

# ET’O NYÄK TAGÉ / McQuesten River Watershed

The Et’o (River with lots of nests) Nyäk Tagé Watershed has, for generations, been home to FNNND citizens, fish, and wildlife. The region has endured significant damage from mining activities for over a century, degrading the environmental and water quality of the watershed and displacing fish, wildlife, and Dun from the region. Since the commencement of operations at the Keno Hill Mine in 1913 and culminating in the Victoria Gold Mine disaster in 2024, both the Et’o Nyäk Tagé and its surrounding ecological relationships have suffered greatly. In order for this region to still provide healthy habitat for the fish and wildlife that FNNND citizens rely on for their special relationship with the wilderness environment and their harvesting Rights, all development in the watershed must cease to give the area time to heal.

Honour

Chapter 11

Treaty

Obligations

*Over 30 years after the Final Agreement, no regional land use plan is in place for the Et’o Nyäk Tagé watershed, despite FNNND’s repeated requests. The Yukon Court of Appeal has affirmed FNNND’s Chapter 11 Treaty Right to co-manage its lands through land use planning; however, the Decision Bodies continue to unilaterally authorize development in the region, which irreparably reduces the lands and waters that can be protected in a futrel land use plan. The negative impact on FNNND’s Treaty Rights cannot be mitigated.*

01

## Eagle Gold Mine Disaster

- 300M+ litres of cyanide solution escaped
- 80+ fish deaths recorded
- Toxic substances continuing to leach until today, threatening Haggart Creek and Et’o Nyäk Tagé watershed.
- At least 8 releases of cyanide-impacted water documented so far in 2026
- Unfolding disaster and influx of new projects puts immense strain on FNNND’s capacity to co-manage lands and waters in region.

04

## Fish & Wildlife

- Moose in decline since 2006; harvest is at or above sustainable limit.
- Salmon populations in decline; 7-year moratorium in place.
- Freshwater fish (Arctic grayling, lake trout, pike, Dolly Varden) also threatened from extensive mining activities.
- No comprehensive habitat protection across watershed to ensure fish and wildlife populations recover and remain sustainable.

02

## Systemic & Structural Concerns

- Chapter 11 co-management obligations never fulfilled.
- Authorizing development with no land use plan harms FNNND’s Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.
- Cumulative impacts of development over decades and across watershed not assessed by YESAB or Decision Bodies.
- Project-by-project approvals and mitigations are not effectively protecting watershed from mining impacts.

05

## Heritage Resources

- Heritage resources cannot be isolated from traditional and cultural land use.
- Identification through desktop-based assessments, which excludes FNNND traditional knowledge, is not acceptable.
- Physical assessments (before project activities start) and FNNND on-site heritage monitors (with authority to halt work) are necessary to protect any discovered heritage resources from theft or destruction.

