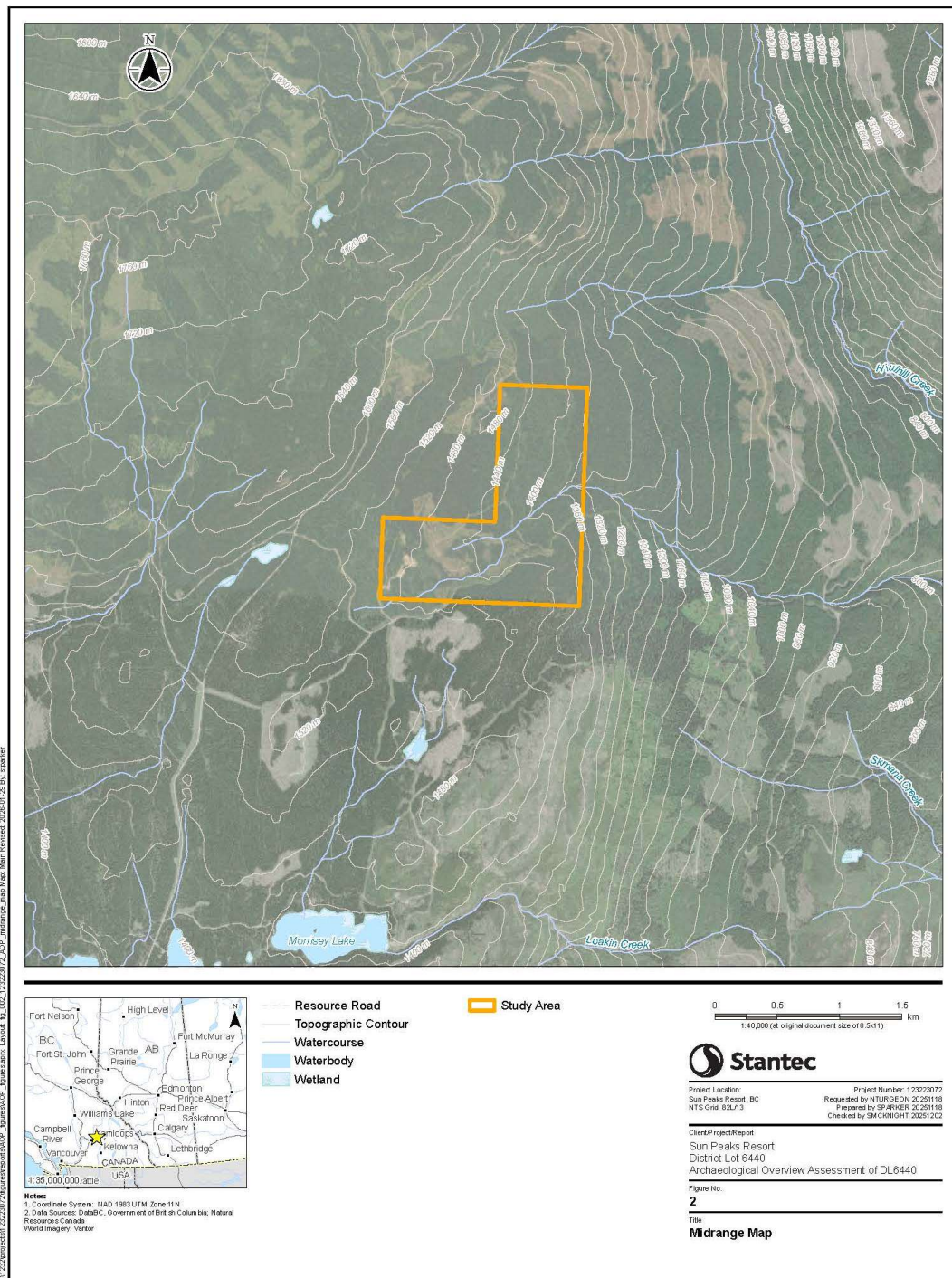
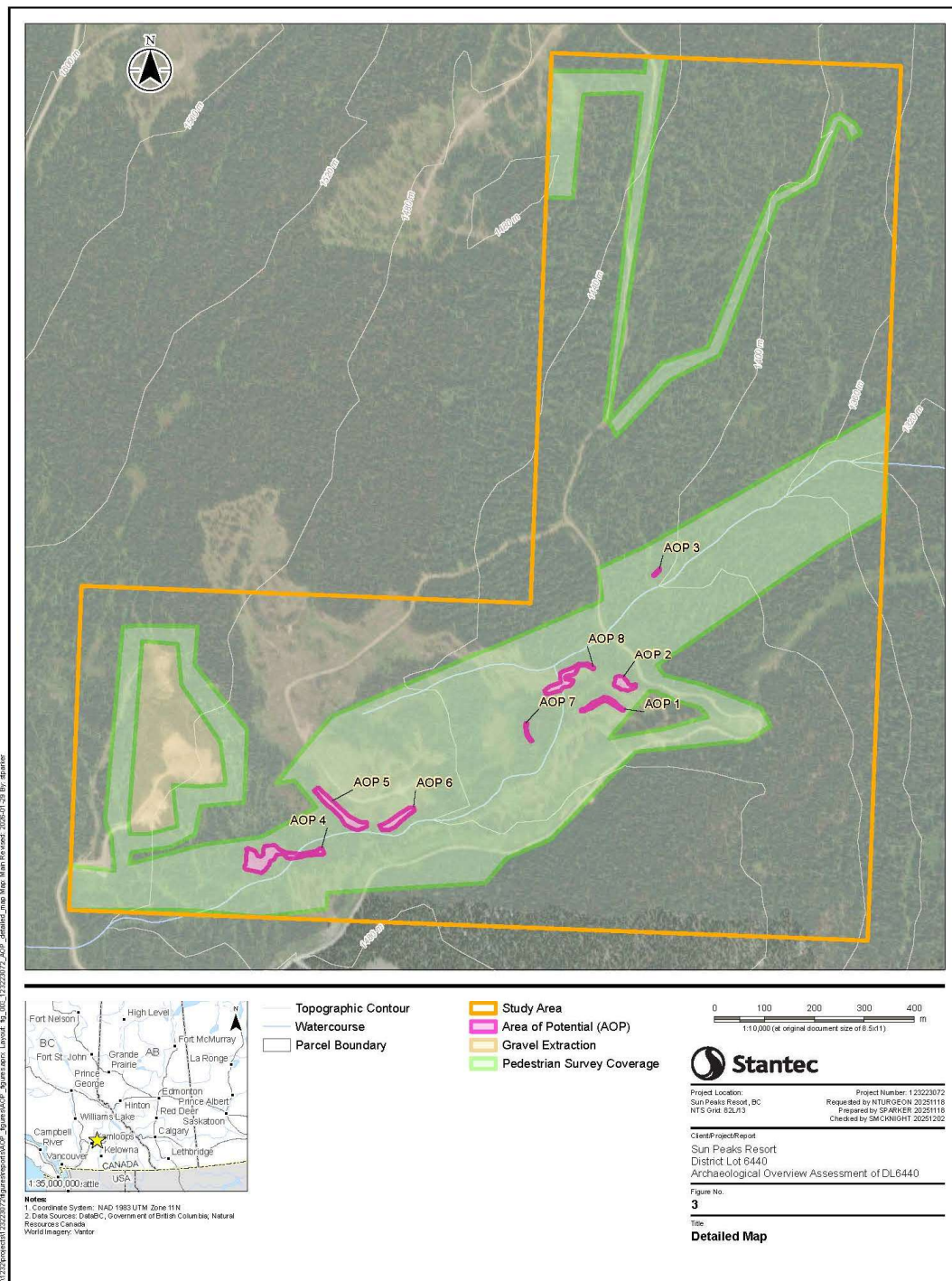


Figure 3 Detailed map.



Appendix A Photographs



Archaeological Overview Assessment of DL6440, Sun Peaks Resort

Appendix A: Photographs

January 30, 2026

Photo 1 View northeast showing evidence of previous logging in the central west portion of the Study Area.



Photo 2 View southwest from AOP 1, showing relatively level terrain with moderate sloping down to the southwest.



Photo 3 View west from AOP 2 showing relatively level to gently sloping terrain.



Photo 4 View southwest of dry drainage located at the base of northwest slopes of AOP 4.



Photo 5 View south showing relatively level terrain of AOP 3.



Photo 6 View southeast showing relatively level to gently sloping terrain of AOP 5, with moderate slope down to the south.



Photo 7 *View southwest showing relatively level to gently sloping terrain of AOP 6, with moderate slope down to the south.*



Photo 8 *View southeast showing relatively level terrain of AOP 7, with steep slopes to the east and south.*



Photo 9 View southwest showing small creek flowing 10 m south of AOP 8.



Photo 10 View southwest showing steeply sloping terrain in the central east portion of the Study Area.

