Memories of Mining: First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Elders’ perspectives

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**Pre-Contact & Far Trade era**

First Nations people lived in a traditional way since time began. Traditionally, our ancestors lived on the land, maintaining a balance between the environment, the animals and our people. Back then, there were no borders and we were not afraid of any combines. The land was the mother and our families came to the traditional territory from far away. Some of the earliest records of the Good Hope and Tulita in the North West Territory. Peter Ogden and the H.O. N.W. Leads Dept. (1913).

**1936 The Road**

This is the history of the establishment of Mayo. The good old logging days. The barkers and logging camps on the other side of the river, which proved to have several negative repercussions. For instance, it caused a sudden increase in the consumption of alcohol. Nonetheless, First Nation of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun elders emphasize that continued agency and resilience have kept their people grounded in the tradition of taking care of the land.

**1955 Relocation and Life in Mayo**

Electricity was introduced during the 1950s. Villagers were required to move to Mayo due to the construction of the Keno Hill Mine in the Keno and Silver Trail region. The integrity of the environment is very important for First Nations communities, and mining companies need to negotiate Impact Benefit (or similar) agreements to ensure benefits are shared.

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**1993 Signing of the Self-Government Agreement**

The signing of the Self-Government Agreement with Canada recognized the importance of the industry for local employment, the value of environmental protection, and the rights to determine the future of the land.

**2013 The First Gold Rush and Establishment of Mayo**

When the Duncan Creek discovery was made, many people came to Mayo to establish a territory. Mayo grew as gold was found in the creeks and the Mayo Historical Society.

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**2018 Reclamation and Opening of Victoria Gold Mine**

After the shutdown of United Keno Hill Mines in 2018, a company was charged with remediating the site, which was one of the largest gold mines in the region.

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**2016 Childhood Memories in the Old Village**

SG: Our memories of childhood in the Old Village are filled with stories of the Keno Hill Mine company and their impact on our traditional way of life. We used to go fishing and other traditional activities, including hunting and gathering.

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**1950s to 1960s: Life and work in Elsa**

Opportunities to work for the United Keno Hill Mines company in the Elsa area were taken advantage of by a number of young traditions of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun people. Many started working at this mine and later joined the mining industry in the sector as well.

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**Methods**

Methods used in qualitative interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. In this study, we collaborated with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to ensure that the research results are relevant to the community.

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