03

## Water Quality & Quantity

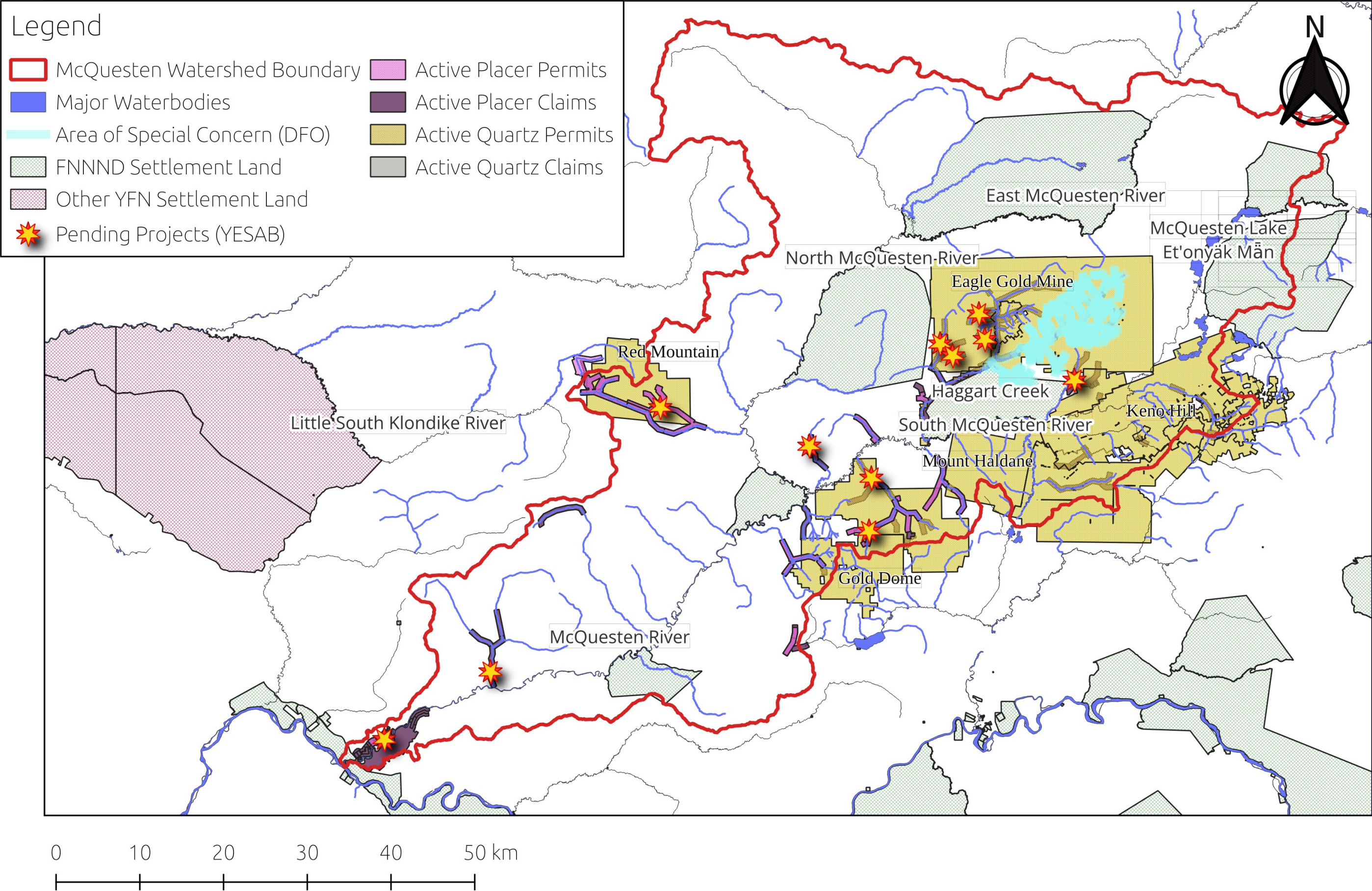
- Water is sacred – not a resource – but mitigations only address physical impacts to water.
- Sedimentation levels in watershed rising since 2016 due to human activities and natural phenomena.
- Wetlands take centuries to form and cannot be reclaimed – all activities must be prohibited from taking place in wetlands.

06

## Socio-Economic Concerns

- Health and wellness is inseparable from access to health lands and waters.
- Transient work camps raise risks to women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ people.
- Cumulative impact of camps across watershed and influx of hundreds of non-local workers must be assessed together.
- Cultural safety training, anti-violence policies, and proper camp siting are necessary.

Placer and Quartz Activity in the McQuesten River Watershed, June 2026



Quartz Activity

- 2 Quartz Mining Licenses  
*Active until 2037 - 2040*
- 7 Class 3/4 Exploration Permits  
*Active until 2028 - 2032*
- 6 Class 1 Exploration Permits  
*Active until 2026 - 2027*

Placer Activity

- 15 Class 3/4 Land Use Permits  
*Active until 2026 - 2035*
- 11 Pending Class 3/4 Land Use Permits  
*Potentially active until 2036 - 2037*
- 10 Class 1 Exploration Permits  
*Active until 2026 - 2027*

What FNNND asks...

Pause,  
Plan,  
Co-Manage

- 1. Do not authorize any project until a regional land use plan is in effect.
- 2. Adopt a precautionary approach given the Eagle Gold Mine Disaster and absence of cumulative effects assessment.
- 3. Stop justifying project approvals on assumption that reclamation reverses impacts – which it does not.
- 4. Implement and enforce FNNND’s recommended terms and conditions in full for each individual project.
- 5. Honour FNNND Mining Policy and meaningful consultation timelines.